



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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Legislative Assembly

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF APRIL, IN THE FIFTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 2009

TUESDAY, 21 APRIL 2009

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Pursuant to the proclamation by Her Excellency the Governor, dated 2 April 2009, appointing parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 9.00 am in the Legislative Assembly chamber.

The Clerk read the following proclamation—

Constitution of Queensland 2001

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God,

Queen of Australia and Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth.

I, PENELOPE WENSLEY, Governor, acting under sections 15(1) and 18 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*, in the name of Her Majesty summon the Legislative Assembly of Queensland to a session to commence at 9.00 am on 21 April 2009 at Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane.

(Sgd)

Signed and sealed with the Public Seal of the State on 2 April 2009.

By Command

(Sgd)

A Bligh

RECORDED in the Register of Patents, No. 47 page 147, on 2 April 2009.

(Sgd)

Clerk of the Executive Council

Tabled paper: Proclamation convening the parliament, dated 2 April 2009 [4].

COMMISSION TO OPEN PARLIAMENT

The Clerk informed the House that Her Excellency the Governor, not being able conveniently to be present in person this day, has caused a commission to be issued under the public seal of the state appointing the Hon. Anna Maria Bligh, the Hon. Paul Thomas Lucas and the Hon. Andrew Peter Fraser as commissioners in order to cause the opening and holding of this session of parliament.

The Clerk read the following commission—

Queensland

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God,

Queen of Australia and Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth.

To the Honourable ANNA MARIA BLIGH and the Honourable PAUL THOMAS LUCAS and the Honourable ANDREW PETER FRASER.

I, PENELOPE WENSLEY, Governor, authorise you, or any of you—

- (a) in my name and on my behalf to open the session of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland to commence on 21 April 2009; and
- (b) to do in my name and on my behalf anything required to be done in the name of Her Majesty or of the Governor in relation to the opening and holding of the session.

(Sgd)

Signed and sealed with the Public Seal of the State on 2 April 2009.

By Command

(Sgd)

A Bligh

RECORDED in the Register of Patents, No. 47, page 146, on 2 April 2009.

(Sgd)

Clerk of the Executive Council

Tabled paper: Commission under the Public Seal of the State, dated 2 April 2009, authorising Anna Maria Bligh and Paul Thomas Lucas and Andrew Peter Fraser to open the parliament on 21 April 2009 [5].

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH OR AFFIRMATION

The SENIOR COMMISSIONER (Hon. Anna Bligh—South Brisbane): Honourable members, I have it in command from Her Excellency the Governor to inform you that as soon as the members of the Legislative Assembly have been sworn, the causes of this parliament being called together will be declared to you. It being necessary that a Speaker be first chosen, it is Her Excellency's pleasure that you proceed to the election of one of your number to be your Speaker and that you present such person so chosen to Her Excellency the Governor at such time and place as Her Excellency shall appoint.

I produce a commission under the public seal of the state authorising the Hon. Anna Maria Bligh, the Hon. Paul Thomas Lucas and the Hon. Andrew Peter Fraser, or any one of them, to administer to any member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland the oath or affirmation of allegiance and of office that is required by law to be taken or made and subscribed by every member before the member is permitted to sit or vote in the Legislative Assembly, which I will now ask the Clerk to read.

The Clerk read the following commission—

Queensland

Constitution of Queensland 2001

To the Honourable ANNA MARIA BLIGH and the Honourable PAUL THOMAS LUCAS and the Honourable ANDREW PETER FRASER.

I, PENELOPE WENSLEY, Governor, acting under section 22 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*, authorise you, or any of you, to administer to any member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance and of Office that is required to be taken or made by every member before the member is permitted to sit or vote in the Legislative Assembly.

(Sgd)

Signed and sealed with the Public Seal of the State on 2 April 2009.

By Command

(Sgd)

A Bligh

RECORDED in the Register of Patents, No. 47, page 148, on 2 April 2009.

(Sgd)

Clerk of the Executive Council

Tabled paper: Commission under the Public Seal of the State, dated 2 April 2009, authorising Anna Maria Bligh and Paul Thomas Lucas and Andrew Peter Fraser to administer to any member the oath or affirmation [6].

RETURN OF WRIT

The Clerk informed the House that the writ for the various electoral districts had been returned to him, and was endorsed as follows—

Albert: Margaret Majella Keech	Logan: John Mickel
Algester: Karen Lee Struthers	Lytton: Paul Thomas Lucas
Ashgrove: Kate Jennifer Jones	Mackay: Timothy Sean Mulherin
Aspley: Tracy Ellen Davis	Mansfield: Philip Gerard Reeves
Barron River: Stephen Peter Arthur Wettenhall	Maroochydore: Fiona Stuart Simpson
Beaudesert: Aidan Patrick McLindon	Maryborough: Christopher John Foley
Brisbane Central: Ignazia Grace	Mermaid Beach: Raymond Alexander Stevens
Broadwater: Peta-Kaye Croft	Mirani: George Edward Malone
Buderim: Steven Lance Dickson	Moggill: Bruce Stephen Flegg
Bulimba: Dianne Elizabeth Farmer	Morayfield: Mark Thomas Ryan
Bundaberg: Jack Mark Dempsey	Mount Coot-tha: Andrew Peter Fraser
Bundamba: Jo-Ann Roslyn Miller	Mount Isa: Betty Margaret Kiernan
Burdekin: Rosemary Norma Menkens	Mount Ommaney: Julie Maree Attwood
Burleigh: Christine Anne Smith	Mudgeeraba: Rosslyn Mary Bates
Burnett: Robert Desmond Messenger	Mulgrave: Curtin Warren Pitt
Cairns: Desley Boyle	Mundingburra: Lindel Helena Nelson-Carr
Callide: Jeffrey William Seeney	Murrumba: Dean MacMillan Wells
Caloundra: Mark Francis McArdle	Nanango: Dorothy Ruth Pratt
Capalaba: Michael Wai-Man Choi	Nicklin: Peter William Wellington
Chatsworth: Steven Andrew Kilburn	Noosa: Glen Wayne Elmes
Clayfield: Timothy James Nicholls	Nudgee: Neil Stuart Roberts
Cleveland: Mark Robinson	Pine Rivers: Carolyn Therese Male
Condamine: Raymond Gordon Hopper	Pumicestone: Carryn Elizabeth Sullivan
Cook: Jason Danial O'Brien	Redcliffe: Elisabeth Cornelia Maria van Litsenburg
Coomera: Michael John Crandon	Redlands: Peter James Dowling
Currumbin: Janet Anne Stuckey	Rockhampton: Robert Evan Schwarten
Dalrymple: Shane Knuth	Sandgate: Vicky Elizabeth Darling
Everton: Murray Patrick Watt	South Brisbane: Anna Maria Bligh
Ferny Grove: Geoffrey James Wilson	Southern Downs: Lawrence James Springborg
Gaven: Alexander Rodney Douglas	Southport: Peter Joseph Lawlor
Gladstone: Elizabeth Anne Cunningham	Springwood: Barbara Gwendoline Stone
Glass House: Andrew Cary Powell	Stafford: Stirling James Hinchliffe
Greenslopes: Cameron Robert Dick	Stretton: Stephen Robertson
Gregory: Vaughan Gregory Johnson	Sunnybank: Judith Caroline Spence
Gympie: David Francis Gibson	Surfers Paradise: John-Paul Honore Langbroek
Hervey Bay: Edward John Sorensen	Thuringowa: Craig Andrew Wallace
Hinchinbrook: Andrew Peter Cripps	Toowoomba North: Kerry Gerard Shine
Inala: Annastacia Palaszczuk	Toowoomba South: Michael Horan
Indooroopilly: Scott Anthony Emerson	Townsville: Amanda Ann Johnstone
Ipswich: Rachel Genevieve Nolan	Warrego: Howard William Thomas Hobbs
Ipswich West: Wayne Earl Wendt	Waterford: Evan Robert Moorhead
Kallangur: Mary-Anne O'Neill	Whitsunday: Janice Heather Jarratt
Kawana: Jarrod Pieter Bleijie	Woodridge: Desley Carleton Scott
Keppel: Paul Anthony Hoolihan	Yeerongpilly: Simon David Finn
Lockyer: Ian Phillip Rickuss	

