

~~3.00pm—6.30pm—~~

~~Government Business~~

~~6.30pm—7.30pm—~~

~~Dinner break~~

~~7.30pm until adjournment moved—~~

~~Government Business~~

(2) Maximum time limits

The maximum time limits that apply to debates, speeches and statements are contained in the schedule below.

Subject	Relevant Standing or Sessional Orders	Time
Address in Reply Debate	SO 47	
—Mover		20 minutes
—Other members		20 minutes
Adjournment debate	SO 56	
—Total time		30 minutes
—Each member		3 minutes
Bills—Government Bills		
Introduction of Bills (Explanatory Speech)	SO 129	1 hour
First reading	SO 130	No debate
Government Bills reported on by a committee		
Second reading debate	SO 138	
—Minister		1 hour
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)		1 hour
—Members of the relevant committee		20 minutes
—All other Members		10 minutes
—Minister in reply		30 minutes
Consideration in detail	SO 146 & SO 147	
—Mover (Minister)		No limit
—Other Members (on each question)		3 minutes
Government Bills declared urgent and not referred or not reported on by a committee		
Second reading debate	SO 129, SO 37 & SO 138	
—Minister		To speak once only as per SO 129 for 1 hour
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)		1 hour
—Other Members		20 minutes
—Mover in reply		30 minutes
Consideration in detail	SO 146, SO 147 & SO 156	
—Mover (Minister)		No limit
—Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) (on each question)		1 x 20 minutes; or 2 x 10 minutes; or 1 x 10 minutes & 2 x 5 minutes
—Other Members (on each question)		1 x 10 minutes or 2 x 5 minutes
Questions Without Notice	SO 113	
—Question time (total time)		1 hour
—Member asking question		At discretion of Speaker
—Minister answering question		3 minutes

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Before calling the honourable the Premier, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasion.

 **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.

002 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.

003 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.

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.55 am): I begin by seconding the motion as moved by the Premier and congratulating him on a great first speech in this Queensland parliament.

As members would realise, this is not my first speech in this parliament, but it is my first speech from this side of the parliament. It is my first speech as part of an LNP government that extends across both sides of the parliament. Those of us who have been in this parliament for a long time would understand the significance of my looking across the chamber at the members from Murrumba, Stretton and Springwood, knowing that they are LNP members. Over the next three years our focus is to make sure that the voters in electorates such as Murrumba, Stretton, Springwood, Lytton, Logan and a whole range of other electorates where people have voted for the LNP for the first time vote for us for a long time to come.

I congratulate all of the new members who make up this LNP government. After so many years it is wonderful to stand here and see so many of you joining us in this parliament. The people of Queensland have placed in us a huge trust and responsibility. For 14 years we were in opposition. For 14 years we sat on that side of the parliament in opposition and a relay of leaders have brought us from that point in 1998 to where we are today. I acknowledge them, because they did some hard yards. I acknowledge former leaders such as Mike Horan, who is not here. He retired and left this parliament with the respect of everybody. I acknowledge his deputy at the time, Vaughan Johnson, and leaders such as Bruce Flegg, Mark McArdle and Lawrence Springborg, who did so much to bring the LNP together. I acknowledge John-Paul Langbroek. They are the people who served the cause and who brought all of us who make up the LNP government to this point today.

I think all of us would agree that the one person whom we must acknowledge more than all in terms of the leadership that it took to get us to this point is the member for Ashgrove and now the Premier of Queensland. On 22 March 2011 he took the momentous decision to leave his position at the Brisbane City Council and move to state politics. The leadership that he has shown since has been a significant part of the reason why so many LNP members are in this chamber today. It was a bold move. Some said it was crazy brave. A lot of people said it would not work—quite a lot of people said it would not work. I remember coming back into this chamber on the Wednesday, the day after the leadership of the opposition had changed. The glee on the faces of those who sat on the government benches was something that I will never forget, but there are not too many of them here today.

They have met the political fate that they so richly deserve because we were able to bring to this state parliament a leader with experience, a leader with a track record, a leader with the respect of all Queenslanders and a leader who was able to build on the foundation of those who had gone before him in the leadership roles of the LNP to ensure that we could bring into this chamber a government—an LNP government—with a strength, a determination and a passion that this chamber has never seen before.

There are lots of things about those first few months that I will save for the book that I will one day write, and nobody else will read. No-one else had better read it; it might be libellous! But there is one thing that I want to acknowledge today and that is the role that Tim Nicholls played. When Tim and I had a lonely discussion in a deserted coffee shop on Racecourse Road on a Sunday afternoon in late March it was very clear to both of us that if we were going to support Campbell's move then Tim had to put aside his own personal leadership ambitions. I congratulate Tim on the decision that he made and on the role that he has played in the leadership team that has led the effort since then. Tim, Campbell and I have formed a unique bond and I think it is a very strong bond that will be at the centre of the LNP government as we go forward. I want to recognise Tim's courage and selflessness today.

It is a huge task that the LNP government face. We have been left a legacy of failure, dysfunction and debt. I do not think that any Queensland government has failed to the extent that the previous Labor government that occupied this chamber failed. They left a legacy that will live on in infamy for generations. We saw a long list of crises as the end result of the maladministration of that government: the health crisis and the payroll scandal, Dr Patel, the fake Tahitian prince, the water crisis, the wasted billions of dollars on the water grid, the rusty desalination plants, the Traveston Dam, the destruction in the Mary Valley, soaring water prices and power prices that Queenslanders will struggle with for years, the kids in care crisis, the Bruce Highway crisis—the list goes on and on and on.

Mr Johnson: And the state of local government.

Mr SEENEY: Not to mention what they did to local government in Queensland; I thank the member for Gregory for reminding me of that. It is too easy to forget. The list of failure and dysfunction is so long that it is so easy to forget.

I think the first thing the few remaining members of that government who now constitute the opposition in this parliament should do is apologise to the people of Queensland for the extent of that failure. Only then would they recover any respect from me or from any Queenslanders that was lost due to the extent of their failure and the extent of the suffering that they have inflicted on so many Queenslanders. The other thing that they should apologise for is the election campaign. The election campaign that was waged in Queensland in the run-up to the last election was unprecedented in my view and in the view of a lot of political commentators. What the failed Labor government tried to do was to cover its own failure and its own ineptitude by personally attacking not just the then candidate for Ashgrove but also his wife, his family and his wife's family. It was unprecedented and it was disgusting. It disgusted Queenslanders from Currumbin to Cook. It disgusted everybody. It is one of the reasons there are only seven members of this opposition in this parliament.

I am pleased it did not work for a lot of reasons. I am pleased it did not work because, had it worked, it would have become the norm in Queensland politics. It would have become the accepted way of operating in Queensland politics, and that would have been a tragedy for all of us who understand what politics should be about. The fact that it did not work hopefully will mean that nobody will try such despicable tactics again. I say quite genuinely to the Leader of the Opposition and her much diminished team that if they want to recover any respect in this parliament and in Queensland then the first thing

they should do in this parliament is not just apologise for their track record of failure but also apologise for the way they ran the election campaign and for what they tried to do to Lisa Newman and her family.

There is no doubt that we as a government have a mandate. We have a mandate for change. We have a mandate to repair the damage that was done by so many years of Labor. We have a mandate to develop and to build Queensland. We have a mandate to build the four pillars that the Premier has spoken about this morning and that he spoke about so often during the election campaign—to build the four pillars of resources, agriculture, construction and tourism. In the weeks since the election, that is exactly what we have been doing.

Across government our ministers have begun the job of doing what we said we would do—that is, delivering on our promises. In a methodical, determined, workmanlike way we will deliver on the promises that we gave to the people of Queensland. We will develop the coal seam gas industry in a responsible way that makes up for the maladministration of the previous government, that brings to every Queenslander the benefits that that industry can bring but that safeguards the environment, that safeguards the rights of landholders and that protects regional communities. We will develop the resources industry in general across Queensland because it is the resources industry in particular that gives Queensland its great comparative advantage over other states and gives Australia its great comparative advantage over other countries. We will do these things in such a way that all Queenslanders will benefit. We will do them in a way that will prove that we can administer the state and the business of the state in a way that will allow the business of the state to grow.

One of the things that the previous government never seemed to understand is that if you are going to spend money you have to earn it first; you have to earn the money first before you spend it. The fact that they did not understand that led in a very real way to the \$85 billion worth of debt that will forever be their legacy. To address that legacy we have to grow the business of the state, and that is the focus of the portfolio that I have been given. We have reconstituted the department of state development. We have refocused the role of the Coordinator-General; we are unashamedly about ensuring that the Coordinator-General can use the powers in the state development act to coordinate the development activities across the state and ensure that we can grow the business of the state.

We have already taken steps to deal with the mess that the previous government left in the Galilee Basin. The lack of planning of the Galilee Basin infrastructure is breathtaking when you understand the degree to which it is now confused. We have established the gas fields commission. We have established the Bruce Highway action group. We have met with the federal government—with Tony Burke—to avoid bureaucratic duplication. We have appointed a 'go to' person for the construction and development industry. We have worked to simplify the planning process. We are refocusing the UDLA and empowering local governments across Queensland to do what they do best: make decisions for their communities. All the things that I and my colleagues have talked about in this chamber for years and all the things that the Premier talked about for the 12 months when he was our leader outside the parliament are now being actioned, one at a time, methodically, workmanlike and determinedly. We will do what we said we would do. At the end of the three-year term I think all of the 78 members who sit in this chamber will be proud of what we as a government achieved.

005 At this point I want to thank some people. Members who know me know that I do not do this very often. My wife asks me, 'Why does everybody else thank everyone in their first speech in parliament but you never do?' It is because I have had so much else to talk about. But today I want to thank some people because, after 14 years in this parliament, this is undoubtedly the high point of my career and I want to thank the people who helped me get here.

First of all, I want to thank my wife, Therese. Thirty-two years married—34 years married, sorry. I will be in trouble for that tonight! Thirty-four years married and for 20 of those years I have been in public life, either in state politics or in local government. Everybody knows that it is our partners who bear the brunt of that. I acknowledge her for the great tower of strength that she has been. I acknowledge my kids—Dan, Helen and Tom. They are all grown up now, but they all grew up with their father as a politician or a councillor in a small country town, and that is a tough gig, so I acknowledge them.

I want to acknowledge some people who have been part of the Monto branch of the now LNP ever since we started together as a group in what was then the Young Nationals. Peter and Mary Sharp, Neville and Narelle Galloway, and Robyn and Robert Ogle have been part of my political life from day one. I acknowledge all of my electorate council people who were there at my preselection 14 years ago—Jimmy Tucker; Orla Hansen; Ken and Val McInnes, who were here yesterday; Ted Kirk from Gayndah; Gil and Michelle Smith; and old Bill Roberts and Percy Iszlaub from Murgon and Wondai respectively who used to say that they never thought they would live to see another LNP government. They not only lived to see it but they lived to see a great one.

I also acknowledge the colleagues who have served in this parliament with me since I came here in 1998. There have been some tough times. Some of them are still here and some of them have gone. I thank them for the support. I thank them for the tolerance they showed when they could not support me. I apologise for the times that I have upset people—and that is a long list, too. But I acknowledge

that they will form the core of experience that will make this LNP government great. So I want to thank all of my colleagues who have served in this parliament.

Also, Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge your election. You, too, have been a colleague for many years. I want to acknowledge your elevation to the position of Speaker. I want to assure you of my support—of our support—and hope that the relationship we build in this parliament will be a good one and will contribute to the role of the parliament and the good things that this parliament can provide for the people of Queensland.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I hope that this government can provide hope for all Queenslanders but especially for regional people. I have unashamedly all of my political career—all of my career in public life—been about country towns and country people, and I hope that this government can deliver for country towns and country people. I am sure it is something that the Premier understands, because he and I have spoken about it many times. I am sure it is something that the cabinet ministers, if they do not understand it now, will come to understand. Things are different in country towns and things are different in regional Queensland and sometimes we have to be well aware of those differences in the regulation and the legislation that we deal with in this House.

I hope that in the future people will talk about the LNP government that was elected in 2012 as a government of integrity, a government that brought change, a government that was known for its achievements and a government that delivered on its promises. That is what I will be focusing on, and I hope that the other 77 members of the LNP government will join me in that task. I once again congratulate the Premier along with my good friend Tim Nicholls, the member for Clayfield, who will not exchange electorates with me no matter how many times I argue with him. I look forward to working with them and all of the LNP members in this government to make those things a reality.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (10.15 am): Madam Speaker, it is yet again an honour to be elected and supported by the residents of the electorate of Clayfield in this the 54th Parliament of Queensland. Whilst in this turn of the electoral cycle I have been fortunate indeed, I am always conscious of the adage that if one does not win one's seat then it is all for nought! That is certainly the case and something that weighs heavily and sits in the back of my mind every three years. So at the very outset, I thank all of those hardworking electors in Clayfield who supported me and my local LNP team and our vision for Clayfield and our vision for Queensland at the ballot box on 24 March last.

I reviewed the booth numbers from election day, because I had a slight 'wager' with the now member for Ashgrove about the outcome. I want to thank all of those electors in all of those suburbs that make up Clayfield for trusting the LNP and me to deliver for them. I urge them to continue to support me, as I am sure that is a wager with the member for Ashgrove that will come back to haunt me in due course. I think the member for Indooroopilly had a side bet on that one as well.

Madam Speaker, I also express my appreciation to Her Excellency the Governor for her felicitous attendance at the opening of this the 54th Parliament. Over the term of her stewardship the Governor has, with Mr McCosker, I think established a warm and enduring friendship with the people of Queensland. From her travels in the cape to her foray into stone sizzled steaks at Beef Week in Rockhampton, the Governor has involved herself in all aspects of community and business life in this great state. I have personally enjoyed both her company and her wisdom at the many events she has hosted and at which we have been in attendance, and I look forward to an ongoing strong relationship with Government House. I particularly look forward to further engagement with Her Excellency in my role as Minister for Trade.

Having listened attentively to Her Excellency's speech on the opening of parliament which will be circulated, I must say that I find myself in complete agreement with her government's agenda for this term and will of course strive to implement in full force and in accordance with the clear mandate of the electorate those excellent policies that have been developed for this government.

Madam Speaker, I also extend my congratulations to you on your elevation to the position of Speaker. It is indeed another seminal moment in Queensland's parliamentary history, and indeed in the rich tapestry of our political life here in Queensland, to see Queensland's first female Speaker. Madam Speaker, I listened to your introductory speech, as I am sure most members did and as I believe you would have wanted. One of the great issues, of course, for the Speaker is the protection of the rights, liberties and powers of the parliament. Madam Speaker, there are of course tensions, as you said, between the executive and the Speaker and, as you said, this is no bad thing.

Madam Speaker, while changes were made in the last parliament to the way aspects of the parliament are run, I think it is important for all members to understand that no changes were made to the power of the Speaker to protect the powers, rights and immunities of the parliament and the parliamentarians. Madam Speaker, that power to protect is given, and always has been given in my view, by the parliament itself. It is not a right that belongs to any one person or office. It is a right of the parliament to protect itself and its powers—originally a right to protect itself against unwarranted intrusion by the Crown and, in more recent times, by the Crown in right of executive government.

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Like the right of lawyer-client privilege, which belongs to the client although claimed by the lawyer, the right to protect the parliament is the parliament's although exercised through the Speaker. I think it is again important to look at the act itself, which says that nothing derogates from any power, right or immunity traditionally held or exercised by the Speaker on behalf of the Legislative Assembly. Madam Speaker, you may rest assured that your role remains as valid and as vital as it ever did in ruling in this chamber, and it is a power that I will support to the full.

