



Speech By  
**Joseph Kelly**

**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

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### MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (5.37 pm): I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this parliament stands. I particularly acknowledge my friend and CFMEU life member Uncle Bob Anderson, who is a great servant of his people, the union movement and our community. I would also like to congratulate the member for Nicklin on his election as Speaker of the House. I have no doubt that he will preside over the House with dignity and fairness.

Congratulations to the Premier for her leadership throughout a remarkable campaign. It has become evident to me in my short time in this place that it should function to restrain any individual's natural tendency to command and dictate. If we are being true to parliamentary traditions, we must take the much harder path of debate and consultation, listening and learning and leading through building consent, even for challenging decisions. Premier Palaszczuk has shown that she is most capable of leading along that difficult path.

Members of cabinet are to be congratulated as well as the other members of the Labor Party who have received the huge honour of representing their communities. I acknowledge and congratulate all other members of the House, particularly Robbie Katter. Our parents were friends, having worked together to keep St Mary's College in Charters Towers open. I acknowledge the immediate former member for Greenslopes, Ian Kaye. I also acknowledge the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, member for Woodridge and friend, the Hon. Cameron Dick, who is highly regarded in the electorate of Greenslopes.

My parents, Bill and Pat Kelly, instilled in their seven children a deep sense of social justice. They encouraged us all to seek the deeper truths in life and to strive to build a community based on respect, acceptance and fairness. Our family moved many times as I was growing up, spending time in Brisbane, Charters Towers, Magnetic Island and Townsville. Wherever we went I was always surrounded by a loving family that helped me through the difficult times, applauded my small achievements and surrounded me with unconditional love. My strongest memory of my parents is of them leading groups in song with Mum on the piano and Dad leading the vocals. It has inspired in me a love of music, and my day is still incomplete if my fingers do not pluck a string of some sort during the day.

Dad was a Christian Brother. Thankfully for me, he was later a failed candidate for the priesthood! This was followed by a career devoted to education and social justice. Mum would have made a great nurse but, sadly, in her time marriage meant the end of career for many women. I am glad that she chose motherhood as she nourished us physically, intellectually and spiritually. Together they led a life that was devoted to their family, their faith, their community and social justice. With seven kids they were not wealthy, but I never felt impoverished—not once. Dad used to say, 'My riches are my children.' Then he would sing his favourite song: *If I Were a Rich Man*.

My mother's family has strong links to the town of Taroom, with my late nanna Dorie living in the town for 60 years. Nanna Dorie started life in Marburg as part of an immigrant German family. I

have a real appreciation of the huge contribution to Queensland of my German immigrant ancestors. Tom, of Irish stock, shared with Dorie a deep understanding of the value of education and ensured that all of their children had the opportunity to receive the best education. Our entire family continues to value the transformative power of education.

My family's connection to the community of Greenslopes began with my grandparents Bill and Josie Kelly, who lived at Raven Street, Camp Hill. Bill and Josie hailed from both sides of the Irish flag and demonstrated that people who choose love over hate can overcome deeply held prejudices. My grandmother was totally blind and raised nine children together with Bill.

Great community disability organisations such as Vision Australia, the Queensland Narrating Service, Carers Queensland and the MND and Me Foundation choose our electorate as their base to support our community and the entire state. In memory of my nanna Josie, I will work to support community organisations.

My volunteer work at school with the St Vincent de Paul Society inspired me to pursue a career in nursing. When I left to begin my nurses training my father encouraged me to join a union because he realised the protections a union could offer vulnerable young workers and the role unions played in building a socially just society. I have been a proud member since I joined 27 years ago. I am proud to be surrounded by great unionists in this place—comrades I have worked with on many campaigns to create safe and fair workplaces and safe and fair societies for us all.

