



Speech by

Michael Pucci

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to address the House today as the member for Logan and a proud Australian, grateful for the opportunities Queensland has offered my family. The fact that I can rise here as an Australian is not by sheer luck. The right for anyone to stand and have their say in this House and the right for the people's voice to be heard anywhere has been hard fought for and long guarded by so many valiant Queenslanders, in fact, by so many people from my home, Logan. I pay honour and respect to those generations, past and present, including our first people, the traditional owners of the land. In fact, I pay tribute to all those Australians who have contributed to making our great state, our wonderful nation, our home, a place of freedom and prosperity and a land of endless opportunity. The freedom we enjoy can be directly related to the bloodless development of our nation's democracy. There is an inherent stability provided in our constitutional democracy, with a parliament, executive and rule of law at its core.

Today I pay my respects to our Madam Speaker and congratulate her as our first female Speaker and for the role she will play in protecting and promoting the function of this House. I also pay my respects and affirm my loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who, through 60 years of loyal service to the throne and Queensland, has demonstrated admirably the qualities of honour, courage, commitment and a positive attitude. Charles Swindoll, a Christian pastor, author and educator, was quoted as saying—

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failure, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes.

Australians have the type of attitude everyone worldwide adores. It is the type of attitude I noticed when I fell in love with my wife while on deployment to Australia as part of the joint Australian-US exercise, Croc 99. The previous speaker seems to have made me all emotional. My wife, Anna Pucci, is a beautiful Brisbane woman who typifies everything that is so wonderful about this nation: bright, sparkly and full of energy, just like the people of Logan. On the surface, people from the outside may think we are totally relaxed, but just take a walk around my electorate of Logan and you will see real Australia bubbling forth.

The families of Logan are hard working and well set in the attitude of making things happen. In Logan and across Queensland there is a sense of a bright new dawn, an era of prosperity and opportunity established by the hard work of generations past and the foresight of our currently elected leaders. The people of Logan are honourable people. A handshake is their bond, their courage is signified by the stoic way they deal with life's obstacles and their commitment is shown by the kindness they show for their neighbours and the love they have for their families. I have been privileged to serve in the US Marines from Korea to Japan, from Saudi Arabia to Australia. In the Gulf War I was honoured to have fought alongside Australian troops to protect the freedom of the people of Kuwait. I have been exposed to many cultures and lived amongst many people from the Asia-Pacific to the Middle East and the Americas. But nowhere is

there a greater group of people who make things happen with what they have than here in our home of Queensland, and especially in my home of Logan.

I am a citizen of the world and, no matter where I go and no matter who I see or who I talk to, I have learnt that everyone is basically the same in their core principle; that is, mothers want the best for their children, fathers want to provide for their families and each generation wants what is right and what is better for the next generation. No matter where one comes from and no matter where one lives or who one votes for, people are people. Wayne Goss, a former Queensland Premier but more auspiciously a former member for Logan, said—

I think anybody who has the opportunity to get into government... finds that if you apply yourself in a positive and diligent way, there is much that can be achieved to transform a community or make changes that affect people.

People do not expect much more from governments other than competence.

I am determined to make my mark in this place by ensuring Logan is front and centre in the minds of government, that we grasp the attitude of hard work and making things happen and bring about real change to people's lives, and that we finally take action and deliver for Logan, not just talk about it. We want change, not by implementing more government but by removing the excessive burden of government. I am committed to this honourable task—totally committed.

What a wonderful day 24 March 2012 was. From Weipa to Mudgeeraba and from Windorah to Maryborough, Queenslanders embraced the Liberal National Party's attitude of making things happen. They wholeheartedly embraced change in the electorate of Logan from Browns Plains, Regents Park and Crestmead in the north, Park Ridge and Munruben in the centre, Logan Village in the east, and Flagstone and Greenbank in the south-west. Those people realised that the Queensland of old, mired in debt and high cost of living, ground still by government waste and inefficiency, just had to change. Locals across the state called on the Liberal National Party to take charge, make things happen and have a positive attitude.