I must say that I look forward to your rulings, I hope. As the last member to be ejected from the last parliament—and I suspect I may have taken one for the team—I also look forward to your exercising the great quality of mercy to those who are on the very rare occasions a little overenthusiastic in debate, and I of course refer to the member for Warrego and the member for Gregory in no small measure in that respect.

I wish to reflect on the new government and the election campaign, because it was in that campaign that our promises were made to the people of Queensland, that we were questioned, that we were tested, and in the fire of which our steel was forged. While the main protagonists from the late government may have departed, either voluntarily or otherwise, the stain of their campaign is as hard to remove as beetroot on a white shirt front. The previous government deliberately and with malice aforethought sought to turn the last campaign into a referendum on the personal integrity not just of the member for Ashgrove but also, disgracefully, on his entire family. The entire Labor Party—those left in this place and those that are out of it—are and were condemned by that disgraceful campaign. With no basis in fact, with not even a grain of truth, an edifice of untruths, speculation and salaciousness was constructed in order to save a decrepit, desperate and dysfunctional government.

The people of Queensland passed their judgement on those opposite and on their campaign on 24 March 2012, and that judgement in all its glory is far more damning than the harshest editorial or commentariat comments could ever be. It pays to remind Queenslanders that the Australian Labor Party will say and do anything in its quest for power. If those opposite think that either Queenslanders or we have forgotten, I am here to say, 'We will remind you and we will remind you every day of the disgrace of that campaign.' We will ensure that the bar is never lowered as it was by the Australian Labor Party in the 2012 state election campaign for Queensland. In talking about the disgraceful, negative campaign run by the Australian Labor Party, it is imperative that we contrast it with the positive campaign run by the Liberal National Party here in Queensland—a positive campaign to get Queensland back on track.

They say that success has many fathers but failure is an orphan. I can point to three people who met on a small, suburban back deck in Hendra just over 12 months ago with me to talk about how we would achieve success. I am of course referring to Campbell Newman, to my great friend Jeff Seeney and to Ben Myers. We met together because we wanted to make sure that Queensland had an alternative to that decrepit, dysfunctional and tired Labor government. We came together as people, some of whom we knew well and some of whom we barely knew. We came together and we made some fairly hard decisions in a very short period of time.

Out of that meeting on a small, suburban back deck a great friendship has been formed and a great team has been formed. I think that will be the enduring hallmark of this government: the teamwork and the bringing together of people from different backgrounds—whether you are a farmer from Monto, an engineer for the Army or a lawyer from Clayfield, or indeed any of the members of the LNP from Currumbin to Cook and from Bribie to Boulia. We are a team that comes together and which represents the strength, the wisdom and the power of Queensland.

After that meeting on that back deck, the rest, as they say, is history. One of the enduring legacies of that meeting was to campaign on an agenda for change. Madam Speaker, as you know, we set about putting together our positive plans for change: positive plans for a Queensland with a bright and positive future; plans to cut waste to deliver front-line services; plans to lower the cost of living for families; plans to deliver better infrastructure and planning; and plans to restore accountability in government. These were the themes that reflected what all Queenslanders we spoke to wanted addressed. These were the things that mattered every day to everyone—heartland, not ephemeral, things; things that make a difference to the quality of life of Queenslanders.

Those themes were underpinned by a desire by Queenslanders to see a government that would work to reduce unemployment and to grow the economy so that we could deliver the things that Queenslanders want, not to grow an economy for its own sake but because of what it delivers—jobs, job security, a better standard of living and opportunities for us and for generations to come. That was the positive campaign that we ran in contrast to that of our political opponents. I want to thank all those in the LNP who helped get our positive message out because in the heat of the campaign there are always questions, there are always comments and, of course, there is an abundance of free advice. It takes some intestinal fortitude to hold the line and to maintain the discipline when some would want you to react to every bad story or every new theory put forward by the pundits and the so-called experts—to be like the captain of the cricket team who places their fielder where the ball was last hit, not where the ball may well be hit.

So let me thank those people who helped us maintain that discipline. Firstly, I thank David Moore, who came to help us in opposition as a great chief of staff. I rang David on the day that the leadership changed over a year ago and said, 'Are you available to help?' He said, 'I am with a client in Canberra. Would you mind if I think about it?' I said, 'No, is there a plane you can get on and get back here?', and he did. He joined our team initially for a week and stayed for a year. I do not think he regretted a moment of it—well, a couple of moments perhaps. Nonetheless, he was a great chief of staff. He was never at a loss for a response. He had an incisive policy mind, and I am sure that many other things await him in the future in the application of those skills and that ability.

I thank James McGrath, our campaign director, who was tough but tough. He kept his cool and only occasionally wanted more money from a very tight policy budget. He directed the campaign, he kept the team going, he worked more hours than there are in a day, I think, and managed to keep both the administrative wing of the party and the political wing of the party in conversation—no easy thing on some occasions.

I thank Gerard Benedet, our deputy campaign director and now my chief of staff, and invariably—and this is no bad thing for someone who works for the Treasurer—the man sent out to bring campaigns back into line over spending. Gerard did a great job in making sure that the campaign worked.

From the LNP team I also thank Mitch Redford, Matt McEachan, Rachael Power, Kate Wilson, Amy Ladner, Harriet Nunan, Caroline Sheehan, Suzie Curtis, Carly Blaik, Di Balke, Hanna Melendez and Kylie Jacobson—whose infectious laugh would often be heard down the other end of the phone just when a bad question was about to be asked. She would say, 'I don't think that Campbell wants to do this one, Tim, would you mind doing it?' and she would laugh at the end of it.

I also recognise Mark Textor. If and when a history of researchers and pollsters is ever written, Mark Textor—'Tex'—will rank in the first order throughout not only Australia but the world. He has advised campaigns and most successfully recently advised on the re-election of Boris Johnson as the Mayor of London. During the course of that campaign I came to trust and rely on Tex—as I think we all did—and his calmness, his clarity and, if I might say at times, and it was needed, his caustic wit. They were an essential ingredient in the success of our campaign and I think those of us who dealt with him came to call him a friend.

007 There are of course the staff from the old opposition office who brought it all together: my executive assistant, Kim McInnes, whose double entendres and infectious good humour are legendary throughout the old opposition office and I am sure will become more so in this parliament; my policy adviser, Mark Gorter, who has been unceremoniously stolen from me by the member for Indooroopilly as his chief of staff but who worked tirelessly on making sure all of the numbers stacked up; my good friend, Joe Owen, who helped us with the economics; and all who joined the great adventure that we started just over 12 months ago.

I also want to congratulate all the new members who are here today, and as I look across the room that is a big congratulations and I am very happy to be able to give it to you all. Rarely does such a seismic shift in a parliament occur. I can remember when the Leader of the House and I were elected only six years ago that there was certainly no seismic shift occurring at that stage of the proceedings; it was more like a speed bump. There are 51 new members here today. Many of them are from the LNP, but I also acknowledge those new members who have joined the opposition and the crossbenches. Many of you have fought long and hard to get here, and I do hope you enjoy your time here. To all those who join the government benches, can I say welcome. To those opposite who are new—and I mean directly opposite—I look forward to the contest that I am sure we will have over the next three years. I trust that all new members enjoy and learn from the great opportunity and privilege they have been given by their electorates to serve them here in the Parliament of Queensland.

I looked back at my first speech in preparing for today's speech, and I reflected on the words I used then and the people I thanked then. I looked at the reasons I stood to be elected in this place, and upon reading those words I find them as true today as they were six years ago: to ensure that the opportunities this state offers for us and for future generations are developed in the best way possible; to make sure that the great benefits that are ours, by either active providence or hard work, are utilised in the best way possible; a belief that government is not the answer for all the problems; a belief that the individual, self-reliance, business and small business are the only true ways to grow a sustainable economy, sustainable employment, prosperity and wealth for future generations; and to give individuals the right to express themselves, whether through work or community, in the highest and best way that they choose fit—not in the way that the dead hand of the state sees fit.

As we gather here today at the opening of this parliament, I want to rededicate myself to those principles that I outlined in my first speech, the reasons that I put myself, my family and my friends through the rigours of election campaigns, the reasons that we come here each and every day to deliver on those outcomes. It is important that we remember why we are here; it is important that we remember what we have pledged to deliver on.

Let me conclude by thanking the last little batch of people I want to thank, that is, my own campaign team, the people who have been with me for a long time: Bill O'Chee, who was my campaign

director; Annie Reid, who is here in the gallery today and who has been my campaign secretary now for more years than either she or I would wish to count; and Darren Barlow, my campaign treasurer who has made sure my finances added up, and they always have. I thank my long-suffering electorate staff. Ros Cutting, after 13 years, has finally grown sick of me and has decided to retire. She is here today as well. I am not quite sure how much of my results in those booths, Mr Premier, is as a result of Ros's work rather than mine. She has been a stalwart and a friend over all those 13 years in both council—

Mr Johnson: Just because she barracks for the right football team.

Mr NICHOLLS: That is right—despite supporting the same team as the member for Gregory. I also thank Kirk Stubbs, who joined my team a year ago and was my on-the-ground campaigner. There are other people: Mark Brodie, whom the Premier has already mentioned, and I thank him for his friendship, support and many other things in between; Daryl Fennell, my great friend, and many in the LNP would know that we thought he was going to die from leukaemia but he came back in a true miracle—a true miracle; Andrew King, a good friend of mine who supported the team; our long-suffering neighbours, Paul and Kylie Edwards, who looked after our three kids whenever we needed to go to that next function and that next event, who had our kids dropped on them morning, noon and tea; and Ernie Ginn, who is known to many people and who at 92 still came out and handed out how-to-vote cards at the Hendra State School, a booth that we won for the first time in 25 years.

It is an emotional time. It is a great time to be here in Queensland and to be part of the new LNP team. I am honoured by the obligation presented to me as Treasurer and Minister for Trade. I thank the people of Queensland for the honour of working for them to get Queensland back on track. I thank all my colleagues on the LNP team. I look forward to delivering for Queensland over the next three years.

Madam SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, I remind members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (10.35 am): I stand here today a very humbled and honoured new member for Toowoomba South and newly appointed Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in this Newman LNP government. To say that the past six weeks has been eventful would be an understatement, but I very much look forward to serving as a member of this parliament, as a minister of the Crown and, most particularly, as the member for Toowoomba South. I therefore confirm my allegiance here today to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her representative, Her Excellency the Governor, Penelope Wensley, and my loyalty to this parliament and to the electors of Toowoomba South. Madam Speaker, I especially acknowledge the Governor's address in opening our parliament yesterday and I sincerely congratulate you on your appointment to the high and respected office of Speaker in this House.

The 2012 Queensland state election was unprecedented in terms of the clear decision made by Queenslanders for a change of government. For my part, I am certainly proud that my result in Toowoomba South represented 71.5 per cent on a two-party preferred basis. I sincerely thank the electors of Toowoomba South for placing their faith in me. At the same time, I recognise that, as a candidate succeeding the only retiring LNP member in this past election, the foundation for my campaign was set on the record of my predecessor, the honourable Mike Horan. I have been very fortunate to have known Mike and his wife, Helen, for some years and he was and is a great friend and mentor to me, as is Helen to my wife, Anita. During the last six weeks, I have come to recognise that Mike retired from this place as one of the few members who was genuinely liked on both sides of politics. He was certainly revered on our side as one of those who played an incredibly important role over the years in the genesis of this new LNP government of the 54th Parliament of Queensland.

I have had the pleasure of knowing all of my predecessors in Toowoomba South: the late Peter Wood, member from 1972 to 1974 and former Deputy Mayor of Toowoomba City Council; the late John Warner, member from 1974 to 1986 and Speaker of the House; Clive Berghofer, member from 1986 to 1991 and Mayor of the Toowoomba City Council, businessman and renowned philanthropist; and, as I mentioned, the member over the last 20 years, Mike Horan.

My success in this campaign is due to the efforts and support of a number of important people. My campaign team—led by a campaign manager of enormous intellect and capability, Mrs Cynthia Hardy—is among the most dedicated, driven and endearing teams of people I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I thank many friends and extended family, especially my parents, Mary and Tom, and my mother-in-law, Cel, who supported and encouraged me through that journey. I enjoyed the support of the entire LNP party organisation—from our president, Bruce McIver, and our regional chair, Pat Weir, through to the volunteers who stood with me in the electorate rain, hail or shine.

I have already been joined by a dedicated professional team led by my Chief of Staff, Bruce Mills, and Kevena Franklin in my electorate office. I thank my children—Meghan, Kevin, Bridget, Annabelle, Marita and Tessa—who put aside their university, school, sport, music and even their social lives to walk that journey with me, and they were perhaps my greatest source of motivation and inspiration throughout the campaign. Finally, I thank my wife, my partner, my best friend, Anita, who prompted me

to make the final decision to run and then sustained me throughout. As I thank and acknowledge them all, I recognise that I am indeed a very fortunate man.

Toowoomba South has significant features and issues within its own boundaries and yet a sense of shared responsibility for the broader region given our catchment of southern Queensland and the northern parts of New South Wales to our south. We have in the order of 20 schools, 28 church communities, 14 aged-care facilities, numerous child-care centres, 16 shopping centres and 19 sporting complexes and facilities. We have one of Queensland's largest livestock selling centres, the iconic Picnic Point on the edge of the range and the East Creek and West Creek catchments that were the scene of flooding devastation in our city in January 2011. The seat extends from the range and our CBD west towards the Royal Agricultural Society's iconic Toowoomba Showgrounds and south to the University of Southern Queensland. We have residents who work in rural industries, in agribusiness, aged care, education at all levels, health, food and other manufacturing, tradespeople, professionals, government services and retail. We are a region facing significant growth challenges, be it the need for resources for our growing school populations and numerous aged-care facilities; the pressure that we bear together with other communities along the Warrego Highway, especially as it cuts a swathe through the heart of our city carrying produce and supplies to and from the west; the balance that we must find between agriculture, mining and other land uses; and the need for flood mitigation and CBD infrastructure development.

Toowoomba, like much of regional Queensland, is ready to play its part in rebuilding the Queensland economy. We are willing to share the burden of challenges with the rest of the state, but we must ensure that we are not left with all of the costs, all of the pressures. We will simply seek our fair share of the benefits flowing from the development of our great state. Our local economic profile indicates that our local economy continues to be based on the mainstays of agriculture, education, health, retail and an increasing contribution from the energy sector in more recent times. In this regard, I am very pleased to see the strong statements in today's Toowoomba *Chronicle* from my good friend His Worship the Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council, Councillor Paul Antonio, wherein he explains that Toowoomba is open for business and has the potential to be an economic powerhouse. From the glory days of Southern Cross Windmills, Defiance Flour, KR Darling Downs to the current business leaders of Wagners, Easternwell, FK Gardner and Sons, Heritage Bank and the University of Southern Queensland; from Steel Rudd to Geoffrey Rush; from Duncan Thompson, Jason Little and Tim Horan to Will Power in international motor racing, we boast of national and international leaders in the arts, sport, commerce and education—all of whom we are justifiably proud.

It is fair to say that one's political ideals are forged through their life experience. I grew up on the Darling Downs and in Toowoomba South, attending primary school and secondary school before moving on to study business at the University of Southern Queensland. Prior to coming to this place, I have been fortunate indeed to enjoy a most satisfying career in agribusiness, including Elders Pastoral in North Queensland, Cargill Australia in the grain belt extending through to Central Queensland, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries in the early 1990s and the federal Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. For the past 15 years my colleagues and I have operated a management consulting practice working for Australian businesses and industries in every continent of the world. It has been enjoyable to work through those roles in the cane and beef industries of North Queensland; the grains industry throughout southern and Central Queensland; the seafood industry in Moreton Bay and Bundaberg; the pork industry in the Burnett; in regional development roles in Western Queensland; in value-adding in the food processing and packaging, wool, vegetable and cotton industries; in irrigation and engineering; and in energy development best practice activities in the Surat Basin. I know through this experience that Queensland industries, particularly regional, have a tremendous potential for wealth and employment generation, not only in my home, the rural and regional centre of Toowoomba, but throughout the entire state.

