




Speech By
Colin Boyce

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 8 March 2018

MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (4.06 pm): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to deliver my first speech and acknowledge International Women's Day.

My first memory was sitting on my father's knee at the kitchen table beside a wood stove. It was early in the morning and it was cold. On the table was a radio covered in a brown leather case. The man on the radio who was delivering the news said, 'The President of the United States of America, John F Kennedy, is dead.' So profound was the news that I remember it to this day.

I grew up on my parent's brigalow ballot block and I remember the big tractors pulling the scrub—a government requirement of the day. The wheel has turned, and now we have proposed government regulation which will inhibit agricultural development in Queensland. It is time that people understand that our graziers and our farmers are the true practical environmentalists—the custodians of the land who look after it, nurture it and make it productive and sustainable. Australia was born on the back of agriculture and it remains at the forefront of our economy, including the local economy of Callide. I will be constantly challenging concerns and advocating for growth for agriculture in our electorate.

It is with great humility and respect that I stand before the 56th Parliament to deliver my first speech as the newly elected member for Callide. I pledge my allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her representative the Governor of Queensland, His Excellency the Hon. Paul de Jersey AC. I am an Australian and I pledge my allegiance to the flag and to the Commonwealth of Australia.

I offer my congratulations to the member for Mulgrave, the Hon. Curtis Pitt, on his appointment as Speaker of the House. I congratulate the Premier, the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, and her ministers and members of parliament on their election as the government of Queensland. I acknowledge and congratulate Deb Frecklington as the Leader of the Opposition and her shadow ministers and members of parliament on their election. I also offer my congratulations to the MPs on the crossbench on their election to the 56th Parliament.

It is truly an honour to be elected by the people of Callide and to join the ranks of parliamentarians who have come before me. It is no small feat and I do not take it lightly. I pledge my loyalty to the people of Callide and sincerely thank them for putting their trust in me. I also take this time to acknowledge the many groups of traditional owners past and present from our electorate.

There are many to thank who have helped and assisted me on my journey here. The biggest thankyou goes to my wife of 31 years, Terri. Without her contribution as campaign manager, secretary, treasurer, speech editor, photographer, media consultant, wardrobe manager, cook and friend, I would not be here. I also thank my daughter, Sarah. As the software enabling specialist it was her efforts that dragged me, the dinosaur, into the computer age. Sarah took leave from her job in London to help me get over the line—a big effort. To my sons, Tom and Scott, thank you for taking up the management of our family business. Your selfless action has afforded me the time to campaign and now represent the people of Callide, and I am proud of you.

A special acknowledgement for my fellow LNP member candidates who stood for preselection for the seat of Callide—Melinda Hashimoto, Ross Stiller, Bronwyn Christensen and Ashley Jensen. It takes a lot to stand up and have a go, and most people have got no idea what it takes to do that. I commend their efforts. To the LNP executive, thank you for your wisdom in having a postal plebiscite among financial members of the LNP so that members could pick their candidate. That is the way it should be.

There are many who have helped manning polling booths and handing out how-to-vote cards. To all the people who assisted me in any way, I thank you. I acknowledge my CLO, Rebecca Docherty. Rebecca was the only shining light in the sea of darkness at the beginning. I thank her for her words of encouragement and wisdom. To my fellow LNP members who took the time to ring me and offer their advice, counsel and encouragement, it was most appreciated and I will not forget it. You know who you are, the people who keep the chains tight, the mainstays with the big vision, I thank you so much.

To Rodney Smith, Julie Goring and Philip Spann, the Callide SEC executive, I thank you for your persistence and resolve in taking up the challenge to win the seat of Callide. It would be remiss of me not to mention those who did not support me and to those people I say this—I am here for you also and I will do my best to try to address your issues. There are some who have denounced me. My father told me once ‘a man will always reveal himself’ and I realise now just how significant those words were.

Today I acknowledge my great uncle, Lesley Boyce. He is a never-ending source of inspiration for me, and I acknowledge the latitude the Speaker of the House has extended to me and indeed the Boyce family. The year is 2018 and as a nation we remember and celebrate the Great War, the war to end wars, 1914-1918, 100 years ago. I take the opportunity on this auspicious occasion, the beginning of the 56th Parliament of Queensland and the delivery of my first speech, to remember and honour him. Leslie Boyce fought at Passchendaele in Belgium. This is where the Australian boys turned the tide of war. He was awarded the Military Cross. I will read his official citation—

819 Lieutenant Leslie Atherton Gerard Boyce, C.M.G M.C. 41st Battalion Australian Imperial Force. Awarded Military Cross, 18th December 1917 for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of his platoon during an attack and of the company after reaching the objective, all other officers being killed or wounded. He remained in command for two days, consolidating position and repelling counterattacks.

