



Speech by

# Hon. Campbell Newman

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Thursday, 17 May 2012

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## MAIDEN SPEECH



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.35 am): It is an honour and a pleasure that I be given the opportunity to move—

That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by Her Excellency in opening this, the First Session of the 54th Parliament of Queensland—

May it please Your Excellency—We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this State and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the First Session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our careful consideration, and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and prosperity of the people of this State.

I want to assure all Queenslanders that we will work hard every single day to make our state a better place to live. It is humbling to stand here today as the Premier and leader of the first ever LNP government. We are a new, enthusiastic government made up of members with energy and passion. I acknowledge the work that has been done to bring us all together as a united LNP. Queenslanders can be assured that they now have a can-do government that knows what its role is and, most importantly, what it stands for.

In making our case to Queenslanders for election we made five pledges: one, to lower the cost of living for families by cutting waste; two, to deliver better infrastructure and better planning; three, to revitalise front-line services for families; four, to restore accountability in government, which has been so sadly lacking and has caused Queenslanders to lose faith in their leaders; and, five, to grow a four-pillar economy to provide better opportunities for all Queenslanders in all walks of life.

Unemployment is too high for a state with such potential. We have set an ambitious unemployment target of four per cent within six years. Our plan will free us of debt, red tape, impractical ideology and indecision. To succeed we need to build a broader, stronger Queensland economy based on the four key pillars of agriculture, resources, tourism and construction. In agriculture, we have set a target to double Queensland's food production by 2040. We can do this by improving education, skills, technology and practices. We will protect strategic cropping land through statutory regional planning and we will go further to identify and develop new areas for intensive food production.

My government will deliver investment certainty for the resources sector and we will facilitate major projects instead of impeding them. We will protect Queensland's environment by raising the bar on environmental performance and by cutting unnecessary environmental red tape and ideology.

Queensland's economy will not be a one-trick pony anymore with the plans that my government has for the tourism sector. On our watch, tourism will be revitalised and again be a major economic driver. We will protect the Great Barrier Reef and our natural attractions. With a new industry focused approach, we will sell Queensland tourism in new markets in China, India, South Korea and the gulf.

I know that I do not have to remind members that the opportunities in property and construction evaporated under the previous government. We recognise that property investment is critical to Queensland's economic recovery and to delivering affordable homes for Queensland families.

A can-do Queensland is about giving communities the power locally to have a real say in their future. We believe, therefore, that local governments should have a bigger and more important role. You cannot properly run communities in a state the size of Queensland solely from an office in George Street. We will therefore give councils every opportunity to build local economies and better services and amenity. We will also, of course, hold local councillors properly accountable.

At the other end of the scale, my government will demand a better deal from the federal government. I believe that the federal government must live up to its responsibilities. Queensland cannot continue to bear the weight of duplication and red tape. The federal government bears responsibilities such as returning Queensland's taxation revenue through infrastructure funding and better social security measures—and I must particularly name the Bruce Highway and the National Disability Insurance Scheme as clear, unequivocal examples.

In the meantime, we will get on with the job here of delivering on our five key pledges. We are a can-do government. We are also a must-do government in terms of rebuilding Queensland's economy and finances to deliver the high-quality health, education and training, police and emergency services that Queenslanders so richly deserve.

It is a privilege and an honour to be the 38th Premier of our great state. My 37 predecessors came from very diverse backgrounds. Some served for just days and some served for many years. Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who held the office for over 19 years, was the longest serving Premier in our history. His government built this state into an economic powerhouse that led the way for our country for so long. While we recognise Sir Joh's many achievements, another long-serving but often overlooked Premier should also be acknowledged.

Sir George Francis Reuben Nicklin, the former member for Murrumba, will probably be recalled by only a small number of members as it is now more than 40 years since he left office and more than 30 years since his passing. Frank Nicklin enrolled in the Army in 1916 and served with great distinction in the First World War, being awarded the military medal for bravery. He was elected as the member for Murrumba in 1932, the year that Labor's 25 years in office began. In 1941 he was elected Leader of the Opposition and he held that demanding office for 16 years. But in 1957, after the Labor Party split, he led the Country Liberal coalition to victory. He won four elections in all and did so with increasing majorities until he retired from politics in January 1968. At that time he held the record for the longest period as Premier. He led a strong cabinet and government after many years in the political wilderness. He insisted on high standards of ministerial conduct and his attention and commitment to matters of probity set a new benchmark for government. He was widely known, including by his political opponents, as 'Honest Frank'. He led wholly by example.