Like us all, I have benefited from the wonderful education opportunities offered in Queensland—in my case, from Jondaryan State School to my beloved Downlands Catholic College in Toowoomba to a business degree at the University of Southern Queensland, an MBA at Bond University and in more recent years postgraduate studies at the University of Queensland School of Agriculture and Food Sciences. But as I consider the careers of my wife and me to date, our family and the challenges that lay ahead, I must recognise the efforts of our forebears. My paternal great-grandfather, Patrick McVeigh, carried salt with his own horse team in the late 1800s to feed workers on the Grandchester to Toowoomba railway, and he and my maternal great-grandfather were among the first selectors on the Darling Downs. Whilst I would love to go back in time and seek the advice of both my pioneering great-grandfathers given my current position, it would be just a little embarrassing to have to share with Patrick that the Toowoomba rail line is much the same now as he saw it being built almost 150 years ago.

PJ Skerman's book *Guiding Agriculture Queensland, 1887-1987* reveals that in his opening speech of the parliament on 19 July 1887 Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave said he had been advised by his ministers that they had authorised the establishment of a Department of Agriculture. In the address-in-reply, the Hon. WF Taylor moved and the Hon. Horatio Wilson seconded that the department be

established, with the Hon. AJ Thynne appointed as the first Minister of Agriculture. A later Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. DF Denham, announced an apprentices in agriculture program in the early 1900s to be operated at the Hermitage Farm near Warwick, which remains an important grains research station under my department to this day. It was there that my great-grandfather and my grandfather Thomas McVeigh, like other farmers in the local community, assisted in instructing those apprentices free of charge. It is therefore satisfying indeed that not only am I charged with the responsibility as Minister for Agriculture to re-establish a dedicated department of agriculture under the Newman LNP government but that I also look at reinvigorating agricultural education and research activities at centres like Hermitage where my own forebears played their part over 100 years ago.

I reflect too on the legacy of my mother's father James Meara, a leading Darling Downs farmer, grazier and businessman and the longest-ever serving mayor of the former Clifton shire council. It was significant for me to sit in the same council chambers he did during my role with our regional council in recent years. It is especially poignant for me that in the gallery today, together with my wife, my mother, my sister and my campaign manager, I have my father, the Hon. Tom McVeigh, a former federal member for Darling Downs, later Groom, and Minister for Housing and Construction as well as Home Affairs and Environment in the Fraser-Anthony coalition government of the 1970s and eighties.

After marrying in Townsville, my wife and I spent the early part of our careers—mine in agribusiness, as I said, and hers in teaching—throughout Queensland before settling our own family back in my home town of Toowoomba. With her forebears involved in grocery and produce supplies in her home town of Charters Towers, as well as mining and railways activities, and mine, as I said, in farming and grazing, Anita and I have an appreciation of both regional and metropolitan Queensland. We have an appreciation of the rewards of hard work and enterprise, of study and dedication, all of which was instilled in us by our own parents—Kev and Cel Phillips and Mary and Tom—given their farming, small business and industry association backgrounds, as well as a shared passion for conservative politics in our great state.

009 As I do so, I acknowledge the example of my late father-in-law, Kevin, focused as he was on his small business, church and community service, including quiet support of the local Indigenous community such that he was referred to on the front page of the *Northern Miner* newspaper at his untimely passing some years ago as 'Charters Towers very best friend'. I have been fortunate to work with others in continuing such legacies through involvement on the board of Concannon College at the University of Southern Queensland; our local chamber of commerce; the Toowoomba regional economic development board; the Condamine Alliance natural resource management body, where we have focused on environmental custodianship of the Condamine River catchment; sustainable forestry development initiatives; our Indigenous heritage; our regional RSL advisory and Australia Day coordinating committees; and as a councillor with the Toowoomba Regional Council.

Although at times there will be—and should be—spirited political debate and ideological differences in this House, I look forward to pooling my experience with that of others in this chamber and joining with every member in making the very best contribution I can to the 54th Queensland Parliament. In closing, I reiterate that I am very proud to represent Toowoomba alongside my colleague Mr Trevor Watts, the new member for Toowoomba North, as we take over from our predecessors the honourable Mike Horan and Kerry Shine—both well-respected local members from our region. I recognise that it is a challenge to represent the interests of one's electorate at the same time as serving as a minister of the Crown, especially in a first term. Toowoomba, though, is where I am from. It is a place that I love, I am humbled to represent it in this parliament, it has a great affinity, of course, with the cabinet role I now hold and it has so much to offer to the future of the state of Queensland. Therefore, as I prepare to represent my electorate in this parliament I reflect on the closing lines of the poem *Toowoomba*, written by George Essex Evans in 1900. It states—

The vision of a city, wide and splendid,
Crowning the Range's wall,
And o'er thy sweeping plateau, far extended,
Welcome for all!

I thank the House for affording me the opportunity to make my maiden speech and I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Madam SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable Minister for Local Government, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and he should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government) (10.52 am): Madam Speaker, I thank Her Excellency the Governor for the speech she has delivered to parliament. My presence in this place is the result of many and varied contributions over the years. I want to start today by placing on record my thanks to some of those people. I am here because a middle-age Italian man made a decision in 1960 to head to North Queensland, leaving behind his loving family for a year,

to work in a field cutting cane. I am here because a first-generation Australian and his young migrant bride made countless sacrifices to educate a bright young girl who would later become my mother. And I am here because of the incredible support of my wife, Tegan, and children Georgia and Nicola, who have always supported their dad. Tegan did not fall in love with a journalist, a councillor or a member of parliament; she married her high school sweetheart, and she has stuck by me through a series of demanding careers. Every day I remind myself how fortunate I am.

But I am also here for other reasons. I am here because of a strong country upbringing which taught me that people matter. I am here because of the discipline I received at Canossa Primary School and Gilroy Santa Maria College in my home town of Ingham. I am here because of the skills I learned working in the media—an often criticised but valuable pillar in our great democracy. I am here because of the baptism of fire I received as the first non-Labor councillor to walk onto the floor of the Townsville City Council chambers in nearly half a decade. The dark years of waking up to yet another political threat dressed up in a legal letter, in a cauldron where the only kind of privilege one is afforded is iced water, steel you for any challenge that can come your way. I learned a thing or two about politics in this arena, but I fall back on a principle that I was brought up with: do as you would be done by. I can assure the honourable members opposite that they will not be subjected to the treatment that I received when I was on the other side of a large majority.

I am here because of the opportunity I had to make a contribution to the growth of my city as deputy mayor. I am proud of what I achieved, especially in my role in overseeing Townsville's CBD renewal process, but I am equally pleased to have been involved in the establishment of parks in the part of the city that now makes up the electorate that I represent.

But there is one overriding reason I am here: I have been given this opportunity because of the people of Mundingburra. While I was humbled to be part of a team offering real change and a fresh start, I hope they also saw in me someone willing to have a crack for them. In Cranbrook and Douglas, it was many of the same faces that afforded me a chance as a very young man to represent them on the council over eight years ago. In suburbs like Aitkenvale, Annandale, Gulliver, Heatley, Kirwan, Mundingburra, Rosslea and Vincent, they supported me again after helping me top the poll in 2008 ahead of 48 other candidates in the local government elections.

As much as each member in this place would like to think their election is the most important in their seat's history, in Mundingburra I cannot for one moment pretend that to be the case. In 1996 it was the seat that changed government when a by-election was called after the Court of Disputed Returns overturned a 16-vote win by incumbent Ken Davies over his Liberal challenger, Frank Tanti. The Labor Party changed candidates to the then Mayor Tony Mooney, Mr Davies ran as an Independent, and after what was the most watched by-election in this state's history the government of Wayne Goss was brought down. I cannot even pretend to be the most colourful member for Mundingburra. That honour goes to Tom Aikens: a one-time hard-drinking larrikin who was known for riding his bicycle throughout the electorate.

The seat of Mundingburra provides the greatest snapshot of life in Townsville. There are some magnificent Queenslanders, predominantly in the suburb that bears the seat's name. Nearby Vincent was developed in the late 1960s to cater for the newly arrived troops after the construction of Lavarack Barracks. Heatley, Gulliver and Kirwan have been created over the years by a string of local developers. Annandale, a magnificent suburb started in the late 1970s, still offers some of the city's finest dwellings. Next door, a part of Douglas was developed around the same time when it was used as a land ballot by the Townsville council exclusively for first home owners while in more recent times a section developed by Delfin, known as Riverside Gardens, has raised the bar for development in our city since the late 1990s. The town centre is based around Aitkenvale, which will house the city's first Myer department store. Aitkenvale itself is a great snapshot of the old and the new, with many quarter-acre blocks as well as units and town houses.

The greatest feature of the electorate is the mighty Ross River. It is an incredible resource used for rowing, skiing, swimming and fishing, but for most it is the backdrop for our morning and afternoon walks. The three weirs all touch into the electorate: Black Weir into Douglas, Gleeson's between Cranbrook and Douglas, and Aplin's between Mundingburra and Annandale. I have moved seven times since first coming to Townsville in the mid-1990s for university, but I have never once resided outside of the electorate. It is where we shop, it is where our kids go to school and it is where we wish to stay.

I know the territory well and I believe that I have a handle on what local residents want from this government. First, they are proud that the hospital is located in Douglas, but they want a medical institution that is as highly regarded as the people who work in it. The local hospital boards will be a breath of fresh air. The progress of the paediatric intensive care unit under the watch of the new Minister for Health, the member for Southern Downs, is warmly welcomed. I am proud of the role that I played in securing this funding and I thank the member for Caloundra for his strong advocacy as shadow health minister.

My constituents want better roads. People in Townsville love the fact that the city is coming of age and is growing, but that needs to be growth on our terms. Nothing will give me more pleasure than to be

able to deliver funding after this year's budget to the Townsville City Council to upgrade Blakey's Crossing—a project that has been caught in the middle of political games for far too long. But there are many other key intersections that will need upgrading during my time in this place and as the local member I will pursue those projects with vigour.

010 These are just two of the local issues I campaigned on, but there was a bigger story than those who supported me locally. There were people who made a decision to vote against the Labor Party for not just the first time in their lives, but for the first time in three generations of their family—people like Rod who I met doorknocking in Vincent. To Rod and people like him I send a personal message: we will not let you down. I aim to be part of a government that grows the economic pie so all can enjoy it. We will not abandon our traditional supporter base of business and agriculture, but we will understand that the role of the worker is paramount to a strong economy. We will also be a government that does as it says before and after elections. I hope our record in marching towards delivering our commitments in the first 100 days of office is proof of this.

While I feel comfortable serving as an elected official, I am not a political apparatchik. I did not grow up dreaming of being a politician and I never got involved in university politics. As a young journalist, politics regularly left me more disillusioned than inspired. My palate was whet by a great man—a great Queenslander—by the name of Ian Macdonald who took a chance on a young journalist who was working in a television station and was looking for a new challenge. It was Senator Macdonald who encouraged me to run for council—a decision that would ultimately cost him a staff member. But in the world of egos and agendas that exist in Canberra, Ian Macdonald has always been a man who has recognised the greater good. Perhaps that is due to his strong country values. Perhaps he is someone who can see the bigger picture. I would like to think it was the fact that he started his time in elected office in local government, something I will expand upon in a moment.

I ran for state parliament for two reasons. First, I have a passion to see things happen in my part of the state. For too long my city has given more than it has got in return. In a city where, as a result of its diverse economy and a will by its business community to make things happen, governments have had the ability to turn a blind eye, I am keen to see the 'second capital' rhetoric evolve into something meaningful and for Townsville to become the regional powerhouse to drive this state for a generation. But I also made my decision to run because of an assault on local government—the level of government not only closest to the people but the one that has the greatest impact on their lives. As strange as this may sound to those who live, eat and breathe state and federal politics, I would have been just as happy to have continued to serve my community as a councillor in Townsville. There is no greater honour than for someone to be chosen from their community to represent it. To the 73 mayors and 488 councillors across this state, I salute you.

I made my decision to enter this place to help a level of government that has been battered and bruised, a level of government that has increasingly become a delivery agent for failed state policies, a level of government where individual decision making has been taken away in favour of a centralist approach. In principle, I think local decision making is better, especially in such a large and decentralised state as ours. Faced with a choice between a decision by locals or one out of George Street, I would generally choose the one made by council. The forced amalgamations were an example of a government that was fighting a crusade against local councils. There were amalgamations which needed to occur, but for local councils to have a gun held to their heads smacked of a big brother attitude. While it was done under the pretext of financial stability, in some mergers this characteristic ran a distant second to an attack on the people and the communities that the Labor government had seen as a thorn in its side. In many cases what was a genuine attempt by mayors and councillors to fight for their community was portrayed as a political attack.

Perhaps it is youthful exuberance, perhaps a strong admiration for councils, but it remains my view that 99 per cent of people who represent the councils outside of our state's capital leave their party political allegiances at the door. It is a place where ideology runs second to results. Unlike the recent string of local government ministers, I believe that great people with varying political views make region-shaping contributions on the floors of local council chambers. I look forward to working as much with Paul Pisasale and Margaret Strelow as I do with John Brent and Bob Manning. To every council across the state, but especially at home in Townsville, a new relationship is underway.

Can I also briefly pay tribute to Graham Quirk on his resounding win at City Hall. While I have touched on my thoughts about politics at a local government level, when that council has a population nearly twice the size of Tasmania and a budget of \$3 billion, a different type of governance structure is needed. He has been given a strong mandate and I intend to work with him to provide the powers he needs to drive his city forward.

May I also thank personally the man he succeeded, now our Premier. The dignity the member for Ashgrove and his family displayed during the most vile campaign we have seen has been justly rewarded by the decision of the Queensland people. While each member understands the importance that his drive and leadership played in our electoral success, I have an extra reason to be grateful—for being made Minister for Local Government. To become a cabinet minister is a privilege few

Queenslanders are ever afforded and to be one of only a handful to do so on day one is a huge responsibility and honour. But while I intend to pour every drop of energy into working with local government and addressing the challenges that lie ahead, faced with a choice between being remembered as a good minister or as a strong local member, I will always choose first to serve the people of Mundingburra. With that in mind, I pay tribute to the former member for the seat, the Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr. While I will let others commentate on her achievements in this place, she left George Street after 14 years of service with her dignity intact. I offer her my best wishes for her retirement.

Can I also thank a great North Queenslander, former Townsville mayor, Les Tyrell, on his guidance in my time with council and wish him well in the years ahead. To my campaign team, thank you for giving so much of your time to secure a fantastic result. To Peter Lindsay, a great friend, sounding board and the man I describe as the best and possibly most persistent local member to have graced federal parliament, thank you for your guidance. If anyone knows what it takes to win elections it is him. While I will not name all of those who gave their time, I want to especially thank Michelle Gillum, my former PA as deputy mayor, who has made the transition to the Mundingburra electorate office. To have someone who genuinely cares about the local area and local residents is a great asset. To my neighbouring seat holders, the member for Burdekin and the member for Hinchinbrook, I acknowledge the great contributions you have already made in this place. As to the new members for Townsville and Thuringowa, the quality of men you both are leaves me in no doubt the size of contribution you will both make to our great region.

