



***AUSTRALASIAN STUDY OF
PARLIAMENT GROUP
(Queensland Chapter)***

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 27 JULY 2015

Brisbane

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Dr WEEKS: Good afternoon. My name is Donna Weeks. I am a lecturer at the University of the Sunshine Coast and I also have the privilege of being the chair at present of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group, Queensland chapter, which is hosting this reception today. I thank you all—women of politics of all colours—who have joined us here today to celebrate this very, very important achievement of the right for women to stand in the Queensland parliament. I also acknowledge the men in the process, too.

It gives me great pleasure to stand here today to present this wonderful panel for the discussion that we will have shortly which will be introduced by the Deputy Speaker. I do want to begin by acknowledging the owners of the land on which we meet—the traditional owners past, present and future. I acknowledge the different ways that we make decisions. We have meeting places and we share our knowledge over the generations—past, present and future. I now want to introduce Aunty Lynne, who will welcome us to country. Thank you.

Aunty Lynne MATSEN: Thank you, Donna. Good afternoon Premier, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I will just establish my credentials for being up here to welcome you to country. My apical ancestry can be traced back to 1815 to Bilin Bilin and Nellie. Bilin Bilin was King of Logan and the Pimpama area and Nellie was his third wife. Bilin Bilin and Nellie had a daughter, Emily Jackey, who married Willy Williams back in 1878. My grandfather Arthur Ford was born at the foot of Mount Warning in 1866 and he was the first Aboriginal birth registered by Joshua Bray, who was the first postmaster, JP, first police magistrate, Coroner and gold warden down on the Tweed. He had a number of roles!

Arthur Ford married Kitty Sandy, who is buried at Deebing Creek and has the historical gravesite that is up there. His second marriage was to Eva Williams, who was Emily Jackey and Willy Williams's daughter. When checking with Maroochy and Uncle Des Sandy and Uncle Alex Davidson if I was able to do welcome to country or acknowledgement, it was discovered that Connie Isaacs, Maroochy's mum, went to school with my father and his brothers. The Ford family has lived at Paddington, Rosalie, Torwood and are still living in Holland Park and it has been confirmed by the apical ancestry researcher that the Ford family can establish and show unbroken connection with Turrbal country going back to the time of the arrival of the first Europeans. So I take this opportunity to welcome everybody to the luncheon today which is being held on Turrbal land.

I am the only female Aboriginal ALP life member. I got my life membership, which I am very proud of, from Anna Bligh and Julia Gillard, so I have got both and I have quite proudly got that. I got that in 2011. As the only female Aboriginal life member, I give Chris Whiting and Mark Ryan heaps out in Morayfield and Caboolture. One of my most cherished things is a photo of myself with Joan Kirner. I was in the National Union of Students in Melbourne, Ballarat and places like that. She was an absolutely fabulous lady and, as far as women in politics was concerned, she always encouraged us. We were actually talking about how we were going to set up Emily's List, so we were sitting around at one of the bars down there and all the ideas were being thrown about to take back to Queensland to give her some feedback about Emily's List. I am thinking, 'Oh God! I've been a member of that for too long as well!'

Anna, I had the privilege of working with your dad for many years. I was there when he was housing minister. I was up in Biloela. Getting housing was really hard when I was working in the Aboriginal community, but he was a great person to be able to ring up. God, he could move. He could actually move things in the parliament and in his department, which was really great. You just had to make a phone call. He was one of those men. I also had Peter Beattie sign me up as the secretary of the Biloela branch and show me how to do the books and show me how to be a branch secretary and all of those things and I was thinking, 'Okay.'

My poor husband, Keith, because having a wife who was politically active was different, especially when he came home from work and said, 'What are you doing feeding Tom Burns and the police chocolate cake?' He knew about it before I even got home. Tom Burns was very good. He liked the chocolate cake and he took it with him. There is another former member here today—Liz Cunningham. I can remember you way back when you were a councillor at Calliope. That is how far I go back. With regard to Di McCauley,

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when working with the ALP I can very proudly say we took her within 400 votes to getting her ousted out of Callide. We worked hard.

I live in the electorate of Longman. With regard to Irene Longman, your first lady, I met her at the Rockhampton Grammar School. It is amazing the number of people—my daughter included—who went through Rockhampton Grammar School and I was thinking, 'I know how she started out.' I was one of the ladies who helped to set up the Murri Court. I am actually on QCAT, a QCAT JP and one of those ladies that sit there. Because I am Aboriginal and I am a social worker, I seem to get on to committees. I do not know why.

In closing, I want to say welcome. I want to finish with words from Joan Kirner. She told me not to be afraid, to speak out on issues and when you want something work hard and do not be afraid to do anything that you think is achievable. So welcome everybody. Enjoy your luncheon today. Welcome to having women in parliament. I think they have earned the right.

Dr WEEKS: Thank you, Aunty Lynne, for that lovely welcome to country and telling us some of your background and of course our connections with other women in politics. With that, I know we are all very busy and we all tend to be quite multiskilled. We could all be doing all sorts of things today as well. I will hand over—very sensibly—to Deputy Speaker Grace. Just before that, because I will not have another chance to speak, I do want to acknowledge the work of committee members of the ASPG in putting this together. Several of our committee members are here as well, but two people who are part of the secretariat are Lucy Manderson and Danielle Cooper. Without these two marvellous multiskilling women, who also have very busy jobs here at the parliament, none of this would have happened and I want to acknowledge their work. They make me look like I can do a lot of things, which I cannot. With that, it is my great pleasure to get our show on the road because everyone is so busy and it is my pleasure to introduce the Deputy Speaker, Grace Grace.

Ms GRACE: Thank you very much, Donna. I join everyone here today in acknowledging the traditional owners and thank you very much, Aunty Lynne, for that lovely welcome to country. It was great to be in the presence of someone who has done so much, and to hear about it is really inspiring, so thank you very much for that.

I of course acknowledge the Premier and my good friend, Anastacia Palaszczuk, and all distinguished guests. I think the Premier is going to go through that in more detail, particularly my parliamentary colleagues and the members of the ASPG Queensland group who are here today who have put all of this together.

It is fantastic to commemorate 100 years of women being able to stand for parliament in Queensland. It is something to celebrate. We have over 80 people here today. It is fantastic to see so many great women and great friends that are in the audience. I see so many familiar faces. It is wonderful to see you all here this afternoon. While we were a bit slow in giving women the vote in Queensland—I believe we were a few years behind other women in Australia—we were one of the first to allow women to stand in 1915. That is, as I said, 100 years ago. But of course I think we should make mention that it was white women who were able to vote and stand for parliament. Indigenous women were not allowed to stand for parliament until 1965. In a way I just thought that was a little thing that we have to remember—that not all of us had the vote here until 1965.

