




Speech By
Kerri-Anne Dooley

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Ms DOOLEY** (Redcliffe—LNP) (8.12 pm): I rise tonight, both humbled and honoured, to deliver my first speech as the newly elected member for Redcliffe in the 58th Parliament of Queensland. I am the first female Liberal National member to represent Redcliffe—my heartland, my home; a community I was born into and have served since I was 16 years old. I never sought leadership. It has always found me since I was vice-captain of Redcliffe State High School and elected as the first deputy youth mayor of the Redcliffe City Youth Council in 1986.

It is no secret that I have run six times for this privilege to stand here before you tonight. I have had members of my own party tell me to move out of Redcliffe—that I would never win it. To them I say: it was never about being a politician. It has been, and always will be, about representing a community that I was born into and have served my entire life. It is Redcliffe or nowhere. To them I say: never give up. To every graduating Redcliffe and Queensland student and young Wade, who is 11 and is here tonight, I say: never give up on your dreams. Persevere. Work hard. When you fail, get back up again. Surround yourself with the right people and you can achieve anything.

I was born at Redcliffe Hospital in the year man landed on the moon. I am testing your history knowledge! I was schooled at Humpybong State School, one of Queensland's oldest primary schools, when we used to sing *God Save the Queen* at assembly and drink warm milk for morning tea. Humpybong will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2026 and I am so grateful to still be closely connected to their community as a representative on their school council. I give a shout-out to all the hardworking members of the Humpybong P&C.

I grew up on the Redcliffe Peninsula: swimming at Suttons Beach, fishing unsuccessfully off the Woody Point jetty, climbing the Moreton Bay fig trees entwined in the red cliffs—our namesake—of Queens Beach Scarborough, riding my pushbike around the perimeter of the peninsula, walking Scott's Point at sunrise to see dolphins breeding, rollerskating at the Redcliffe Rollerdrome and dive-bombing off the Redcliffe Jetty—please don't tell my mum! My first job was at Redcliffe Red Rooster in Sutton Street, now a car park. My first job as a registered nurse was at Redcliffe Hospital. Two of my four children were born at Redcliffe Hospital. Now my youngest daughter, who is also a registered nurse, works at Redcliffe Hospital.

As a second-generation Redcliffian, Redcliffe is in my DNA. My mother, Eunice Allgood, was a foundational student at Redcliffe State High School, heralding from a dairy farm in Kingaroy. On my dad's side, my grandfather came to Redcliffe from Toowoomba in his retirement with his business Turnbull Constructions, now in its fourth generation—and, no, I am no relation to Malcolm. I am married to Redcliffe.

Redcliffe was almost the capital of Queensland. It is known as the very first English settlement city of this state of Queensland. It is the most beautiful place to live, work and play. Thank you to the Gubbi Gubbi people who share this land with us today. This year we celebrated our bicentenary as a settlement city. I want to thank History Redcliffe for their week of celebrations in September to commemorate. I honour late councillor James Houghton for his love of Redcliffe history and his service.

As a peninsula, we are almost an island. We are surrounded on three sides by the beautiful Moreton Bay. I like to call us a geographical hug. Everyone knows the magic of Redcliffe. As you come across the Houghton bridge from Brisbane to Redcliffe there is that overwhelming sense of 'this is home'—a let-down reflex of being disconnected from the hustle and bustle of Brisbane, with the beauty of Moreton Bay greeting you and stunning sunrises and sunsets our everyday delight.

The Redcliffe electorate also boasts the magnificent Moreton Island—the third largest sand island in the world and the highest sand dunes in the Southern Hemisphere. Moreton Island has long been a family favourite holiday destination—camping, glamping, swimming with dolphins, four-wheel driving, sand tobogganing and many a drink sipped at Tangalooma resort.

As a teenager I learned that service above self was the key to happiness by attending Redcliffe Uniting Church Youth Group. I served here and also overseas. I left the shores of Australia to join Youth With A Mission, affectionately known as YWAM. I served as an international volunteer for 5½ years in Europe, Africa and Asia, learning to speak both French and Mandarin. It was a sliding doors moment in Mali, West Africa, that led to my career in nursing.

In a remote village I was reading a book under a tree when a teenage Malian girl came up pointing at me and pointing at the book. She wondered how, as a woman, I could read. Sadly for her, girls are not educated in Mali. We could not even speak to each other as she spoke only Bambara, her tribal language, and had not learned French like her male peers. I was only 18. She was only 16, already married with two children to a man 20 years her senior. It is a moment that will stay with me forever. I realised the precious privilege it is to be born in Australia and given a 12-year education whether I appreciated it or not. I could have been her: born in Mali in an impoverished village with no education, married off at a young age and with no hope of a future to pursue my dreams.

It was there and then that I chose to dedicate my life to God and humanity. I was blessed to be a blessing. In YWAM Mali I saw registered nurses teaching women to give birth safely, educating them on nutrition and health. As Florence Nightingale said, nursing called me. As a registered nurse for over three decades, I believe the lessons learned caring for those who are vulnerable, in pain, living with a disability or dementia, seniors who want to stay in their own home, those at the end of life, and listening and advocating are the skills I now bring to represent the people of Redcliffe.

As a palliative care nurse, fighting for more funding for those at end of life was the pathway that took me into politics. As the vice-president of Palliative Care Queensland, fighting for funding for a children's hospice, meeting with grieving families and meeting with politicians red, blue, green and in between to garner a bipartisan commitment to build Hummingbird House led me to first put my hand up for the LNP in the Redcliffe 2014 by-election. I knew I would not win, but as a nurse I ran to bring political healing for the people of Redcliffe and for the LNP.