Madam Speaker, may I take this opportunity of congratulating you on your election to the Speaker's chair. As the first woman to hold the office since responsible government, I am sure you will not only conduct proceedings fairly but also, importantly, inspire more women to seek elected office. As I enter a new chapter of my life, but more importantly a new chapter for North Queensland, I want to outline a few themes that will guide me. I am the product of two people who believe in the value of hard work. My mother, along with my sister Belinda, run a small retail business in Ingham. My father, a migrant educated to just grade 8, has built a large and successful cane farm on the back of blisters, tenacity and an appetite for risk. My friends, many of whom have been a part of my life throughout school and my time at James Cook University, have always kept me balanced. Time and again they lined my electoral booths handing out how-to-vote cards. Most of them have no political leanings at all, but have done it to help a mate.

It has been all these relationships which have made me who I am: a proud yet progressive regional Queenslander who believes the greatest gift a government can give its people is not to interfere. While I recognise there are some things that only government can do, in our thirst to control every aspect of people's lives we have lost sight of the fact that if something can be delivered by the private sector, on most occasions it will be done more efficiently and effectively than by government. Faced with a choice between restrictive regulation and accepting that an open market will produce errors but more good will be done than harm, I choose private enterprise. I have watched this House in horror in recent years where those in power have thought that their level of empathy should be judged by finding another way to transfer money from one group to another. I do not own a 'Save the Whale' T-shirt and I did not buy a Kony 2012 wristband, but I would like to think my sense of real social justice is as strong as anyone's. But it is social justice where those who cannot look after themselves are given a helping hand and those who fall on tough times are given a hand up. However, I do not believe in constantly taking away pieces of the pie from one group to give to another in order to convince the social critics we are governing for everyone. If you continue to do that, eventually the baker picks up his apron and goes and bakes elsewhere. I believe in growing the pie, ensuring everyone can share in a strong economy, but making sure those who put in the most effort are entitled to enjoy the fruits of this success. This effort might be measured by a father's long nights in a lonely office or it might be seen in a small donga in a mining camp while your husband and child await day 14 to roll around to see mum. Whatever form it takes, it must come with reward.

I will finish where I started, by thanking my friends and family for getting me here today. I intend to leave this place proud of the contribution I make. But this North Queensland boy will never forget where it is he has come from. I will work tirelessly to ensure the things that government need to do are done well. But I will do it always with the understanding that the role this place plays in people's lives is not as life or death as its inhabitants often think it is. Faced with a choice of whether the great contributions to this state have been in workplaces across Queensland or in George Street, Brisbane, it is with pride that I choose the contribution of quiet, hard-working and family-loving Australians like that deceased migrant cane farmer. I thank the House.

011 **Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the honourable member for Rockhampton, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (11.09 am): I rise to speak in the address-in-reply debate. This is a unique experience not only because I have the honour of representing the people of Rockhampton and making this speech on their behalf, but also because the opposition has been reduced to so few newly elected members. This is not something we as a party intend to see repeated. Many friends have

suggested that a maiden speech might be something of a daunting task in such circumstances. I have replied that often such things are informed by your life experiences. Does it compare to being present at the significantly premature induced birth of your first child, who is present in the gallery today, or to the experience of being a shiny new 21-year-old platoon commander standing in front of experienced Vietnam veteran infantrymen, seeking to convince them of your worth as their new leader? I suggest not really. I have approached this speech with one purpose, that is, to ensure that I represent myself in a rational and honest fashion.

I take this opportunity to thank the people of Rockhampton who supported the ALP and me in keeping the seat Labor. As the editor of the *Morning Bulletin* editorialised, the LNP had a small swing of 4.3 per cent, the lowest in the state, which shows that while Labor voters swung away from us, with good reason, they did not embrace the LNP.

I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of my father, Bill, my wife, Kim, my daughters Sarah and Bonnie, and my sister Diana. A statement of appreciation is hardly adequate for Kim and my three daughters, especially Sarah who stepped up to the role of campaign director in the most trying of circumstances. Kim has stuck with me through thick and thin for reasons that often escape me. She walked away from successful business and sporting careers to marry me and become a military camp follower, and she has been there with me ever since. My brother Robert also made every effort for me during the most tense periods of the campaign. The saying is that blood is thicker than water and no man could wish for any better family support or loyalty.

It is indeed sad that my late mother, Desma, is not here too. She once told me that one of her proudest moments was to witness my graduation parade as a newly commissioned army officer from the Officer Cadet School at Portsea. I suspect today might have engendered similar emotions, as I am sure my father understands at this moment. I need to say that my values and principles have been shaped by the example of two parents, both state schoolteachers, who with somewhat dogged determination persisted in laying the foundation of my character. Perhaps I was not the most receptive of students and, admittedly, there have been times when my choices would not have been encouraged by my parents. However, at least at those times I understood the implications of such decisions and that appreciation of consequence and acceptance of responsibility are largely due to the example set by and expected from my parents. They gave me the latitude to make mistakes, to follow my own star and to choose the path that ultimately led me here. My father always encouraged me to have a go and not to be overly consumed by personal doubts.

I can trace my family roots as Queenslanders back more than 140 years. My great great grandfather, Edward Byrne, sailed his barge from Brisbane to the Burnett River and in the early 1870s operated the first barge across the Burnett River. To this day the Byrne family remains well known in the Bundaberg and Wide Bay region. I am the product of many generations of regional Queenslanders and I am proud of it.

I want to thank the members of the ALP in Rockhampton who assisted and advised me from the moment I decided to contest the preselection. I thank people such as Robert Schwarten and his family who were collectively instrumental in my decision to seek to represent the people of Rockhampton in this chamber. I thank Davey Thomas who was my Rock of Gibraltar through the entire campaign. He never once failed me in thought or deed. I thank Kirsten Livermore, Craig Brown, Chris McJannett, Charlie Broughton, Ann McDougall, Roseanne Mathewson, Marilyn Tynan, Noel Keegan, Dan McIntyre, Justin Kann, Melissa Newton, Karen Horstman, Debra Wickerson, Rees Banks, Greg Belz, Barry Large and, last but not least, Barry Thompson from the Queensland Teachers' Union. They all provided me with assistance at critical stages.

It is not just Labor people and family whom I have to thank. Old Army and Defence comrades such as John Phelan, Steve Grant who was my last regular Army sergeant major and who has had the misfortune to work with me for almost two decades, Cameron Hurtz, Scott Mackie and Scott and Leesa McGinnis—Scott is an ex-US Navy submariner—all provided me with support when I needed it. Everyone in this chamber knows that politics is a team sport and the most important team is your local one. Without my family, those friends and party supporters I would not be here making this address.

As I said, my journey here began with parents dedicated to quality public education. They ensured their children got not just the benefit of the best formal education experiences but also the understanding that a good society is based on compassion, generosity and one's best endeavours to help create equity of opportunity, thereby ensuring we get the best economic and social outcomes by maximizing human capital. The strength of this state is its people and empowering our constituents through quality education must be our overwhelming priority. If we want a highly flexible and intellectually robust society, then the first step is a quality education. That journey took me from school in Bundaberg, to a Queensland Rail electrical apprenticeship in the Ipswich Railway Workshops and three decades of regular and Army Reserve service. The latter stages of that service overlapped a further career in the Department of Defence managing highly complex and at times controversial activities in one of the most environmentally significant tropical military training establishments in the world. I served overseas on active duty and commenced my military career as an airborne officer with the 3rd Battalion

of the Royal Australian Regiment, where I was introduced to my bride. Yes, that means that she supports the Blues on State of Origin nights.

However, I point out to honourable members that I was not parachuted into preselection, as I won a local plebiscite in order to be here. Again I thank those party members who put their faith in me back in May last year and the singularly critical support rendered by Robert Schwarten. Many in this chamber know Robert and I will not go into a resume of Robert's background. I must also acknowledge my opponent in that pre-selection, Mr Matthew Flanagan. Matthew demonstrated extraordinary integrity at a difficult moment, simply on the basis of a matter of personal honour. I mention it now because I want that fact to be known and recognised.

I am well aware that in the history of this parliament no Labor opposition has been represented by such a limited membership in the chamber. Honourable members must remember that the Australian Labor Party is the oldest social democrat political party in the world. Many times our opponents have crowed about the final demise of the ALP. This will not happen. One may well ask why I say that. Further, one may well ask why an ex-Army officer, from a profession renowned for its conservative tendencies, is a passionate member of the Labor Party. As a once career soldier who rose to a modest senior rank, became an ALP branch president, a candidate and, ultimately, a Labor MP, I reply that the majority of citizens who have served and continue to serve this country are working class people. There are working class soldiers, sailors and airmen buried in war cemeteries all over the world and no-one should be surprised that people such as me, who hail from that very stock, are supportive of Labor philosophies. As an officer the first rule is always to put the wellbeing of your people ahead of your own interests and I believe this to be one of the essential differences between genuine high performance groups and the also-rans. It is never about you!

The motto of my first unit was 'Duty First'. I have always believed strongly in this motto and have adopted it as a motto for life. I am not a free market fundamentalist. I do not accept that greed is good and I remain a committed opponent of the selfish 'affluenza' infecting our society. I support balance in all things. We have become a society where the sensible questioning of the circumstances of the uber-rich immediately draws howls of class warfare and class envy. That is nonsense and is really a case of Australians being force fed foreign mantras. Australians believe in human equality, especially with respect to social, political and economic affairs. That is what it means to be truly an egalitarian society and the notion is embraced by the vast majority of our people and the Australian Labor Party.

012 The political tipping point for me was the election of the first Howard government. This first term really got me energised about politics. I participated in a brutal and ill-considered reform program within the ADF. I give a word of warning: not all reforms are for the better. This particular program was nothing short of an abomination and saw the lives of normal, hardworking, loyal people turned upside down for no other reason than the implementation of a conservative ideological position. It was this experience and an intimate appreciation of the facts and implications that encouraged me to join the Australian Labor Party once I had separated from the Army. It seems that my generation of Portsea graduate Army officers possesses a certain amount of political fire in the belly. Mal Brough, who is well known to many on the other side of this chamber, served with me well before he was known to them. He was a Portsea boy in the class behind me. I also note that another classmate, Andrew Nikolic, is preselected federally for the Liberal Party in Tasmania.

There seems to be a bit of a trend there, so I am happy to balance out the political spectrum, so to speak. However, we all share a common notion of duty and service and, on that basis, seek to lead our communities. Genuine leadership in all circumstances is demonstrated most importantly by self-sacrifice in the face of difficulty for the good of the majority. When it comes to leadership I have always measured myself against the quote attributed to Erwin Rommel from 1938 when he was the director of a military school addressing assembled cadets. He said, 'Be an example to your people, both on duty and in private life. Never spare yourself, and let your people see that you don't, in your endurance of fatigue and privation. Always be tactful and well mannered, and teach your people to be the same. Avoid excessive sharpness or harshness of voice, as this usually indicates the man who has shortcomings of his own to hide.'

Manners cost nothing. I have always measured people against this basic behavioural benchmark and at times harshly judged myself in the same fashion. Vicious, nasty, loud and overly aggressive behaviour is always the signature of the intellectually or morally corrupt coward. Unfortunately, these undesirable qualities have been seen by some as useful in public life and have undoubtedly degraded the political discourse in this state. I suggest that this is one of the factors shaping the broader community's generally low regard for politicians.

Every member of this chamber should commit to raising people's opinions about the political process and politicians more generally. Despite some of the fantastic leadership models that the Army provided me, I have been guided in most things, as I said, by my parents. They valued the fundamental rights that we have, particularly the right to equal opportunity regardless of circumstance. This is the compass that was preset for me as a young apprentice, a soldier, a father, a husband, a son and now as an elected Labor MP. Perhaps I have not always stayed the course, though I have tried to strengthen

and improve myself as a result of my various failings. This is a function of self-awareness and force of habit.

Of course, I am well aware of the Tarago jokes at our expense, and that is fair enough. I prefer to think of Labor in this chamber as the 'significant 7'. Maybe that is something for cartoonists to contemplate in the future. As our leader has said, we owe an apology to those Labor voters whom the previous government pushed into the laps of our opponents. Those opponents now boast unprecedented numbers in this place. All I can promise is that I have committed myself over the next three years to giving our traditional supporters a reason to vote Labor again.

We have been resoundingly defeated at the polls. 'Belted' is a more accurate term. However, it would be a factual misrepresentation to condemn every facet of Labor's record. Labor made some very substantial investments and progress in areas such as education, disabilities, child protection and environmental protection. These achievements were before my time so I will not be dwelling further on the past. As we have already seen this morning, I am sure that the government will be reminding us enough over the next 12 to 18 months about their recollections and, I dare say, interpretations of the legacy of this period. Ultimately and in time, a measure of objectivity may prevail and the examples of uplifting teachers' salaries to parity with those of other states and creating a prep year so that our kids have the same number of years at school as those in other states may be given due recognition. I am not prosecuting an argument that somehow the electors got it wrong—the votes are in and have been tallied; Labor has been measured and found wanting—but I must propose that Labor was not a failure on all fronts.

Likewise, I do not believe that every idea or initiative that emanates from the conservative side of politics represents evil incarnate. My role in this chamber is to promote good public policy. Too often the blunt instrument of political necessity has overwhelmed or substantially compromised the development of good public policy in this great state. There will probably be some friction around the edges of the definition of good public policy. This should be expected as a product of the diversity of opinion present in this chamber. However, my point is that Queenslanders are sick and tired of the argument for argument's sake, of the spin generated simply to distract and divert from the essential facts of the matter. They deserve better than that. If this chamber is ever to be redeemed in their eyes then an outbreak of honesty might be worth a go. The people of Queensland expect every MP in this chamber to act in the best interests of Queensland. I believe that good public policy should be supported and acknowledged, regardless of its source. I hope to be able to work with the government, where those opportunities present, for the betterment of this marvellous state.

I guess it is normal for those opposite to be buoyed by their success and to be full of confidence. After all, nothing is sweeter than victory. But there is an old saying that it is not the size of the dog in the fight; it is the size of the fight in the dog. I can assure all present that the opposition is up for it. As a history enthusiast, I have to advise those who think they are unassailable because of the numbers that there are plenty of examples where, against heavy odds, small teams, pure of purpose, have defeated whole companies. The *Magnificent Seven* remains one of the classic movies for this very reason.

Some in this chamber admire Napoleon, and there are many things to admire. However, he once said, 'God is on the side of the big battalions,' and look what happened to him ultimately. I am more inclined to agree with Voltaire, another Frenchman, when he said, 'God is not on the side of the big battalions but on the side of those who shoot best.' As I often pointed out to my soldiers over the years, there is a reason the Army puts sights on their rifles. It is so that when they pull the trigger they hit the target. This parliament certainly provides we the Labor opposition with a target-rich environment and we will be from time to time, metaphorically speaking, pulling the trigger as an agile opponent.

I now turn to what is a most important priority for me—that is, the electorate of Rockhampton and one of the promises our side made during the recent campaign. Foremost was a pledge to provide funding for the Rockhampton Meals on Wheels to construct new premises on land gifted by the Rockhampton Regional Council. This is not a luxury; this is not something that can be ignored by government. I can say without reservation that it is an issue beyond politics. This is not just about providing a few meals to pensioners; it is about keeping people out of aged-care homes. It is not only essential to their health and wellbeing outcomes; it is also saving the taxpayer the huge cost of subsidising nursing-care beds. It is socioeconomic soundness by any measure. Also, I must point out to all that this project has as many implications for the seat of Keppel as it has for Rockhampton. I offer to work with the member for Keppel to bring this project on. It is appropriate and important for this government to dispel growing concerns about a partisan agenda and provide modest support to projects like the Meals on Wheels in Rockhampton where the merits are so patently non-partisan and obvious.

I suggest that the community has had their fill of promises that can never be delivered, of 'five-second sound bite' public policy debate and the never-ending distortion of political discourse. I know that I am contesting Cicero's basic rules of politics, but I submit that the time is up for such approaches. The party I respect, that I joined and that I believe in has strayed from its path and not only has been cut down by its political enemy but also has endured an epidemic of fratricide. Today we are but a few

holding the bridge. However, the fact is that we represent over 600,000 Queenslanders who voted for us. We as an opposition owe it to them to stand up and fight for the principles we believe in, and we will.