There are a couple of things that I wanted to say. I think it is great to celebrate. We actually saw the first woman elected. As you said, Lynne, Irene Longman was the first woman elected to parliament in 1929, so some years later. I guess my experience as a woman in parliament is that it never fails to amaze me the firsts that just keep happening. I mention the first female Governor-General, the first female Prime Minister, the first female Speaker, the first female Premier elected in her own right in Anna Bligh and the first female Premier elected from opposition in Anastacia Palaszczuk. Still to this day we are hearing of firsts, which is interesting given that over 100 years there are still so many. I actually found out that I am the first female Deputy Speaker of the parliament and I did not know that. We had an inkling and I offered to check it out and it is correct. I think there were chairmen of committees; the Clerk, Neil Laurie, is nodding. So I think I am the first female Deputy Speaker. One thing that strikes me is that, even though we have been around for a long time, we are still continually hearing about firsts in making great milestones.

Secondly, I think there is a richness that diversity brings to the parliament when you have a great mix. It goes without saying that it is wonderful when you have that mix, as it brings such great diversity to the discussion of and debate on whatever it is that we are talking about at the time.

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The third thing that I am noticing is that we cannot get away from what we wear. As women, we still have that situation where what we wear often is up there. I am looking for the day when I can get away with wearing a suit for 12 months and nobody noticing. I do not know whether it will happen. Premier, I do not think it is very likely that it will happen to you. However, these are interesting times and another thing that I notice is that the importance of what we wear seems to be magnified for a woman than for a man. They are the first things.

I have the great pleasure of introducing the Premier. I know that she has to leave by a certain time, so I now warmly welcome her to address you. She has been the member for Inala since 2006. She comes from a wonderful political family and, as we all know, her father is Henry Palaszczuk. She trained as a lawyer. She became a policy adviser with the ALP and, once elected, she became the minister for many different things including transport, disability services and multicultural affairs. Then she was leader of the party unopposed in 2012. We all know what happened in 2015: we saw her occupy the position of Premier of the state. She is the first female to be elected from opposition. Three of the highest ministerial positions in the Queensland government—the Premier, Jackie Trad as Deputy Premier and Yvette D’Ath as Attorney-General—are held by women, which is wonderful. We have the first female dominated government in Australian history, with eight out of 14 ministers being women.

I want to leave this for last before I invite Annastacia, the Premier, to the podium: the ministry also includes the first Indigenous woman to be elected to parliament, Minister Leeanne Enoch. That is a milestone. Welcome to all of you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Good afternoon, everyone. It is my pleasure to be here. I also start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we gather and pay my respects to the elders, past and present. Thank you very much, Aunt Lynne, for your lovely welcome to us here this morning. I acknowledge Deputy Speaker Grace Grace. Isn’t it wonderful to hear that she is the first female to occupy that post? I have learned that this afternoon and it is wonderful to hear.

I acknowledge my ministers who are here: Shannon Fentiman and Coralee O’Rourke. It is wonderful to have you both with us. As Grace was saying, we have made Australian history in having eight—which is more than 50 per cent of the cabinet—women in the ministry. That was a deliberate intention of mine. Leading up to the election campaign I remember thinking one night, ‘I wonder if we can get there? I think we can almost get there.’ In fact, we did. Also present we have Jennifer Howard, Di Farmer, Chris Whiting and Leanne. It is lovely for them to join us. Also present is Fiona Simpson, the member Maroochydore and the first female Speaker of our parliament. Fiona, you always held yourself with dignity and carried out your duties very professionally. It is lovely to have you here. It is lovely to see Yvonne Chapman here, our very first Queensland female minister. She made history. Professor Anne Tiernan is our guest speaker and we will hear from her very shortly. Just as a little plug, both Anne and I are on Q&A tonight and we are looking forward to that. It should be very interesting. I do not think Tony Abbott is sending anyone from his side of politics, though. I acknowledge Donna Weeks, chair of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group, and the Clerk of the Parliament, Neil Laurie. I thank everyone for coming along today including Mary Crawford, who is also a former member of parliament. Mary, it is wonderful to see to you. Thank you, everyone.

This is a lovely milestone to be celebrating. We were having a conversation about how last week I went down to COAG, and you would have seen that I was the only female there amongst all of my friends. That was the second COAG meeting that I have been to, but I reflected on the first one that I attended. At the end of that meeting, a young female journalist said, ‘Oh Premier, can I please ask you a question?’ I thought, ‘This is good! A young female asking me a question.’ I said, ‘Yes, what would you like to ask me?’ She said, ‘What’s it like being the only chick there?’ I said, ‘Firstly, I am a woman and, secondly, won’t it be wonderful when we get to the stage where throughout Australia half our leaders are women?’ I felt a bit disappointed, because I thought we had come so far and here was a young journalist who had the opportunity to ask a really important question. It could have been on politics, it could have been on the economy, it could have been on any of a range of the issues that we had been discussing. However, she almost brought it down to such a low level that I felt disappointed.

I reflected back to when, many years ago, I was tutoring at the Australian National University. There were a whole lot of young people in my tutorial class. It struck me when the young women students said, ‘Why do we need the Anti-Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act? We don’t need any of those things.’ So I just launched into the trials and tribulations that we have all been through. Women have had to lead the charge to bring about fundamental change. If we look back at the right to vote, it was women who were out there demanding the right to vote. For women to stand for parliament, it was women out there

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who were driving that change. In terms of women getting seats, when I was growing up I can remember that there was no such thing as a woman in a safe Labor seat. The women were given the marginal seats, because they were not expected to win and gee it was good when they won. We saw some landslide elections that brought a whole lot of women into the parliament. I can tell you that it changes the dynamic. Fiona, you might also agree with me, as may Liz Cunningham. I am sorry I forgot to mention Liz earlier. It is lovely to see you here too, Liz.

During the last parliament, under the LNP government, the number of women dropped dramatically and the culture changed dramatically. It was not a friendly culture. The whole parliament changed in terms of the interactions between people and the way that the committee system worked. That was reflected in the fact that women had basically left the scene. Now when I chair cabinet, I love the dynamic in our cabinet room. Everyone is given an equal opportunity to speak. The broad range of issues that can be brought into a discussion and people's experiences reflect the depth of having women with an equal say at that cabinet table. I reflect back on COAG. I cannot reveal what happens inside that room, but unless you are a strong woman prepared to stand up and have your say, let me tell you that the men can tend to dominate. It is a completely different dynamic.

The experience that I can share with you is that you have to give women the opportunity, not just in politics but also in all walks of life. That is when mentoring is so important. That is why I have put out a call for more women on Queensland government boards. If we can change the dynamic in the way government operates in terms of boards, we can then look more broadly to the business community and say, 'Hang on, if we can do it at the government level, surely at the business level you too can change that dynamic.' We are doing everything that we possibly can, but it is incumbent on all of us sitting here today, both male and female, to encourage women in all walks of life, whether it is academia, nursing, teaching, hospitality, mining, construction or engineering.