My personal approach to unionism has always been to build strong relationships between workers and employers—building consensus and looking for common ground, striving for outcomes that are fair for employers and employees. This takes discipline and a willingness to listen. It demands that you look beyond the petty squabbles that occur in any relationship but keep focused on the bigger picture of building real prosperity for all. I have seldom met an employer who does not want their business or organisation to be successful for themselves, for their families, for their employees and for their community. Funnily enough, I have seldom met a worker who does not want that, too. We should all bear that in mind and be thankful that in our democratic society people can form associations—employees, employers, workers, farmers, whatever—groups dedicated to collectively improving our society. We should celebrate our uniquely Australian approach to industrial relations—a system that drives us together to achieve greater outcomes and equity. While I am a proud unionist, I am first and foremost elected to represent all of the people of Greenslopes, and I will advocate for them as passionately as I have done for workers.

I wish to pay tribute to the many great nurses I have worked with over the years, particularly Lisa Mitchell, Cindy Bond, Mildred Chitabwa and Peter Rooney. I acknowledge my former colleagues at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, RBWH GARU, ward 4B at QEII Hospital and the members of the Queensland Nurses' Union and the Australasian Rehabilitation Nurses' Association. My workmates always find a way to amaze me. When a situation has seemed overwhelming they have found a way to bring healing and, when required, solace. Nursing shaped me in so many ways. I have learned to listen, to encourage and to support people as they try to change, adjust to or accept their situation. I have seen many happy and sad things as a nurse, and I acknowledge the many patients and families I have had the privilege to care for.

I acknowledge my first-ever organiser and now QNU general secretary Beth Mohle, as well as the great work over my 27 years of nursing done by the Queensland Nurses' Union. I told Beth yesterday and I will tell members now: I am proud to be part of a government that will deliver on its promises to nurses, particularly our commitment to establishing nurse-patient ratios. This will make a difference to patients and to nurses. This will save lives. Over the years, great nurses taught me to always be a patient advocate, no matter what, and I will take this lesson into my role as the member for Greenslopes.

My work journey led me to community sector work with people with intellectual disabilities. Many were my age, and they wanted the same things from life that I wanted: friends, a career, a special person to share life with and some down time to pursue hobbies. I am pleased to say that many achieved this with and without support. But I am proud to be part of a government that will bring the National Disability Insurance Scheme to fruition. It will help all people with disabilities to achieve these things.

I have volunteered for organisations such as Amnesty International, the leukaemia and heart foundations and local community groups such as Holland Park Meals on Wheels, Coorparoo 5 Neighbourhood Watch and the Greenslopes State School P&C. I will support the volunteers of the more than 160 community organisations such as the Holland Park RSL, Mount Gravatt Community Centre, the Eating Disorders Association and the Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre as they work to build a community that is truly caring, fair and worth living in.

The hardest job I have ever had was that of stay-at-home dad. Like many before me, I thought it would be easy. But after a few days alone at home with my daughters, Molly and Brenna, a two-year-old and a four-year-old, I realised quickly the folly of my thinking. Honestly, all men should do it. I learned much, worked hard, had a lot of fun and developed a deep sense of respect for people who take on caring roles for children or relatives. I consider it to be my most important job ever, and in this place we must ensure we support families and carers.

I believe that a functioning democracy is a key to building a better community. While travelling overseas I realised that democracies only ever work when citizens have and take up the opportunity to participate. So after my travels I joined the Greenslopes branch of the Australian Labor Party. My activism has always been focused on working in my local community. I was encouraged to step forward as a representative by many people who over the years quietly supported my political development. For this I thank Robbie Elphinstone, Richard Cleal, Anthony Chisholm, Sarah Mawhinney, David Barbagello and Troy Spence.

Labor provides any aspiring member with many role models. I need look no further than the Hon. Judy Spence. Judy attained many accolades in her long career, but for me her work as a local member is the most inspiring. During a recent visit to the Mount Gravatt Community Centre I posed the question: how was this place set up? The response: because Judy Spence saw a need and set it up. She listened to the people of her electorate, particularly Bernadette Dawson, and worked with them to achieve something of lasting importance. I will strive to work in a manner that would make Judy proud.

Special thanks go to the people who make up the community of Greenslopes. It is a wonderfully diverse community. We have people who live in social housing next door to people who live in mansions. We have people who are professionals and tradespeople living side by side with people who work in retail and hospitality. We have retirees, business owners, students, people with disabilities and single parents all living in harmony as part of our community.