013 Madam SPEAKER: Before calling the next member, I wish to acknowledge visiting school groups today: Emmaus College Jimboomba, represented by the member for Beaudesert; Samford Valley Steiner School, represented by the member for Ferny Grove; and also Fairholme College Toowoomba, represented by the member for Toowoomba North. Before calling the honourable member for South Brisbane, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (11.29 am): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and can I add my congratulations on your election to the important role of Speaker of this House. It is both historic and, looking around this chamber, one might say timely that a woman has been elected for the first time as Speaker of this House.

I rise for the first time in this place, the people's house, both buoyed by the honour of representing the interests and concerns of the community I love and grounded by the responsibilities and challenges that lay ahead for me and my fellow Labor members. As only the second Labor member to give a maiden speech from the opposition benches in 25 years, I am conscious of the enormous responsibility that I now assume: firstly, to serve my constituents and to work for their interests tirelessly; secondly, to respect the democratic outcome of the last state election but to contribute to delivering to the people of Queensland a strong opposition that can hold the Liberal National Party's massive majority to account; and, lastly, to work hard to rebuild and restore the Labor Party in Queensland.

My first acknowledgement is to the traditional owners of the land on which we gather—the Jagera and the Turrbal peoples. I pay my respects to their elders past and those present, many of whom reside in the electorate of South Brisbane. South Brisbane boasts strong cultural and ethnic diversity that has flourished alongside a respectful recognition of the local Indigenous population. Unfortunately, just this week we have seen a breakdown in this normally harmonious situation with the forced eviction of Indigenous people from Musgrave Park.

Musgrave Park has long been a very important gathering place for Indigenous people across southern Queensland. According to local elders, as Moreton Bay was developed by Europeans, sacred bora sites were destroyed, denying young Indigenous men their important rite of passage in learning ancient customs and being initiated into adulthood. Musgrave Park became the site for a new bora ring, attracting those who were removed from their country looking for family, looking for community. Despite past evictions and past laws banning Indigenous people from the area, Musgrave Park has and always will hold immense cultural significance for Indigenous Queenslanders. It is a connection that no leader with a 21st century conscience should seek to diminish.

For 36 years Musgrave Park has also been the home of Paniyiri, a wonderful celebration of Greek culture and a public acknowledgement of the significant contribution that Greek migrants have made to the local community of South Brisbane and the larger community of Queensland. Paniyiri is important to residents in Brisbane, and many families, like mine, look forward to attending every year. I wish to acknowledge the efforts made by the Greek community and the festival organisers who have worked hard to make Paniyiri one of Brisbane's best cultural events.

Shamefully, yesterday, locals woke up to a complete lockdown of the Musgrave Park precinct, with more than 200 police officers brought in to evict 30 protesters. By anyone's assessment, this is not a measured response but an overreaction. Premier Newman and Lord Mayor Quirk could have chosen reason to resolve this situation but instead they chose force—overwhelming force. These scenes have not been seen in Brisbane since 1984, when Indigenous citizens who were merely gathering in Musgrave Park were forcibly evicted under the order of the then Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. As the rest of the nation watched in horror the events of yesterday morning, many local residents expressed their outrage to me that in a matter of three days Queensland had been taken back 30 years.

Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to be elected to this parliament as the member for South Brisbane. I am acutely aware of the historical significance of this particular area of our great city. In 1859 the order-in-council establishing independent government in Queensland had only 16 electorates. South Brisbane is one of only two that can claim uninterrupted continuity from the original 16.

South Brisbane is one of our state's smallest electorates, with the Brisbane River defining a large part of the electorate's boundary. Because of its natural boundary of the river, proximity to the CBD and key cultural and recreational facilities, South Brisbane boasts nine of the 15 bridges that cross the Brisbane River. And while locals enjoy living so close to the majestic snaking bends of the river, we also lament the devastation she inflicts when her banks are breached and our streets are submerged. Of all the major flood events to affect Brisbane—1841, 1893, 1974 and 2011—all have affected the history and distinctiveness of the South Brisbane electorate and our community.

Madam Speaker, like so many other Queenslanders, I was out and about during January 2011 helping family, friends and local businesses save belongings and then clean up. I found inspiration during this terrible time from two sources: firstly, the random acts of kindness from complete strangers,

particularly young people who lent a hand in the hard work of cleaning up—from those on high land who stored the furniture and valuables of those who were to be flooded and from those Queenslanders who accommodated whole families displaced by flooding and supported them for weeks on end. In this moment, this quintessentially Queensland moment, while the world watched in pity, Queenslanders displayed their true grit and their incredible compassion.

During this time I, like most other Queenslanders, also found inspiration in the leadership of my predecessor for South Brisbane, Anna Bligh. In this new parliament, the 54th Parliament, and in this new chapter in Queensland's political history, much will be argued and rebutted about the former Premier's legacy to Queensland. Indeed, we have already heard of this this morning. But it is unarguable that during the worst natural disasters in Queensland's recorded history Anna Bligh provided Queensland with the strength and leadership we needed to endure, recover and rebuild our state—a fact acknowledged and acclaimed even by the new Premier.

Madam Speaker, another important feature of the South Brisbane electorate is its ethnic diversity, which I referred to earlier. It is a characteristic that is particularly close to my heart as I am a proud product of this cultural melting pot. Along with some 30 per cent of the current South Brisbane population, my late grandparents and parents migrated to Australia from another country. At the time they arrived in Australia the White Australia Policy was still our nation's overarching migration position, and by the time the Whitlam Labor government finally abolished it I was one.

During my school years, Australia embraced the policy of multiculturalism, and I lived this throughout my childhood growing up in Fisher Street, East Brisbane. Our neighbours to one side were a family from the former state of Yugoslavia and the neighbours on the other side were Russian immigrants. The wave of Vietnamese refugees post the Vietnam War saw many families resettle in West End alongside the large and well-established Greek community.

Multiculturalism has served Australia well and South Brisbane is a microcosm of its success. The many people who visit the West End and South Bank precincts do so to experience a broad range of ethnic cuisines and cultural experiences just as thousands will this weekend for Paniyiri.

Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the special contribution of a number of local multicultural and ethnic organisations that have contributed to making multiculturalism a success in South Brisbane: the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, the Multicultural Development Association of Queensland, the Greek Orthodox Community of St George, Annerley and District Community Centre and the Brisbane Lebanese Maronite community.

As a second generation Lebanese migrant, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of key Lebanese descendants to the city of Brisbane and Queensland—from David Malouf's contribution to literature, which has attracted many awards including the recently defunded Queensland Premier's Literary Awards, to the Hon. Sam Doumany, the first state member of parliament of Lebanese descent who took his seat in this House as the member for Kurilpa and was from the other side of politics.

Like other diaspora, the Lebanese are hard workers and they contribute greatly to their communities and I want to acknowledge them here today. We are small in comparison to our cousins in Sydney and Melbourne, but we are a close-knit community that works hard to continue to keep Lebanese culture and tradition alive in Brisbane.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to note the contribution to the cultural diversity that local artists, retailers and organisations make to the fabric of the South Brisbane community. The recent and hasty actions by the new government has given them much cause for concern. From local writers who are disheartened by the fact that Queensland now holds the new inglorious honour of being the only state in Australia to not have a government sponsored program to reward emerging Queensland writers and great Australian literature; to Sisters Inside, who have recently been advised that they no longer have access to the small amount of funding they have relied upon to provide crucial support to help in the rehabilitation of women prisoners in Townsville. Many organisations are greatly concerned that this is a sign of things to come—that governing with care, fairness and compassion will be completely outweighed by the massive Liberal National Party majority. As their state member, they will always have in me a strong advocate for the important work that they do.

014 The South Brisbane I live in is unrecognisable from the one I grew up in. The South Brisbane I remember from my childhood had a maximum security prison operating in its heart, it had a stretch of derelict riverbank that invited squalor and crime, and, apart from church and family gatherings, nothing ever happened on a Sunday. Today South Brisbane boasts some of our nation's best cultural and recreation facilities in the Gallery of Modern Art and South Bank. Boggo Road continues to evolve as one of the inner-city's most exciting mixed-use precincts; pedestrians and cyclists have access to more river crossings in the Goodwill and Kurilpa bridges; and construction of dedicated busways has revolutionised public transport in Brisbane.

Our emergence as a modern inner-city precinct has not happened by chance; it has happened by choice. It has been Labor choices driven by Labor values that have indelibly changed Queensland, Brisbane and my electorate of South Brisbane for the better. It was the Goss Labor government that

brought to life the vision of South Bank. It was the Beattie Labor government that built and delivered the Goodwill Bridge and GoMA, forever changing the dynamics of the area across the river from the CBD. It was the Bligh Labor government that built the Kurilpa Bridge—the world's largest tensegrity bridge, an international, award-winning display of the best from science, art, engineering and architecture.

It has been the vision of the past three Labor governments to coax Queensland out of the 1950s, where the last long-term National Liberal government wanted us to stay, and have us emerge as a more confident, better educated, better skilled and more compassionate state. Largely, due to that, we have seen massive levels of migration from southern states which has had a very big impact on the inner-city through increased development. South Brisbane residents have taken on a reasonable amount of increased density and worked hard to reach a compromise over the past few years for sustainable increased development in the West End, Kangaroo Point, Woolloongabba and South Brisbane precincts. All of this hard work and compromise by residents has been thrown out the window as Lord Mayor Quirk and Premier Newman now review agreed local neighbourhood plans in order to further increase high-rise development—an announcement conveniently made a matter of days after the South Brisbane by-election.

There was no ambiguity in the outcome or the message delivered by Queenslanders on 24 March this year. This is our system of democracy and it is the system I will defend, regardless of the outcome. There has never existed a perfect government and nor will one ever exist. The wear and tear on government, as former Prime Minister Paul Keating coined, is inevitable, and after more than 20 years the former Queensland Labor government certainly had its share of wear and tear. However, I am enormously proud of a number of key achievements delivered by Labor in this state. These include effectively managing the Queensland economy through the global financial crisis; creating hundreds of thousands of jobs during this time when the private sector could not; delivering the biggest infrastructure program in the country year in, year out; producing important infrastructure including rebuilding and upgrading every hospital throughout Queensland; delivering a surplus seven years out of the past 10 and only going into deficit to absorb the worst effects of the GFC and to keep Queenslanders in work; delivering the best workplace health and safety laws and the fairest and most efficient workers compensation system in Australia; massively expanding quality early education services including a universal prep program and kindergartens; increasing the Disability Services budget by nearly 500 per cent to help Queenslanders with a disability and their carers; introducing an acknowledgement to the traditional owners in the Preamble of the Queensland Constitution; enacting laws to protect the pristine wild rivers throughout Queensland; legislating for the end of sand mining on Stradbroke Island; and ending broadscale tree clearing through regional forestry agreements.

These are merely some of the achievements Labor in this state has delivered, for which I am proud. Every Labor member in Queensland should feel proud of being associated with the transformation and modernisation of our state. To the 35 former Labor members who sat in this chamber, who contested the last election and lost, I am enormously proud of your contribution to this Labor legacy and to your communities.

The Labor Party undoubtedly finds itself in difficult circumstances. However, as a party with a 120-year history, we have been here before and we have rebuilt and reformed to come back stronger and better. We owe it to Labor members and supporters to be diligent and honest in our rebuilding efforts so we can stand up for the values that they look for in Labor. Standing up for fairness in the workplace and advocating justice for those who are most vulnerable and marginalised. Delivering opportunity and prosperity through education and training, jobs and a strong economy. And ensuring that our environment is protected for future generations. The Labor Party is part of a political movement that is acutely aware of its responsibility to this state and this nation.

The other important part of our political movement is the trade union movement—the foundation of our fair society. Without unions, Australians would not have a minimum wage or annual leave, superannuation or paid parental leave, workplace health and safety or workers compensation. These are basic entitlements in Australia but they are considered unattainable to most working people in many other countries including the United States. These reforms—now widely accepted—did not happen overnight and they did not happen without a lot of effort on behalf of wage earners. They should all be protected because, as WorkChoices showed, many of them can be lost at the stroke of a pen by a conservative government.

As the first person from my large extended family to attend university, I know too well the value of a good education in transforming lives. I have not only worked hard but I have been lucky. I was born to parents who, despite not having much of an education, valued it and encouraged us to complete senior schooling. My first thanks today goes to my Mum, Yesmine, who is in the gallery. When mum arrived from Lebanon, she had no English skills but a huge work ethic. Not only did she learn English on the job; she also raised five children and some 40 years later continues to work in a fruit shop. If I contribute even a quarter of her hard work and diligence to duty and family in this House and in the South Brisbane community, then I will have acquitted myself honourably.

I want to also acknowledge my late father, Victor Trad. His sacrifices and courage are the strong foundation of the success and happiness that my siblings and I enjoy, and for that we are eternally grateful. To my siblings and their spouses, many of whom are in the gallery today—Marilyn Trad and Damien Atkinson, Lorene Trad and Byron Head, Naji and Sandra Trad and Fina Trad—thank you for your constant support and strength.

To my principal partner in life, my husband, Damien van Brunschot, your advice has never let me down. Your faith in me has never wavered. Your optimism and enthusiastic support propels me each and every day. Our sons, Leo and Vincent, deserve special acknowledgement—Leo who completed his last NAPLAN test today. I know they will always balance out the highs and lows of this job with their particular challenges and their unconditional love.

For their longstanding friendship, support and work on my campaign, I place on record my thanks to Alan and Adrian; Penny and Jo; Cecilia Anthony and Ashley Hogan; the bookclub ladies who this year will celebrate our 10th anniversary; the new leader of the Labor Opposition in council and my friend, Milton Dick, and Susan McGrady; the Leader of the Opposition, Anastacia Palaszczuk, and all opposition members and staff. I thank you for your diligence, hard work, guidance and support. To Andrew Dettmer, Gary Bullock, Julie Bignell, Bill Marklew and Jim Valery, thank you for your leadership and support through good times and bad.

Madam Speaker, any casual observer will know that no political party can claim to own a seat regardless of its margin. When I embarked upon the South Brisbane by-election, I knew it would be difficult, if not impossible, to win. In two previous conservative landslides—1929 and 1974—both of which were smaller than 24 March, South Brisbane was won by the conservatives. The fact that Labor won is testament to the hard work and dedication of my campaign team and the local Labor community. I particularly want to thank my campaign director, Sarah Warner, and ALP organiser Shannon Fentiman. To Claudia Whitton, Paddy Keys-Macpherson, Ellie Desmarchelier, Chloe Moss, Leon Naoumis, Peter Shooter, Cath Rafferty, Tim Quinn, Jane Austen, Tina Langford, Louise Kelly, Kevin O'Brien, Susan Ellison and Angus Sutherland, I simply say thank you. Winning would not have been possible without your voluntary efforts. I also wish to record my thanks to the Gabba councillor Helen Abrahams for her assistance during our combined elections.

To the people of South Brisbane, thank you for entrusting me with your confidence. I hope that you will find my thoughts to be just, my actions good, my speech honest and my disposition even and transparent. I humbly look forward to serving you in the years to come.

015  **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.49 am): I rise today with the greatest honour to present my address-in-reply to Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland's speech at the opening of the 54th Parliament and this most auspicious occasion. Her Excellency executed her official duties on behalf of the Queen, being the head of this parliament, the Commonwealth of Australia and her namesake the state of Queensland with the greatest of distinction, poise and grace. I thank Her Excellency for making this such a historic occasion in so many different ways.