Tabled paper: Writ for election issued in accordance with the Electoral Act 1992 [\[7\]](#).

MEMBERS SWORN

The commissioners, the Hon. Anna Maria Bligh, the Hon. Paul Thomas Lucas and the Hon. Andrew Peter Fraser, administered the oath or affirmation of allegiance and of office to themselves and, having been sworn, subscribed the Roll of Members.

The commissioners administered the oath or affirmation of allegiance and of office to the following members, who then subscribed the Roll of Members—

SCHWARTEN, Evan Robert	JOHNSTONE, Amanda Ann
ROBERTSON, Stephen	KEECH, Margaret Majella
WILSON, Geoffrey James	KIERNAN, Betty Margaret
ROBERTS, Neil Stuart	KILBURN, Steven Andrew
WALLACE, Craig Andrew	KNUTH, Shane
MULHERIN, Timothy Sean	LANGBROEK, John-Paul Honore
BOYLE, Desley	MALE, Carolyn Therese
HINCHLIFFE, Stirling James	MALONE, George Edward
NOLAN, Rachel Genevieve	MCARDLE, Mark Francis
LAWLOR, Peter Joseph	MCLINDON, Aidan Patrick
REEVES, Philip Gerard	MENKENS, Rosemary Norma
STRUTHERS, Karen Lee	MESSINGER, Robert Desmond
PALASZCZUK, Annastacia	MICKEL, John
JONES, Kate Jennifer	MILLER, Jo-Ann Roslyn
DICK, Cameron Robert	MOORHEAD, Evan Robert
ATTWOOD, Julie Maree	NELSON-CARR, Lindel Helena
BATES, Rosslyn Mary	NICHOLLS, Timothy James
BLEIJIE, Jarrod Pieter	O'BRIEN, Jason Danial
CHOI, Michael Wai-Man	O'NEILL, Mary-Anne
CRANDON, Michael John	PITT, Curtis Warren
CRIPPS, Andrew Peter	POWELL, Andrew Cary
CROFT, Peta-Kaye	PRATT, Dorothy Ruth
CUNNINGHAM, Elizabeth Anne	RICKUSS, Ian Phillip
DARLING, Vicky Elizabeth	ROBINSON, Mark
DAVIS, Tracy Ellen	RYAN, Mark Thomas
DEMPSEY, Jack Mark	SCOTT, Desley Carleton
DICKSON, Steven Lance	SEENEY, Jeffrey William
DOUGLAS, Alexander Rodney	SHINE, Kerry Gerard
DOWLING, Peter James	SIMPSON, Fiona Stuart
ELMES, Glen Wayne	SMITH, Christine Anne
EMERSON, Scott Anthony	SORENSEN, Edward John
FARMER, Dianne Elizabeth	SPENCE, Judith Caroline
FINN, Simon David	SPRINGBORG, Lawrence James
FLEGG, Bruce Stephen	STEVENS, Raymond Alexander
FOLEY, Christopher John	STONE, Barbara Gwendoline
GIBSON, David Francis	STUCKEY, Janet Anne
GRACE, Ignazia	SULLIVAN, Carryn Elizabeth
HOBBS, Howard William Thomas	VAN LITSENBURG, Elisabeth Cornelia Maria
HOOLIHAN, Paul Anthony	WATT, Murray Patrick
HOPPER, Raymond Gordon	WELLINGTON, Peter William
HORAN, Michael	WELLS, Dean MacMillan
JARRATT, Janice Heather	WENDT, Wayne Earl
JOHNSON, Vaughan Gregory	WETTENHALL, Stephen Peter Arthur

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The CLERK: Honourable members, pursuant to the requirements of section 14 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, members must immediately elect a member to be the Speaker before proceeding to any other business. Standing order 39 provides that the Clerk shall call upon the member present in the House who has served in the House continually for the longest period, and who is not a minister, to take the chair for the purpose of the election of a Speaker. This member is known as the Presiding Member in the Legislative Assembly's standing orders for the purposes of the election of the Speaker.

In the United Kingdom House of Commons practice and Westminster style parliaments generally, this member has historically been called 'the father of the House'. Two long-serving members of the Legislative Assembly—Mr Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, and the Hon. Dean Wells, the member for Murrumba—were both elected on 1 November 1986 and sworn in as members of the 45th Parliament on 17 February 1987. This House is therefore fortunate in having two potential presiding members.

House of Commons practice, generally followed in Westminster style parliaments, is that where two or more members entered the House at the same election, each with unbroken service, the member taking the oath first is deemed to be 'the father of the House'. Members in Queensland take the oath and sign the roll of members in alphabetical order by surname. Following House of Commons practice, Mr Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, is therefore deemed to be the Presiding Member. Under the provision of standing order 39, I call on the member for Warrego to take the chair as Presiding Member for the purpose of the election of a Speaker.

The PRESIDING MEMBER (Mr Hobbs): Honourable members, before calling for proposals for Speaker I draw the attention of honourable members to standing orders, which provide that any member present in the chamber may be nominated as Speaker. All nominations are to be seconded. Members who have been nominated are required to indicate if they accept the nomination. After all nominations have been made, seconded and accepted, debate will ensue. Debate on nominations shall be relevant to the question. In accordance with past practice, debate will occur regardless of the number of nominations received and a time limit of five minutes will apply to all speeches.

I remind honourable members that the provisions of the standing orders apply to this debate. I also remind honourable members that whilst in the chair the Presiding Member has the powers and authority of the Speaker. I now call for nominations.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.45 am): I nominate John Mickel. I move—

That John Mickel do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.45 am): Mr Presiding Member, I second the nomination and motion as moved by the Premier.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Does the honourable member accept the nomination?

Mr MICKEL: I accept the nomination.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Are there any further nominations?

