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# *HANSARD*

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## **Legislative Assembly**

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### **FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT**

#### **Appointed to meet**

AT BRISBANE ON THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF MARCH, IN THE FIFTY-THIRD  
YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, IN THE  
YEAR OF OUR LORD 2004

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**TUESDAY, 16 MARCH 2004**

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#### **OPENING OF PARLIAMENT**

Pursuant to the proclamation by Her Excellency the Governor, dated 26 February 2004, appointing parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 10 a.m. in the Legislative Assembly chamber.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

#### **COMMISSION TO OPEN PARLIAMENT**

The Clerk informed the House that Her Excellency the Governor, not being able conveniently to be present in person this day, has caused a commission to be issued under the public seal of the state appointing the Honourable Peter Douglas Beattie, the Honourable Terence Michael Mackenroth and the Honourable Anna Maria Bligh as commissioners in order to cause the opening and holding of this session of parliament.

The commissioners so appointed being seated on the dais, and the Clerk having read the commission—

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

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

The Clerk read the commission.

### RETURN OF WRITS

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

Albert: Margaret Majella Keech	Lockyer: Ian Phillip Rickuss
Algester: Karen Lee Struthers	Logan: Reginald John Mickel
Ashgrove: Demetrios Fouras	Lytton: Paul Thomas Lucas
Aspley: Veronica Lesley Barry	Mackay: Timothy Sean Mulherin
Barron River: Lesley Ann Clark	Mansfield: Philip Gerard Reeves
Beaudesert: Kevin Rowson Lingard	Maroochydore: Fiona Stuart Simpson
Brisbane Central: Peter Douglas Beattie	Maryborough: Christopher John Foley
Broadwater: Peta-Kaye Croft	Mirani: George Edward Malone
Bulimba: Patrick Douglas Purcell	Moggill: Bruce Flegg
Bundaberg: Junita Irene Cunningham	Mount Coot-tha: Andrew Peter Fraser
Bundamba: Jo-Ann Roslyn Miller	Mount Gravatt: Judith Caroline Spence
Burdekin: Rosemary Norma Menkens	Mount Isa: Anthony McGrady
Burleigh: Christine Anne Smith	Mount Ommaney: Julie Maree Attwood
Burnett: Robert Desmond Messenger	Mudgeeraba: Dianne Ann Reilly
Cairns: Desley Boyle	Mulgrave: Frederick Warren Pitt
Callide: Jeffrey William Seeney	Mundingburra: Lindel Helena Nelson-Carr
Caloundra: Mark Francis McArdle	Murrumba: Dean MacMillan Wells
Capalaba: Michael Wai-Man Choi	Nanango: Dorothy Ruth Pratt
Charters Towers: Shane Andrew Knuth	Nicklin: Peter William Wellington
Chatsworth: Terence Michael Mackenroth	Noosa: Cathryn Molloy
Clayfield: Elizabeth Anne Clark	Nudgee: Neil Stuart Roberts
Cleveland: Darryl James Briskey	Pumicestone: Carryn Elizabeth Sullivan
Cook: Jason Daniel O'Brien	Redcliffe: Raymond Keith Hollis
Cunningham: Stuart William Copeland	Redlands: John Michael English
Curumbin: Janet Anne Stuckey	Robina: Robert Joseph Quinn
Darling Downs: Raymond Gordon Hopper	Rockhampton: Robert Evan Schwarten
Everton: Rodney Jon Welford	Sandgate: Gordon Richard Nuttall
Ferny Grove: Geoffrey James Wilson	South Brisbane: Anna Maria Bligh
Fitzroy: James Pearce	Southern Downs: Lawrence James Springborg
Gaven: Robert Lindsay Poole	Southport: Peter Joseph Lawlor
Gladstone: Elizabeth Anne Cunningham	Springwood: Barbara Gwendoline Stone
Glass House: Carolyn Therese Male	Stafford: Terry Sullivan
Greenslopes: Gary Bernard Fenlon	Stretton: Stephen Robertson
Gregory: Vaughan Gregory Johnson	Surfers Paradise: John-Paul Honore Langbroek
Gympie: Elisa Mary Roberts	Tablelands: Rosa Theresa Lee Long
Hervey Bay: Andrew Ian McNamara	Thuringowa: Craig Andrew Wallace
Hinchinbrook: Marcus Hosking Rowell	Toowoomba North: Kerry Gerard Shine
Inala: Heinrich Zbyszczek Palaszczuk	Toowoomba South: Michael James Horan
Indooroopilly: Ronan Oliver Lee	Townsville: Michael Francis Reynolds
Ipswich: Rachel Genevieve Nolan	Warrego: Howard William Thomas Hobbs
Ipswich West: Donald Wallace Livingstone	Waterford: Thomas Alfred Barton
Kallangur: Kenneth William Hayward	Whitsunday: Janice Heather Jarratt
Kawana: Christopher Paul Cummins	Woodridge: Desley Carleton Scott
Keppel: Paul Anthony Hoolihan	Yeerongpilly: Simon David Finn
Kurwongbah: Linda Denise Lavarch	