What do the people of Logan tell me they want? What do they expect from their new government? How am I going to assist them? The key to a successful future for Logan will be the work this government can do towards implementing the five-point plan that we took to the people. Our action plan is unequivocal, it is tactile, it will deliver. As our Premier, the Hon. Campbell Newman, has articulated—

... our action plan involves growing a four pillar economy—focusing on tourism, agriculture, resources and construction; lowering the cost of living for families by cutting waste; delivering better infrastructure and better planning; revitalising frontline services for families; and restoring accountability in government.

Growth in the four-pillar economy will ensure that Logan's stubbornly high unemployment can finally be reduced. We need to attract tourists to our area from wide and far. In northern Australia, we have a new Marine deployment and I want to encourage those serving members of the US armed services to spend their R and R here in the Sunshine State. I hope to use my contacts throughout Australia and overseas to bring more tourists to our part of the world. Logan needs fresh ideas to attract visitors and tourists, and I am committed to the task of growing our tourism base.

Logan must be allowed to take advantage of the mining boom by further developing its manufacturing industry. It is no hidden fact that Logan is a manufacturing community, with the 2006 census showing 15.8 per cent of Logan's population coming from the blue-collar sector, which was higher than any other sector. The government's recently introduced measures to cut payroll tax will boost employment and help with this process, as will measures to cut business red tape. Recently, I talked to business executives from around the world and local entrepreneurs who manufacture crushing and screening machinery for quarries and mines. Logan's men and women need not go west to find employment in the mines if we can successfully promote the local growth of the industries that serve the mines and minerals sector.

Once Logan was just a rural area on the outskirts of Brisbane, but now it has a diverse and developed economy. Driving our local economy is not only the manufacturing industry but also the construction industry, which I am keen to support. It is also important that we support our traditional agricultural businesses, which I know are still developing across Logan, such as the Mushroom Exchange in North Maclean. As the local member I hope to encourage agricultural enterprises that are employment intensive and teach valuable skills like aquaculture and permaculture.

After many years of neglect by the Labor Party, in Logan our police services are overworked and under-resourced. We must address this issue so that the people of Logan can be confident they live and work in a safe community. The government's plan to put 100 more police on the streets of Logan and the Gold coast is a good start.

I look forward to working with newly re-elected unopposed Mayor, Pam Parker, and her team of councillors and council officers at Logan City Council to implement a strategy to ensure Logan shines and that together all tiers of government do whatever it takes to make life better for Logan residents. Logan residents can be assured that, unlike the tribulations that they endured in the past, I am truly committed to

collaboration and listening to the community. People want an honest dialogue, not false accusations, blame shifting in government and name calling in the press. Ronald Reagan, a great American President whom I was proud to serve as a Marine, said, 'Government does not solve problems; it subsidizes them.' We have to move beyond an expectation of governments throwing money at problems, which in turn creates more problems and higher taxes. People feel like they have been taxed enough already. Throughout Logan locals tell me they just need a hand up to realise their dreams and a change in the machinery of government so that it is not overbearing but instead is an institution that lightly touches their lives and does not interfere with people's opportunities, either private or in business. Government should have the same attitude as most Australians, that is, people deserve reward for their hard work.

My mind turns to the many people I have met throughout Logan and most recently during my campaign such as Frank Lipanovic of Crestmead, born in the 1930s here in Australia, of Croatian heritage. Frank is a school bus driver and is working hard in his retirement in the job that he loves, getting kids to and from school safely. I also recall Regina Keil, a young mother from Regents Park in her 20s who has a small bub and one on the way. Regina and her partner are working to pay the bills and build a great life for her children. People such as these are why we have such a great nation, a great state. In their lives and in their work they think only of the next generation and their kids. That is why we are the land of opportunity and forever progressing as a state, as a country, because we allow freedom to reign and opportunity to flourish.