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.45 am): I nominate Michael James Horan and I move—

That Michael James Horan do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.45 am): Mr Presiding Member, I second the nomination moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr HORAN: I accept the nomination.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Are there any further nominations? Honourable members, there being no further nominations, I call the Premier.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.46 am): Firstly, may I take a moment to welcome all honourable members to the 53rd Parliament. I especially welcome each and every one of those members who are entering the chamber for the first time today. There are 19 new members from both sides of the chamber. That is a little more than one in five. So it is a considerable new contingent—the class of 2009. I welcome you. You join a long list of people who have been tasked with the responsibility of representing their constituents and the people of Queensland in this chamber, and I wish each and every one of you all the very best in your endeavours. I also welcome your families and friends who have been able to join us in the public gallery today. Your official swearing in is a very important moment in your parliamentary career and I am pleased that so many friends and family have been able to join with you and other members. I know that a number of your family and friends have travelled from regional Queensland, so welcome. It is great to have you with us and we look forward to a chance to talk to you a little later today, when the proceedings get a little less formal.

Mr Presiding Member, I have moved that John Mickel do take the chair of the House as Speaker. John Mickel was elected as the member for Logan in 1998, which means, of course, that he has served in this House as a member for 11 years. John has a wealth of experience as a minister, most recently heading up the portfolio of transport, trade, employment and industrial relations. In his first speech to this parliament John Mickel said—

The best social security we can give anyone is a job.

In his time as minister, in portfolios including state development, employment and industrial relations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and energy and environment, John has maintained that commitment to jobs and to job creation. I know that that will stand him in good stead in some of the times that we have ahead.

As many people in this House know, John is a very active local member. He works very closely with community organisations, both as a patron and as an active member of groups like Meals on Wheels, St Vincent de Paul and employment groups. New members of the House would do well to take a leaf out of John's book in terms of the involvement he has with community organisations.

It is a little-known fact that John was born in Murgon, and the people of the south Burnett can be proud of him today. He is married to Catherine and together they have three children, Lauren, Patrick and Gabrielle. I am very pleased that Catherine and Lauren could join us today. I acknowledge them in and welcome them to the public gallery.

John Mickel has a broad range of experience, from both inside and outside the parliament, that I believe will equip him well for the position we are debating this morning. He holds a Master of Literary Studies, a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Education Studies and a Diploma of Teaching. He has worked as a teacher and as a university lecturer. No doubt from time to time those roles have given him an opportunity to deal with the unruly.

As continuing members know, the Speaker's role brings with it significant and important duties. These duties are ceremonial, procedural and administrative in nature. Many Queenslanders only see the public role of the Speaker as one that keeps order here in the chamber and they are right to understand that that is one of the most important tasks.

I think all continuing members will acknowledge that John Mickel is a strong parliamentary performer. He has a great reputation for giving many past Speakers some cause to enforce their responsibility as the keepers of order in this place. With his good natured humour and his capacity for pithy comments and witty barbs, the member for Logan has often been on the receiving end of some Speakers' admonishments, although I stress in the context of my nomination of him for this position that they have always been the gentlest of admonishments. To my knowledge he has never required firm discipline, but I have no doubt that he will have no trouble meting it out when required. Therefore, who better than John Mickel, who on occasion has tested some of our Speakers, to now take the place in the Speaker's chair?

On a more serious note, the duties of the Speaker are much broader and often people do not know of all the roles that the Speaker undertakes, such as greeting international guests. John has a wealth of experience in this area and I know that he will make a very important and compelling impression on visitors to Queensland. The member for Logan has the experience, the knowledge and the commitment to serve as Speaker of the 53rd Parliament. I believe he enjoys the respect of all sides of this House. I commend his nomination as Speaker of the Queensland Parliament.

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.51 am): It is my honour to second the Premier's nomination of Reginald John Mickel to the position of Speaker. The importance of the role of the Speaker in a parliamentary democracy cannot be overstated. Much like refereeing a game of football, you need to have your wits about you, have a respect for the rules of the game and judge incidents on the field without fear or favour. And like a referee, the Speaker is a necessary part of the contest but not the show that people turn up to see. The member for Logan is a decent, honest man who can do exactly that.

The honourable member for Logan entered parliament in 1998. He was elevated to cabinet as minister for environment in February 2004 and appointed minister for energy later that year. He gained the additional portfolio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy in March 2005. From September 2006 to September 2007 he was minister for state development, employment and industrial relations and most recently he served as minister for transport, trade, employment and industrial relations from September 2007 until the election. He holds a Master of Letters in politics and history, as well as bachelor degrees in arts and education. Between 1975 and 1984 he was a primary school teacher and he has also worked as a part-time university lecturer and tutor.

Right from the start, indeed in his maiden speech, Mr Mickel proclaimed the power of parliament. When he came to this place in 1998 he said that parliament can be a source of strength—a place where the ideas and debates in the community can be expressed and resolved. At a time when policies of division and discrimination had made a big impact on the shape of politics in Queensland, he preached engagement, openness and tolerance. These are characteristics that will serve him well if he is elected Speaker.

The member for Logan has had unique experience to fill that role, and I am not talking about managing children in a classroom—a skill that he will not need to call on here. Not only is he a senior member of parliament and an accomplished minister; he has also worked for a federal minister and as a

senior adviser, both in government and in opposition. He has always been someone who has a strong personal interest in the history of our parliament, our democratic institutions and their character. As they say, those who forget the lessons of the past are doomed to repeat them. The member for Logan has an understanding of Queensland political history that few in this place could match.

A little-known side of him relates to the very strong social values that he possesses, in particular his work in support of an orphanage in Danang in Vietnam. That is something he has done quietly and consistently over the years. It is a mark of the man. In fact, the only thing I could fault him on—and I have discussed this with my friend and colleague the member for Toowoomba North—is that both he and the member for Toowoomba South, who are both candidates, went to my school Villanova's arch rival St Laurence's. But this will be one match that Laurie's will win, one way or the other, and a Villanova referee cannot do anything to stuff it up.

Politics is a contest of ideas that is conducted robustly and vigorously indeed. This belies the fact that much of what happens in this place is actually agreed and that only someone who is particularly quirky would not develop friendships based on mutual respect with members from both sides of the chamber. John Mickel is a person who has been just as comfortable with a friendly word as an offensive thrust, with a laugh or a quick retort.

I know that John's wife, Catherine, and daughter Lauren, one of their three children, are here today, as are his mother and father-in-law. I welcome them. I am sure that better than anyone they can attest to the qualities he would bring to the job, which is above anything else to be a person of fundamental decency, honour and goodwill. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to second the Premier's nomination and I commend the honourable member to every member of the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.55 am): It is my pleasure to nominate Michael James Horan, the member for Toowoomba South, as our candidate for Speaker. We all know that the Speaker plays a crucial role in our great democracy and that it is important that we all have a sense of impartiality and a deep respect for the standing orders. When I first came to this place the then Chairman of Committees, the honourable Jim Fouras, acknowledged that point when I was speaking with him one day. He helped me to appreciate the standing orders, which I have really come to know and respect.