### MEMBERS SWORN

The commissioners then administered the oath or affirmation of allegiance to the following members, who thereupon subscribed the roll—

ATTWOOD, Julie Maree  
 BARRY, Veronica Lesley  
 BARTON, Thomas Alfred  
 BEATTIE, Peter Douglas  
 BLIGH, Anna Maria  
 BOYLE, Desley  
 BRISKEY, Darryl James  
 CHOI, Michael Wai-Man  
 CLARK, Lesley Ann  
 CLARK, Elizabeth Anne  
 COPELAND, Stuart William  
 CROFT, Peta-Kaye  
 CUMMINS, Christopher Paul  
 CUNNINGHAM, Elizabeth Anne  
 CUNNINGHAM, Junita Irene  
 ENGLISH, John Michael  
 FENLON, Gary Bernard  
 FINN, Simon David  
 FLEGG, Bruce  
 FOLEY, Christopher John  
 FOURAS, Demetrios  
 FRASER, Andrew Peter  
 HAYWARD, Kenneth William  
 HOBBS, Howard William Thomas  
 HOLLIS, Raymond Keith  
 HOOLIHAN, Paul Anthony  
 HOPPER, Raymond Gordon  
 HORAN, Michael James  
 JARRATT, Janice Heather  
 JOHNSON, Vaughan Gregory  
 KEECH, Margaret Majella  
 KNUTH, Shane Andrew  
 LANGBROEK, John-Paul Honore  
 LAVARCH, Linda Denise  
 LAWLOR, Peter Joseph  
 LEE LONG, Rosa Theresa  
 LEE, Ronan Oliver  
 LINGARD, Kevin Rowson  
 LIVINGSTONE, Donald Wallace  
 LUCAS, Paul Thomas  
 McARDLE, Mark Francis  
 McGRADY, Tony  
 MACKENROTH, Terence Michael  
 McNAMARA, Andrew Ian  
 MALE, Carolyn Therese

MALONE, George Edward  
 MENKENS, Rosemary Norma  
 MESSENGER, Robert Desmond  
 MICKEL, Reginald John  
 MILLER, Jo-Ann Roslyn  
 MOLLOY, Cathryn  
 MULHERIN, Timothy Sean  
 NELSON-CARR, Lindel Helena  
 NOLAN, Rachel Genevieve  
 NUTTALL, Gordon Richard  
 O'BRIEN, Jason Danial  
 PALASZCZUK, Heinrich Zbyszczek  
 PEARCE, James  
 PITT, Frederick Warren  
 POOLE, Robert Lindsay  
 PRATT, Dorothy Ruth  
 PURCELL, Patrick Douglas  
 QUINN, Robert Joseph  
 REEVES, Philip Gerard  
 REILLY, Dianna Ann  
 REYNOLDS, Michael Francis  
 RICKUSS, Ian Phillip  
 ROBERTS, Elisa Mary  
 ROBERTS, Neil Stuart  
 ROBERTSON, Stephen  
 ROWELL, Marcus Hosking  
 SCHWARTEN, Robert Evan  
 SCOTT, Desley Carleton  
 SEENEY, Jeffrey William  
 SHINE, Kerry Gerard  
 SIMPSON, Fiona Stuart  
 SMITH, Christine Anne  
 SPENCE, Judith Caroline  
 SPRINGBORG, Lawrence James  
 STONE, Barbara Gwendoline  
 STRUTHERS, Karen Lee  
 STUCKEY, Janet Anne  
 SULLIVAN, Carryn Elizabeth  
 SULLIVAN, Terry  
 WALLACE, Craig Andrew  
 WELFORD, Rodney Jon  
 WELLINGTON, Peter William  
 WELLS, Dean Macmillan  
 WILSON, Geoffrey James

### ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Clerk having called upon the longest serving member, not being a minister, to preside—

Hon. K. R. Lingard (Beaudesert—NPA) took the chair as the Presiding Member.

**The PRESIDING MEMBER:** Honourable members, before calling for proposals for Speaker, I draw the attention of honourable members to the standing orders, which provide that any member present in the chamber may be proposed as Speaker. Every proposal shall be seconded. Any member who has been proposed as Speaker is required to indicate if the proposal is acceptable. When all proposals have been made, seconded and accepted, debate may ensue. Debate shall be relevant to the question. Speeches shall not exceed five minutes for each member. I remind all honourable members that the provisions of the standing orders apply for this debate. I now call for nominations.

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.42 a.m.): I move—

That Raymond Keith Hollis do take the chair of this House as Speaker.

Mr Presiding Member, I welcome all members to the 51st parliament, especially the 13 new members. As we all know, our constituents have entrusted us to represent them at the very heart of Queensland's democracy, and we should listen to them, regardless of how old or young. That is a huge honour. If new members are seeking guidance on how best to serve their constituents,

they could find no better role model than Ray Hollis, the member for Redcliffe. The member for Redcliffe has always served with commitment, enthusiasm and an abiding belief in the importance of this parliament.

As Speaker since 1998, he has progressively opened up the Queensland parliament to the people who own it, that is, the people of Queensland. Our parliament is now more accessible than ever. That is due in no small part to his considerable efforts. He has been a passionate supporter of the government's initiatives to make parliament more relevant and meaningful to the people of this state. Initiatives such as the Internet broadcast of proceedings and online petitions are just two. In that sense, he is a fantastic ambassador for Queensland democracy. There was no better advocate for the regional parliament in north Queensland, on which I congratulate him. He issued the warmest of welcomes to the 8,000-plus people who attended this event in September 2002, and I know he will be every bit as enthusiastic about the central Queensland parliament next year.

He has thrown open the doors of the parliament to the people of Queensland. It was the member for Redcliffe who made this place an open House on Sundays during his first term as Speaker, and in his second term he extended this to regularly include Saturdays as well. Parliament House is now open to the public every day of the week, including some public holidays. It is now open for 348 days of the year. Excluding visitors to the north Queensland parliament, since he became Speaker more than 214,000 people have undertaken guided tours of Parliament House. There have also been more than 155,000 schoolchildren who have gained a better appreciation of democracy by visiting here. Many of them have also been greeted by Ray Hollis and his wife, Diane.

All of these highlights and his understanding mean that this place is run a lot better than it used to be. During his tenure as Speaker, the House has sat for 264 days. For two years running we have had Science in Parliament. That involves a total of about 400 scientists. The experiment has been such a success that Science in Parliament is becoming an annual feature on the parliamentary calendar. The member for Redcliffe has continued the restoration of this historic building and recently oversaw the refurbishment of the level 5 conference room and the media conference room as well.