First and foremost today, I would like to congratulate the member for Maroochydore on becoming the first female Speaker in Queensland. This is the supreme exultant position of the parliamentary roles in the Queensland parliament, and I am sure that Madam Speaker will uphold the office of the Speaker with the utmost of integrity and decorum for which she is already renowned. I do not underestimate the huge task that is before Madam Speaker with such a new and diverse Legislative Assembly that the people of Queensland have elected to this special place, but without a doubt Madam Speaker will oversee a very fair and equitable parliamentary process that the members of this House require and the people of Queensland deserve.

I would also like to congratulate the Premier, the Hon. Campbell Newman, on his elevation to the position as the highest elected representative of the great people of the state of Queensland. The people of Queensland have spoken and it is a monumental day for Queensland. Today is not the day to talk about the specifics of his journey to achieving this the highest office, but I would like to mention that his tenacity, work ethic and strength of character over the past 12 months are just a few of the most impressive qualities I have ever seen in an individual, and my political oversight has carried me through almost 25 years in local government and state politics.

Queensland is in great hands and he has a strong deputy at his side in the member for Callide, the Hon. Jeff Seeney, as well as a hardworking Treasurer in the member for Clayfield, the Hon. Tim Nicholls. I congratulate them both. Their united, focused and unrelenting efforts have delivered the unprecedented 78 LNP members out of 89 seats in this parliament—hallelujah. I also congratulate all of the ministerial and parliamentary appointees with whom I will be working very closely, including the member for Gregory as the Chief Whip, the member for Burdekin as the Senior Whip and the members for Hervey Bay and Mount Ommaney as the deputy whips.

The mandate that the people of Queensland have given the Premier and his Liberal National Party team is the clearest message possible that Queenslanders demanded change. I am very excited to be part of this team as Leader of the House, and I am very excited to be part of that vehicle for change in Queensland. Expectations are great after the mandate given and the change in direction of

Queensland that has been bestowed upon us, and we must fulfil our responsibilities to the best of our abilities as guardians of the state of Queensland.

The 100th anniversary of the sinking of *Titanic* brings to mind similarities between that event and where Queensland was heading under the previous government. It is our duty to turn the ship around with a new captain and his crew, and we are extremely well placed to see Queensland develop, grow and prosper for all Queenslanders. I would like to think of myself as the captain's first mate, but I think 'navigator around the decks of the parliamentary house' is the more appropriate nomenclature. Under the previous government and Captain Bligh, the good ship HMAS *Queensland* was heading towards the financial iceberg that would have seen the very way of life that Queenslanders expected and deserved diminish. It will take a long time to get Queensland back on the right course, but the 'New-man' as captain has already started off in a flying fashion with his 100-day program.

I would like to thank the Premier for having faith in me to carry out the duties of the Leader of the House in the 54th Parliament of Queensland. My role as Leader of the House is to be responsible for executing the management and arrangement of government business in this parliament. I do not take this responsibility lightly and I will ensure that I carry out my duties with the utmost diligence, integrity and careful consideration of each and every member of this House. On the conservative side of politics I follow former leaders of the house including: Tony Fitzgerald, April 1976; Neville Harper, September 1989; Lin Powell, 1987; and others. Most recently I follow from our opponent's side the former member for Sunnybank, Judy Spence. With the make-up of the 54th Parliament being 78 LNP members, seven Labor members, two Katter's Australian Party members and two Independents, I understand that my job will be a challenging one with so many new and diverse members.

I am so proud to belong to a party that embraces diversity in all of its members, as this has created a parliament that will truly be a representation of all members of our community and all aspects of the private sector. We are truly blessed in Australia to live under a Westminster system of parliament. Even though it may have some flaws, it is still the best democratic parliamentary system in the world. It is a system that lets the people have their say by voting in who they want, and it then gives them the ability to be part of the democratic process through the parliamentary system, which includes a consultative and community-engaging committee process. I am so pleased that we now have a government which will ensure this process will be succinct, with its parliamentary requirements and responsibilities, and will bring back the traditions of open and accountable parliamentary process.

There has been a dramatic shift in business confidence in Queensland since the LNP's monumental win on 24 March 2012. This has been a welcome relief for the backbone of our communities—that is, the small business owner. They have waited for this day and they can breathe a sigh of relief because they will get the support they need to grow and develop their businesses for the future.

The LNP is committed to the four-pillar economic plan with the key priorities of tourism, agriculture, resources and construction, and this will be done by cutting red tape and regulation. The one problem for Queensland businesses and the community currently is the disastrous federal budget that the Gillard government handed down recently, with no tax relief, no red-tape relief and no support for businesses, which are the biggest employers of Queenslanders. We need a change of government federally to see Australia thrive like it once did and support the policies and mandate of our new LNP government. Liberal National Party governments are good for business; Labor governments are bad for business and employment.

I will now speak about my fabulous region of the Gold Coast and Mermaid Beach. I will unfortunately have to reject the overtures from the member for Gregory to swap seats over the three months of summer; it is not possible, member for Gregory. The new LNP government has been great news for the city of the Gold Coast. People have told me that confidence in the business community has already turned a corner and it is on the up and up. With the Commonwealth Games heading our way in 2018, we will see a financial injection from government, business and the tourism sector which will be of great benefit to our region.

We have a new and exciting Gold Coast City Council which is committed to working in conjunction with the LNP government, and I congratulate Mayor Tom Tate on his election to the very important role of mayor of the Gold Coast City Council. He follows a long line of wonderful mayors. Thank you to the constituents of Mermaid Beach who voted to return me to the parliament of Queensland. I want to also acknowledge the people of Mermaid Beach who did not vote for me and assure them that I will represent their concerns in the parliament just as vigorously. I would like to thank my wife, Ruth, my son, Louis, and my daughter, Jess. Without their continued support I would not be able to be here. We are a very close family and we support them in everything they do and they support us in everything we do as parents.

I would like to thank each and every one of my supporters and volunteers for their hard work on the 2012 Mermaid Beach campaign. The 2012 state election made Queensland political history, with 78 LNP candidates sweeping into office in an outstanding and overwhelming result, and each of the hardworking volunteers across the state of Queensland has been part of this historic victory. In the seat

of Mermaid Beach we increased our margin from 10.8 per cent to 26.05 per cent, which means we received the sixth highest percentage of the vote in the state on an individual seat basis. This is due to the dedication, commitment and hard work of all of the volunteers who helped in our campaign.

016 I want to make special mention of my electorate staff. Fiona Ward has been with me since virtually day one of my political career and she does a wonderful job. My assistant electorate officer Jaqi Kair, who has been on maternity leave but who will be back later in the year, has done a wonderful job in helping the constituents of my electorate. We help all of them as much and for as long as we can. Gemma Corles has taken over that role for the last 12 months, and she has done a wonderful job in that position.

I now want to offer a few words to the newly elected members on both sides of the House, and I do this both in my new role as Leader of the House and as, along with the Treasurer in the 2006 draft, a fairly recent parliamentarian to the Queensland parliament. In the cut and thrust of politics, I would suggest to all members not to lose sight of the very reason that you are here and you must at all times remember to respect your colleagues. You might not agree with them, but you must respect your colleagues because they got elected just the same as you did. In their electorates they are just as popular as you are. You need to respect your staff because they will be your greatest asset in the community. You need to respect all of the staff here in the Parliament House precinct because they are here to help you, and they do a wonderful job. There are literally hundreds of former members who would tell you of the wonderful support that they have received during their time in this House.

Above all, all members need respect for the electorate and the community that gave you the utmost admiration and respect in giving you their vote to represent their community needs in the important role as their representative in the Queensland parliament. If you remember honour before honours you will always have the best of your community at the forefront in your mind as you go about your everyday lives serving the people of your electorate as their representative in this House. We are in a very special place and it does not matter if you are the brunt of barbecue jokes or the brunt of media assertions that you do not do anything or you are overpaid and underworked and all of those issues. You are an important part of the highest legislative place in Queensland. There are 89 members and it is your duty to appreciate that very high honour and act accordingly at all times.

In conclusion, I am honoured to be re-elected to this House as the Liberal National Party member for Mermaid Beach for the can-do LNP government. I will endeavour to represent the people of Mermaid Beach with a strong and dedicated focus on the needs of my electorate. I would encourage any Mermaid Beach constituents to come and see me with any state issues that concern them or for any assistance that they might need over the next three years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Thuringowa, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Thuringowa.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (12.03 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address the House. I congratulate Madam Speaker on her appointment as the first female Speaker in the Queensland parliament and of course the first LNP Speaker in the Queensland parliament. I want to pledge my loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II and her representative in Queensland, Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, and to the constituents of the Thuringowa electorate. I feel very honoured to be able to address the parliament as the member for Thuringowa. I deem it a great privilege to have been elected to this position and I am instilled with a sense of deep loyalty to the constituents of the Thuringowa electorate for having placed their trust in me.

I am also here today in no small way due to the support of many people for whom I have great respect and admiration and whose support I am very privileged to have. At this time I remember my friends and extended family and I thank them for the guidance and direction they have given me in my life. May our friendship continue and remain strong and long lasting. I ask the House though to forgive me if I indulge on this occasion in giving special recognition and thanks to some people. I thank the honourable member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, John Dywer, Jane McNamara and Des and Jacko Barr for the support and encouragement they gave me during the early days when nominating for pre-election and later during my campaign in the seat of Thuringowa for the LNP; to the members of the Thuringowa SEC and the executive for selecting me to contest the seat and for their 100 per cent support from day one; and also to the many LNP shadow ministers who visited Thuringowa and provided us with their support and assistance, especially the member for Hinchinbrook and now Minister Andrew Cripps. I thank you all.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my campaign team in Niki Lyons, Robin Scottney-Turbill, Tom Darlington and Peter Sandery. They all demonstrated the difference between an interest and a commitment when you believe strongly in something or someone. Special mention must be made of Tom Darlington and Peter Sandery for their support and guidance to me 24/7 during a long campaign. The mentoring, friendship and advice they gave me provided me with a better understanding of politics and the political process. They were with me every step of the way, whether it was Peter by my side

doorknocking on the hottest summer days or Peter, Tom and I sitting back discussing the history of Queensland politics. The many hours I spent with them both helped get me here today.

I must also thank the former federal member for Herbert, the Hon. Peter Lindsay. His wealth of political knowledge and skills was invaluable to me during the campaign and I thank you, Peter. Mention must also be made of my North Queensland colleagues—the Minister for Local Government and the member for Mundingburra, David Crisafulli, and the member for Townsville, John Hathaway, who are also in the House today. From the beginning of the campaign, David, John and I worked together in a united way which resulted in the three of us successfully claiming the three long-held Labor seats. We will continue this unified front to ensure our region gets its fair share.

To my former employer George Booth at Booth Pastoral Services and the staff, a big thank you for allowing me the time to chase my dream of getting into parliament and for help in so many other ways. To my mother Pauline Cox, to whom I am forever indebted for all she gave and sacrificed for our family, her unselfish love and commitment to her children and her usual hands-on approach to life in getting things done, I thank you. Also to my siblings, Les, Kellie and Andrew, I thank you for your support and help not just during the campaign but also throughout my life. Les generously put in countless hours over the phone and advised me firsthand from his knowledge of the workings of state politics. Thanks to my younger brother Andrew, who was very much hands on assisting me with everything from letterboxing, putting up signage, manning polling booths on election day to even taking up child-minding duties for Janine and I. Finally, words cannot express sufficiently my thanks and gratitude to my wife Janine and our children Harry, Georgia and Dugald. You have all been very supportive and patient with me over the past 18 months when at times it must have seemed to be a very selfish endeavour on my part to enter the Queensland parliament. Your love and support never wavered. You are my drive but, more importantly, you are my life.

First and foremost, I am a family man and I believe that our society can only be truly strong if it is built on the foundation stone of good family values. I believe in the sanctity of marriage and the right to raise children in a safe and loving environment where they can get the best possible education. I believe we should treat the older members of our community with the respect that they have earned. Grandparents and elders are, after all, the bedrock of the family unit. I also believe in reward for hard work. From a very young age I learnt about hard work, as my father died when I was 10 and the children in the family had to step up and fill the breach to help our inspirational mother keep the property running. We succeeded because we were resourceful, hard working and we believed in helping ourselves and not relying on others to carry us. It was a lesson that has shaped my endeavour since then. However, another lesson from that time was to show compassion for those who are less fortunate and, when needed, to speak up on their behalf. It is that belief that has led me here today with the ambition of representing my electorate and making a difference for my community. It is my firm belief that taking responsibility for helping others and not just looking out for No. 1 is what makes a truly valuable member of society. I believe in being honest, not only to others but to myself with regard to my beliefs.

Thuringowa is the second fastest growth area in Queensland. It is in a prime position to benefit from this growth and to reap the advantages, but the expansion must be matched by good governance and infrastructure development. To cater for this growth, we need to increase education facilities, we need to improve the traffic network and we need to support the front-line operations of our emergency services.

017 Thuringowa encompasses a large area of new housing estates and any growth in industry and commerce throughout the region places a strain on our present resources. Thuringowa has a mix of private and government enterprises, small business, tradespeople, professionals and Defence Force personnel and it stands in good stead to remain a high-growth and self-sustaining area. The people of Thuringowa need a strong voice if they are to capitalise on this growth. We are the home of the North Queensland Cowboys at Dairy Farmers Stadium. The team is currently in the top four of the NRL and is aiming for a 2012 premiership—sorry Vaughan. We are also part of the support base for the Townsville Crocs and the Townsville Fire, who made the play-offs this year in the NBL and the WNBL respectively. Sport plays a large part in the lives of our locals and initiatives such as Get in the Game for children will help ease the burden of fees and costs on struggling parents. May I take this opportunity to welcome an additional infantry battalion to Townsville. 3RAR is now based at Lavarack Barracks and its arrival has enhanced the strong military presence in our city, which is home to the largest Defence Force establishment in Australia.

I joined the political fray as the LNP was being formed and, while proud of my rural heritage, I endorse enthusiastically this unified conservative voice. I have many friends who come from the opposite side of politics who I also have learned much from when it comes to looking after others rather than just ourselves. While campaigning in Thuringowa, it became very evident that my constituents want their member to be active and involved at the local level in community events. The residents of Thuringowa have also emphasised to me the need for action on juvenile crime in our area. The LNP government's plans to increase policing levels and introduce an early intervention program for juveniles will go a long way towards addressing these problems. Early intervention programs that emphasise civic pride without peer pressure together with programs like boot camps will go long way towards repairing

the divides caused by juvenile crime in the community. More resources will need to be directed towards these issues.

Like all Australians, the Thuringowa residents are experiencing increased pressure from the rising costs of living. They welcome our efforts to curtail increases in car registration and service costs. Health has been a serious ongoing issue over the past couple of decades in the region and, along with my constituents, I have welcomed the LNP's promise of a paediatric intensive care unit at the Townsville Hospital and other improvements to health services. The Townsville area has the highest per capita recreational boat ownership in Queensland. I have no doubt that a fair proportion of these owners are Thuringowa residents who are trying to cope with the shortage of boat ramps and car/trailer parking areas. This issue will become a bigger problem as the population increases and I will be working with my colleagues to address it. My vision for Thuringowa is for a vibrant community that works together to achieve results. As their representative, I will strive to be actively involved and assist them in their decision making.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is at this time that I wish to draw your attention to the exploits of an early pioneer, George Elphinstone Dalrymple, who was active in my region in the mid part of the 19th century. George, unlike some of his colleagues, was not an explorer with a narrow view. His vision for the north included pastoralism, tropical agriculture and mining and he did his best to develop all three—not unlike the present day LNP's vision of a four pillar economy. The LNP has outlined the need to focus on the four pillars of mining and resources, tourism, construction and agriculture to enable economic recovery and growth. Nowhere is this vision more important than in North Queensland and Thuringowa.