Our community has people of differing views and beliefs on matters religious—people of every religion and atheists—all living in peace, respecting each other's beliefs. We have people from all parts of the world such as our vibrant Somali community. Many of this fine community such as Abdirahman Mohamud, Farouk Arte and Mhuba Ali I count as friends. I have watched the Somali residents of Holland Park move from being new immigrants struggling with language and pretty much everything else to becoming leaders who make great contributions to our community. All of this diversity makes our community a vibrant and rich place to live.

My community is made up of not only the people who demand the products and services produced elsewhere in the state; we are also the people who add value to these products and services. With our access to the traditional centres of business and government, our capacity to operate in a digital world and our capacity to access high-quality educational opportunities for our families at every stage of life, we make a significant economic contribution to this state. We are the small business people, the retailers, the planners, the process workers, the designers, the researchers, the installers, the financiers, the marketers, the information facilitators, the tradespeople, the legal advisers, the managers, the community workers, the educators, the health promoters and the public servants. This last group is by no means the least, and we should all value the work of our public servants.

The electorate has been my home for 18 years and I have grown to love this community. Its sporting teams engage thousands of people of all ages in healthy pastimes—clubs like the Coorparoo Bowls Club, Metro Districts Netball Association and the Easts junior leagues club. Families in our community are spoilt for choice with good schools—schools like Seville Road, Mount Gravatt, Holland Park and Coorparoo state schools—where diversity is valued and celebrated. At schools like Coorparoo college, Cavendish Road, Holland Park High and Mount Gravatt High students are encouraged to excel. The Nursery Road special school and the Brisbane School of Distance Education fulfil our historic mission to deliver education to all Queenslanders. Loretto, St Joachim's, Mount Carmel and St Agnes provide Catholic education and places like Mott Park kindy and Canossa kindy start the education process with professionalism and care. I am always impressed by the hundreds of volunteers on the P&Cs and P&Fs who support the schools and the dedicated teaching and support staff who make a real difference to the life of our kids.

My family and I love the local parks and I love taking my kids to dip their toes in the catchment of Norman Creek that flows through the electorate, and I appreciate the volunteers of N4C who give their time to protect and restore it. My family and I love to support local businesses like the Greenslopes newsagency, JJ's fruit shop, Cartridge World Greenslopes, Jacu and Deedot cafes—all providing service and kindness to my entire family when we visit. I have been pleased to spend many

hours each month visiting small businesses and asking them what they need to create just one more job. I am proud to be part of a government that has jobs as its first priority.

I have greatly enjoyed meeting the people of Greenslopes during the election. They were respectful, courteous and generous with their time. I listened to their concerns and hopes for their families, their friends, their volunteer groups, their businesses, their environment and their community. The people of Greenslopes responded to my campaign motto, Building Communities. They shared my view that government is more than just an exercise in balancing a set of books. It is true that that is important, but as a government our real task must be to build a fair and decent community. I will never forget the people who told me the things that they need from a government to assist them to raise a family, care for relatives, build a business or make a community service contribution. I thank those residents who took the time to discuss our policies. Parents of teenagers were particularly supportive of our plans to tackle youth unemployment, particularly our plan for a viable and forward looking TAFE delivering services in our community. Small business owners welcomed our plans to stimulate the economy and build confidence. Young people welcomed our Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative and could see how it would help to boost employment. Community organisations welcomed a government that would work with them as they attempted to establish a voice and services for the people in our community. Residents welcomed our plan to reinstate a say for them in the development of our communities. I met people passionate about protecting our natural environment and they were adamant that our plans for the reef must be a priority. Health professionals welcomed our desire to re-establish preventative health services and, as a nurse, I share their passion and will use my time in this place to complement their efforts and I hope to be able to push for policies that recognise the natural links between education and health.