Mr Presiding Member, this heightened accessibility brings added scrutiny. Like never before we are all in the public gaze, which is exactly what should happen. In our troubled world, people expect their leaders to be disciplined, dignified and honest. We are all leaders. They want debate to be constructive and respectful, so the Speaker's role has never been more important. It is the Speaker who ensures that the debate is of a high standard. To demand high standards the Speaker needs to be fair, and the member for Redcliffe has always shown his fairness. In fact, there have been times when I have even thought he has been too fair, but in the interests of democracy I respect his fairness. He can stand on his record to command respect from everyone in this House.

His strong sense of justice and fairness is rooted in his life experiences and expressed in his activities outside parliament. He chairs his local Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal. He embodies how life in Australia is a great leveller. People can come from humble beginnings to make it in this country, and that is in no small way due to our democracy.

Ray Hollis was born in England on 30 January 1940 and came to Australia as a merchant seaman in 1962. He is the father of four children and is married to Diane. Before becoming a parliamentarian on 2 December 1989, he worked on the railways, as a farm hand, a galley boy, a cook, a paper mill operator and a steward. He also sold insurance, ran his own transport and distribution businesses, and worked in Victoria in corrective services. Ray has lived and worked in the real world. He is an ideal Speaker. He is the right person to be the Speaker of a parliament that must connect with the community.

I believe today's members can give parliament more meaning for the people of Queensland. We come from a wide variety of backgrounds and we remain, with 31 women members, the Australian parliament that is the most representative of women.

Ray Hollis has shown that he will make parliament more relevant and worth while to the people of Queensland. For this, amongst many other reasons, he is fully credentialled to be the Speaker of this House, and I nominate him accordingly.

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (10.47 a.m.): I have pleasure in seconding the motion moved by the Premier to appoint Ray Hollis as the Speaker of this parliament. The Speaker is probably one of the most difficult jobs in politics. I have seen a few come and go. Ray is the second member I have seen to start a third

term as Speaker. Jim Fouras actually started his third term. I suppose he got to the end of it, but circumstances made it very short. But he did have three terms. They are the only two members I have seen who have served for that time. But I have seen a number of them, Mr Presiding Member, as you would know, in that role. It is one of the most difficult jobs in the parliament. As members, we can make the Speaker's job that much easier if we actually respect the position and the Chair.

This may come as a bit of a surprise to members, but in the 26 years that I have been here I have been warned under standing order 123A once and I have never been asked to leave the parliament—never. That is because I have always respected the Chair. If the Speaker has asked me to respect his rulings, I always have. I sat for 14 years in opposition. During that time I always did that.

I have seen the Speaker's job from both sides. Whenever the Speaker gives a ruling that favours the government, the opposition—irrespective of who it is—says that the Speaker is favouring the government and that he is doing the government's job. If the Speaker gives a ruling with which the government is not happy, irrespective of who the Speaker is the same thing goes: they think that the Speaker is being weak.

It is a very difficult job because you are never going to make everybody happy. As I said, I think that we can make the Speaker's job that much easier and we can make this parliament run a lot better if we do show respect for the Chair. When the Speaker or Acting Speakers ask us to bring ourselves to order we must ensure that we do in fact do that. I have sat here as a member of parliament for 26 years thinking, 'Boy, if I was there that bloke wouldn't be around.' I have always held the view that if we got rid of a few really quickly everyone else would shut up. No-one has ever tried it, but I think that would work because they would know that we were serious. When we warn them and warn them and warn them, they see how far they can take us. If the Speaker asks us to behave ourselves or warns us under standing order 123A, we should respect his ruling and bring ourselves to order. It is up to each and every one of us as members of parliament to do that.

The Premier mentioned Ray's role as Speaker and the way he has changed the way that things operate. The thing that he will look back on as one of his crowning glories would be the first parliament to have sat outside of Brisbane when we travelled to Townsville. It started out as being an experiment and ended up a great success—every member of the last parliament believed it was a great success. As a parliament we all committed ourselves to doing that each term. It was a great success. That is no small measure of the work that Ray and the staff of this parliament put into making sure that it was a great experience for us as members of parliament but a greater experience for the people of north Queensland. I am sure that the people of central Queensland will find the same thing next year because Ray will make sure that it does work.