The member for Toowoomba South is disciplined, dignified and honest. People expect that of our leaders. There are a lot of debates about politicians—what they are doing and how they are behaving. I believe that, since first coming to this place in 1991, the honourable member for Toowoomba South has shown through his personal actions that he embodies all of those principles and would bring many of those principles to the role of Speaker.

As many have mentioned, this is not a lecture theatre. As a former Leader of the Opposition the member for Callide said, it is not a classroom. Some members need to learn that when they come to this place, because I think sometimes they believe that because of the way parliament has changed over the years this is no longer a place for robust debate, but of course it is. The 89 electorates that have returned us here today expect to see robust debate, especially when we do not have an upper house. We need robust debate, and the Speaker's role is to make sure that, whilst parliament is conducted under the standing orders, there is robust debate and that it will be adversarial. The Speaker needs to walk a fine line between not favouring one side or the other. We believe that the member for Toowoomba South will do that, based on what he has done here since 1991.

The member for Toowoomba South has been a minister and a shadow minister. He was a minister in the Borbidge government—a health minister acknowledged for his work—and he has certainly been acknowledged for his work as the shadow minister for health in the lead-up to the 1995-96 era. He has also been Leader of the Opposition and he is well known throughout Queensland.

I have been to regional parliaments. When I am with the member for Toowoomba South—and the member for Gregory—I can walk anywhere in Queensland and see that average, everyday people know and respect him for what he has done in his career. He is like a referee who does not want to be the centre of attention. While this is not about playing a game, it is about serving in a role. We want someone to sit in that chair who will watch over things and ensure they are not the centre of attention.

The member for Toowoomba South has been a member of this House since 1991. He has a wide and varied history. He was general manager of the Toowoomba Showgrounds and has run agricultural shows, exhibitions, greyhound racing, speedway events, concerts and numerous expos. He has been a very active local member.

His wife, Helen, and he have been residents of Toowoomba for over 30 years. He has run a dairy farm near Gympie and before that was a rugby league player and player/coach. He has three children.

Most importantly, we know that he would undertake the role with a sense of humour. I think that is important. He has been a great mentor for many of us on this side of the House. Our society seems to believe that people over the age of 60 should move on, and that goes for members of this parliament as well. The member for Toowoomba South provides a great example of our need for seniority and mentoring, especially for new members. As I said, he does that with a sense of humour.

I note something he said in his maiden speech in 1991. He said, 'I look forward to working in this parliament in a statesman-like and fair manner.' I believe that all members would acknowledge that that is how the member for Toowoomba South has behaved. We are always happy for the government to take our ideas and we would be very happy for the government to take our ideas on this one. I have pleasure in nominating the member for Toowoomba South as Speaker.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.59 am): I rise to support the nomination of Mike Horan for the position of Speaker of the Queensland Parliament. Mr Presiding Member, there is no doubt that this parliament needs a member to oversee its proceedings in the position of Speaker, which is steeped in the institution of parliament, who understands and respects the role of parliament and who is truly independent in the role that they have to fulfil in this place.

The role of Speaker of the Parliament is of course very historic and dates back many centuries, and we have drawn much of what is good about our parliament from Westminster democracy. Certainly that is something which we should seek to epitomise and something which we should seek to replicate in this place. It is my very fervent belief that the member for Toowoomba South is just that person. He is a person of extraordinary experience. He is somebody who is well respected by both sides of this parliament and, as the Leader of the Opposition said, he is somebody who is extremely well respected in the community in general.

We are nominating a member here today who has some 18 years of experience in this parliament. He has had experience in government and he has had experience in opposition. He has been able to actually see the way that this parliament operates. He has been able to accrue an enormous amount of corporate knowledge and he has been able to accrue an innate sense of fairness and understanding about what is needed in this place to ensure that proceedings are conducted in the best possible way.

Mike Horan is a member of longstanding. As the Leader of the Opposition said, he is enormously respected. Certainly in my travels around Queensland in various capacities in recent years that is something which I have practically seen, both in Mike's presence and in his absence as people have asked after him. He has the skills and he has the capability to do the job. He has held various portfolios in opposition in the time that he has been in parliament. Not only that, but in government he had the very difficult portfolio of minister for health which he undertook with an extraordinary degree of compassion and an extraordinary degree of capability and energy, and he is very much respected for the job he did. He has also had a great deal of experience in administration—and that has also been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition—in running various organisations and also in his professional capacity. That experience is something that a member of parliament needs to be Speaker. They need to be somebody whom all members of this parliament can look up to.

As has been indicated, the Speaker does receive very important and very distinguished delegations from overseas and interstate from time to time. The Speaker needs to be somebody who not only has a sense of humour but also has a disarming personality. They need to be not only somebody who is capable of making people feel relaxed but also somebody who can clearly intellectualise the role that they have and be an effective spokesman on behalf of the parliament of Queensland.

Mike has also been a professional football player in his time, not only in Queensland but also interstate. As we all know, when playing in a team there are team rules. You are part of a team. You need to respect the rules, the role of the coach—and that is a role which Mike has had—and also the role of the referee. So not only in this place but also outside this place he has been able to take on board practically the role of the umpire in various capacities.

The member for Toowoomba South is an excellent nomination. He is a member of longstanding in this parliament. He is somebody who can provide independence and statesmanship. He is somebody who can actually bring that experience and respect which is needed in this place. I have absolutely no hesitation in supporting and endorsing the member for Toowoomba South's nomination.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Honourable members, a ballot will now be taken in accordance with standing orders. I call on the Clerk to conduct the ballot.

At 10.05 am, in accordance with the provisions of standing orders 40 and 41, a ballot was taken by the Clerk, with the following result—

Mr Mickel—54

Mr Horan—35

Informal—0

Mr Mickel submitted himself to the pleasure of the House and, on being called, was conducted to the chair by the mover and the seconder.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I thank the House for the honour it has extended to me by electing me as the Speaker of the 53rd Parliament of the state of Queensland. I also want to thank the Premier and the Deputy Premier for the generous remarks they have made.

In assuming the office of Speaker, I am conscious of the fact that I have a duty to the House and to the people of Queensland to discharge the duties I am now assuming with fairness and with impartiality. I also want to thank the outgoing Speaker, Mike Reynolds, for his courtesy, his inclusiveness and his determination to improve the work/life balance for members. The period between when I was stood aside as a minister and my election to this House today has given me the opportunity to reflect on how I can define this role. Undeniably, I was elected to the House as a member of the Australian Labor Party. In that time I have asked for no quarter and most certainly have given none in participating in the robust debates that take place here. For myself that must change from today onwards, and it will.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: The House—or sections of it—will be greatly relieved to know that this may well be my last speech during the parliament, so I intend to make the most of it!