I look at the debates we are having at the moment about STEM and the focus on science, technology, engineering and math. Why is it that those areas are dominated by men? Recently I had a fantastic conversation with a woman in San Francisco. She was telling me about this great program she has to make sure that young women love science. It is bringing science to them. She is tracking them through high school and then on to university and they are continuing in those fields. It is about getting them in young and making sure that we give everyone the same opportunity. As you can probably see, I am not even touching this speech. It is a very good speech and I think Kirsten is going to kill me later!

Today is a celebration. It is about the fact that so many more women are taking the opportunity to stand. It is a very brave call to go into politics. Politics is not very family friendly. I know a lot of women have young children and over the years we have seen parliament adapt and change to that. Over the course of the weekend at the national conference I was speaking to Daniel Andrews. He was telling me that they have family-friendly hours in the Victorian parliament. I think that is something that we need to look at here. We really do need to think about whether it is in the best interests of the Queensland public to have their members of parliament staying up to 1, 2 or 3 in the morning and then coming back later that morning to make decisions and run the state. Is that the healthy environment that we want? Do we want people making decisions when they are tired? Perhaps, Grace, you and the Speaker can look at that for next year. I think that would make a huge change to the dynamic of the parliament.

We need to think broader, too. I am very, very proud that we have Leeanne Enoch as our first Indigenous cabinet minister. We need more young Indigenous men and women to put up their hands to run for parliament—not just women but men as well. We need to ensure that we diversify. People with a disability: we have our wonderful member for Cairns, Rob Pyne, representing his electorate. We have to broaden our base. We have to make sure that anyone from whatever background, multicultural as well, can stand for election in parliament.

Today is about women. Look at all the lovely women we have sitting around the tables here. We also need strong men to support women. No matter what walk of life you are from, men can play a role as well and mentoring is so important. If there is one message you can take away from me today it is that you have a duty to mentor young women coming through, to make sure that you give them opportunity. I try to do that in my local community when young women come up to me. For some reason they want to give me hugs now, which is lovely. They say to me, 'We have seen that you have grown up in our area and you have gone on to do different things—study, run for parliament—and you have given me hope that I can somehow do that.' People grow up in different parts of Queensland, but it is always about education, which

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gives inspiration. We need to make sure that we have a level playing field for people and we need to make sure that it is possible for young women to do whatever they want to do.

Thank you very much, everyone, for coming along today. We are now going to hear from Professor Anne Tiernan. Grace will introduce her very shortly. In closing I would say that, coming back from the national conference, Bill Shorten's proposal to have 50 per cent of representation by women by 2025 is indeed admirable. We need to set those targets. I look back over the years to when the Labor Party had affirmative action. If it was not for affirmative action, driven by Joan Kirner and women in Queensland, we would not have the number of women that we have in our parliaments across all jurisdictions today. Affirmative action did work within the Australian Labor Party to give more women an insight. When I was growing up, there were very few women in the Labor Party but there were a few who were dynamic, they were headstrong and they fought and fought and fought.

I remember the role model I had to turn to was from overseas. When I was in San Francisco I met a dynamic young woman, Dianne Feinstein. She is still a senator. I remember hearing her speak and I watched her first debate. I thought, 'If she can stand up there and debate a male, I am quite sure I can do that one day as well.' I enjoyed that debate with Campbell Newman! It does give me confidence. Role models are very important. We now have a lot of strong role models. We have a lot of women doing excellent things. I am very proud of every single woman in my caucus and I am very proud of the women who are in my cabinet. They are working beyond the call of duty. They are out there. I know that Shannon and Coralee have two of the most difficult portfolios in communities and disabilities. They are out there speaking to all the stakeholder groups, they are speaking to people at length and they are leading the government consultation, which is what I said we would do.

I also have Jackie Trad as my Deputy Premier. Jackie is fantastic to work with. I have to be the good news and sometimes Jackie has to be the bad news, but that is just the way it works. To have someone so strong as Jackie there being my right-hand person—she is always out there. She is always working hard. She has a really good, strong portfolio, too, of infrastructure, transport and local government, which means she has to have that engagement right across Queensland. Thank you everyone for coming along today. Watch Q&A tonight. I will give a plug for it. It should be a very interesting night. I know Anne and I are looking forward to it. So thank you very much.

Ms GRACE: Thank you very much, Premier, and you are so right: role models are so important. Role models give hope and hope gives action. Let's hope we get more young women in parliament when some of us oldies decide to leave. That would be good. I have the pleasure now of introducing Anne Tiernan. Anne is a professor in the Centre for Governance and Public Policy at Griffith University. She is the director of postgraduate in executive programs and policy analysis and public administration at the Griffith University School of Government and International Relations. She is a writer of many books. You have many of them listed here. I am not going to read them all out, but it is such an interesting array. She is an author of several books and also a member of the Public Records Review Committee of the Queensland State Archives. Can everyone please welcome Anne Tiernan.

Prof. TIERNAN: Thank you very much. Thank you, Deputy Speaker and Premier. I would like to join both of you in acknowledging the traditional owners of the land and pay respects to their elders past, present and emerging. Thanks, Aunty Lynne, for that lovely welcome. It is fantastic today to acknowledge the role that women have played for centuries in decision-making and debate in this place.

Can I also thank the Australasian Study of Parliament Group, Queensland chapter for the invitation to speak at the lunch to mark this centenary of women's right to stand for Queensland parliament. I was absolutely honoured when Donna approached me about this in February. So thanks, Donna, for that and also members of staff here at parliament for organising the event. I am so pleased to have the opportunity to offer what I hope is an analyst's insight that I hope will complement the extraordinary lived experiences of the women on the panel today.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, in my short address today I want to offer some reflections on the experience and achievements of women in the Queensland parliament over the last century. But I want to look to the future as well as to the past. In doing that, I draw inspiration from politician and philosopher Paul Keating, who influenced many in my generation to become interested in politics but also in public policy, very importantly I think. He gave a speech to a group of high school students recently in Melbourne. The former prime minister exhorted the young, as the Premier and Deputy Speaker have, to become engaged and to embrace politics. He told them that increasingly if Australia is going to navigate

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what he described as the 'age of impermanence' then we are going to need open minds and strong leaders to emerge. He told his audience that public life is where leadership matters most and this is because 'politics and politicians govern our lives from the cradle to the grave ... They may be a deprecated class often but politicians change the world, and they are central and remain central to human progress'. Keating then went on to elaborate what he meant by leadership, and I quote again –

People often talk about leadership but there are only ever two dimensions—imagination and courage. These are the imagination to see something better, to paint something bigger and to see an opportunity for what it is and then the courage to push changes through.