Here, people think of others as much as they think of themselves. The government must encourage not hinder, promote not strangle, deregulate not regulate the lives of these people of Logan, of Queensland, who seek out a better life. It is an honourable cause to reduce the burden of government, and it is a core responsibility that the people have charged the Newman government with.

The honourable and committed spirit of Logan was truly on display in early 2011 when South-East Queensland was so badly affected by the floods. Generously, Logan adopted the Lockyer Valley Regional Council and raised over \$74,000 for the mayor's appeal. Our dedicated SES and rural fire brigades helped clean up on the ground.

The electorate of Logan has changed greatly since it was first established as a seat in 1872, with Philip Nind being the first member. It has existed in many forms and covered large tracks of the state since that time. It has even been abolished but always managing to be reincarnated. I would like to acknowledge that our previous state member was John Mickel, who also held the position of Speaker. I thank Mr Mickel for his notable work as Speaker.

Logan has had a leader of the Liberal Party and an Acting Premier in Sir Thomas Hiley, a former Premier in Wayne Goss and a senior minister in John Mickel all represent the seat. Sir Thomas Hiley, a member of the Nicklin cabinet, was a most colourful and inspirational member for the seat of Logan. Always immaculately dressed, always ready to fight for our state and take on the Commonwealth, Hiley was a highly regarded and austere Treasurer of this great state and he led the parliamentary Liberal Party. Hiley displayed the qualities of courage, dignity and a positive attitude.

The story of Logan is partly an immigration story, a story of tribulations, people fleeing persecution, people just hoping for something better. Figures from 2006 show that 25 per cent of all people from Logan were born overseas and half of these from non-English-speaking backgrounds. That figure is expected to climb when the 2011 numbers are released. These people are welcomed by average Aussies who together work hard for their communities and their neighbours. The department of immigration tells us that most recently Logan has seen immigration predominately from Afghanistan, Burma and the Congo. We also have a very large Pacific Islander and Asian population within our borders. I will doggedly represent residents from all walks of life—Australian citizens and non-citizens alike. There will be no class distinction made by me. I believe everyone deserves a fair go.

Logan has some of the most hard done by and struggling families in the state living within our boundaries. I think of the homeless people that I have met in Logan and the struggles they go through. We need to get our housing policies right so they can have dignity and a place to sleep at night. And I think of the bright young people I have met at TAFE, people who want to finish their apprenticeships and break the welfare cycle that some of them have told me hold their families back. These are bright young people on the path to success whom I am so proud to call the people I represent.

Within our borders we have a wide and diverse group of people from all backgrounds, like my family. When I arrived in Australia I started work in a cleaning business. Through teamwork and commitment, that business was forged into a state-wide facilities management company of which I became the executive manager, a position I held until my election. Logan's story is the story of my family—I am one of them and they are one of me. The people of Logan are honourable to the core, courageous in adversity and committed to their communities.

When I think of Logan's story I can't help but think of my wife's story, the wonderful Anna Pucci, who I talked of earlier. Anna is a first generation Aussie whose family escaped the ravages of communist Russia and then communist China in the dark of night to build a new home in Australia. I recall a quote by John Winston Howard, who said—

I thank all of those who weren't born in this country for coming here and making a contribution to Australia. We are the least discriminatory country in the world, in my view.

John Howard was a masterful political leader who showed true signs of honour, courage and commitment while at the helm of our great nation. Mr Howard recognised the importance of immigration to the national story and proudly talked always of our nation's rich cultural tapestry. Today I pay honour and respect to the man who did so much for our great nation and whose honourable example guided me into this place.