I note that the member for Callide has been appointed Leader of Opposition Business. Over the last 11 years he and I have engaged in vigorous exchanges across the chamber more than most. What has impressed me about the honourable member is that he has never complained and he always gave as good as he got. Whilst I look forward to now actually working cooperatively with him and of course the Leader of the House for the good management of the business of the House, I think new members can learn from his example that robust debate does not have to descend into personal enmity.

Honourable members, humour has its place in this chamber. I can recall my good friend the Deputy Leader of the Opposition speaking in a health debate. In describing a series of meetings he had had with the medical fraternity he declared to the House, 'I've been to four doctors in a week.' The honourable member for Southport, now the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading, interjected, 'Four doctors? In a week? Jeez, you must have been sick!' Then there was the condolence motion in which the former Rockhampton mayor was being spoken about by the member for Rockhampton, describing how the late mayor had travelled around in a boat door to door during a flood enjoining people to evacuate their houses. He happened upon one old anxious dear who questioned him and said, 'But, Alderman Pilbeam, I can't come out. I'm under the doctor,' and 'Pilly' said, 'Well, you better bring him with you. We don't want to lose anyone.' What I am saying, honourable members, is that the parliament is vibrant and richer for those interchanges and many more like them.

My hope for the 19 new members who have joined us is this: as you find your feet you find also a voice for yourselves on behalf of the people you represent. I ask that all members of parliament extend the courtesies of the House to the newly elected members for their maiden speech, which of course is a defining moment for all members—both the new and the seasoned.

In the public gallery today I am joined, as I always have been, by my wife and my family and by my friends of longstanding, but I have also asked special people to join with us today to share this occasion with us. I have asked Auntie Valda Coolwell, acknowledging that Aboriginal people are the traditional owners who cared for this land for thousands of years before European settlement. I have asked Mr Daniel 'Zingi'—as I know him—the Executive Director in Logan of ACCES Services Inc. I have asked Daniel because he represents the wonderful opportunity that Queensland provides to refugees and to migrants to build new lives based on freedom, tolerance and opportunity. I have also asked Mr Doug Formby, the President of the Queensland RSL, representing Queenslanders who paid the supreme sacrifice to protect the liberty we enjoy and those who served and continue to serve in our defence forces. Above all, I want those who have come to our nation seeking freedom, and those of us fortunate to be raised in Australia, to know that this House is not just a symbol of our freedom but also a place that belongs to everyone. I know the House will join me in extending to our special guests a very warm welcome.

Later this year we will celebrate 150 years of statehood and next year will mark the 150th anniversary of the election of the first parliament. Because of these significant historical events, I have invited three distinguished former members to witness the start of this the 53rd Parliament. I have asked Mr Pat Hanlon and his wife. Mr Hanlon is the son of a former Premier of Queensland, the Hon. Edward 'Ned' Michael Hanlon, who served as Labor member for Ithaca and subsequently for Baroona from 1956 until his retirement in 1974. For much of his service Pat Hanlon was opposition Treasury spokesman. I have asked Mr David Cory, who served as the Country Party and then National Party member for Warwick from 1963 until his retirement in 1977 and who also served as chair of a number of parliamentary committees during that period. I have also asked Mr Bill Hewitt, who served as the Liberal Party member for Chatsworth and subsequently for Greenslopes from 1966 until 1983 and who also held the position of Deputy Speaker and served as a minister.

These three gentlemen—Mr Hanlon, Mr Cory and Mr Hewitt—with whom I had the pleasure of reminiscing about their old times here earlier, are three different members, from three different political parties, with three different career paths, and with three different experiences. But all are united by a

common commitment to improving the parliament and its role in our democracy. I am sure all honourable members will join with me—and I hope with them—in welcoming our special guests here today.

Now, as in the past, there are and will be differences that motivate us and divide us. While the tensions and anxieties that challenge Queensland will resound in this House, it is imperative that parliament, as the focus for freedom of speech, expresses the hopes and aspirations of all Queenslanders. In tough and uncertain economic times we all need to work together to uphold the standing not only of parliament but also of our democratic fabric.

In tough times some people question the relevance and effectiveness of our democratic system and the institutions that deliver democratic, representative government. Our collective task—and it does not matter whether members sit to my right or my left—is to ensure that our parliamentary system and representative government helps maintain community confidence and trust. I hope all honourable members share this commitment by the way we behave here and by the way we contribute constructively, even if critically, to the proceedings of the House during the 53rd Parliament of Queensland.

We must all remember that this is not only a parliament for 89 elected members; it is also the workplace for the staff who loyally serve the parliament and members. Just as I want to see a harmonious working relationship between members, I also want this to be a harmonious environment for staff—an environment that maintains respect for staff at all times.

Honourable members, I embark upon the duties and challenges associated with this position mindful of the rich history of the office of Speaker and of this parliament itself over the past 149 years. I do so in a spirit of goodwill to all honourable members and to all who hold office on either side of the chamber.

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.43 am):
Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to congratulate you on assuming the important position of Speaker of the Queensland Parliament. As has been noted in some of the contributions to the earlier debate, this is a chamber that relies on a robust approach to the matters that come before us. This is a chamber where I believe it is important that points of view and ideas are not only passionately debated but often forcibly prosecuted. I believe that because I think members of the community who have passionate and strong views themselves want to see that reflected in the institutions of their democracy. When we prosecute the debates in here, people in our community feel that their ideas are being represented and there is a place for their point of view. Those of us who are fortunate enough to secure the support of our electorates and who become members of this chamber I believe have an obligation to be part of those debates and to put our best efforts forward in prosecuting those debates. It gives us a wonderful opportunity to express our ideas and in doing so comes with a great responsibility—a responsibility for robust debate but one that is conducted in a manner that does not demean the dignity and decorum of the parliament.

Mr Speaker, ultimately, when those of us in the chamber who are part of those debates are unable sometimes to find that balance, the role falls to you to assist this chamber to walk that fine line and to find the balance between ensuring the dignity and decorum of this institution and the public expectation of our behaviour in it and securing and nurturing open, full, frank and robust debate—in other words, to keep your head when all about are losing theirs, as you know often happens in this place.

Sometimes we see a lot of criticism of the behaviour in this chamber and I have to say that in the time I have been here some of that criticism has certainly been valid. But you would also say that some of it has urged us to sanitise the parliament to a point which I do not think would be helpful in maintaining the traditions of our democracy. This is the chamber in which political differences should be prosecuted, where they should be explored and, wherever possible, where they should be resolved. That is why I think it is important that we not move to a position where we so sanitise the debates in this chamber that we lose the passion that drives those ideas on all sides of the House.

As the Speaker has noted, humour is a very useful weapon. It is not only very useful in contributing to a well-made point; in my experience it contributes to a well-run parliament. I have certainly witnessed a number of Speakers over time very usefully use humour to sit someone back and make them think carefully about the way they are performing. Mr Speaker, I have every confidence that you will be someone who will well use this method and I look forward to your contribution to debates.