I have quoted Keating at length here because I was struck by the relevance of those two dimensions of public leadership—imagination and courage—for this centenary of women's right to stand for election in Queensland parliament, because it was imagination and courage that drove our nation's founders—the mothers who are often overlooked, as well the much better recognised fathers—to champion and campaign for many decades for political and social reform. That included the right to have a voice, to be represented in the places where the decisions and laws that affected everyone are taken and made.

Stella Prize award-winning author and historian Clare Wright highlights the confluence of activists and thinkers from the federalism movement and the international campaign for women's suffrage in shaping Australia's democracy. She argues that the flow of complementary historical forces for progressive change helped ensure that equality of participation for white women and men—notably not for Indigenous Australians—was embedded in our constitutional design. In contrast with the experience elsewhere, women suffrage was achieved peacefully in Australia and much earlier than the great democracies of the United States, which was not until 1920, the United Kingdom in 1928 and France in 1944.

So at the turn of the century Australia was recognised internationally as an innovator and a leader in the practice of democratic politics, and Clare argues that by 1910 Australia had become known around the world as a social laboratory celebrated for its pioneering welfare legislation. Some commentators attributed Australia's capacity for experimentation to a new land like ours with a restless go-ahead population. The suffrages, however, were keen to stress the gendered nature of Australia's progressivism and were quick to note how crucial votes for women had been in igniting the flame of social change.

Now, as is well known, New Zealand was the first country to grant women the right to vote in national elections in 1894. South Australia followed in December 1894. Other colonies' efforts to pass similar legislation were frustrated in their property to other classes but not for want of women's activism. In Queensland between 1894 and 1897, the Women's Equal Franchise Association and the women's Christian temperance movement campaigned vigorously, collecting the signatures of thousands of women and men on petitions for electoral reform, including women's suffrage.

South Australia's success in securing both the right to vote and to stand for parliament was a lucky break. It took the advocacy and the political skills of the then premier, Charles Kingston, and former premier Frederick Holder to establish women's suffrage as a precondition for federalism. You see—and this I will come back to and has already been alluded to by the Premier—male champions of change have always been important in helping to drive progressive and inclusive representation. That is the responsibility that comes with privilege. So it was in 1902 that the newly federated Australia became the only country where women could both vote and stand for election on a universal and equal basis with men. Between then and 1908, as the Deputy Speaker pointed out, the remaining states came on board.

As premier of Queensland from 1915 to 1919, TJ Ryan was another male champion of change. Roger Scott delivered a fine address to the ASPG to mark the centenary of the Ryan government's swearing in on 1 June 2015. If you have not read it, I commend it to you. Professor Scott, who chairs the foundation named after this giant of Queensland premiers, reflected on Ryan's idealism and nationalism. He argues that, as a progressive leader, Ryan positioned Queensland as a dominant influence in social reform during his generation and beyond. Ryan was instrumental in legislating the right that we are celebrating here today through the passage of the Elections Act 1915.

As you have already heard, it was Ryan's idealism, notwithstanding that it would be 14 years before a woman would be elected to the Queensland parliament—Irene Longman in 1929—and another 37 years would pass before Vi Jordan was elected as the member for Ipswich West in 1966. Now at least by then there was a women's toilet, which had eluded people up until that point. But it would be many, many more years before women could achieve leadership positions and begin to challenge the atmosphere of the parliament that Joan Sheldon recalled was very aggressively male when she was elected in 1990. Only 11 women had sat in Queensland parliament before 1989. A further 12 would join their ranks in the 1990s.

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However, as the Premier and our other panellists have shown by example, much has been achieved since women's right to stand for parliament was legislated in 1915. But the work of promoting a more diverse and inclusive parliament—one that reflects the community it serves—is far from finished, both here and nationally. There is much to do, as both our speakers have suggested, to ensure that MPs both understand and are able to represent the concerns and interests of their constituents in a polity that is becoming increasingly diverse—not diverse in the ethno-cultural concentrations that are characteristics of other federations such as Canada or Switzerland, for example, but by spatial, territorial, cultural and economic measures such as ethnicity, religion and language, types of industry, access to education, information and services and, importantly, the distribution of opportunities and wealth.

The audience assembled here will be aware, for example, that Australia's comparative ranking for women in national parliament has declined steadily over the past decade from 20th position in 2001 to 48th in 2014. There are two women in the federal cabinet, where, as you know, appointments are made on the notoriously neutral concept of merit and apparently free of the unconscious bias that constructs public spaces inherently male. We are assured lots of good women are knocking on the door of the Abbott cabinet and still others are knocking on the door of the ministry. But many in the federal coalition, including the Prime Minister's chief of staff, have expressed concern about the lack of a pipeline that gives women opportunities and experience to move into leadership. Peta Credlin argues that political parties' failure to preselect women candidates for safe seats only entrenches inequality, and this echoes some of what we have heard already.

Queensland's record of representative women has been much better than our national parliament actually, but it still remains quite patchy. Women comprise the majority of the Premier's cabinet and we have now had two female premiers, three women deputy premiers—Joan Sheldon, Anna Bligh and Jackie Trad—and two women treasurers—Joan Sheldon and Anna Bligh. The former Newman government had only two women cabinet ministers, while the Borbidge government had three, and broadly comparable numbers of women were represented in the Beattie and Goss cabinets but, as elsewhere, they were concentrated mainly in social rather than economic portfolios.

Now, as has occurred today, firsts matter. But, as Clare Wright notes, it is important to identify and celebrate the women who have breached the bastions of male predominance, as our panellists have done. But I am with Clare when she says, 'It is even more vital to join the dots and to look at the big picture and women's trajectory over time.' Joining those dots would lead us to question why 100 years on we continue to struggle to attract candidates from a sufficiently diverse range of ages, backgrounds and experiences to sit in our parliaments both here and nationally.

The Premier has noted that the proportion of women in the Queensland parliament fell 28.1 per cent in the 54th Parliament—in the last parliament it declined. But I have run some numbers on the women who stood as candidates on the 31 January poll—only 30 per cent, just 131 women. I have broken this down by party but I have not yet analysed the proportion who ran in winnable seats, but I will. Suffice it to say, there is a significant problem. There is as significant a problem in our pipeline as there is federally, and that is especially the case for conservative women. In Queensland, women comprised 46 per cent of Green, 39 per cent of Labor and 36 per cent of Palmer United Party candidates, but the conservative parties had a less equitable record. Just 22 per cent of LNP candidates and 21 per cent of Family First candidates were women, while the Katter's Australian Party fielded no women—100 per cent of its candidates were male.

The Premier has already remarked on something that I was incredibly struck by in preparing for my talk today—the relative absence of women leaders at all levels of Australian government. That extraordinary imagery of you as the only woman at the COAG leaders' summit last week reminds us that there is so much still to do, especially when we think about the substantive issues that were under discussion. Let me run you through them—education, skills and training, infrastructure, housing affordability, health funding and domestic violence. I tend to avoid provocative remarks. I try really hard to do that. But I put it to you that the fact that one woman had a voice in that key decision-making forum on issues so central to the wellbeing and opportunities of all Australians verges on being a national disgrace. I think that if we do not address the pipeline we have a serious problem.