You may have noticed my unique Aussie accent, Mr Deputy Speaker. Growing up in Wisconsin was my greatest exposure to life's harsh realities of needing to work hard to earn your keep. Wisconsin, USA, is like Queensland—a state built on mining, an agricultural state with dairy at its core. I was the youngest of eight and at the age of 11 I started working shovelling snow. The money I made went to my family. Mum struggled on her own. When I was seven my parents separated and when I was 15 my father passed away. I was 22 when mum, Eileen, also passed. I was blessed to have the loving support of my older brothers and sisters during this period of my life and I thank them all for it.

My USA NFL team is the Green Bay Packers, a team that has won more championships than any other NFL team. These days I enjoy watching the Broncos beat the Roosters—in fact, watching the Broncos beat any team from New South Wales is glorious enough in itself. But, better still, at the top of my list is watching the mighty Maroons beat the Blues in the State of Origin.

The story of my family, both as I was growing up and even today, is just like the story of families from one end of Logan to the other—large broods struggling to pay the bills, folk who love and live their various sports and recreation. Like everyone else, I am proud of family. Allow me to honour Brian, my older brother and mentor who passed away just a couple of weeks ago and was laid to rest on the date I was sworn into parliament, on 15 May. Brian organised my first real job as a detailer at a car dealership and helped me buy my first ever vehicle—a 1969 Buick Electra, a smooth metallic green. He was a Vietnam veteran who suffered the consequences of that war and has now met an early demise. Brian, I will miss you and always love you.

It is important for me to thank the many supporters and helpers that ensured a can-do member was elected to parliament for Logan: Betty Graver, who worked on our prepoll along with Hillary Newton; Ken Lock and his partner, Helen; Emma Paznikov, my campaign coordinator, who with my campaign manager and chair of the Logan SEC, Sean Black, kept all things under control and the campaign on track; Anna and Darryl Sluggett, dear friends; Juanita Gibson and her husband who gave much needed support; the people who manned our booths, Sheree and Boris Chipizupov, David Goodridge and his family, Ian Anderson, Martin Day, Telisha and Kellie Doolan, Anastasia and Matthew Speirs.

Thank you to my neighbours Terry Wiseman and Alex Surdonjic for your support. Wayne Upton, my good friend, thank you for your moral encouragement and everything you did and do for my family. Thank you Peter Paznikov and Ally Charles—two young people who did whatever was asked of them without complaint. Thanks to Kate Wilson, Felicity Stevenson and all those in the LNP team who provided guidance and support.

To Bert van Manen, the federal member for Forde, I thank you not only for encouraging me to join the LNP and run for preselection but also for your help during the campaign. I also want to thank the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, for the advice and support that you have provided throughout my campaign and for your guidance you continue to provide. Of course I thank the people of Logan for their trust. It is not misplaced and I will never take the opportunity you have given me for granted.

To my loving daughter, Nikole, and my son, RJ, and all of my family in the US: thank you for your constant encouragement and sage advice. To my darling wife, Anna, who did not just stand beside me throughout the campaign but at times got behind me and pushed. And to my two young daughters, Lidia and Marie, who stood by me through the heat, cold, dry and wet weather on roadsides, letterboxing and doorknocking: thank you my beautiful, sweet ladies. I love you all dearly and it is an honour to be loved by you. I truly am blessed.

In the spirit of teamwork, I am proud to say I come to this place like a forward prop goes to the field—a true team member of the Liberal National Party united under the leadership of the courageous Hon. Campbell Newman. We were forged from the Liberal and National parties, a merger that could not have happened if it were not for the brilliant vision of our party leaders. I know our party will set a course for

Logan and Queensland that will reignite our passion as a state, establish a new positive attitude and bring forth growth and prosperity to all people from all backgrounds.

The people of Logan can be assured that I seek to be a proactive member of this House. I will serve the people of Logan diligently. I will work with honour, courage and commitment in all dealings with community organisations and my constituents. I will work together with them, always with a positive attitude, to ensure that Logan shines and it is a better place to raise a family, live and work. They will instruct me as their representative—I am them; they are me.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!