Frank Nicklin's long political career and his decade as Premier were hallmarked by integrity, humility and dedication to service. His greatest achievements as Premier were undoubtedly the opening up of the state's coal and bauxite industries and turning Queensland into a great mineral exporting state as well as a great agricultural state—two of the four pillars that we are so focused on to make Queensland strong again. He died on 29 January 1978, just 10 years after his retirement. If I as Premier of Queensland can live up to the standards of my eminent predecessors, I know that I will have worked hard and with honour for the people of Queensland.

I have always believed that involvement in politics, no matter at what level, is all about service to the people. It is all about service to the community. It is about helping people who just need that nudge in the right direction, who need advice about who to talk to and where to look and who often just need help with finding their way through the maze of bureaucracy to find the person who can provide the solution they are after. I believe that people do want to help themselves, do things for themselves, work hard and provide for their family and loved ones but that sometimes, sadly, inappropriately, government just gets in the way. I know from the many stories that come across my desk and that I hear firsthand that finding a way through the maze of bureaucracy can be everything from annoying to downright frustrating and, in some cases, extremely upsetting and troubling. That said, I also believe that government is there to provide the things that private firms or organisations cannot provide or do the things that people cannot do for themselves, but only if it makes things easier, not harder. It is about providing a safety net, not a complex maze.

In the spirit of service to the community, I will ensure that my government and the public servants who work for Queenslanders will not laud it over the people or boss them around with a heavy or high-handed approach or with a government-knows-best attitude. As Premier, I believe that the best ideas should result in less regulation, lower taxes and fewer laws, but, most importantly, my philosophy says that the people of Queensland will always, always, always come first.

I am privileged to represent the Ashgrove electorate in this parliament. The electorate was established by the 1959 redistribution. The first member for Ashgrove was Mr Doug Tooth, who was

elected into the seat at the subsequent 1960 election having previously served as the member for Kelvin Grove since 1957. Mr Tooth was a distinguished member of the Liberal Party but he was also a strong coalition supporter. I am sure that he would be pleased with the election of a united LNP government. Doug was instrumental in establishing The Gap State High School at a time when there was no other state high school servicing the Ashgrove-Gap area. He also held ministerial office, serving as health minister for a record 10 years until his retirement in 1974—and someone is looking worried! So today, as the seventh member for Ashgrove, I salute the first member, Sir Seymour Douglas Tooth, a proud Liberal and a dedicated coalitionist.

I arrived in the Ashgrove electorate in January 1986 as a young Army officer posted to the Army barracks at Enoggera. It did not take too long at all to fall in love with the Enoggera, Ashgrove, Gap, Alderley, Newmarket, Gaythorne and Mitchelton areas—living and working in and being part of the community. I met my wife-to-be, Lisa, outside the 2/3 Field Engineer Regiment officers mess in August 1987 at the barracks and it did not take me too long to fall in love with her, too. We purchased our first home in Ashgrove in 1991 and were married in the base chapel in July that same year. Not long after that we brought our baby girls home from the Mater Hospital to our first home in Warmington Road, Ashgrove. Indeed, our eldest daughter, Rebecca, was christened in Ashgrove. Both Rebecca and Sarah have thoroughly enjoyed their formative years in the Ashgrove community and are proud members of the Ashgrove Dance Studio family, run by Wendy and Judy Lowe since January 1996.

I am very conscious of the privilege the people of Ashgrove have accorded me and the trust they have placed in me to be their representative in this parliament. When they were considering their vote, the Ashgrove residents knew that they were electing more than a local member but, first and foremost, someone to stand up for them in this parliament. I thoroughly and wholeheartedly embrace the significant responsibility of representing the people of Ashgrove whilst also discharging my duties as Premier. To the people of Ashgrove I pledge to be a passionate and effective representative. That is the promise I made to them and that is the promise I will keep.

