



Speech By
Shane King

MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR

Record of Proceedings, 19 May 2015

MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (5.13 pm): It is my great privilege to rise in this address-in-reply and deliver my maiden speech as the state member for Kallangur. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this parliament meets. I pay my respects to their elders, both past and present.

To say that my life has changed dramatically in recent times would be an understatement. I used to say, 'My name is Shane King and I'm an electrician.' I am slowly getting used to saying, 'My name is Shane King and I'm the state member for Kallangur.' It is a big change for me, I will be honest.

Truth be known, my life changed in the biggest imaginable way pretty much around the time I put my hand up to be Labor's candidate for Kallangur. I say this a lot—too much, probably—but a few years ago I did not imagine me ever doing this: putting my hand up for politics, being a politician. It seemed like someone else's job—someone in a suit, maybe!—but when you think about what politicians are, the answer is pretty simple: they are elected representatives of their community and public servants. Politicians are meant to be 'just like us'—from all walks of life, with all kinds of experiences and backgrounds. They are meant to be of the people. Politicians are not born; they are most often forged from their life experiences—an issue or a desire to change things often drives them—experiences that drive them to want to make a difference for their communities and for the people they care about.

My arrival here is no different from that of so many of my colleagues: I want to make a difference for the better. My journey to this place begins with me being a proud tradesman. I have been an electrician for over 20 years. I have worked all over the state, in regional and remote Queensland, and in the mines in Western Australia. For the majority of my adult life I have worked in the Queensland electricity supply industry, or for Powerlink, the transmission division of our industry, that stretches from the New South Wales border to Cairns. I have been a tradesman, a supervisor, an inspector, a workplace health and safety trainer and a union delegate.

The electricity supply industry is a tough industry. It requires a focus on safety, quality service delivery and, as a worker, being away from home and heart for long periods of time. It is important work, though. The supply of electricity is essential to every home, business and service. When your lights and power go out, things are tough. It is frightening, for some people it is life threatening and it can be extremely difficult to cope with.

I understand this industry. I understand how important it is to our economy. I understand how important it is to the lives of every Queenslanders who needs to turn on lights in the dark to keep safe, to have the fridge and stove work to feed their families and to be able to keep cool in the Queensland summer. After a storm, having your electricity back on quickly and the streets safe from fallen powerlines are not just matters of convenience but also critical issues of public safety.

I understand the importance of a safe and secure workplace for power workers because I have been one most of my life. I want my mates to come home to their families safe every day. I want my community and the public to be safe and secure in the knowledge that this essential service is available to them when and where they need it. I also understand how important it is to so many people to be able to afford to pay for the electricity they need to use. I understand how vital it was and is to keep our electricity assets in public hands for safety, security and economic reasons.

My experiences as a representative began early, as a young electrician dealing with management around issues as critical as safety and securing fair pay rates and working conditions for my team. I have stepped up and been a delegate with the ETU on some pretty big jobs and been an advocate for my workmates for many years. The truth is: I have always been 'that guy'—the one who listens to his mates and co-workers and, when things are wrong, not fair and not just, and when no-one else would, I put up my hand and said so. I have always been someone who is prepared to speak up and try to put things right. From an early age my family taught me the value of being true to my beliefs and speaking up for the right things. My union, the Electrical Trades Union, as well as workplace management training have helped me to develop skills that allowed me to speak on behalf of my workmates and the people we provide a service to.

I have watched over these past few years the unfolding plans to sell our assets and I have known that this is wrong. Essential services like electricity should be held in public hands for the public good. They are called 'essential' for a reason. They are not the profit-making playthings of private companies; they belong to the people of my community—our communities—because the security of supply and safety of the electricity service is critical. From day one I have stood and said no to selling our assets—no to selling our power assets, our hospitals, our kids' school ovals. The answer is no. I do not apologise for that; this is personal for me. Selling our assets is personal for me, my family, my workmates and my community, and I could not stand by and let it happen. So I raised my hand to be the member for Kallangur, to make sure it did not happen. Our assets were not for sale and I am pleased to begin this new journey knowing that the battle is won with the election of the Palaszczuk government.

Whilst my initial motivation to stand for public office was fighting asset sales, it does not end there. As I began to think about putting up my hand to be the MP for Kallangur, I looked long and hard at my community. Whilst I am very proud of who we are, I have become increasingly concerned about the pressures and the losses we have sustained.

My wife and I moved to Kallangur over 20 years ago and raised our children there. My electorate is a great place to live, has a terrific natural environment, has lots of great businesses and a choice of terrific schools. I will not gloss over the challenges many in our community face. Tough economic times have hit hard in the outer rim of metropolitan Brisbane. Many households suffer from housing stress and people have to work hard to pay mortgages and rent, and cost-of-living expenses are on the increase in many areas. Our demand for public transport is in need of constant attention. We have high growth. In fact, we are amongst the fastest growth corridors in the state and that impacts on our schools, health and road services. We have lost services as our area has rapidly expanded without critical transport infrastructure to keep up—the Moreton Bay Rail Link, a Labor government initiative, being an exception. We compete for limited services. Our lost library services from Kallangur and Narangba to the high-growth area of North Lakes, which my good friend from Murrumba represents, are an example of needing to be more innovative and, frankly, a bit more proactive than we have been in the past. I think we can offer services to all without trading one community service for another.