I will pause for a moment to honour him. Lest we forget.

Honourable members: Lest we forget.

Mr BOYCE: Leslie Boyce was gunned down twice on separate occasions, going over the top. He returned to Australia severely wounded. He carried with him his entire life the curse of war. He fathered no children as a result of his war injuries. Later in his life he was awarded the CMG, Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George, by the Queen. He also became a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Queensland. He was a proud Australian and an outstanding citizen. I table a photo of Leslie Boyce’s Portfolio of Declarations for the record.

Tabled paper: Photograph of military tribute compendium regarding Leslie Atherton Gerard Boyce, CMG, MC [306](#).

I consider myself a humble man from humble beginnings. As a small business success story, I know intimately the challenges and rewards which come from running your own business. I am self-made and that has come from hard work, sound investments and good business strategy and the ability to seize the moment and have a go. I run a 5,000-hectare cattle and farming enterprise at Taroom with my family. I am a qualified boilermaker, as are my sons. We have a small engineering business and a fully functional workshop. We are heavy plate welding specialists and build and repair implements for earthmoving machinery and farm equipment.

I worked for several years as a high pressure pipe welder in the gas industry, building the gas pipelines to Curtis Island, the pyramids job of our time. I have a small earthmoving business which serves the local district. I was principal earth moving contractor to Xstrata Coal at Wandoan where we dug the first test pit to recover a coal sample. I have travelled extensively around the world. I have paid my respects at Tyne Cot and Menin Gate. I have boarded the Shinkansen and seen the Colosseum and the Grand Canyon. I have worked as a ringer and a shearer on the big stations out west, and I worked as a timber cutter in state forests. I have a wealth of life experience from which to draw.

The electorate of Callide is approximately 75,000 square kilometres, straddling the Great Dividing Range in Central Queensland. We cover some of the catchment head waters of the Burnett, Fitzroy and Condamine River systems, the roof of Queensland so to speak. We have 37 towns, the largest being Chinchilla followed by Biloela and Calliope, and five local government areas—Banana, Gladstone, Bundaberg, North Burnett and the Western Downs Regional Council.

There are 60 schools, seven major coalmines, numerous other mines and mining proposals including bauxite, gold, bentonite, sand, gravel and quarry materials. There are six major dams including Paradise, Wuruma, Monduran, Awoonga, Callide and Cania dams respectively which serve the industrial, domestic and agricultural needs of places like Gladstone and Bundaberg as well as the electorate of Callide. There are numerous other weirs throughout the electorate which serve the local communities. They are major tourist and recreation destinations. There is the Nathan Gorge Dam proposal at Taroom, a storage facility approximately three times the volume of Sydney Harbour, a project talked about since the 1920s.

The federal government has a \$2.5 billion water infrastructure fund available for projects such as this. I urge the government to take up some of these moneys, start building and give water security to agriculture and industry. The last dam built in Queensland was Paradise Dam on the Burnett River in the electorate of Callide, commissioned 16 years ago.

Callide is the energy hub of Queensland with two base load coal-fired power stations, gas-fired power stations and proposals to build at least a dozen solar power plants and wind farms, some of them as large as any in Australia. The electorate has a large proportion of the CSG gas industry, with all the major gas lines to Curtis Island traversing the electorate. This is underpinned by a huge agricultural industry including dry land and irrigation of fibre, cereal, pulse, herbs, fodder, sugar and fruit crops—again some of them among the largest operations in Australia. We have dairies, feedlots, piggeries and abattoirs which support a huge grazing livestock industry. We are a major food supplier to Queensland. Callide has a large sawmilling industry which sources its product from both native and plantation forests. This supplies the building industry throughout Queensland.

The electorate of Callide is the economic engine room of Queensland. There are thousands of people who gain direct employment in and from the Callide electorate who do not live there. Their contribution to the social wellbeing and the economies of our small communities is very little. This must change if we are to see these communities prosper into the future. It is my job to lobby the government to invest in the electorate of Callide. We provide the basic necessities of life—food, clothing, shelter and energy. We deserve better strategic infrastructure, we deserve better digital communications and we deserve better connectivity to metro and global markets.