I take great pleasure in seconding Ray Hollis's nomination as Speaker. I am certain that he will prove to be a great Speaker for this parliament.

**The PRESIDING MEMBER:** Does the honourable member for Redcliffe accept the nomination?

**Mr HOLLIS:** I accept the nomination at this stage.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.52 a.m.): I move—That Elizabeth Anne Cunningham do take the position of Speaker in this parliament.

Regardless of a person's individual personal attributes or their party political affiliation, it is time that this parliament give serious consideration to the appointment of an independent Speaker. It may very well be that that person could be an Independent member of this parliament, a member of the crossbenches or ultimately somebody who is selected from one of the major parties who then subsequently takes that position based on Westminster tradition.

Liz Cunningham, as we all know, has served in this parliament for three full terms. She is in her fourth term. She is a person who is widely respected in this place by both sides. She is a person who has always completely dedicated herself to the job in this place and is one of the most prolific participants in parliamentary process. She has always studied the process and she has always been very much involved in debate in this place and is somebody who respects very much its institutions.

In 1996 she had the very difficult and unenviable job of being an Independent member who supported a minority government. During that time she, I believe, exercised great discretion in not only voting with the government but also on occasion voting against the government on matters

that she felt were principal to her. She is somebody who is obviously widely respected in her own electorate and is widely respected for her astute judgment within the community in general. To hold the seat that Liz Cunningham holds, and hold it so well—she is now in her fourth term—I think is a very true indication of that. I believe that if she were Speaker she would exercise great dignity and great fairness in this place. This is in no way a reflection on the previous Speaker. As I said, it is simply a continuation of the position which the Nationals hold that we need to move towards an Independent Speaker in this parliament.

It is no doubt challenging, as the Premier and Deputy Premier both said a moment ago, to be Speaker. It is very challenging to be able to deliberate very fairly in this place when we consider the argy-bargy that occurs across this chamber. I believe that having an Independent Speaker would certainly remove the Speaker from any charge whatsoever that that Speaker was being biased or being unfair to one side of the parliament or the other.

In his dissertation in supporting Ray Hollis, the Premier said that there is a large number of women in this parliament, and I personally welcome that. I think that it would take this parliament to the next step if this parliament today was courageous enough to elect a woman to the position of Speaker. I have absolutely no doubt that Liz Cunningham, given her stature within her own local community and her stature and experience in this place, would be able to bring all the qualities which we see as members of parliament, which we want as members of parliament and which the community wants in a Speaker to the fore in this place. I therefore have absolutely no hesitation and enjoy the opportunity to nominate Elizabeth Anne Cunningham for the position of Speaker in this parliament.

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.56 a.m.): I rise to second the motion that has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition that Elizabeth Anne Cunningham, the member for Gladstone, take the chair of this parliament. I can only reinforce the comments that were made by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the suitability of Liz Cunningham to be Speaker of this parliament. In the years that she has been in this House she has earned the respect of every member in this House, irrespective of their political allegiance. We have an opportunity today to recognise that respect in her appointment as Speaker.

The position of Speaker and the suggestion that parliaments such as this should have an Independent Speaker has been the subject of some debate and conjecture at various levels in the political arena in Australia. In this parliament we have quite an extraordinary number of Independent members. I have a particular view about the role of Independent members, in a parliament such as this, that one of the roles they can play, and play adequately, is the role of Speaker. It is a position that requires a degree of independence, and that is sometimes hard to achieve when the nominated Speaker is a member of either one of the major parties.

In parliaments such as this we have the government and the alternative government. Naturally enough, in most circumstances the government has the numbers to ensure that one of its members becomes the Speaker. If that person is elected from the ranks of the government, it is always going to be difficult to achieve the level of independence that is truly necessary for a parliament such as this to work properly. That is going to be difficult irrespective of the person who is elected. That has been the basis of the arguments for an Independent Speaker in houses of parliament such as this. That is what those arguments have been based on for quite a long time.

