

National Party also provided rolling stock and electricity for coal companies. Those initiatives were implemented through agreements reached with the companies, who paid tariffs on rail and royalties on coal. They are ironclad agreements and they cover most of those undertakings. Those initiatives were undertaken in the interests of Queensland as a whole.

Most of the National Party Government's requirements for schools and hospitals were met from revenue earned from those new mines. In that area, the commitments were not overextended. But the difference between the former National Party Government and the present Government is that my Government made decisions—and decisions require statesmanship and courage. It is about time that the Government adopted a similar policy. Decisions must be made now. but they may not bear fruit for many years. However, those decisions require courage. I hope that Government members have the backbone to make those decisions. The ball is in their court and the future of Queensland in their hands. The alumina refinery at Cape York and the Gladstone refinery must go hand in hand with the spaceport. Decisions must be made, otherwise the spaceport project will be lost, which would mean the loss of thousands of jobs and millions of dollars that are so vital to this nation.

It is about time that the Government got into the business of governing. The honeymoon is almost over. The businesspeople are saying, "Forget about the vendettas. Don't appoint committees. You have 65 of them already to look into things. Look to the future. Start making some decisions. Put the union heavies back in their place. You have been elected to govern."

The Government should go out and do something. So far, the Government has only carried out initiatives that the National Party approved when it was in Government. The Government should get out of its Opposition syndrome and make a balanced judgment on the environment and approve some projects. The people of Queensland want jobs. The Government should not let this State slide down from its present high position to the financial levels of Western Australia and Victoria.

Mr Goss and his Government have inherited a State with a solid economic foundation and a worldwide reputation for its economic management. All I ask is that they get in, make some decisions and keep this State running in the interests of the people of Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Johnson): Order! I remind the House that the member for Redlands, Mr Briskey, is making his maiden speech. I trust that honourable members will extend him the courtesy of listening to it in silence.

Mr BRISKEY (Redlands) (2.42 p.m.): May I say at the outset how very proud and pleased I am to be able to speak for the first time in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

I congratulate Mr Speaker on his appointment and I also congratulate Mr Campbell on his appointment as Chairman of Committees. I look forward to working with both of them during the next three years. I am certain that they will undertake the duties and responsibilities of the offices they hold in a most professional manner.

My congratulations go to the Premier, not only for the outstanding victory of our party on 2 December, but also for bringing to Queensland the rational, open and honest Government which the electors so earnestly sought. I pledge my total support to the Goss Labor Government.

One motivation for my seeking election to this place is well expressed by the words used by Pope John Paul II when addressing an audience in Rome. He stated—

"Man is not at the service of social, economic, political and cultural systems. Rather the system must be for man. We must look with respect on the manifold programs and activities, at times reforming, of various tendencies and systems. We must be aware at the same time that we are not concerned first of all about systems but about justice and man."

I have undertaken studies in education and social welfare. I chose those areas because I saw injustice in our society and I wanted to work towards building a better society. It was my belief in social justice which drew me inevitably to become a member of the Australian Labor Party. I saw within the Australian Labor Party a group of like-minded people, people who are concerned about the eradication of all forms of prejudice and discrimination, and people who are concerned about the removal of inequity and poverty from our society.

My sincere thanks go to the electors of Redlands for the confidence they have placed in me by electing me as their representative. I assure them that I will represent them to the best of my ability and that the interests of all who form the electorate are my prime responsibility.

Equally, I thank the members of the Australian Labor Party in Redlands for their continued support and the many hours of work they put into my campaign. They worked tirelessly on campaign after campaign in Redlands, and I know how happy they were on the evening of 2 December to see that we had won the seat of Redlands and Government. Their efforts over the past years will ensure that the seat of Redlands will be held by the Australian Labor Party for many years to come. I thank them for their efforts and I look forward to working with them in the many years ahead. I would like to thank especially my campaign manager, Mr Ken Hughes, for his support, hard work and advice during the campaign. I thank also the union movement and Young Labor for their help and support.

This speech gives me the opportunity to thank the Federal member for Bowman, the Honourable Con Sciacca, for his encouragement, support and direction. Con has worked tirelessly for the electors of Bowman over the last three years. His hard work in his electorate was brought to my attention time and time again when I was door-knocking during my campaign. He has been a credit to the Australian Labor Party and an excellent representative for the electors of Bowman. I congratulate Con on his re-election as the member for Bowman and his elevation to the position of Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Security.