If we do not invest heavily in primary and secondary industries—the generator of our wealth—then the tertiary service industry is doomed to fail. We are tired of being vilified as environmental vandals by the urban environmentalist who has an ascientific disconnection from the natural world arising from a modern urban consumer lifestyle where the necessities of life come from a shop. Urban life shields consumers from the effects of their lifestyle, rendering them blameless, whilst they enjoy the fruits of an affluent consumer life while producing little or nothing. All too often decisions are made based on popular opinion rather than fact. This comes about because people do not have all the story and only some of the facts. There is often another side to the story which is dismissed or unrepresented. As an example, we are all familiar with Paterson's icon of Australian verse—

And he ran them single handed till their sides were white with foam
He followed like a bloodhound on their track
Till they halted cowed and beaten, then he turned their heads for home
And alone and unassisted brought them back.

That is part of a wonderful story of a magnificent ride, but there is another explanation from the pen of Frank Daniel—

I found them in a dead-ender in a gully walled with stone,
And that's how I came to turn them back, how I did it on my own.

That does not sound as glorious as Paterson's version, but if the story were true it may very well be the truth. The point is that we as representatives of the people must operate with all the story and all the facts.

The state owned roads and highways in Callide and rural Queensland are more than just ways of getting from point A to point B. They are the essential arterial routes of major industry. They are crucial to the economic growth of Queensland. They are deteriorating rapidly and many are in need of urgent upgrade and repair. There are major access roads that are single-lane pavement and sections that remain unsealed. Interstate truck drivers tell me the Leichhardt Highway between Wandoan and Taroom is the worst section of road between Cairns and Melbourne. I urge the government: abandon your \$15 billion Cross River Rail project and invest in rural and regional Queensland where our wealth is generated.

Callide is not a suburban seat. Having said that, we have ongoing issues with health care and aged care, education and transport and how these services are provided and maintained—the same issues as our suburban cousins. If we are to have a 50 per cent renewable energy target, will this bring the closure of coal-fired power stations like Callide? Our power stations inject much into the local economic development and I will be demanding that they remain relevant to our energy supplies.

Will the local coalmine lose its contract to supply coal under renewable energy policies? How will this affect the economy of a large rural town like Biloela? Why would a person who is working in the energy and mining industry support a political party that will oversee the demise of their job? These are questions that directly affect everyone in the Callide electorate. They are topical, controversial and real. We must give airtime to such issues and debate, consider and act in a measured way to ensure that these communities thrive.

Renewable energy is an issue which needs and deserves proper debate. Many will tell you it is not as clean and green as it portrays itself to be. It takes approximately 120 tonnes of coal to produce the steel required to build a wind tower. I also ask this House to consider the life cycle of our renewables—solar panels, electric cars and turbines. What happens at their life's end? Will regional Queensland be a dumping ground for such city-centric driven ideologies? Energy needs to be reliable. Energy needs to be affordable, and that is one thing we all agree on. How we create this affordable energy is something that all levels of government need to work together to address.

There is a proposal to inject carbon dioxide, CO₂, into the precipice sandstone water aquifer of the Great Artesian Basin at Wandoan in the Callide electorate. This is a highly controversial issue with serious environmental and social ramifications should it be allowed to proceed and should it fail. The Great Artesian Basin covers approximately 70 per cent of Queensland. It is the largest underground water storage system in the world. When you mix carbon dioxide with water it becomes carbonic acid, lowering the pH of the water, potentially rendering the water source useless.

The environmentalists will argue that carbon dioxide is the toxic pollutant that is driving climate change. If that is so, why would we allow the Great Artesian Basin to be used as a toxic waste dump? On the earth's driest habitable continent, why would we compromise a precious water source?

What troubles me is that this issue may not make the floor of parliament for debate. The company involved will take its submissions to the EPA and to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and seek their approvals. The people of Callide do not want another Linc Energy fiasco. Where do the urban environmentalists stand on this issue? It seems to me they have painted themselves into a corner and it will be interesting to hear what hypocrisy they come up with.

I also note that the honourable Minister for Environment has told the House this morning that she will not tolerate Queensland becoming a waste dump. On behalf of the people of rural Queensland and the Callide electorate, I will hold the honourable minister to that statement.

I have made a mound and I stand upon it and I will be on good terms with all persons as far as possible without surrender. I will close and leave the House with one final thought: de omnibus dubitandum—doubt everything. I commend this speech to the House.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!