In any case, women's representation in positions of political leadership compares poorly with the experience in other sectors where the productivity and other benefits of diversity are increasingly well understood. The outgoing Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, has made an outstanding contribution, I think, to building the moral and economic case for gender equality. She argues

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it is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing to do, as the evidence of the performance of companies with greater numbers of women on boards and in senior leadership clearly demonstrates.

The Male Champions of Change group that Broderick has established has mobilised the support and resources of some of the nation's leaders in support of a cause that many of them actually freely concede they need to be educated about because they did not understand that their unconscious bias created a systemic impediment to women's participation and advancement. Some of them, together with a cohort of very impressive women leaders in politics, business, universities and the not-for-profit sector, are demonstrating imagination and courage as they advocate for and help facilitate changes that will bring the benefits of different skills and broader perspectives to the challenges facing our nation.

I look at the women who are making seriously valuable contributions to public policy in Australia. They are role models and mentors who tend to have more experience and depth than many of the male leaders who they tend to come up against in their day jobs. I think of women like Elizabeth Broderick, Catherine Livingstone, Ann Sherry, Cassandra Goldie, all of whom—there are many others—approach things in a very measured, constructive, inclusive, rigorous and outcomes focused way. I think as president of the BCA, Catherine Livingstone has really belled the cat on what she sees as a lack of political leadership on issues of national significance. She has done this out of frustration with the apparent lack of concern for the long term. These women have worked together across sectors and intellectual philosophical divides to find ways forward, common ground where they can agree, and they always note that what they agree about is much more than what they disagree about. There is a lesson in that, I think, for our politics and for Australia's political culture.

I remain optimistic that leaders with imagination and courage can and will merge if we consciously and deliberately broaden the pipeline of available talent. Just as our founding mothers and fathers imagined it was possible to build a democratic future—within the constraints of their understanding, I note—that included everyone and had the courage to pursue it, I believe it is possible to overcome the barriers and impediments that constrain and actively deter women and many people whose experience and insights would enrich our public life from engaging in politics. I really believe that greater diversity will help to bridge the trust gap that has emerged within our political system despite the aspirations and tangible gains of the past century. It continues to be, like most of our institutions, disproportionately white and disproportionately male.

Let me conclude with a challenge. Academics never do that! I want to challenge a broader range of Queenslanders, particularly women at all life stages, not just young women—I hope people have read the Liza Mundy piece in *The Atlantic* about the granny card because there is a lot in that—to stand up or perhaps lean in, as the Premier, our panellists and their trailblazing predecessors have done.

While it is critical, as I think everyone acknowledges, to continue to push for gender equality in our parliament, it is necessary, too, to promote diversity that ensures the parliament is more generally representative of the full spectrum of Queensland's community. If we are to achieve this, as I believe should be our shared ambition, we are going to need new reserves of imagination and courage. We will need a much wider group of Queenslanders to be willing to embrace public leadership as our forebears did; to see and to be willing to act on opportunities to improve the lives and wellbeing of our citizens and communities. That seems to me to be a laudable aim as our democracy matures towards its second century. I hope it will not take as long to fully embed as the changes made possible by the passage of the Elections Act 1915.

Ms GRACE: Thank you so much, Professor Tiernan. That was fantastic. The historical concept about where we have been, how long it has taken and where we need to go was wonderful. We will now take a short break. We will bid farewell to the Premier. Don't forget that the Premier and Professor Tiernan will be on Q&A tonight. I look forward to watching it tonight. The Premier, unfortunately, has another engagement that she needs to be at so she is going to bid us farewell. Once again, thank you so much, Premier, for being here for this milestone. We will get some dessert and then start with our next three panellists as we hear about their life in politics. Thank you very much, Premier, and Professor Tiernan.

Ms GRACE: Thank you everyone. Fiona has indicated that she is ready to speak. I feel like I am Deputy Speaker at the moment. Order, order! The lunch will come to order, please. There is far too much noise in the house. If you want to have a conversation will you please take it outside and we will get started. That is exactly what I do say in the parliament, to be honest with you.

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Fiona is happy for you to continue eating and having coffee while she addresses you briefly following dessert. It is my pleasure to introduce Fiona, who was elected to parliament in 1992 as one of the youngest women in the Queensland parliament representing the now LNP. She is one of our longest serving females in the Queensland parliament having served for over 20 years as a parliamentarian. Fiona, you deserve a medal. As I said before, Fiona was elected in the 54th Parliament, making her the first female Speaker in our 150-year history. Congratulations, Fiona. I just found out this morning that I am the first female Deputy Speaker. You have us both. So you are witnessing the first. She served her party as deputy leader and had shadow portfolios. She commenced her career in politics at a young age having studied degrees in journalism and government. She worked as a journalist before she entered parliament. Welcome, Fiona Simpson.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you very much, Grace, for the welcome. I acknowledge our traditional custodians of the land, Auntie Lynne, and all distinguished guests, particularly my parliamentary colleagues, both present and those of past years—Yvonne, as the first ever female minister in Queensland; also Liz Cunningham, who recently retired at the last election, it is so good to see Liz back—our ministers and our MPs, Professor Tiernan, Donna and the Clerk of the Parliament.

It was an honour to be asked to serve as Queensland's first female Speaker. Interestingly, a male MP said to me, 'You're only getting this gig because you're a woman.' That was after 150 years of all male Speakers before me and despite the fact that I had more than 10 years experience on some of the legal and constitutional committees of the parliament and, in fact, postgraduate management qualifications as well. I just laughed.

I listened to the presentation from Professor Tiernan. I appreciate her thoughts and her challenge in respect to the pipeline. I will just pick up on this point before sharing some of the thoughts that I would like to share with you. We need to look at what is happening in local government. My reflection, particularly from the conservative side of politics, is that that pipeline used to be a very effective way for a lot of people to come to state and federal levels of parliament. The conservative side of politics is still very heavily represented in the local government sphere across Queensland, but we need to do better to articulate that into the state and federal spheres. There are reasons for this that do not involve conscious bias. It is the subconscious bias, the unintended barriers, or the different choices people make that we need to recognise so that we can provide better ways of facilitating that because we do need the voice of good women from across the spectrum of politics and from across the spectrum of demographics and the diversity that we have just heard about.

As I said, I was honoured to serve as Queensland's first female Speaker. I would like to briefly acknowledge some of those male champions I have been fortunate to have had along the way. My predecessor, John Mickel, was very good to me when I was coming into the role. We spent quite a bit of time talking about the running of the House. I appreciated the advice he gave me. I remember very clearly this piece of advice. He said, 'You know you're doing a good job when you upset them on both sides of the House.' In that case I did an outstanding job! There were some weeks where I seemed to manage that in equal measure and outrage.