I say to the member for Logan that on behalf of the government and the people of Queensland I congratulate you on securing the support of this House for the position that you now occupy. I trust that you will undertake your duties with the same diligence and commitment that you have shown in the performance of your responsibilities in the previous positions that you have held. I know that you will represent this parliament and our state in both national and international forums with dignity. I urge all members to show respect for you personally and, importantly, for the position that you now hold. I am

tempted to ask in advance for some leniency, but I suspect it will not be given. I am very confident that you will exercise your duties, as you outlined, with fairness, with equity and with impartiality, although it is bound to be the subject of debate from time to time.

Mr Speaker, I wish you well. I wish you all the best as you take on the duties of our Speaker. It is often a thankless task but one of the most important in upholding the traditions of our democracy. As I said, I have every confidence that you will perform it well and I look forward to the 53rd Parliament under your guiding hand.

Mr SPEAKER: I thank the Premier.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.47 am): Mr Speaker, I join with the Premier and others here and congratulate you on your appointment. I want to take back everything that I said about the member for Toowoomba South and apply it now to you! Cross out all of those things.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for your opening address and welcome again all the members and the families who are joining the members here today. As I say, I pledge the support and cooperation of the opposition. We pledge to use standing and sessional orders appropriately. I note your comments relating to the member for Callide, which I hope means that we are not going to have any dissent motions, as I note we did not have in the last term. But I think that might have been because of the then Speaker. When I was the manager of opposition business, whenever I would ask him for a ruling he would say, 'I did not make a ruling,' so I was not able to dissent from it. Mr Speaker, I am sure the member for Callide is flattered by your comments. I hope that does not mean that he will not be vigorous in his pursuit of you should he think that the standing and sessional orders are not being used appropriately.

Mr Speaker, I can tell, as we all can, that you have an abiding appreciation for the history and traditions of this place. It is something that I feel personally and, as I say, I will be working hard with the members of the opposition, as the Leader of the Opposition, to make sure that we all enhance the standing of parliament and the parliamentary processes and, most importantly, the politicians within it. As I have already mentioned this morning, there are issues in the community about people's perceptions of politicians. Mr Speaker, I look forward to working with you in a good natured way. But I also say to the new members who have seen all the good natured activities this morning: do not be lulled into a false sense of security.

As I say, Mr Speaker, I look forward to having a meeting with you at the earliest opportunity and I look forward to working with you. I again congratulate you on your appointment.

Mr SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.49 am): I desire to inform honourable members that Her Excellency the Governor will receive the House for the purpose of presenting the Speaker to Her Excellency at Government House today at 12.15. Cars will be leaving the porte-cochere at 11.40 am sharp and all members are invited to be present to be transported there.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Orders

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.50 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, the official opening by the Governor may take place today and the motion for an address to the Governor in reply to the opening speech be moved tomorrow.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.50 am): I move—
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 3.10 pm today in the former Legislative Council chamber.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.50 am): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.50 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. John Mickel, Logan) read prayers and took the chair at 3.10 pm in the former Legislative Council chamber.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that this morning I presented myself to Her Excellency the Governor as the member chosen to fill the high and honourable office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and that Her Excellency was pleased to congratulate me on my election.

ADDRESS BY MAROOCHY BARAMBAH

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I now call on Maroochy Barambah to address the new parliament.

MAROOCHY BARAMBAH: This means welcome to Brisbane in the language of the Turrubul people. I will now perform a song of welcome.

Traditional greetings were then performed by Maroochy Barambah.

“Monda Baritha”*

“Monda Baritha, Muruyenaman Birrai,” in the language of Turrubul-Dippil People.

The above literally translate to—

From up high above,
Where you are,
God! Be down here also,
Where we are,
Make this a gathering,
Of good and strong spirit.

In essence, this traditional song asks the Almighty and our ancestors to be with us at this gathering. It is very much like The Lord's Prayer.

Written by: Maroochy Barambah

*©Daki Budtcha P/L

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

At 3.15 pm Her Excellency the Governor came in state to Parliament House, was announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms, received by Mr Speaker and accompanied to the dais.

Honourable members being seated, Her Excellency read the following opening speech—

Honourable Members, you have been called together to make decisions on matters relating to the welfare and governance of our State.

Following a State election held on 21st March 2009, I invited the Honourable Anna Bligh to form an administration.

Ms Bligh was sworn in as Premier and Minister for the Arts on 26th March 2009, with a new Ministry.

The opening of this, the first session of the 53rd Parliament is an historic occasion.

It occurs in the year marking the 150th birthday of this great State—the separation of Queensland from New South Wales—and its establishment as an independent colony.

And, it marks the election of the first woman elected as Premier in Australia, in her own right.

It was on the 10th of December, 1859 that the first Governor arrived to lead a population of just 25 000 people.

Then, Queensland had 12 police officers, 13 pubs and 14 churches.

Today, Queenslanders are protected by a police service of more than 10 000; they can quench their thirst at one of 7000 licensed premises and attend a service at more than 2100 churches.

Today, 4.32 million people call Queensland home.

Every week, 1800 more people move to Queensland.

That means Queensland welcomes the equivalent of its original population as new residents, every three months.

Next year marks the 150th anniversary of the first sitting of the Queensland Parliament at the Old Convict Barracks on Queen Street, which today is roughly opposite the Myer Centre in the Queen St Mall.

Today, the Parliament gathers in this magnificent building.

Honourable Members, the opening of this Parliament is set against the backdrop of the worst global economic conditions since the Great Depression and that brings with it enormous responsibility.

While certainly not of Queensland's making, the global financial crisis is leaving its mark on the State's landscape and will impact on its future.

Governments around the world speak of a global recession.

Leaders predict further contractions in growth.

This crisis is costing more Queensland workers their jobs.

Analysts tell us conditions will get worse before they get better.

But my Government will work hard for a return to prosperity.

It has embarked on a program to stimulate the economy—to protect the jobs of today and create the jobs of tomorrow.

Honourable Members, my Government has a clear vision for this State.

My Government's Q2 program is focused on building tomorrow's Queensland.

It is a plan, a blueprint, to build a Queensland that is Strong, Green, Smart, Healthy and Fair.

My Government will create a strong Queensland—a diverse economy powered by bright ideas.

It has set a target to create at least 100 000 jobs in the next three years.

It is a tough target.

One compounded by rapidly changing economic circumstances.

But my Government will do everything possible to insulate Queensland from the effects of the financial storm, to cushion the impact and to create jobs.

It will do this with a four-point plan.

The first step is a commitment to keep driving the record \$17 billion building program.

It is the largest building program in the country, keeping 119 000 people in jobs and creating demand in the economy.

My Government will continue to plan for, and invest in, the infrastructure that enables the economy to grow: the roads, rail and public transport.

It will build the social infrastructure: the schools and hospitals that service a growing population.

It will build the tourism infrastructure needed to secure Queensland's position as a premier tourist destination and its ability to attract premium events.

My Government will invest \$6.5 million in the successful Industry Capability Network to ensure that Queensland business and manufacturers receive the maximum benefit from the State's record capital works program.

Honourable Members, in these uncertain economic times, nothing has a higher priority than creating and protecting jobs.