The crushing problem of youth unemployment cannot be ignored. We must create jobs for our young people. We cannot hide from our challenges. We understand the competing needs of high-growth regions like the Moreton Bay region, but it is important to retain our heart of Kallangur to support local businesses and make it easier for our seniors and kids to access services and get jobs. The Kallangur electorate needs a fighter who will put up their hand for what is right—not just look like they are doing something but actually do it. I am very grateful to the people of my electorate of Kallangur for returning a Labor member. My focus for the next three years will be to work hard and build strong relationships with constituents, communities, businesses and council. I want to get to work restoring our front-line services. A Labor government will invest in front-line services like health and education, with Labor having committed to employing 80 new nurse positions in the Metro North region and jobs for graduate nurses as a first step. We have also committed to extra teachers, with Dakabin, Kurwongbah and Petrie state schools to be amongst the first Queensland schools to receive funding for extra teachers under our Labor government. Kallangur State School oval will now not be sold. My priority will be on working to create jobs for unemployed youth by helping to rebuild our local TAFEs, by making course fees affordable for jobseekers who are trying to attain qualifications and by

supporting business through a detailed job creation plan, including assistance for businesses that employ our young people through payroll tax rebates. I will focus on restoring lost community services starting with a financial commitment from our Labor government to kickstart the consultation and planning around an integrated community hub at Kallangur that will rehouse local community and youth services left stranded after recent community facility closures. I will be consulting widely with the community and council to decide the type of facilities and services that will best provide what the area needs.

I will, as a priority, establish a Better Transport, Safer Kallangur advisory group made up of local residents and businesses to hold regular forums for residents to have a say on local priorities and concerns for our roads and public transport services in the area. I will support this group in its role to give residents an opportunity to examine and provide feedback on both small and larger transport issues and projects in the electorate. I want people to have a clear and regular way of talking to me about their concerns, their ideas and answers to their problems. I am committed to advocating for the skiing community of Lake Kurwongbah. Skiing has been part of this lake's identity for five decades and I want this to continue for my community. Our lake is big enough for all to share. I am committed to supporting and seeing Lakeside raceway used as the great sports facility it is. Lakeside is special to so many people in our community who, like me, love motor sport. It has great potential as a facility for driver training, and I will be working with the facility operators, council and the relevant state departments to further this work. I know there must always be a balance between its use as a sports facility and the comfort and lifestyle of those people whose homes border it, and I will work hard to ensure this balance is achieved.

On a broader level as an MP, I am very committed to working with our Labor government on a new way to make our energy sector safe, efficient, affordable and reliable while being kept in public hands. This industry is my passion, and I will work tirelessly to ensure that Queenslanders, energy workers and the economy are benefited by a strong publicly held power system. I also look forward to the improvement of care for our seniors with funding for respite care for families, caring for people with dementia and a review of the care of older people in their homes and community. These are just some of the plans for this term. I am sure I will have many more to talk about in this place.

My maiden speech gives me the opportunity to say thank you to those who have helped me this far, and there are so many to thank. From the mighty Electrical Trades Union I want to thank Peter Simpson and Stuart Traill, two gentlemen who are well known to many in this place. To the organisers, staff, other state and national branches: a huge thank you for putting your faith in me to be a good advocate for workers and the communities who rely on our power industry and services. To the Queensland union movement, which is constantly demonised but rarely thanked for the great work that it does: I know your heart is about looking after workers and the things that make our lives and that of our families better. Thank you to my friends and colleagues from Powerlink, particularly Steve Doyle, Shane Mills, Brett Hanan, Wade Smith and the Humphreys brothers. In fact, to every Energex and Ergon worker who helped me, as well as their families, you are amazing people. To the Not4Sale team led by Lara and Janine, I am very proud of you all. I hear from so many people that green was everywhere at the election campaign—and, yes, they were tireless and relentless in their efforts to fight for power workers' jobs as well as for Queensland's assets. I am proud of you all.

Thanks to my Kallangur branch and ALP friends and their families, in particular Bob and Veronica, Shayne, Michael, Iris, Pat, Berit, Beryl, John and Sandra, Wayne and Ley, Jenny and Emma, Mary-Anne and Craig, Abhi, Tony and Ronnie Coleman just to name a few. I know I have not mentioned everyone. I apologise, but all of your efforts are appreciated beyond belief. Thanks to the Labor Party office: Evan, Anthony, Dick and Jaxen and to my good friend and neighbouring MP, Nicki Boyd. Thanks to Anastacia Palaszczuk and her caucus team for all of their support and encouragement. Thanks to my campaign team: Bob, Lloyd, Terry and Jerry led by Bonny Barry—a true champion who kept us all focused and on track. Thanks to my staff, Noeline and Jerry, who are working tirelessly in the electorate office. Thanks to my family, because I would not be here without you. Thank you to my wife, Angie, and our children Ben, Natasha and Nicole and their children and of course to my dad. I will work hard to do you all proud. Because I think it is important, I also want to thank Trevor Ruthenberg, the former MP for Kallangur, for his public service and commitment to the people of Kallangur for the last three years. Public service requires a lot of hard work, and I acknowledge and respect his efforts for our community. Finally, to the people of Kallangur—the people I am here to serve and represent—thank you all. I am not as stylish as some. I will speak more often like a tradesman and less like a polished politician. I do not mind; that is who I am. But I commit to meeting as many of my constituents as I can as quickly as I can and working hard both in this parliament and in our local area to deliver the results that will make our community a better place.