I want to make special mention of Matthew Campbell and his family. Matt combines great vision with attention to detail. A respected educator, he has made a vast contribution to many community organisations like St Vincent de Paul and St Joachim's P&F. He was a great campaign manager and a greater friend. I thank the local Greenslopes branch members, particularly Lisa O'Donnell, Daryl Sparkes, Alex McConnell, Riley Williamson, Talbot Speechley, Chris Anderson and Glennis Dart, who all made significant contributions in terms of ideas, energy and skills. I also want to thank Jim Loftus, Barb Turomsza, Mary Rose Abbott, Angela Cran, Mick Fraser, Shane Malley, Ian McClennan, Ryan Robertson, Narelle Smith, Heather Abramson, Greg Hausmann and David Malcolm for their help. Over 400 volunteers helped my campaign, including people outside the party such as Sagie Pillai, Brian Joye, Barb and David Clarke, Mark Wockner, Arthur Page and John Savage. There are so many other branch members and volunteers too numerous to mention, but I thank them all for their support.

I make special note of my friend and comrade Jose Franco. Jose has recently suffered a stroke and I wish him a speedy recovery. I wish to thank my Labor friends and supporters such as federal member for Griffith, Terri Butler; federal opposition leader, Bill Shorten; Leader of the Opposition in the Brisbane City Council, Milton Dick; Councillors Helen Abrahams and Shayne Sutton; Phil Carswell; Paul Keene; Adam Obeid; Penny Toland; Brett McCreadie; Fran Bell; Sasha Marin; and Brett Murphy. I also pay tribute to the staff at party office for their great work in supporting all candidates.

I wish to particularly thank my supporters—Crichton McIntyre, Julie Fox, Lyle and Trish Nicholson, John and Megan Denny, Don Todman, Jon Baque, Peter Stirk, George Kerlin and Penny Carr, Trish Hagenlocher, Joseba and Jon Larrazabal, and Danny and Angela Keenan. My electorate staff Rachael Quinn and my dear friend Matthew Sellars, who works there, are true servants of the public and I thank them for their work. I thank Peter Biagini and the Transport Workers' Union, Ben Swan and the Australian Workers' Union, Neil Henderson and the Services Union, Andy Elphinstone and the Queensland Independent Education Union as well as members of the Queensland Teachers' Union, particularly Sam Pidgeon, Brendan Crotty, Lynn Cowie, Scott Tibaldi and Dave Terauds.

More than anything else this evening I wish to acknowledge the love and support of my family. I start with my wife, Susan Adams, and my daughters, Molly and Brenna. Susan has been with me every step of the way since we met 23 years ago and has never faltered when I often have. We all know that life in politics is testing in the extreme. The haven of a loving partner is a wonderful thing. My daughters have filled us with joy every day since they came into this world—bright little things, far too smart for their father. I hope only for their health and happiness, but I suspect that they will seize the opportunities created by the many fine women whom I have the privilege to work with in this place. I thank the women who step forward in politics for the contribution they make to creating an equitable society for my daughters and for all of us.

I acknowledge my mother, Patricia Kelly, who has led a life of great charity and selflessness. Thanks to my brothers, Peter and Vincent, who worked tirelessly for me. I have always felt the love and support of my other siblings, Christine, Bill, Paul, Angela, and their families. I wish to thank the many members of my extended family who have supported me in so many ways, particularly my aunties Moyra Walls and Anne Goodwin and uncles Father Mick Carroll, Father Vince Carroll, Uncle Dom Carroll and Uncle Michael Goodwin. I would like to thank my mother-in-law, Nola Adams, and acknowledge the entire Adams family, including the late Harley, Ian and David Adams, for their support over many years. Sadly, my father passed away in 2013. He would have enjoyed the pomp and ceremony of this place, but mostly he would encourage me to use this opportunity to continue to build social justice.

I am a keen reader and have great enthusiasm for history. During my time in this place I will keep in mind the many sacrifices made by many outside this place to build this great institution. It has been built at great cost and, at its best, it delivers peace and prosperity through good governance based on representative democracy. I will do my best to serve this great institution with honour and dignity. I am truly thankful to the people of Greenslopes for this opportunity to work with them and for them to build our community. Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Speaker.