A major constraint facing George Dalrymple in the 1860s was the tyranny of distance from the seat of government in Brisbane. There was no real concept of the issues facing an emerging North Queensland or recognition of the economic potential of the region. Unfortunately, some 150 years later it seemed as though the north was again facing the same disconnect from a southern focused government. The policies of the past government had been driven by social engineers who tried to control all levels of government. They had forgotten the role of the three levels of government and ignored the economic drivers for development. The LNP understands the different roles, and we have said we will give the power back to local councils to make relevant decisions. We need to lobby federal governments irrespective of their side of politics for a fair return to this state in recognition of Queensland's contribution to the nation's coffers.

It is time now to focus on the economic potential of my region and turn that potential into an economic reality. My long-term ambition is to promote the sustainable development of North Queensland. I believe the focus needs to be on the areas of water, energy, infrastructure and food production. The importance of these areas have been emphasised by the effects of the recent natural disasters on both urban and rural communities as well as major industries such as mining and agriculture across the state. To the detriment of Queensland, and in particular North Queensland, the previous government forgot that if you choose to stop feeding the goose, the eggs will no longer remain golden.

In closing, I wish to state that the point we need to get right in a good government is the recognition of the significance of local, state and national issues and the need for balance between them. It is a recognition of the unique role that each level of government has to play in contributing to the welfare of the individual and in ensuring the security and prosperity of their community for future generations. I believe good government provides support, not direction; assistance, not hindrance; and policy, not politics. I look forward to representing the people of Thuringowa and working with them to deliver that security and prosperity. Never look back. It is that which is in front of you that you need to see. May I say to the members of the House to take note of the shortness of my speech, as that it will probably be the last time.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (12.15 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, may I congratulate you on your appointment. To be returned to your electorate as their representative is one of the greatest honours that a community can bestow upon an individual. I have had the great privilege twice in my life. Having won a by-election then losing the subsequent general election only months later, I clearly know what it is like to climb a mountain and then fall off it. I would say to any member who so asks that they should never take the privilege for granted, nor assume that people's attitudes are slow to change.

The public were rightfully sick of what they were being told to accept by the previous Labor government. Tragically for Labor, it has been told 77 times now that its attitude was unacceptable. Perceptions are one thing, but reality is a harder taskmaster. If the outcome of such a massive change is something other than what was promised, then the public reactions will be swift and terminal for probably too many. To hold the public trust, we all have to do more than just replace prior members in name. Queenslanders' expectation of our government is to reduce the cost of living, reduce government waste, enable them to look to a person rather than a machine and to get out of their way as they do their business.

The parliament faces more challenges than ever before—not only because our financial structure is so dire but also the global commodity prices have fallen 25 per cent in the last 12 months after a

boom. Queensland has a commodity-driven economy, whether we like it or not. The times ahead look very worrying. The LNP plan outlined at the recent election reflects that situation and is an appropriate response to it. We often get the politicians and the policies that reflect the time in which we live. That said, in this 54th Parliament the LNP has a greater monopoly on power in this state. This implies even greater attention to integrity, responsibility and audit or we will fail too. It is a triumph of democracy that these things can occur without civil insurrection. The mere fact that the transition of power occurred so civilly after a spiteful election campaign gives me great hope for the future. Forgiveness is often the greatest unacknowledged human virtue.

Politics is a connect of ideas. The former Labor hierarchy strode far too far away from the views of everyday people and, sadly, with now seven members it will struggle for their communities, electorates and the aspirations of the 530,000 Queensland voters who supported them. I put it to honourable members that we all need to think outside the square and go to where we have not gone before. My great friend and colleague the member for Gregory spoke yesterday on ABC Radio about the need to be fair to all of our parliamentary colleagues and, by default, to all Queenslanders. For me, the last great floods—and I have heard this mentioned before by the now member for South Brisbane—and also the cyclones in the north were a great reality check. Too many lives will never be the same. Many here worked far from home or at home to do what they could. In many overseas countries it was not missed how here in Queensland, Australia, complete strangers made personal sacrifices to help other complete strangers who were in need. This is the Australian way and it is part of our great belief in a fair go for all. I worked in Emerald, Alpha, Bundamba and then went through the Downs to Theodore. I was one of many helping in their own way. I think we need to help one another more than ever before in this parliament. I ask members to go out of their way to be helpful and forgiving.

018 Labor supporters are our constituents, too. Their members are hopelessly outnumbered and our newly drafted parliamentary committee system could fail if participant members on those portfolio committees do not act totally impartially or do not seek to connect with those stakeholders with whom we have not traditionally linked. In difficult times, by drawing in all those views and counsel we might get through the challenges ahead. I would implore all members to find out the detailed views of their constituents—what is it about any legislation that troubles them—and address those concerns either within the committee system or directly so as to fill those gaps that occur where there is an imbalance of representation.

For all new members there will be times when there is conflict, there will be potentially embarrassing moments and possible fears regarding their own future chances of promotion. If you put the interests of the constituents first then you are never wrong, nor should you be penalised for being their representative. It does help to remember that we are all in it together. Do not always put yourself first. Business may be war but politics is about coalitions of support. It is not about you; it is about them.

For me, 'them' refers to my electorate of Gaven, a beautiful part of the Gold Coast hinterland closely linked to Nerang River and the headwaters of the Coomera River. Things are very tough there due to the depressed Gold Coast economy—although it was great to hear some good news from the member for Mermaid Beach. The Gold Coast economy has had it very tough. Its construction industry and the uncertainty of the times are worrying for the future. For many, the hope of spin-offs from the 2018 Commonwealth Games—and six years is not too far away—cannot come soon enough. For my constituents I will do everything I can to deliver a lot more than Metricon Stadium, which abuts the eastern border of my electorate.

Under a new Liberal National Campbell Newman government I am proud to announce that we will reduce the cost of living starting with measures introduced in parliament this week. Reintroducing the principal place of residence stamp duty concession will have the ability, pending intergovernmental support, to stimulate some growth in the Gold Coast property market. I congratulate the incoming government for implementing this as quickly as possible.

Police resourcing has been hotly debated on the Gold Coast over the past few years, and I will always continue to fight for my electorate and ensure the region, which has long missed out, gets its fair share of state resources. Bus timetabling is an issue that I have campaigned on over the last three years, and under our government I am pleased to see that public transport affordability is being addressed. I look forward to meeting with the minister to plan how best to meet the growth and future transport needs of our city, in particular east-west travel.

As a local GP over the last 30 years I have seen the epidemic of failure in our public health system and staff morale at record lows, not only in our health system but across the whole Public Service. We must ensure that our new government can boost work ethic and ensure systemic success. The health minister, the member for Southern Downs, Mr Lawrence Springborg, and I spoke this morning in great detail of just how good Queensland Health is. One should never think about throwing the baby out with the bathwater. We are very well served by a wonderful organisation. We just have to make sure that together we get it working. I would implore everyone to actively participate in the new hospital boards that are coming in and try to make sure they work so that regional areas, and even the big areas like metro south, metro north and Brisbane, start working efficiently together.

Many of the families in my electorate will greatly benefit from the introduction of the sporting club registration subsidy. This comes at a time when struggling families most need assistance and relief with daily living costs.

I want to thank my campaign director, Mr Phil Lovell. Phil volunteered his time endlessly to help me with tasks on a daily basis. Most know that the management of not only a campaign but also a politician is a most unenviable task and is a very difficult job for volunteers at the best of times. I would like to mention and thank some of the humble volunteers who worked on my campaign.

I would like to thank Gloria James, Jane Ru, Rohan Seneviratne, Rhys Selby, Jankin Hay, Gordon Walker, Glen Case, Ted Cameron, Bev Hellyer, Steve McCabe, Bronwyn Breadmore, June Kennedy, Brian Morris, Pam Ryan, Mel and Meg Funk, John Collins, Ray and Lisa Stearman, Barry and Val Moore and Terry Selfe. Thank you to everyone else on the campaign team—the list is too long to read out—who worked tirelessly and often behind the scenes and, of course, thank you to the broad group of people who worked for the SEC both in my electorate and in the region. I would like to thank all those who assisted me over the past parliamentary term, in particular Helen Treherne and Anne Stafford, who have volunteered many hours in my office. To my electorate officers, Mrs Bev Malseed and Susannah Stearman: thank you very much.

I could never have got to a third term without the great help of my wife, Susie, who is the former councillor for division 7 on the Gold Coast, who endured nine months of very difficult treatment for breast cancer about 18 months ago, during my most recent term, and then, sadly for her, was defeated in a very hostile and bruising Gold Coast mayoral campaign. I certainly hope that that is reversed in a couple of years. My four now-adult children, Caroline, Alex, John and Helen, have spent a lifetime with parents campaigning as Nationals and latterly the LNP. I sympathised with the member for Callide when he described how his three children have spent a lifetime with this as well. It is a rather interesting experience, and one wonders whether as adults they will be affected for the better or for the worse by it. It was good to hear what John McVeigh said about his father, the honourable Tom McVeigh, setting a great standard for his future. We should think that our futures are mutually assured by what we do as parents and by setting examples.

It has been a privilege to serve as the first non government chair of the PCMC. I thank the former members—Mr Evan Moorhead, former member for Waterford; Mark Ryan, former member for Morayfield; Mr Steve Wettenhall, former member for Barron River; and Grace Grace, former member for Brisbane Central—for what they did. It was a very difficult task. It is a role that is sometimes misunderstood by many people. The CMC is now fully staffed and the new chair, Mr Ross Martin SC, has kindly accepted our request to serve a five-year term. We are very fortunate indeed to have him serve. We thank him for what he has done so far. We are also very fortunate to have Mr Paul Favell SC as our new parliamentary commissioner. For many years we were unable to fill that position. We are very lucky to have Paul. He has fallen into the role very well and is giving us great service.

I would also like to thank the now retired CMC chair, Justice Martin Moynihan, who during his time suffered two strokes but continued intermittently to serve with great attention to detail and made the CMC a much better organisation in that time. I also thank the retiring CMC Senior Counsel John Callanan, who is one of the unsung heroes. That name is not heard very much, but Mr Callanan served two terms with great distinction and Queenslanders were very lucky to have him serve in the way he did. We want to thank both Martin and John and the other retiring members for what they have done. To Warren Strange and our full complement of part-time commissioners and all the senior staff, I give thanks. To Brook Hastie, Michael Gorringer, Mitchell Kunde and Iolene Kokay in the PCMC: thank you very much for assisting me.

The CMC is now well placed for the future. It has addressed many of the internal concerns that some felt were limiting its success. Morale, outcomes and efficiency have dramatically improved. Complaints referred have a far better path to resolution. The PCMC has reciprocated and addressed its deficiencies. Our three-year statutory review sets a blueprint for an even better future. It is my sincere hope that the Attorney-General embraces all its recommendations. He has three months to respond. I also ask all members to embrace the CMC and also the role of the oversight committee, the PCMC.

To those who may well serve on the PCMC in the future or may be wondering what actually goes on, the CMC and the PCMC have a critical role in both the oversight and the management of corruption and as a major crime investigation organisation dealing with major crime linked to the Australian Crime Commission. We need your wholehearted support in a very difficult area. I would ask you to speak highly of the organisation because it has a very difficult role and ensures security for our future.

In conclusion, universally what the people of Queensland wanted was change, but they also wanted something better. Most would add that they did not want to lose what they still had and that they did not want the government to say one thing and then do another. Most, if not all, did not want to plan for one outcome and then have an end result which is altogether too hard or worse than what they started with. I said in my maiden speech that change is what the public sought, together with access to basic needs. That is what they pay their taxes for and we should never forget that they are paying mightily for it. If we believe in democracy then no-one should ever not practise it. It is more than just

receiving a vote or voting; it is about actually going through the practice of delivering on a democracy. It is also about collective responsibility, sharing and listening to other views, even if those views are difficult and you have to try hard to understand them.

The public has given the LNP a great opportunity. It is ours to squander if we are vindictive, unforgiving and parsimonious. With trust comes responsibility. We need to respond to those people who placed 77 individual members of our party in this place. Jointly we need to do our best because half-measures will not cut the mustard.

019  **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (12.30 pm): It is always an honour to serve and it is a privilege to be in this House. To again have an opportunity to provide an address-in-reply to Her Excellency's speech is an honour. I pledge my allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her representative in Queensland. We are fortunate to have an individual of such integrity and calibre as the Governor of Queensland. In my maiden speech in this House I said—

Those of us who have made the pilgrimage to parliament share many common ideals and make significant sacrifices ... we are committed to the institution of parliamentary democracy. We also have our own visions for a better future for our state and the wellbeing of our fellow Queenslanders. Those visions vary, as do our philosophies and the policies we would pursue to achieve them.

Those words are as true today as they were in the 52nd parliament when I rose for the first time to make my maiden speech.

There has been much said—and much more will be said—about the election that we experienced this year. The chattering classes have raised concerns about the size of the LNP's majority in this House. I struggle to understand how what represents the democratic will of the people of Queensland is anything of concern. It is not excessive; it is what the people of Queensland voted for. It behoves all of us in this House to act in a manner that ensures that the institution of parliamentary democracy is preserved. When we are in this chamber it is not our party membership that unites us; we are united as members of our respective electorates. We stand tall, representing those parts of Queensland that we have the privilege to represent, being their voice in this House.

Often the broader community does not realise how much of the work of this House is bipartisan. Those of us who have been here for some time know that what is shown on the six o'clock news does not reflect a full day in this chamber. Often bills are debated and passed with support from both sides of the House. I am sure that tradition will continue in this House. I reflect upon the comments that my colleague the member for Gaven made with regard to the success of the previous parliament's committee reforms and how they worked. It is with some pride that I, along with the member for Bundamba, served on the previous Transport and Local Government Committee, which handed down every report without a dissenting report. That did not mean that members of the government got away with putting forward just their views; nor did it mean that members of the opposition could just obstruct. What it did mean—and I take great pride in this—is that our committee put aside our party memberships and worked to the best of our ability at looking at legislation. There was good legislation that we wanted to improve; there was bad legislation that we did not believe this House should see. The Mount Gravatt Show Bill was one of those pieces of bad legislation—

Mr Walker: Hear, hear!

Mr GIBSON:—and I know the member for Mansfield was involved.

The 2012 election result is an historic one. It will be analysed ad nauseam, political scientists will make their reviews and in three years' time there will be another election. Much will be said about 2012, but much more will be said about how the 54th Parliament carried itself as a result of this election. My thought with regards to this election result is that the responsibility that the people of Queensland have entrusted to the LNP is one that cannot, nor will it, be taken lightly. There is much that we in the LNP can learn from Labor. We must never breach the trust that the people have placed in us, like Labor did; we must never stray from our core philosophy, like Labor did; and we must never put the pursuit of power ahead of good governance, like Labor did. In this House we have an opportunity to make a difference—we have a great opportunity to do so—but in doing so we must be always cognizant of the responsibility the people of Queensland have placed on each and every one of us.

I congratulate the Premier on his outstanding election victory in Ashgrove and for his leadership both from outside this parliament and now from within. As the Deputy Premier has said, there was a time when people laughed at our decision. The election result shows that the decision that was made was the right one for Queensland, for Ashgrove and for the LNP. I echo the thanks to all within the LNP for their great work in this campaign. Their victory highlighted what can be achieved by the conservative side of politics when we are up against the formidable Labor campaign machine. I also express my thanks to my own campaign team in Gympie. They know who they are. Without their support and guidance, our election victory in Gympie would not have been assured.

As is the case with each new parliament, there are those who do not return. Whilst I disagreed with many in the former Labor government, I also respected many who served. I thank them for their service to Queensland. I am comforted in the knowledge that their electorates will be equally well represented by the new LNP members.