I would also like to thank my family and many friends, who worked so hard to get me elected. I thank especially my wife, Cathy, who is in the public gallery, and my children, Joanna and Kathleen, who put up with a candidate for a husband and father for over 12 months. Cathy went back into the work force for six months so that I could take six months' leave without pay to campaign. During that time Cathy not only worked to support the family but also worked on my campaign and helped me keep my sanity.

This occasion also gives me the opportunity to thank my parents, Bob and Bev Briskey, and parents-in-law, Les and Gwen Winkle, for baby-sitting our young children for many hours and for the other work that they did during my campaign. I especially thank my father—and I am very proud that he is in the public gallery today—who has been an inspiration to me during his long career as the State secretary of the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union and who, during the campaign, gave up the greater percentage of his leisure-time to come to my home and look after our children, answer the phone and perform myriad other campaign-related jobs.

The electorate of Redlands is extremely diverse. It has within it residential, farming and bushland areas, and it is situated on Moreton Bay. The electorate includes Wellington Point, Ormiston, Cleveland, Thornlands, Victoria Point, Redland Bay, Mount Cotton, Sheldon, Burbank and parts of Capalaba and Rochedale. It also includes North Stradbroke, Coochiemudlo, Russell, Karragarra, Lamb and Macleay Islands. The greater percentage of the electorate lies within the Redland Shire. The shire is one of the top four fastest-growing areas in Australia. This rapid growth has brought with it many needs. These are especially evident in the areas of education, police and health. These needs were known to the previous member and his Government but they did little by way of forward planning to fix them.

The Redlands has a great community spirit, which is evidenced by the fact that there are more than 200 community groups and organisations operating in the electorate.

Their number and diversity are indicators of Redlanders' concern and caring for their fellow residents and their environment. The Redlands, of course, is known for its excellent soil for farming and is especially famous as a strawberry and flower growing area. I take this opportunity to invite all members to the annual Strawberry Festival which will be held in September, where they will be able to taste the best strawberries in Australia.

Rapid population growth has changed the Redlands from being predominantly a farming area to a mixture of farming and residential. The residential growth has occurred especially in Wellington Point, Cleveland, Ormiston, Thornlands and Victoria Point. This growth is due to the natural beauty of the Redlands and the fact that it has so much to offer. Its potential for tourism is unlimited. The fact that the Redlands is on Moreton Bay has meant that it is a place where many have chosen to retire and hence it has a large and ever-increasing retired population.

I wish to pay a special tribute to the homes for the aged, retirement villages and senior citizens groups in the Redlands for their marvellous work. They enjoy an excellent reputation. Of course, along with these groups go hand in hand the many services which are provided for the aged. I acknowledge the work of the Meals on Wheels groups and the various nursing services and thank them on behalf of the residents of Redlands.

Another population group which is ever-increasing in the Redlands is that of families with young children. As a former teacher in the Redlands, I am well aware of the problems associated with this rapid population growth. There has been much ado about tertiary entrance and how that is determined. Of far greater importance is the curriculum for the whole of the school population. The curriculum is more than what appears in the school syllabus; it is the whole set of experiences a child encounters while at school.

Of prime importance is the quality of the buildings in which learning takes place. If image is of importance for corporations, it is equally important for students. If the "right address" is important for lawyers, accountants and so on, how much more important for the esteem of the education process is the quality of the school environment. How can we expect students to respect our commitment to their education when we house them in the sparse surroundings of a demountable building. The years of neglect in terms of education funding in Queensland have meant that schoolchildren in Redlands have had to endure substandard education.

Teachers and teacher aids in Redlands are an extremely hard-working, professional and dedicated group. I have never encountered a more hard-working and dedicated group of parents than those whom I have met in Redlands. They have had to put up with inadequate education funding and a scarcity of resources, which has made their jobs all that much harder.

I have and will continue to work for the schools within my electorate to ensure that they receive adequate funding and that their building requirements are met. I have already had the Minister for Administrative Services visit schools in the electorate. This is an indication of our Government's commitment to the provision of quality education facilities for Queensland children.

As my electorate has only two State high schools, I have made representation to the Minister for Education for the provision of a State high school at Victoria Point. I believe that it is essential that a State high school be provided for the southern part of my electorate to cater for the growth in that area and to provide a high school that is closer to the children from the bay islands.

It gives me great pleasure to state that in its first term of office our Government is committed to raising the level of education funding to that of the national average. The members on the Opposition benches should hang their heads in shame at their neglect and lack of concern for the children of Queensland. That they could spend millions and millions of dollars for paid political advertising whilst children in our schools had to go without vital resources is an indictment on the former National Party and coalition Governments.