I value the role of the Speaker in our parliamentary system and the need to educate people more about our system of government—not just the structures but the why, the passion of what we want to do and how we want to improve our communities. The what and the structures are certainly the tools that have to be part of the tool kit, but the why is the passion for making things better for people. We as women have the right and the necessity to have an effective voice in our institutions. We must do all that we can to ensure that people know that we have a right to be there and we have valuable talents to bring to the table.

I thought I would just briefly reflect on three women who speak to me in respect of some of their examples. The first one you will probably think is unlikely to be spoken about in respect of 100 years of women being able to stand for parliament and that is Taylor Swift. I love this young girl. I love that song of hers *Shake It Off*. I actually have it on my playlist. There are days I hit that and I think, 'Remember.' Seriously, though, by the time you put your toes in the water of politics or any other area of leadership, anything that is outside of the status quo that might push the boundaries, you are going to get kicked back. There are ample opportunities to be offended. Some of the offence and what people will cop, women and men—we are talking about women in this space today—is not right. However, how we respond to it is still our choice. I am not saying it is justified, but I think we need to talk about this. It is not as hard in the early years but once you start to compete for the toys in the sandpit and people think you are competing for high roles it is a different kettle of fish. I do not think this is gender specific. People will use whatever it takes in

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the competition for roles to try to push back. However, when there is an imbalance with women, I do note that it is very easy for people to find it too hard and not like the way some people play the game.

I do not believe in personalised politics. The reality is that a lot of people will play that line against you. The penny dropped for me once when I saw, of all things, a grand final football match. I am a football heathen and do not understand the game at all. The penny dropped when I saw this grand final where there was this star player on one side, the one who was expected to hit all the goals, and I saw the way that the other people targeted this person to physically take him out. I thought, 'Well, take it as a badge of honour when people come after you because if they see you as someone of relevance and ability they will be threatened by that.' Our challenge is to ensure that, one, we do not play the game the same way and, two, to not be offended because that will be benching yourself. We cannot bench ourselves, put ourselves out of the game, because of what other people say or do. It is easier said than done, but I think that is one of the challenges for women and those male champions of women.

The second person I wanted to share with you is Sheryl Sandberg. I heard the words 'lean in' before. Sheryl's book *Lean In*, for those who have not read it, is a brilliant book. I went out and bought it after borrowing it from the library. I lend it to people. People do not have to agree with everything in it, but there is a lot of research in it. Sheryl is the former chief operating officer of both Google and Facebook. She has belonged to both organisations. It is research based. It makes a lot of sense because she brings an insight to the issue. I think it is through insight that we can encourage each other; reading the dynamics around the table, understanding why people react the way they do. When there is an imbalance of women there are subconscious barriers and bias. People do not even know they are doing it. They do not mean to do it but it is there. It is important for us to have that knowledge and insight.

So, firstly, shake it off; do not be offended. It does not mean it is right, but do not bench yourself. Secondly, push forward, lean in and put yourself there, because a lot of men of similar capability have no problem putting themselves forward and a lot of women doubt themselves. It is about leaning in, having a go and not doubting yourself.

In closing I mention Eliza O'Connell. Her story is one I like to put a focus on. There are wonderful stories of women who have done amazing things, but they slip through the pages of our history and many times because they did not shout, 'Look at me. Here I am. I am doing this.', or they did not always have a title. Some of these women were in a time when women did not have a vote. What they achieved was outstanding. Eliza was the wife of a very important man. She was the wife of the first president of the Upper House here, Maurice O'Connell. She did some amazing things at a time when women did not have the vote, but what they did have was capacity to take what was in their hands, to organise, to see a need, to come up with a solution and to meet that. They saw women getting off the boats here in the early years of Queensland's colonial history who had no family and no means of support and they recognised that they were quickly becoming destitute. They formed a training institute. Eliza was the leading force behind that. They saw young women with no family or medical support, only traditional midwifery, and they got together, with Eliza at the helm, and started the Lady Bowen Hospital. Eliza was actually the main driving force on many committees. They formed what has become today the royal women's hospital. The Royal Children's Hospital similarly was formed by Eliza and these wonderful women.

Shout the message, the story of those who have led with capacity and capability. They are the legacy that we carry and the opportunity to build on this platform that we have got today. I am going to leave it at that and to say to you that for all our stories that we bring, let us make sure that we celebrate them together. There is more than one way of approaching these things. I think we are a healthier society with a diversity of ideas. The ability to celebrate that fact, from across the spectrum of politics or the diversity of this state, from the top to the bottom, from the east to the west, and by having those voices heard and the right to be heard not—just the loudest voice, but the right to be heard—is where innovation and creativity comes from. It is a delight to be here with you today. Thank you.

Ms GRACE: Thank you very much, Fiona. I agree: take those opportunities when they arise. It is important. I am really delighted to introduce next Yvonne Chapman. She was first elected in 1983, representing the National Party in the seat of Pine Rivers. She served until 1989. As we have heard, she was the first female minister in Queensland history, being appointed to minister for welfare services, youth and ethnic affairs in February 1986, minister for family services, youth and ethnic affairs in December 1986 and minister for transport and ethnic affairs in September 1989. Please welcome Yvonne Chapman.

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Mrs CHAPMAN: It is a long time since I have stood before such an important crowd of people. I spoke to Chris, Anne's husband, when I came in and I said, 'Gee, I haven't prepared anything to say.' He said, 'Just get up there and tell them that you were the first.' So I am telling you that I was the first woman minister in Queensland. It is amazing that I got into that position because when I heard all the speakers before me today I thought how wonderfully educated they are. I got into parliament and I remember one fellow saying to me, 'And what letters have you got behind your name?' And I said, 'HW and M', and walked off and I could hear him saying to someone else, 'Never heard of that. What's a HW and M?' And I just turned round and I said to him, 'Housewife and mother.' It is good, isn't it? I wanted to become a physiotherapist. That is what I settled my life on.

At the age of 38 our dad died and left my mum with five kids and her taking needles every day because she had diabetes. I was the eldest; I was 13. I had a sister, 10; twin sisters, three; and a brother, 18 months. So we knew what the school of hard knocks was all about. If you wanted to do it, you had to get out there and do it yourself. We rode horses to school but not before we went down the local dam and filled up the 44-gallon drums on a sled and pulled it up to the hill to where we used the water. I can remember very well when I was at school—and I never attended very much school. Because my mum was so sick, I used to have to race home at lunchtime and give her a needle and get home early in the afternoon to do the same thing. My teacher told me that I would never make anything of myself because I was just a young girl who was not doing the right thing—not going to school enough, not learning enough and this sort of thing. I look at that phrase you see on the back of cars 'Women can do anything'—well, here I am.