I congratulate our new Speaker on her historic election. It shows that you do not need quotas to bring female representation to any place. What you need are good individuals of character and calibre who will stand up and be recognised on their merits. Our Speaker can take great pride in the fact that she was elected because she was the best of all of us to be the Speaker of this House. As many have done before me, I recognise the previous Speaker. He was indeed a breath of fresh air in this House. Those who did not have the opportunity to sit here and hear his rulings, see his wisdom and understand his guidance missed out on something that was truly special.

As I reflect on my past years in this parliament, I recognise that in time I will be remembered for many things, some of them related to my failings, but I hope that most will be for what I have achieved. I will always be proud of my involvement in the deaf community. In this House I will continue to champion their issues and provide them with a voice, because as the child of deaf parents I know first hand the challenges that they face. They are the challenges that deaf and hearing impaired people face every single day as they get up and go about their work. Deafness is a hidden disability. It is not one that you can easily see and, therefore, often it is overlooked. Invariably those in our community who are disabled are the most disadvantaged. As politicians from all sides we have a responsibility to support them in whatever way we can.

020 Locally, the people of Gympie have provided me with a great honour to serve them again in this House. I would like to once again echo the wise words of the former member for Gympie Jacob Stumm in this chamber in 1897 when he said, 'When party obligations come into conflict with pledges to constituents they must give way to the constituents.' These were wise words in 1897 and they are wise words today in 2012. The people of Gympie will always have my commitment, first and last.

The old adage of 'as you sow, so shall you reap' has meant that Gympie residents have reaped what has been sown over 20 years of incompetent Labor mismanagement. After the election and the LNP victory I was asked my views on the Bligh Labor government. I said that they were not a bad government; they were an incompetent government, and I believe that today. I have only to look to my electorate to see the legacy of their incompetence. My region faces higher unemployment than other parts of this state and what did Labor do to protect or preserve jobs? Nothing! My area has a particularly special environmental area, the Mary Valley and the Mary River. What was Labor's approach to that environmental jewel? To threaten it with environmental mismanagement! My region has one of the worst stretches of highway in Australia, the section of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra. What was Labor's approach over 20 years to trying to fix it? To play petty games with Canberra and fumble around rather than actually get on with the job! If we had seen them getting on with the job, we would not have seen section B built before section A. Any one of the prep children in this great state of Queensland could tell them that A comes before B, but the Labor administration could not grasp that simple concept. I look forward to an LNP government that will address these issues. I note with great pleasure that the Deputy Premier visited the Mary Valley just last week to talk about how we can rebuild that community. That is in comparison with the former Premier who, on 9 October 2009, promised that she would visit the Mary Valley and never did. In Gympie we chalk that up as one more broken Labor promise.

My community feels a great sense of pride in being known as the town that saved Queensland. Whilst in 1867 the young colony of Queensland facing bankruptcy was relieved at the discovery of gold in Gympie, the real value of Gympie has come from its people since then. We have provided much to this state and to our nation. Gympie, of course, provided the first Labor Prime Minister with Andrew Fisher. We have provided a military general and statesman in Major-General Sir Thomas William Glasgow, one of the great people who led Australian forces in World War I. Since those years we have also provided many other great men and women who have served and continue to serve—some in public roles, some in quiet unassuming ways—but all of them bring about a great difference in this state.

My community shows its strength best during times of adversity. As the Mary River floods, it is a sign to the people of Gympie to band together and to unite with each other in their adversity to minimise the impacts. Each time that river floods, whether it be once a year or three times a year, neighbours, strangers, individuals, friends, colleagues, workers and bosses work together side by side to ensure that the impact on the community from the flooding event is as minimal as possible. That is what makes my community a great community.

No discussion of Gympie would be complete without mention of the Gympie Country Music Muster. At this point I must declare for the record that I am a member of the Gympie Apex Club. It is a great club and provides a great community event. I note that last year our Premier visited the Gympie Country Music Muster and had a fantastic time. I extend an invitation to all members of this House. If they want to actually hear some decent country music they should give me a yell. I could probably hook them up with a ticket or two and we can get them out to the muster in the Amamoor State Forest. I say to the manager of government business that if parliament clashes with that week I may be seeking leave, but I will discuss that closer to the time.

Gympie has many other great attributes such as the Mary Valley Heritage Railway. It is not well known that second to QR, that railway carries the most passengers of any railway in Queensland. It covers one of the longest tourism rail routes, 43 kilometres.

Mr Johnson: Do you know who saved it? The last coalition government!

Mr GIBSON: I take the interjection of the member for Gregory. It is as a result of government support—the previous coalition government—that this railway continues to operate. It is also due to the support of great volunteers, individuals, former railway workers and people who have had no experience with the railway—all of them have stepped up to ensure that the Rattler can continue to go forward. On the Queen's Birthday long weekend this year the annual Race the Rattler event will be held. I did that for my 40th and swore at about the four kilometre mark that I would never do it again. I have kept that promise. However, it is a great tourism attraction. At a time when tourism is doing it tough across this state of ours, it is again something that as a community we must step up to protect.

The businesses within Gympie continue to evolve and adapt. We were a mining town. Then we became a logging community. We moved on to dairy and now we reflect all of those elements and others. But we are a town that is fragile. We are a town where businesses do it tough, and on 1 July they will do it even tougher. The carbon tax that will come in will hit our major businesses and major employers in a way unlike in other parts of this state. We have companies like Nestle and Laminex who rely highly upon their electricity. An increase in charges will result in them needing to change their business operations. It is a fool who says that this carbon tax will not cost jobs. Our community cannot afford to lose jobs when we are already facing higher unemployment than the rest of Australia. It is our community that binds itself together through adversity. It is my community that steps up when it is required to do so. It is with a great deal of honour and respect that I stand in this House to be their voice.

Each time we have the opportunity to campaign, we do so as a contest of ideas. I wish to thank the other candidates who ran against me in Gympie because our campaign was a dignified one, unlike what happened in Ashgrove. Our campaign was a contest of ideas and it was one in which we could debate, discuss and then put forward our platform to the people to make their choice. I congratulate all who put their hand up for public office on their willingness to do so. There are also those people who, during campaigns and also during our life, make sacrifices. It is our families who pay the greatest price and to my wife and to my children I say thank you. They are the reason that I am here.

In my 2009 speech on the address-in-reply I quoted the great Roman philosopher, statesman and political theorist Cicero. I would like to conclude my speech today with another great quote from this thinker of his time which is as relevant today. Cicero said, 'The more laws, the less justice.' Let us not feel that our time in this place must be absorbed by passing more and more legislation that makes it more and more difficult for Queenslanders to get on with living their lives. We do not need to pass more laws for there to be more justice. We simply need more common sense.

021  **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (12.49 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to participate in the address-in-reply for the 54th Parliament of Queensland. I congratulate Madam Speaker on her appointment to the very high office of Speaker and I congratulate you too, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham, on your appointment. You have put many years into this parliament and I am sure you will take pleasure in the role that you have. I commit myself to work hard for the electorate of Warrego and in fact for all Queenslanders. I certainly thank the electors for having faith in me to serve another term. To the LNP branches particularly in my area who work so hard and to all the people who worked in the booths: they put in a fantastic effort and they do so on a regular basis, so I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

I have seen many changes in this place since 1986. The political cycles come and go—the wind blows one way and then the wind blows the other way. I have been three times in government and two times in opposition. There is one thing worse than being in government and that is being in opposition, and we have been there a few times. But many of us did it and we did not whinge about it. We used to always attack the government and say that what they were doing was wrong even when in many instances it was right. But at the end of the day we worked hard, we listened to people, we travelled the length and breadth of this state and we formed policies. We formed policies that from today are going to be implemented by this government. As you heard during the last election campaign, a lot of those policies were developed over many years and they have been honed and pull together philosophies that we believe will take this state forward very, very quickly.

I want to congratulate all the new members who are here in this chamber. It is a fantastic effort by everybody. It is a great privilege to be here. There are not very many of us who do get the opportunity and the privilege. Many try to come into this place but few succeed. To those who have made it, I congratulate you on the wonderful effort and the team that you have had behind you to do it.

It has been a very difficult task to pull together the LNP team. This is the first time since the National Party formed government back in the late seventies and early eighties that we actually have a government from the conservative side that is one team—the LNP—as the Premier said earlier this morning. I think it is very important to have one team. In the past we had two teams—a coalition. We

have put a lot of work into this and it is important that we keep it this way—a strong, united, conservative government in this state.

The Labor record and legacy is abysmal in this state. Generations of Queenslanders will pay dearly for the debt, the forced council amalgamations, the demonising of agriculture, the demonising of landholders, the abuse of land tenure, the bureaucracy that has been foisted upon everybody and the vegetation laws that were abused. For example, landholders were taken to court and when the government lost they would appeal and the landholders were taken to court again, and when the government lost again they would appeal again and the landholders were taken to court again. The government never gave up. They used the government purse to persecute landholders.

Let me talk about water management in this state. Generally speaking, a lot of the water management plans done in this state are legal but only just. There is only one water management plan that has been done in this state—and that is the one done for the Condamine-Balonne water management area—that I can say is accurate. The reason it is accurate is that we had a hell of a fight in that area and we ended up getting in an independent panel to peer review the water management plan, and so we ended up with a figure that is about right. But that took 15 years to get because we were blocked all the way through. People's lives have been held up. People who owned water licences and who had water entitlements could not use them. Banks have been held back and, as a result, finances have been held back all because of inaction and because they did not use the government well.

We need to change the way we do government in this state. We need to change it dramatically from what we have seen. Queensland is a resource rich state with enormous potential. We must open Queensland up for business again and those small businesses will provide the jobs and the revenue. We have to fix things like workplace health and safety. When I talk to local businesses, they say that they have been stifled in everything they do. Coming in on the Warrego Highway we now have all of these stop-go people. In fact there was one section of road I came through where there were four stop-go people and there was a one-tonne ute with a sign that said, 'Follow me', then there was a ute behind him—I am not sure what it was doing there but it went in behind the group as the cars went by—and there was a spare ute there as well. So there were three one-tonne utes and four stop-go people for two machines on the road. How can we afford this? It is absolutely ridiculous. What is the cost of running that? If you use signs, they do not argue back, they are not paid overtime and they work 24 hours a day! It is simple. It is not rocket science. Let's make it work.

Litigation laws have to be changed. Look at what has happened in the medical field. Doctors are leaving. I had a great doctor in Dr Jim Baker. He was the famous flying surgeon based in Roma. He passed away recently. He once said to me that with every mail he opens he fears that that is the day the letter will come. He hoped that every kid that he brought into this world made it to 17 years old because then they were off his books. We cannot afford to have that. New Zealand have fixed their system—well, they have improved it—and we need to as well.

We must of course give people natural justice. We do not want to change that. We do not want to take away people's rights. But people must do the right thing. They must fix up their fences, install grids, provide access and not set traps for people. But at the end of the day we need to ensure that common sense prevails. If a sign says, 'Don't go through the door,' and you go through the door and you fall over, well whose fault is it? If you break into someone's house and you fall through the skylight, whose fault is it? Presently it is the homeowner's fault. How bad is that? We need to be able to do something about that.

We must grow agriculture. We have to have some security. It is one of our four pillars. We have to double agricultural production in this state.

My electorate of Warrego is a large one. It is the same size as Victoria. It reaches just west of Dalby and to the South Australian border.

Mr Hopper: Good neighbours.

Mr HOBBS: I have some good neighbours too. I take the interjection. I have a lot of neighbours actually. I often talk about the fact that with one more redistribution I could fish in Cooper Creek and the sea in the same electorate. But I do have some great neighbours out there and we work really well together. It is a huge area.

There are a lot of things that I want to see done in my area that I am sure other members would like to see reflected in their areas as well. Take roads for example. All our roads are bad. It is just that some are worse than others. The Warrego Highway is a good example where there is an enormous amount of traffic. There is convoy after convoy of road trains going out there now, with the biggest trucks you have ever seen in your life. Even your brothers would be jealous of the size of some of those trucks going out there, Vaughan. They are giants. We love to have them but we have to have facilities to take them. What about rail? There is a rail line that goes out there and the grass is growing over it. More freight goes by road than by rail. We used to have five freight trains a week that would go from Brisbane through to Roma and Charleville.

Mr Johnson: Quilpie.

Mr HOBBS: And to Quilpie, and now there are none. There is the Westlander twice a week. There is a perfectly good railway line there but it is not used. When we get a big wet season the grass grows over it before a train gets there. It is just ridiculous. The biggest freighters on the Warrego Highway is Queensland Rail. We have to change that and I am sure we can.

Coal seam gas, CSG, is a huge industry and one that we want, but we have to manage it better. The policies that we are going to put in place will do that. We have to give certainty to landholders. We have to be able to provide security of water—that the water that is used and extracted will not in any way be to the detriment of our underground supplies, our Great Artesian Basin and suchlike. We have a strong policy that will resolve those issues, and we need to ensure that that is put in place sooner rather than later.

When it comes to floods, members have all heard about the floods and have all had them in different parts of their electorates. I have had a few too. Roma had three floods in two years, Mitchell was flooded again the other day and Charleville has had numerous floods. In most of those cases, particularly with Roma and Charleville, flooding of those towns is totally preventable. So we have to put in place mechanisms—and we have—to resolve those issues. While the previous government came out and were helpful at the time the flood occurred, it was disappointing that as soon as the media moved off so did they. That was it. We have to make sure that we are there for the long haul, and we can be. I will give members an example. So far it would have cost about \$100 million to fix the homes in Roma; it would cost about \$10 million for a levy bank. It is not rocket science, is it, to know what to do? And that would solve the problem entirely. That figure may vary but it is roughly that.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

PETITIONS

~~The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, lodged by the honourable members indicated—~~

~~Nambour Hospital, Car Park~~

~~Mr Wellington, from 178 petitioners, requesting the House to build a multi-storey car parking facility at the Nambour Hospital.~~

~~Anakie State School~~

~~Mr Johnson, from 288 petitioners, requesting the House to provide funding and facilities for a co-located kindergarten at the Anakie State School and to re-open the children's day care facility at Sapphire.~~

~~The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3)—~~

~~Bicycles, Registrations~~

~~301 petitioners, requesting the House to implement a system of registration for bicycles.~~

~~Koala Protection, Alma Park Zoo~~

~~58 petitioners, requesting the House to purchase the land at Lot 8 48 Alma Road (Alma Park Zoo) for future koala preservation.~~

~~Telegraph Road, Rail Crossing~~

~~183 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently provide funding to upgrade the Telegraph Road Rail Crossing to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety for local residents.~~

~~John Muntz Causeway, Bridge~~

~~1,994 petitioners, requesting the House to build a new bridge at the John Muntz Causeway to increase safety and alleviate the bridge becoming inoperable during weather events.~~

~~Motorcycles, Licensing~~

~~76 petitioners, requesting the House to overhaul current motorbike licensing laws and implement tougher regulations to obtain a motorbike licence through QRIDE.~~

~~Mining Explorations, Exclusion Zones~~

~~245 petitioners, requesting the House to increase the buffer zone between urban areas and coal mines or exploration from two kilometres to a minimum of five kilometres.~~

~~The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the honourable members indicated—~~

~~Wynnum Road-Hawthorne Road, Red Light Camera~~

~~The former member for Bulimba, from 95 petitioners, requesting the House to install a red light camera at the intersection of Wynnum and Hawthorne Roads.~~

~~Prostitution Laws~~

~~The former member for Mount Coot tha, from 17 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to restrict prostitutes from operating in suburban, residential neighbourhoods and to ensure residents can directly contact the owner of a rental property to discuss the operation of prostitutes on their property through disclosure of current contact details for premises under such use.~~

~~Warrego Highway, Upgrade~~