Here in this parliament we have an opportunity today to elect someone who is already independent and who has already earned the respect of every member of this parliament during the years that she has served in this place. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion to nominate Elizabeth Anne Cunningham to the position of Speaker. She would do a fine job. It would be a great precedent to set for this parliament and it would ensure that this place was presided over by somebody who was truly independent of the arguments that are put by the government and challenged by the alternative government.

**The PRESIDING MEMBER:** Order! Does the honourable member for Gladstone accept the nomination?

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (11.00 a.m.): Yes.

**The PRESIDING MEMBER:** Is there any further debate? Honourable members, a ballot will now be conducted. I draw the attention of all honourable members to the form of ballot paper which will be used. It will list only the names of those members who have been nominated and seconded and who have accepted the nomination. You are required to place a cross in the square immediately to the left of the name of the member whom you choose to be the Speaker. I warn that no cameras are to be used during this period. As your name is called, please come

forward to receive the ballot paper. After voting, place your folded ballot paper in the ballot box on the table.

At 11.05 a.m.,

In accordance with the provisions of standing orders 6 and 7, a ballot was taken by the Clerk, with the following result—

Mr Hollis	63
Mrs Liz Cunningham	24
Informal	2

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am honoured to be chosen as the member to fill the high and honourable office of the Speaker of the Queensland parliament. It is the highest privilege amongst parliamentarians to be the Speaker. It is a great honour to be elected by my colleagues to continue in this high office. I commence by thanking the parliament, especially those who proposed and seconded me to the House—the Premier and the Deputy Premier—and also the Leader of the Opposition for his kind words.

In my previous term as Speaker, I initiated many activities to improve the parliamentary precinct and these buildings. Major changes have taken place on level 5 of the Annexe, with the conference room and the media room now completely refurbished. I was pleased to launch the Wall of Reconciliation on level 5 and accept the first beautiful artwork *Celestial Gathering* on behalf of the parliament. The front entrance of the Annexe has been refurbished. This will improve the safety and security of the precinct for members and its staff. The outward appearance of the old House has been refreshed as stone work continues into this year.

Outside of the precinct I was pleased to be Speaker of the first regional parliament and look forward to leading the Parliamentary Service and members to the second regional parliament in this new term. There are many other initiatives which have already been implemented in the 51st parliament. I am pleased to present all members with a laptop computer for the first time and facilitate the use of laptops in this chamber. This ensures that parliament is keeping up with the technology so that members are well equipped to do their jobs.

The Queensland parliament will also be the host of the first Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Youth Parliament held outside of the United Kingdom. This will take place in 2005, and I am very proud that we can facilitate such a prestigious event.

I remind all members that this is a public forum and we should all be aware that our behaviour will leave a lasting impression on those who view the parliament from the gallery or on the Internet. If members ever fail to check themselves, I will remind them to uphold the best parliamentary standards. All Speakers will do things that even majorities do not like, but that is my role. To the 13 new members of this parliament, can I offer you my welcome as well. You can be assured that my door is open to you at any time. Again, I thank you all for the honour and the privilege conferred on me today.

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.31 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the government, I congratulate you on your election and I pledge that we will work with you with the usual degree of enthusiasm during this term. I have to say I welcome a ballot. I think in a democracy that is a good thing. It is very rare for a Speaker to get over two-thirds of the vote. I congratulate him on that, and he did it last time, too. In fact, when you look back, it is very impressive for a Speaker to get more than two-thirds of the vote in a contest on two occasions. So, Mr Speaker, you have a very impressive track record.

Mr Speaker, I should say that this is a very important institution, as we all know. Our behaviour and conduct in this place is on public display on every occasion. It saddens me and I know it saddens all members of this House—if it does not, it should—that politicians are not held in as high regard as they should be in the community, because we all know regardless of our political differences we work very hard for the people we serve—the people who elect us. It is therefore important and incumbent on all of us that we are on our best behaviour in this House. There does need to be a robust process in here, particularly in question time, and I would not want to see it any other way. But there are many ways that you can handle robust debate. The most important is to do it with a dignified and constructive approach, and that is what I would urge all members to do. I know all members of the government will certainly be pursuing that.