It is funny; I mean no disrespect to anyone but we were brought up rather sternly in a home where you kept your elbows off the table, you said grace before your meal and you always thanked everyone when you left the table. I was only about 17 when I met this gorgeous man, and I lost him in January. I thought to myself during the hard times, 'I never cried in parliament. Not one second have I cried in parliament,' because you would not let the others know that you were going to do that. We married and I had two kids by the time I was 21. The only enjoyment we could have, because we did not have much money, was to go out and play tennis. So I put the two kids in the pram and pushed them up to the other end of Kallangur where the tennis courts were. When it came time to have lunch, we all pulled out our lunch and sat and gossiped. They gossiped about everything. They gossiped about politics, about the people next door, about religion—everything. I can remember them saying when they were speaking—and this is how naive I was—I don't know about her. I think she's a lesbian.' I said, 'I thought she came from Czechoslovakia.' I never knew the meaning of the word. I went home and told Graham and he said, 'I didn't think I had married someone so thick.' That is what happened.

Then I became a member of parliament. I can remember sitting in parliament. This was during the time that Terry White crossed the floor and voted with the opposition, I think he was a minister at the time. Voting with the opposition was the least of his worries; it was something you did not do if you were a minister. I had said to Graham that this fellow in parliament—there were three of us: there was Leisha Harvey, Anne Warner and me; we were the only three female members in parliament. They were pretty slim, trim girls and I was the little short, chubby one. Every time I got up to speak he would say, 'Come on, Doll. Everyone quiet, Doll's going to have a go'—Dolly Parton. So he had this go at me and he did it so many times that I stood up one day and everything stopped and was still and I said, 'You keep your opinions to yourself, Rock Hudson.' He turned to his mate and said, 'Who's Rock Hudson?' Of course, you all know the story of Rock Hudson, but he never, ever did it to me again.

I came from a family that had nothing. We grew up in the hard times and the paper mill where my dad worked had paid for me to finish my schooling, but I hardly got to school. Everybody else did my homework for me. I was not very well educated at all. I went on to become a person who had to do everything for themselves. Consequently, when I was in parliament—I can remember going off one day in the party room and Joh used to rule the party room with an iron fist. The next day he gave me a call and told me he wanted to see me straight away in his office the next morning. I thought, 'Gee, I'm in strife now because I went off the day before and he is going to really give me the rounds of the table,' but he did not. I walked in and he said to me, 'Yvonne, we've decided to make you a minister.' I looked around for the other person in the room. I said, 'Me? A minister?' I said, 'I'm not educated enough.' He said, 'Oh I think you'll handle it. I think you'll handle it.' I nearly died because I thought of all the people who should have been over the top of me in becoming a minister I would have been the last on the list. Women can do anything.

I became a minister. I rang Graham and I said, 'I've just become a minister,' and Graham said, 'I've heard it on the radio.' I said, 'Can you go home and clean up?' Usually all the women who have been in

parliament would wash up in the morning, make the beds and then you take off. That morning I hadn't done a thing because I was more worried about what Joh was going to do to me than about doing anything else. I went and rang Graham and he said, 'What do you want done?' I said, 'Just get home and clean up.' When I got home—and I had everything on the table and there was a tablecloth there—he had picked up three corners of the tablecloth, tied it in a bow and put it in the bedroom. There was tomato sauce and sugar upside down—everything you could imagine. I said to him, 'Graham.' He said, 'It looks clean and tidy, doesn't it?' I said, 'Where have you put it all?' He said, 'In the bedroom.' I said, 'You should have put it in the bathroom.' He said, 'I thought they might have wanted to use the loo so I thought to put it in the bedroom.' He was really wonderful support.

I felt that I was so very normal and I am still very normal. Having had 14 years as mayor of Pine Rivers shire, I found it better to be normal, better to do the things that you feel within your heart. I feel that during all that time it did not really hit me till I was in the cabinet room. I do not think they have ever had a woman even serve dinner, tea or anything to them because gee, could they swear. They would let it go and all of a sudden I would cough and they would say, 'Oh, sorry Yvonne. I forgot you were here.'

Joh would bring out his diary each day. In that diary he would have dozens of invites. Each of the ministers would have our diary and if he could not make it, he would get one of the ministers to do that job. So he would open up his diary and this particular day he said, 'I've got one in Townsville. It's a child-care centre. Right, have we got—oh, Yvonne, you can probably do that.' I said, 'I could do that, but I'm not sure how I would get there.' He said—and it still rings in my ear—'Take the jet.' Me, coming from driving an old Morris Z and then a second-hand Commodore to taking the jet? It was then that I realised that you are sort of living a different life to a lot of people. I think it is the normal side of women that brings out the good in men. I was treated with the utmost of respect, although every time we had our photo taken I would stand beside Russ Hinze till he finally said to me, 'Listen, girly, why do you always get over beside me when you have your photo taken?' I said, 'One thing you do for me, Russ, is you make me look thinner,' and that he did.

It has been a real pleasure to have represented Queensland in this way. I will leave you with one final thing. I was out at a function at the big church at Everton Park. I had had a couple of attacks from people because it is the hardest thing in the world to take someone's children off them when they are being mentally, sexually or physically abused. Joh said to me, 'You can't have that. What you've got to do is get someone who can protect you.' So we got an ex-detective who they used to call Dirty Harry and he protected me right through. He was also my driver. We were out at a function this night and we were all lined up on the stage and I could see Harry coming down the middle of the aisle. I thought, 'Glory, Harry, what are you doing this for?' He spoke to the person on that end and whispered in their ear, who talked to the next one, who talked to the next one, who finally got the message to me and they said, 'Don't move when you go out. Follow the minister.' I'm saying, 'Where to?' You know what women are like: we want to know where, how, why and when. They said, 'Just follow the minister.' So they finished the ceremony and I got up and the minister says, 'Come with me.' So I followed him. He went down the steeple and then we walked down the back of the yard and then we crawled under the hedge at the bottom of the yard. I am neatly dressed and I am getting under this hedge and I thought, 'I cannot see anyone else around. I hope this is the minister,' and I'm going first! I got out the other side and there was Harry in the car waiting for me. 'Get in!' I got in and the minister says, 'I'll see you,' and slammed the door. I said, 'What on earth is wrong, Harry?' He said, 'From my experience in the police force—there is a woman out there. She's got a knife and she's waiting to get you. You've taken her kids off her and she is not one bit happy with you.' I did not know the kids; I did not know the problem because the staff had handled that. But it is a dreadful thing to have that happen to anyone. We got away at that time, but I was so thankful to have Harry there at that time and I felt very womanly. I felt that I was being guarded and someone was looking after me.

Ladies and gentlemen, it has been an absolute pleasure. I wish every woman in this state of Queensland all the very, very best. I hope that all of those who follow you do as well. God bless you.