Already, thousands of Queenslanders have lost their jobs in industries ranging from mining to manufacturing as a result of the financial crisis.

My Government stands ready to help each and every one of these people.

Initiatives such as my Government's Rapid Response Team will continue to match displaced workers with new jobs.

Honourable Members, my Government will deliver the biggest health infrastructure program ever undertaken in Australia, building or rebuilding ten major hospitals around the State.

This program will create almost 40 000 jobs.

It will include the new world-class Queensland Children's Hospital at South Brisbane.

It will do this, because that's what the experts say is best—a single dedicated children's hospital with the best medical expertise located in one place.

My Government will continue to connect people and places with a multi-billion dollar road building program.

It will plan for growth, improved safety and reduced congestion through projects like the Houghton Highway duplication, the Gateway upgrade and Australia's largest road infrastructure program, the Airport Link and the new Airport Flyover.

Tunnelling is already underway and work is expected to be completed six months ahead of schedule.

This suite of projects will create 10 000 jobs.

Work on the Boggo Road, Eastern and Northern busways in Brisbane alone will generate almost 2400 jobs.

Together, these projects will create the most extensive network of dedicated busways in Australia.

Regional public transport infrastructure, like the Gold Coast Robina to Varsity Lakes rail line and the Caboolture to Beerburrum rail duplication will also be completed.

Honourable Members, delivering the Port of Brisbane upgrades; the Jilalan Rail Yards upgrade and Abbot Point Coal Terminal expansion; along with planning for the Northern Missing Link and Wiggins Island Coal Terminal, are central to my Government's expansion of export capacity in anticipation of economic recovery.

Major works like the Townsville Port Access Road, the Bundaberg Ring Road, and Central Queensland's Capricorn and Peak Downs highway upgrades will also improve access to these key regional economic drivers and importantly, create jobs.

My Government will continue to deliver the largest school building program in the country.

In the next three years, it will build 11 new schools through the \$850 million State Schools of Tomorrow program and continue to refurbish older schools with new and modern facilities.

My Government is committed to providing water security in South East Queensland.

The world's largest water grid is now in place and delivering water across the region.

My Government will complete this by delivering the Wyaralong Dam and continuing to develop the Traveston Crossing Dam.

Honourable Members, the second plank of the jobs plan is to prepare for the recovery from the global storm by developing skills for the future.

My Government will expand the skills base so Queensland is ready to lead Australia into the next period of growth.

It will launch the biggest local expansion of skills and training ever—investing more than \$400 million to create almost 150 000 new training places.

It will ensure that 10 per cent of workers on State and Federal infrastructure projects are apprentices and trainees.

It will reward employers who hire apprentices or trainees with a 125 per cent payroll tax rebate to build skills and encourage businesses to retain workers.

My Government is planning ahead.

Queensland's economy needs these young workers.

They are building their skills as the frontline of tomorrow's economy.

The third step of my Government's jobs plan is the creation of new jobs in industries of the future like the solar and LNG industries, and in a renewed focus on our traditional strengths like the tourism, agriculture and resource sectors.

Tourism keeps almost 120 000 people in jobs and contributes \$9 billion to the economy every year.

Supporting it is good business.

My Government is committed to building a strong and vibrant tourism and events sector, supported by the infrastructure needed to compete on a global stage for premium events.

It will fund \$38 million in new tourism marketing and infrastructure initiatives to help insulate our tourism operators from the effects of the financial storm.

It will invest \$60 million in the redevelopment of the Gold Coast AFL Stadium and work with the Commonwealth to redevelop Reid Park in Townsville to stage the V8 Supercar Championship Series Event.

It will deliver the \$11.2 million Cairns Cruise Ship Terminal at the Heritage Wharf.

My Government is committed to maximising the economic potential of our primary industries in a sustainable manner.

It will continue to achieve the targets set in the ten-year Blueprint for the Bush and will implement the Biosecurity Strategy to ensure that Queensland can respond quickly and effectively to pests and diseases.

My Government will continue to support the resources industry, which has suffered serious blows as a direct result of the global financial crisis.

It is planning for the recovery by fast-tracking mining approvals and building the export infrastructure needed for when world demand for Queensland commodities returns.

Many of the jobs my Government will create will come from new and emerging industries, like the Liquefied Natural Gas industry.

There are currently eight proposals on the books for LNG export start-ups in Queensland, an industry which until recently was not considered possible in this State.

An LNG industry in Queensland will create 6000 jobs in construction and contribute more than \$1 billion to the economy in operation.

My Government will clear the way for a gas 'superhighway' to build and to help support the LNG industry, securing a land corridor for an underground gas pipeline to proposed LNG plants.

Further, my Government will create new green jobs by encouraging more renewable energy projects like the Cloncurry and Windorah solar projects and developing new industries by accessing resources like geothermal and wind-generated power.

Harnessing the power of the sun in a State with such an abundance of sunshine is a key weapon in the fight against climate change.

My Government will create jobs in the solar energy sector through the new Solar Hot Water Program.

It will provide 200 000 solar systems at a fraction of the retail price, cutting Queenslanders' power bills by a third and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least two tonnes every year.

Honourable Members, the fourth plank of my Government's plan to create 100 000 new jobs is to develop new job programs like the Green Army.

My Government will create 3000 jobs, putting an army of unemployed people to work in our national parks, in our green spaces and waterways.

In doing so, it will help address two of the most important issues of modern times—protecting jobs and protecting the environment.

Honourable Members, as a State, a nation, and a global community we are fighting the calamity of the global financial crisis.

But my Government will not forget the other major challenge of the times—the effects of climate change on our environment and on Queenslanders' wellbeing as a people.

These are global problems that require local solutions.

My Government is determined to set a new standard for tackling climate change.

It will continue to deliver the \$60 million ClimateSmart program to help Queensland households reduce their energy consumption to save power and money, and to help reach the target of reducing Queenslanders' carbon footprint by a third by 2020.

It will pave the way for more sustainable development across the State by fast-tracking new green developments and will support jobs by boosting the green skills base in the building industry.

It will legislate to become the first Australian State to require six-star efficiency standards in all new houses making every one of the 33 000 new dwellings built each year, greener than ever before.

It will encourage greater use of public transport and pedal power, by requiring all new office buildings to include facilities for cyclists.

My Government will place a three month moratorium on the clearing of regrowth to allow consultation with landowners about how best to protect endangered vegetation.

It will introduce the Carbon on Leasehold Land Bill, which will enable leaseholders to participate in, and benefit from, the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

Honourable Members, the Great Barrier Reef is one of our most precious treasures and Government has an obligation to protect it for generations to come.

My Government will regulate to cut by 50 per cent the level of pesticides and fertilisers running into the reef.

Queensland's natural environment and lifestyle are the envy of the world.

To showcase our stunning natural landscapes, my Government, in partnership with traditional owners, will start work on a 2000 kilometre walk stretching from the Daintree River to the tip of Cape York.

It will be one of the longest and most spectacular walks in the world, creating up to 1000 jobs and injecting millions of dollars into the local economy.