Mr Speaker, as I half-jokingly said in my nomination speech, you have been a very fair Speaker and on many occasions I jokingly said 'too fair'. I believe you are fair. I believe in a parliament where the government does have 63 seats that it is important that you do demonstrate that fairness which you have done in the last two terms and I know you will in this term as well. So can I pledge our loyalty and support to you. On behalf of the government, I look forward to working with you with some enthusiasm. Congratulations. Well done!

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.33 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the opposition, I rise to congratulate you on being elected as Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly and I offer you the support and cooperation of the opposition in this place. I also agree with the Premier that the role that you hold is a very important role. It is a role which is about ensuring dignity and fairness in this parliament, and we will work with you cooperatively to ensure that. Mr Speaker, I personally have enjoyed a good working relationship with you and I know that we will be able to continue to do that. From the perspective of the opposition, from time to time we know that things are going to become somewhat robust and a little bit difficult in this place. But I will be doing my level best to ensure that we use the appropriate processes of this place—the standing and the sessional orders—to pursue the concerns that we may have in this place.

Mr Speaker, as happens in all parliaments, from time to time it may also be necessary to dissent from your ruling on matters, and that is a process which has been in-built in our democratic process over many generations and many centuries. It is my personal view and the view of the opposition that that is the appropriate mechanism that we should use if there are any times that we feel that there may be a ruling of yours on which we disagree. But, Mr Speaker, we know that on the greatest majority of occasions we will have absolutely no qualms with the way that you conduct this place. As I said, in my dealings and my discussions with you and many of my colleagues, we have always found you to be very fair and very open.

I would also like to reflect on what the Premier said a little while ago—that is, that this is a place for robustness and engaging debate. That is the beauty of our democracy. If anyone thinks that there is a better system, then let them come into this place and tell us what that particular system is.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Coalition in the opposition!

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Mr Speaker, as I said, let people come into this place and tell us what the better system is. Mr Speaker, whilst it is true that we engage in pursuing each other across this chamber on matters on which we disagree, on the matters that we agree on we do not necessarily debate, and that is what a lot of people out there do not see. That is the simple reality. Some 70 per cent of the pieces of legislation that go through this place have the unanimous support of members of this parliament, and that should never, ever, ever be forgotten. This place is to ensure that the notions of accountability and democracy and fairness—government and alternative—are best played out, and that is what we are about doing in this particular place. The things on which we disagree with the government we will pursue and the things on which we agree with the government we will praise. During the campaign I was actually urged by some in the media to drop my positive politics agenda because it was being a bit too—

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Terry, most people would prefer to see us with mine off than yours off, I would imagine.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Mr Speaker, seriously, we congratulate you. We wish you all the very best. We will work with you cooperatively. We will work with you well. As I said, if there are matters of dissent, we will use the appropriate mechanisms in this place to pursue that.

**Mr QUINN** (Robina—Lib) (11.37 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Liberal Party, can I also offer you our congratulations on your election to the Speaker's position for your third term. As previous members have said, we all have an obligation to make sure that we enhance the standing of parliament and the parliamentary process in this state. Your office—your position—in fact is a vital component of that process. We respect that process, and we wish you well for the next three years.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (11.37 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Independents, I congratulate you on your success. We look forward to working with you cooperatively. I say on behalf of not only the Independents but also the member representing the

One Nation Party that we look forward to furthering and benefiting the community of Queensland in the term ahead. Congratulations.

#### **PRESENTATION OF MR SPEAKER**

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.35 a.m.): I desire to inform honourable members that Her Excellency the Governor will receive the House for the purpose of presenting the Speaker to Her Excellency at Government House today at 2.30 p.m. Cars will leave the portico at 2.05 p.m. sharp.

#### **SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.36 a.m.): I move—

That this House, at its rising, do adjourn until 2.10 p.m. tomorrow in the former Legislative Council chamber.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.37 a.m.