Ms GRACE: Thank you so much, Yvonne. I think everyone in the room extends our deepest sympathies for the loss of Graham that you shared with us today. We know when you lose someone that close after so many years of marriage, it is not easy. Thank you for being here today. You are right; in this game you have to be yourself. It was wonderful to hear. Thank you so much.

Mrs Cunningham is our next and last speaker, one of our longest serving female members of parliament, having been elected in July 1995—has it been that long?—as the Independent for the seat of Gladstone and serving her electorate until she retired this year. She did not stand for the last election. That

was some 20 years as well, an amazing length of time. She was the first non-major party woman to be elected. Well done, and we remember when Liz, of course, had the balance of power during the Borbidge government which she used and used wisely at times, I have to admit. Welcome, Liz. It is great to hear from you today.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Thank you very much. I am not sure how I follow that. I have no hedge-crawling stories! Today we are celebrating 100 years of women's right to stand for the Queensland parliament. I acknowledge and thank the Australian Study of Parliament Group for the invitation to existing parliamentary members and all of our ladies, especially the Deputy Speaker and our guest speakers. Thank you for this opportunity.

It is 100 years since women could be elected to this place and 55 years since Aboriginal women could be elected to this place. It is hard to believe, particularly when it comes to our First Nation people, that it is such close history, but so much has been achieved in that time. Last week I had the opportunity to speak with a group of women in a very male dominated employment area. I did some maths when I was talking to them. Before I was elected, in 1995, there were 21 women in parliament—I think this is correct—and after I was elected there were 62 women elected to the Queensland parliament. The balance and change has been exponential, but, if you look back, still the change has been slow. However, I think we need to be encouraged by those numbers.

I grew up with a twin brother. He did not play dolls; I played cowboys. Therefore, gender—the feminine thing—was never an issue. I did not have any problems dealing with blokes. Being a female, short et cetera has never been an issue. If there was a problem dealing with me as a woman, it was their problem; I do not want to know about it. However, because of the issues and the challenges that many women face, it is something that I have had to give consideration to.

I note that previous speakers have talked about the conservative and Labor pipelines. Generally, the pipeline for conservatives is local government and, generally, the pipeline for Labor is the union movement. I use the word 'generally' intentionally. There is movement on both sides of the party political spectrum to block those pipelines. I think that is regrettable, if not unforgivable, that having recognised that certain people come through certain pathways to get into political life others would actively try to block those opportunities. The motive for all of us, men and women, who aspire to leadership, whether it is in local, state or federal government, should be improving the lives of Queenslanders. I think men do it well and women do it extremely well.

In speaking with young people, and young women in particular, I have said this to them, and I say it to this room because I feel very strongly about it: when people criticise you, whether it is because of your gender, whether it is because of your height, whether it is because of your build or whether it is because of your points of view, take what they say and consider it. I think that is important. Take what they say and learn from what is constructive. However, what is rubbish, what is baseless, what is negative, do not even consider taking to heart because it suddenly becomes your burden to carry. For some ladies it is really difficult to do that compartmentalisation. If you have a problem because every time someone says a cross word to you, you cry—and that is a different thing to you, Yvonne, but you are right—as a woman, you steel yourself in a lot meetings and say, 'I'm not going to get upset, even though I might feel like it, because it will be seen as a sign of weakness,' rather than the reality, which is that it is a sign of humanity. It is really important for some ladies not to take that criticism to heart but to dispense with it and to dismiss it. Use what is constructive, use what is positive, but get rid of the rest.

It has also been said—and I am conscious of time—that to be a leader one has to be objective and unemotional: do not be moved by what is around you; just make the decisions. I reckon that is crap. They—usually the other side of the equation—say that women cannot be in those roles because they are way too emotional; we cannot cope; we are fair too fragile; we would not manage; we can only have babies. That is rubbish, too. I believe that without emotion, we as people are dead. Have a look at your day at home: without emotion we are dead. A leader has to be emotional. A leader has to be informed, has to be considerate, cogent in their arguments and deliberative. It is my belief and it is my experience that women are strong in all those areas. Sit back and think about the last blue you had with your husband: you were informed, you were considered, you were cogent and you were deliberative. We have the goods!

It is also my belief, as other speakers have said, that having a good balance of men and women in any role is critically important to having healthy balanced results. Women do form about 50 per cent of the community and it is the input of all of those points of view—interesting, coloured, experiential—that gives the end result, the end decision, one that is sound and able to perpetuate.

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When the old boys club changes, the old boys probably will not, but we can raise young boys and young girls who are strong, independent, confident young people who look first at the strengths, skills and contributions of their peers and not at their gender. May there be many more people in parliament in the future who are strong, informed and cogent and may many of those be women.

Ms GRACE: Thank you so much, Liz. I think you are right: who is to say that we are too emotional or whatever? I have seen many women cope very well in senior positions. Well said! As the mother of a daughter who turns 21 in October, Yvonne, I cannot imagine my daughter, Alexandra, having two children at that age. Culturally, we have shifted so much. I cannot even imagine her being married, let alone having children. Things have definitely shifted.

Liz and Anne Tiernan talked about pipelines. I was remarking to Fiona that both Annastacia Palaszczuk and I were advisers in the Keating government. I was doing a bit of research myself and what struck me was that on both sides of the House there were a lot of male ministers and shadow ministers, and it was interesting to note the number of young men who worked for them. Very, very few young women worked as advisers. I think Mary Crawford is nodding, as well. We talk about a pipeline which provides an amazing study for them in politics and a lot of them then enter parliament. It struck me also that I am sure that many of the wives and partners of those men were very happy that they were young men and not young women in those roles. It is interesting when you look at how those pipelines are so very important to advancement.

That takes us to the end of today. What a way to celebrate 100 years of women being able to stand for parliament. We have heard from fantastic speakers. It was wonderful to hear from the Premier, of course, Professor Anne Tiernan, Fiona Simpson—thanks, Fiona—Yvonne and Liz. It was great to have you here. Thank you for your generosity and your insights, and for those little snippets you gave us. I think we will all walk away thinking about the things that were said today. It was wonderful.

Of course, none of this would ever happen unless there were some women organising the event. We had three fantastic women organising this event. Please thank Donna, Danielle and Melissa. Please stand up. You did a great job. I was very lucky today because I had these notes. They did a great job in organising today. I have to commend the Australian Study of Parliament Group, Queensland chapter, which has done a great job in making sure that we commemorate this historic milestone. For white women, it really is an historic milestone. I hope that in the years to come we can celebrate 100 years of Indigenous women having the vote and being able to stand for parliament, and that there are lot more of them by that time. Aunty Lynne, we really hope that that happens.

I thank everyone for being here. It was a great afternoon. I am sure we have the room for a little longer, so enjoy. I really enjoyed today. I am going to take away a lot and I hope you do as well. Thank you all so much.