Queensland has 297 national parks covering desert to rainforest to reef, and providing vital protection for native plants and animals in the face of climate change.

My Government is committed to preserving these and other natural wonders for future generations.

It will increase the national park estate by 50 per cent to almost 13 million hectares—almost twice the size of Tasmania.

It will extend the ground-breaking Wild Rivers protection program to Queensland's south west Channel Country, preserving rivers with their natural values intact.

Honourable Members, a strong Queensland, a green Queensland, is also a smart Queensland.

My Government understands that investment in knowledge, research, innovation and new technologies is critical to future growth and prosperity.

It will build on its successful Smart State programs to build new world-class research facilities like the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.

It will continue its investment in new research fellowship programs to bring the world's best and brightest to Queensland.

My Government will work with the IT industry and the Federal Government to maximise use of new technologies and the expansion of broadband capacity across this decentralised State.

Queenslanders are this State's greatest asset and while the education and skills level of its people have improved, they are not yet nation or world-leading.

My Government will invest in the Queensland of tomorrow to ensure that people are more educated and better skilled—ready to make the most of the opportunities that new technologies will bring.

Investing in education is one of the best investments a government can make.

My Government will employ more than 1000 teachers in the next three years.

It will create an extra 500 teacher aide positions, providing schools with 15 000 hours more help every week and drive improvements in academic performance.

It will invest \$72 million in new literacy and numeracy programs, lifting Queensland's academic standards to match those of the highest performing States, and introduce the \$43.5 million Science Spark program to reignite students' interest in science.

Honourable Members, Queensland children are reaping the benefits of the Prep year.

They are making gains in numeracy and literacy and even greater gains in physical development and social and communication skills.

My Government will build on the full year of Prep giving more children access to high quality early education, providing 240 new kindergartens statewide.

My Government is committed to a healthy Queensland, delivering better health services and making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people.

It will continue to drive the \$10 billion Health Action Plan, the biggest single injection of funds into the State's health system in Queensland's history.

It will employ at least 3500 more doctors, nurses and allied health workers and it will keep building the system to treat more patients than ever before.

It will expand the busiest emergency departments in Brisbane, Logan, Redlands, Ipswich, Caboolture, Bundaberg, Toowoomba and Townsville.

It will free up beds for incoming patients by investing in more transition and rehabilitation care.

It will deliver 20 000 more elective surgery operations through the Surgery Connect program.

It will strengthen the clinical workforce and implement creative solutions like 'telehealth' so people living in remote and rural Queensland can have better access to specialists using new technologies.

When it comes to health care, it starts with Queensland children.

My Government will make sure that children get the very best start in life.

It will invest \$42 million to expand child and maternal health services in rural and regional Queensland so women can receive maternity support closer to home.

It will designate specific areas in emergency rooms for children and their parents waiting for treatment.

It will continue the rollout of fluoride into the State's drinking water supplies, to help protect children's teeth by significantly reducing tooth decay.

By the end of this year at least 80 per cent of Queensland will have access to fluoridated water with work continuing in the regions, including remote Indigenous communities, in 2010.

Honourable Members, too many Queenslanders experience the devastation of Cancer.

My Government will invest \$15 million in new patient accommodation for people who live in rural and regional Queensland and who need to travel to major cities for specialist treatment.

It will also deliver new oncology centres at the Rockhampton, Cairns and Gold Coast hospitals.

As part of my Government's plan to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people, it will work to reduce the incidence of preventable diseases like Type 2 Diabetes and skin Cancer.

It will encourage people to lead healthier lives by investing in programs and facilities like community sport and aquatic centres, playing fields, walkways and cycleways.

Honourable Members, my Government's vision for Queensland includes safer and more caring communities.

That includes more police on the streets.

My Government will employ at least 600 new police officers and support them with the best equipment and resources to do their jobs.

It will invest more than \$366 million in new or improved police stations and equipment.

My Government will continue to be tough on crime.

This year, it will introduce a range of new laws to help make Queensland communities safer.

It will crack down on outlaw motorcycle gangs and will introduce new telephone intercept powers to help police fight organised crime.

It will also ensure a balanced approach to juvenile crime, giving the courts new powers including longer mandatory sentences for young people convicted of serious repeated crimes.

Honourable Members, our State and nation have experienced the worst extremes, from devastating floods in the north and north-west of our State, to the tragedy of the bushfires in Victoria.

In these times of need, Queenslanders reach out to local heroes like the State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Brigade.

Their commitment helps communities recover.

My Government acknowledges the importance of these heroes.

It will invest almost \$13 million in 90 new vehicles and equipment for the SES and 14 new fire engines for the RFS.

Surf Lifesaving Queensland will receive a \$6 million helicopter for the south east and funding for additional services from the Sunshine Coast to Cairns to help keep Queensland tourists and beachgoers safe.

In striving for a fairer community my Government will also continue to tackle the issue of Indigenous disadvantage.

My Government's commitment to closing the gap in Indigenous life expectancy, health and opportunity is stronger than ever.

It will work to ensure Indigenous Queenslanders have better access to services and equal access to funds allocated for literacy and numeracy programs.

It will continue the positive work being done in Indigenous communities through the Family Responsibilities Commission and it will implement initiatives to encourage better school attendance and create jobs.

Honourable Members, having a place to call home is a privilege many Queenslanders take for granted.

Unfortunately, homelessness is a reality for many.

My Government will work with the Commonwealth to tackle homelessness.

It will build low-cost, affordable housing for displaced people and provide the support that they need to get lives back on track.

My Government will continue to hold Community Cabinet meetings in regional Queensland because great ideas and great ways of doing things come from members of the community.

My Government will be one that listens and responds to the challenges of the times.

At this historic opening of Parliament, we heed the words and the lessons of our forebears.

150 years ago, in his first address to Queensland's first Legislative Assembly, Governor Sir George Ferguson Bowen said:

"The future destiny of this colony will depend in no slight degree on the members.

... an arduous and responsible but most important and interesting task awaits us;

... this great portion of the earth begins its political life with noble principles of freedom, order and prosperity;

... but I say in all sincerity, it is on your prudence, knowledge and experience that I depend."

Honourable Members, in opening this first session of the 53rd Parliament, I have set out the key initiatives of my Government's program for this term.

I trust that your individual and combined efforts in representing Queensland will enhance the lives of its people and that they will promote the present and future wellbeing of our State.

And, Honourable Members, I trust that in doing so, you will bring the prudence, the knowledge and the experience urged by Governor Bowen to your responsibility to maintain those values and principles which lie at the heart of our democracy: compassion, humanity and social justice.

Her Excellency then left the chamber.

Mr Speaker announced that the sitting would be continued in the Legislative Assembly chamber, where he took the chair at 3.56 pm.

MOTION

Address by Maroochy Barambah

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (3.56 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the address by Maroochy Barambah be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings* of today's official opening of the 53rd Parliament of Queensland.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (3.56 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am tomorrow.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (3.57 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.57 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pratt, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson