



Speech by

Michael Latter

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Hansard Tuesday, 29 May 2012

MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (8.14 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, firstly, I would like to congratulate the honourable Speaker of the House on her appointment. May I also congratulate our Premier, Campbell Newman, and my esteemed colleagues for their part in what has become one of the greatest landslide victories in the history of our political landscape. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and the land within which my electorate of Waterford is contained. I respectfully acknowledge the elders, both past and present.

I would also respectfully acknowledge my predecessor, the former member for Waterford, Mr Evan Moorhead. While we saw in Queensland one of the dirtiest campaigns this state has ever seen, while Queensland was dragged through personal attacks on candidates and their families, the campaign in Waterford was not by any stretch of the imagination one of those campaigns. I commend Mr Moorhead, his staff and supporters for maintaining what was between us—both Evan and I—a campaign that maintained its dignity and professionalism, where first and foremost the interests of our community were the priority.

For me personally, to be here today as the member for Waterford is both rewarding and humbling. It is for any one of us a great honour and privilege to hold office and to represent our community in such an esteemed position. I pledge to my constituents, the residents of my electorate, that I will not forget that. This honour is particularly humbling as I am the first conservative member to hold the seat of Waterford.

Waterford means more to me than a successful election. It is more to me than a job or a role. It is more than a seat of parliament; Waterford is my home. I have grown there, I live there and I am raising my family there. Waterford is not just a community; Waterford is my community. Waterford is an area that contains great diversity. From the varied multicultural backgrounds, the hopes and aspirations of our young and the experience and wisdom of our aged, there is strength in this electorate, as there is across the city of Logan. There is a great strength in the sense of community that permeates throughout Waterford—in our schools, our P&Cs, our community centres and groups, our PCYCs, our seniors groups, our Soroptimists, Lions, Rotary and Quota groups, our chambers of commerce and junior chambers of commerce. From school leaders to community leaders, there is a pride and a willingness to help our friends and neighbours, a willingness to work hard, to build our sense of community, to give of our own time and to volunteer to further the causes of these great organisations.

While we saw in Queensland following those floods in 2011 what it was to be an Australian and the tremendous efforts of those volunteers, it is with a great sense of pride that I acknowledge those in Waterford who give of their time and who volunteer tirelessly every day in my community. It is Frank Barnes and others like Frank whom I have in mind. It is that rich diversity and the moral compass of those volunteers who work against and despite the reputation and negative perceptions of Logan who make up the unique fabric of Waterford in what I believe is our great city of Logan. Again, may I say how humbled I am that the people of Waterford have entrusted me to advocate for those issues and the causes that they hold dear. To those who did not vote for me, may I also say that they, too, I represent and will represent to the fullest of my ability.

With regard to my being here, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the work that my campaign team put in. Indeed, I simply would not be here without their tireless efforts. There was no glorious campaign in Waterford. There were no great amounts of money thrown into the Waterford campaign and it was, in fact, fairly humbly resourced. The strength of this campaign was borne upon the hard work and dedication of friends, family and volunteers in what was a back-to-basics, grassroots campaign over 12 months. To David Pellowe and the Pellowe family, I say thank you. To John Broadhurst, to Shane von Senden, to Lance Bare, Kevin Walters, Jim and Robin Gallen, to Terry Millful, Couda Chappel, I say thank you. To the Logan women's group, to the Waterford SEC and the Logan Business Branch, I say thank you. To all those who volunteered on the Waterford campaign, I say thank you.

There are also those who I feel warrant a special mention for their assistance and guidance throughout my campaign. To the honourable John Paul Langbroek, Minister for Education, may I firstly offer my congratulations and may I also thank you. Thank you for taking my call; thank you for your guidance and support. To Mark Boothman, member for Albert, to the Boothman family and to the Albert campaign team, I thank you for your support and for your friendship. To Luke Smith, councillor for division 6 Logan City Council, to Andrea and the girls and to Kevin, I thank you for your support and for your friendship. To Burt van Manen, federal member for Forde, to Pam Parker, mayor of Logan, and to your respective family, friends and supporters, I say thank you. To my friends and former colleagues of Brisbane City Council, to the MIPO team, the city property team and to my friends in the Brisbane city legal practice, I say thank you. To Doug Muir and Mary-lou Badeaux, colleagues and friends who provided me with support and guidance and who continue to do so, I thank you.

In the spirit of being a true politician I would also like to take the opportunity to talk about myself. As a child and student some may find it hard to believe that for the most part the report cards of my early years all read the same: Michael is a great student but is shy and does not mix well. I can attribute the change to a number of things: years of training in martial arts, my enrolment in the performing arts, the active pursuit of school leadership and, of course, the loving strength of family. But my inspiration in politics I can limit to a particular point in my life and to two particular people. As a school captain in the second senior year for Windaroo Valley High, I met my local politicians and was greatly impressed by their active involvement in my school, with me and with my community. These politicians were the then federal member for Forde, Kay Elson, and the former state member for Albert, Bill Baumann. As a young man it greatly impressed upon me their willingness and desire to work with and for the betterment of my community. I saw in Kay and Bill a path to follow, an opportunity for me to be able to be and to do something greater than work towards my own ends. I had been inspired. The seed for change, the desire to work harder for the greater good and the need to help others was well and truly planted. I then set about living a life and working towards gaining the experience that I felt would serve me well when the time came for me to stand up and represent my community. I feel that those experiences will serve me well in this new chapter of my life.

I am of a large family, a family that has had much to offer by way of varied experiences. Through the highs and lows of any family we learn and we grow and it is those around us who shape the person we are and have the potential to become. My parents, young when they became parents, gave of themselves all that anyone could ask of parents. They gave and continue to give their love, their discipline and their loyalty to my brothers and I, even if from time to time we may lose sight of that. My parents were never wealthy, but may I acknowledge that my brothers and I were never without. Their sense of selflessness can be attested to by many. While not many outside of my immediate family will know, and one of my younger siblings will never know, one of the greatest defining influences on the sort of person I am or was to become was, in fact, the death of one of my brothers. I am the oldest of six, but five of us remain. At a very young age the loss of George Geoffrey to AIDS was to have a profound impact on my parents and my family. At an age far younger than most would appreciate, it became incumbent upon me to grow beyond my years to take on a support role that was to later blur the lines between parents and child to son and friend. I do not begrudge those tragic circumstances; they were, as I mentioned, a defining influence. For me, my parents, whom I love dearly, are also dear friends. I thank them both for their love, their guidance, their fierce loyalty and their friendship. To my brothers, George, James, Luke and Bradley, you will know that my involvement in your lives has often blurred between the roles of an older brother and a parent, but neither were without a great sense of pride and love in the men that each of you has become or, in the case of my younger brother, the man you are becoming. To your respective partners, Kayla, Melissa and Megan, to each of you I extend my love and appreciation for the support you have provided.

To my wife, Jayne, who has been with me since we were both students in high school, I simply would not be standing here without your support and understanding. While I was a young inexperienced, and somewhat terrified father, I can say nothing—nothing—means more to me than our children: my daughter, Gabriella, and my son, Maximilian, or Max. Jayne, you and I have been through a great deal together. We have had highs and lows, as any couple has, but no-one knows me better than you do. You are my wife, an outstanding mother, but you are also the greatest friend I have. I love you and I thank you. To my daughter and to my son, while you are both too young to understand the path that our family now

takes, I must first apologise and beg of you your later understanding for the long days and nights, for the times that I will not be there, but it is my hope that the times that I am there are all the more special for that reason and that you come to know that the reason I do all that I do is in the hope that for you and for all others there will be a future worth having.

I thank my mother-in-law, Doreen, and all of my family on both sides for their acceptance, love and support. I thank the Trabys and the Thompsons, whom I consider to be family, for their love and support. I am where I want to be. I am doing what I want to do. I am the member for Waterford and I would have it no other way. To the Premier, members of the cabinet, my friends and colleagues I say simply this: we have a great deal of work to do and I, for one, am looking forward to getting on with the job.