I turn now to the beautiful environment of Redlands. Its protection is high on my list of priorities. Moreton Bay must be protected not only for our enjoyment but also for future generations. Protection of our bay environment was rightly one of the major issues in the election campaign. Electors saw a previous member and a previous Government allow development after development along the shores of Moreton Bay. The past three years have evidenced the people of Redlands exerting their power in opposing overdevelopment of the bay.

The beauty of the bay, which is the very reason for the rapid population growth, has been destroyed at a frightening rate. The previous member and his Government supported a large canal development at Toondah harbour. That development would have reclaimed land about 2 kilometres out into the bay. Only after 12 000 signatures were collected on a petition was the development halted. I was proud to be part of a group which organised that petition. I congratulate STIR—Secure Toondah's Invaluable Resources—for its work. That multimillion-dollar plan was opposed by conservationists, fishermen and local residents. I am proud to say that the Honourable Wayne Goss and our Federal member for Bowman, the Honourable Con Sciacca, also opposed it.

Large areas of mangroves, seagrass beds and mudflats still remain, although significant areas have been progressively destroyed since the 1970s. Those mangroves, seagrass beds and mudflats provide an essential source of food and shelter for fish, crustaceans and birds. It is our duty to ensure that those wetland areas survive. It is important that the bay be preserved for human use as well.

There is evidence that, 20 000 years ago, Aborigines of North Stradbroke Island were using the bay. Midden sites on the island indicate that Aborigines were dependent on the bay and its rich marine life for food. People now use the bay for recreational and commercial fishing. Studies have shown that the bay is an extremely important nursery area for young fish, which is another reason for its continued protection. This is especially so for prawns, which spawn in the bay and require the shallow, protected area of the bay for maturing.

Moreton Bay is the most important recreational fishing area on the east coast of Australia. The bay's value as a recreational, educational and natural heritage area cannot be underestimated. It also has great value to the economy of Queensland.

A study undertaken by the Griffith University School of Environmental Studies revealed that in 1985-86 commercial fishermen within the Brisbane region caught in excess of \$66m worth of product. That was the retail value of the catch. The summary of the flow-on effects shows that the catch sector stimulated a further \$33m in indirect economic activity which, in turn, indirectly stimulated a further 1 108 jobs. Moreton Bay needs to be protected to ensure the continued success of the commercial fishing industry.

No Australian estimates are available on the economic value of the wetlands. However, according to Thawbourg 1986, the United Nations environmental program has placed a value of \$US87,000 per acre on mangroves. The previous Government ignored both the economic and environmental value of our precious wetland areas. Our Government realises the importance of protecting those areas.

Another important environmental issue in Redlands is the protection of the large koala population. I am proud to say that groups in Redlands are working towards that end. They are endeavouring to protect the koala habitat areas and are working towards the provision of koala corridors in Redlands.

We must not forget that ultimately the environment sustains all life. If we do not act quickly to protect it, our quality of life will deteriorate and, eventually, continued environmental destruction will mean an end to humanity. We owe it to our children to protect and to learn to live in harmony with our environment. We must all work together to leave a better world for them.

I shall speak briefly about the islands in the bay which are within my electorate. I pay special tribute to the residents of those islands because of the way that they work

together for the betterment of their communities. North Stradbroke Island is the largest of the islands within my electorate. Recently I have had discussions with the Environment Minister with respect to having approximately 50 per cent of the island proclaimed as national park. The island's many beaches, historical sites, freshwater lakes and other areas of natural beauty lure thousands of tourists to the island each year. The island's European history began when Captain Cook named Point Lookout. The Aboriginal population has a much stronger link to the island. More than 120 Aboriginal sites have been identified, and some middens date back 20 000 years.

In the 1800s Moreton Bay Aborigines were transferred to North Stradbroke Island. The Noonuccal tribe was the traditional owner of the island. I acknowledge Oodgeroo Noonuccal, who was formally known as Kath Walker, and admire her for her poetry and her work for the Aboriginal and white people on North Stradbroke Island.

The Aboriginal and Islander housing cooperative of North Stradbroke Island is doing an excellent job. I wish Oodgeroo and the cooperative every success in their endeavours for the residents of North Stradbroke Island. I sincerely hope that those collective endeavours are successful to ensure the culture and spirit of the Aboriginal people is not lost.

There are many women in the Redlands who have given much to the community. I recommend to all members of this House a book titled *Women of the Redlands*, edited by Roberta Bonnin, which outlines many of their achievements.