By working with local residents and listening to the people of Ashgrove we have developed a strong plan: deliver the best fix for the intersection of Samford Road and Wardell Street with proper community consultation; provide improved road safety for local schoolchildren by installing flashing school-zone lights at Newmarket and Payne Road state schools; upgrade the intersections of Glen Retreat Road and Samford Road and Irvine Street and Samford Road to improve safety and reduce congestion; provide fare relief for commuters by offering free unlimited go-card travel after nine trips per week and get 15-minute train frequencies on the Ferny Grove railway line in off-peak periods; provide an amenities building for GPS Rugby and Valley Cricket Club at the Ashgrove Sports Ground; secure more funding to support the school breakfast program at the Mitchelton State High School; build a new school hall at The Gap State High School and teaching facilities at the Ashgrove State School; and install new lighting on the Payne Road State School sports oval.

However, upgrades and amenities aside, what I also want for Ashgrove is to play my part in nurturing and supporting the amazing sense of community. It is a community that loves its sports and has nurtured many of the nation's best rugby players. It is a community with a sense of and respect for our history, led by the Ashgrove and Gaythorne RSLs. It is a community with a strong commitment to religion as symbolised by our beautiful churches and places of worship. It is a community that is supportive and inclusive as characterised by organisations such as the Picabeen Community Centre, which has been supporting local families for many years from its base in Mitchelton. And it is a community with a robust population of small businesses, such as Milk and The Grove, which are some of my locals.

The 2012 election campaign was hard fought. The community spoke in a very clear way. I am so proud that our vision for this state so overwhelmingly resonated with Queenslanders. Today I must acknowledge the following people for their relentless efforts during the campaign: Bruce McIver, our president; James McGrath, our campaign director; Gary Spence, our vice president; Michael O'Dwyer, our state director; Daryl Fennel—we are glad he is still with us; Mark Brodie; Ben Myers; David Moore; Matt McEachen; Kylie Jacobson, who has been promoted to senior media adviser again; Carly Blaik; and Diane Balke.

It would be an understatement to say that my entry into this parliament as Premier has been unprecedented. At this point I want to thank the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer for their unwavering support, friendship and leadership during this unique period. Thank you so much. We are a team. We won office as a team and, along with the 77 other members of the LNP government, we will work hard for all Queenslanders as a strong and effective team.

I thank Lord Mayor Graham Quirk for being prepared to serve the people of Brisbane and I congratulate him on his recent election victory. I also acknowledge the following people for their efforts and support during the Ashgrove electorate campaign: Councillors Geraldine Knapp and Andrew Wines; Rob Hutchinson, my campaign director; David Hutchinson, my deputy campaign director; Carol Cashman, my campaign manager; and all the key coordinators such as the Conry family, John Goss, Selwyn and Robyn

Clark, Rachel Parry, Lorraine Jones, Andy Russell, Tony Farrell, Jenny Noble and, of course, all the other LNP members.

Most importantly, I want to acknowledge and thank the people of Ashgrove, everyone who volunteered, the families who welcomed Lisa and I into their homes and the many people who may not be members of the LNP—and there were so many of them—but who wanted a positive change for Queensland and so supported our local campaign in Ashgrove. I will not let you down. I also give special mentions to Jeff Wall, John Miller and the elder statesman—he knows who he is—for their advice and support.

I acknowledge my family. To my father, the late Kevin Newman, I have always been sad that you were not here to see all of this, to talk about the issues and to provide advice. I thank my mum, Jocelyn, for her guidance, love and support. I thank my sister, Kate, and her family. To my father- and mother-in-law, Frank and Elizabeth Monsour, your quiet dignity and stoicism during a trying period is admired by all. To my daughters, Rebecca and Sarah, over 10 years you have grown up in a political household and yet you have grown into wonderful young women. Finally to Lisa, my best friend and the love of my life, thank you for all that you have gone through, for all that we will go through and for the love and support you have always given me. I could not do it without you.

I will conclude by once again thanking the people of Ashgrove and the people of Queensland for entrusting the LNP with getting this great state back on track. I am excited, I am honoured and, with this great team, we will deliver.