I turn now to the matter of policing in the Redlands and the ever-increasing crime rate, which is a result of the shortage of police. Let me say at the outset that the police officers at the only mainland police station in the Redlands at Cleveland are a hard-working and dedicated group of people. They work long hours under extremely trying conditions that few others in the community would tolerate. The conditions at the Cleveland Police Station are disgraceful. The previous Government's lack of spending in this area is to be deplored. I congratulate the police in Redlands for their work under extremely trying circumstances. I am proud to say that, in its first term, our Government will increase police strength by 1 200 officers.

It is obvious that a greater police presence in the Redlands would reduce the rate of crime. There is a great need for extra police, especially in the vicinity of the Cleveland shopping centre and in the southern part of the electorate, as well as on the bay islands. Members on the opposite side of the House had 32 years to get it right, and still they could not. The protection of families and property must be a priority of any Government, and I will work towards that goal.

I would like to comment upon the lack of public housing in the Redlands. It is and should be a matter of concern that in Queensland more than 17 000 people are on the waiting list for Housing Commission accommodation. This figure is only an estimate, as the correct figure is in fact much greater. In this area, as in other areas, Queensland lags far behind other States. The fact that 11 per cent of housing in South Australia is public housing and that the Queensland figure is below 3 per cent is a further indictment on the previous Queensland Government and its total lack of concern for the people of Queensland.

I am proud that by 1993 our Government will be injecting an additional \$174m into public housing. The present situation is abysmal. In part, it results from an unwillingness on the part of the previous State Government to work with the Federal Government. I am happy to say that our Government will not be following in the footsteps of previous National Party and coalition Governments and that it has signed a Commonwealth and State housing agreement that will inject funds into public housing. I have made representations to the Minister for increased public housing in the Redlands, especially for women faced with domestic violence situations and for the many homeless youth in Redlands. I am happy to report that today I received notification from the Minister that a detached home will be purchased at Cleveland for crisis accommodation.

I turn now to talk about the Redlands Hospital. I wish to congratulate Dr Keneally and his staff for the excellent work that they are doing. They are to be commended for the outstanding service that they provide to the people of Redlands. The hospital auxiliary is to be commended for the amount of money that it and other service clubs have raised to purchase hospital equipment. To date, the value of this equipment is in excess of \$58,000. Much of this equipment should have been provided by the Government. However, because the Redlands Hospital was merely a long-standing election promise that was finally honoured, it was not being given the support it deserved by the previous Government. The hospital has been provided with an outstanding staff but little else.

The population of the Redland Shire is in excess of 80 000 and yet the capacity of the hospital is only 36 acute beds and four observation beds. It is still necessary to transfer patients to other hospitals when staff would prefer to care for them at their hospital.

The many needs of the hospital, including maternity, radiological, surgical and geriatric services, should have been provided. A social worker should also have been provided to the hospital to help patients and the general community. There are many other needs, and these have been outlined in a submission by me to the Minister for Health. The needs outlined indicate clearly that the hospital was not a high priority of the previous Government.

I wish now to speak on matters relating to local government. Apart from the overdevelopment of the bay, one major area of concern is the provision of water. In the past, many restrictions have been placed on water usage. The council has stated that the problem is not that there is not enough water but that the council's system is not adequate to supply enough water to the residents of the Redlands. Late last year, thousands of homes in Victoria Point, Redland Bay and Coochiemudlo Island ran out of water. This would not have occurred in a shire that had planned properly for its increase in population.

Another matter of concern is that of residents objecting to rezoning applications. Currently, if they object to the rezoning and the council approves the application, the next step is to go to the Local Government Court. However, because of the costs involved, this course of action is impossible.

It has been a long-standing commitment of mine to work towards the provision of some other body to adjudicate on matters relating to objections to land rezonings, so that residents can put their case without the need for high legal fees. At present, developers can undertake expensive court cases, thus precluding most residents from having a say because of the costs involved.

In conclusion, let me say how proud I am to be a member of this historic Labor Government, a Government which will, for many years ahead, work towards building a better society for all Queenslanders.

Mr VEIVERS (Southport) (3.07 p.m.): Firstly, I wish to swear my allegiance to the Governor as the Queen's representative. I also congratulate the new Speaker, Mr Jim Fouras, who is a former Southport lad—he went to the Southport School—and who, in the old days, at Mick Theodore's cafe, used to serve me fish and chips.

Mr Comben: When did you go to school?

Mr VEIVERS: Just a little before your time.

The people of Queensland have now had six months of this Government and this House is still dealing with the Address in Reply. That says something about what has happened in Queensland. It has come to a grinding halt. Nothing of any consequence is happening and a great deal of what has happened has been a series of delays, inquiries and investigations—you name it—anything to avoid taking or making a decision. Yes, Mr Stephan?

Mr Stephan interjected.