I pay tribute to the Liberal and National members for Redcliffe before me: James Houghton Senior, Terry White OAM and Terry Rogers. Terry White has been a pillar of support, launching most of my previous campaigns. To him and Rhonda, thank you. Thank you for believing in me, for loving Redcliffe as much as I do and for your wisdom and friendship. I also want to pay tribute to the Hon. John Hodges, the late member for Petrie, who passed away just a month ago. John and his beautiful wife Margaret have made the Redcliffe peninsula their home for past 60 years. John was a good friend and supporter. He served in the Fraser government as immigration minister and came into federal parliament with John Howard in the class of 1974. It was a privilege to care for him and his beautiful wife Margaret, who succeeds him, in their senior years to keep them in their beloved own home. I am also proud to say that an LNP government delivered Queensland's first children's hospice Hummingbird House with both federal and state commitments under the leadership of the then prime minister Tony Abbott and Lawrence Springborg as our state health minister.

Redcliffe is an incredible community with a higher than state average number of community organisations and volunteers. I am just one of many. I welcome Minister Leahy's inquiry into volunteering in Queensland. Winston Churchill famously said, 'We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.' As a community champion, I have invested in Redcliffe over the decades as chair of Redcliffe Crime Stoppers; chair of Redcliffe Relay for Life; chair of the Redcliffe Special School Chaplaincy Committee; co-founder and chair of the Moreton Bay Dementia Alliance; board member of ROPE Inc; chair of the Redcliffe Uniting Church Community Hub; community member for Moreton Bay Says NO to Violence; and a former member of the Rotary Club of Redcliffe Sunrise. I am also a very proud Glass House foundation member, number 264, of the mighty, mighty Dolphins. Phins up!

As a nurse educator tutoring at both QUT and ACU in the School of Nursing, Paramedicine and Midwifery, I have been committed to seeing the next generation of nurses be the very best they can be. I would like to see more done to support my nursing, allied health and medical colleagues to remain in

their profession. During COVID our health heroes left in droves, burned out by a failing system that did not support them. I am proud to be part of an LNP government that has a plan to heal our health crisis and to put doctors and nurses back in charge. I also look forward to seeing the Redcliffe Hospital expansion plan, with an additional 204 beds and 2,500 jobs, delivered.

As a mother supporting a son living with bipolar, I have been fighting for a dedicated mental health unit at Redcliffe Hospital to support him and the hundreds like him who need this type of care where they live. Thank you to the thousands who signed my petition to see this delivered. I will be tabling this petition in the new year.

After I lost the 2020 state election I started a home hospice private nursing agency with the aim of providing 24/7 in-home care for those who want to die in the comfort of their own home. This business has grown and flourished and I still employ a team of 15 nurses. Today I want to acknowledge my colleagues Kathy and Kathleen who manage the day-to-day affairs of this service and my team of nurses who go over and above every single day. To my clients, who have taught me to cherish life with every breath, thank you for entrusting me and my nursing team into your hearts and homes. To Professor Phillip Good, who has been a professional mentor in palliative care, thank you for your years of friendship and sage council.

As a business owner, I understand intimately the challenges faced by the 4,500 small business owners in Redcliffe. We are in a unique position to deliver services, boutique products, create jobs and support families. Thank you to Ocean Network, Mums in Business Moreton Bay and the Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce for all you do to support local businesses and for hosting this year's inaugural Redcliffe Business Awards. We are humbled and thrilled to win the 2024 Small/Home-Based Business Award.

Today I stand for the people of Redcliffe like the Beaumonts, who tragically lost their son Angus in 2020 to an act of murder by teens who were out on bail; for people like Mary, who told me while doorknocking that she locks her doors and windows at 4 pm every single day for fear of being broken into and no longer goes to the local shopping centre for fear of being stabbed like Vyleen White; for Alan, who was left on a footpath for four hours waiting for an ambulance after having a stroke; and for Gerry, who as an apprentice is sleeping in his ute at Woody Point beach because he cannot afford rent or a house. We all want safer communities, and I look forward to seeing the Making Queensland Safer laws passed before Christmas to put victims' rights before perpetrators' and for gold standard early intervention so that services like Redcliffe Area Youth Space and Redcliffe PCYC can continue delivering support for our at-risk and disadvantaged teens through education and wraparound services, diverting them out of a life of crime.

There are a tidal wave of thankyou's. As everyone in this chamber knows, it takes an army of supporters to help us win an election. First I thank my family. My mum, Eunice, taught me the value of hard work. As a single mum she worked three jobs to raise my sister, Tanya, and me. I thank my stepdad, Keith, for being my go-to fixer of absolutely everything—I think I locked my keys in the car three times in the campaign; my four adult children, Josiah, Matthew, Grace and Amy, and my '12 out of 10' sons-in-law, Kenny and Jai: thank you for supporting me even when it meant sacrificing me. I am so proud of the young adults and nation builders you have each become. Thank you for keeping me grounded and humble, for budgeting advice and for reminding me how to have fun. My week is just not right if we do not have Sunday night family dinner together.

To the federal member for Petrie, Luke Howarth, who has been a great friend and mentor: thank you for your wisdom and guidance and for giving me the eye of the tiger. To our Premier, David Crisafulli: thank you for encouraging me to run just one more time. You made Redcliffe your patron seat. You put your feet where your mouth is and you came to Redcliffe regularly, showing your commitment and integrity.

To LNP secretariat Ben Riley, Janet Wishart and my amazing campaign team, Jill, Geoff, Jake, Nichol, Michael, Wayne, Ryan and Fiona: thank you for absolutely everything. No words do justice. I mention my previous campaign managers, Phillip Pease, who is watching from Melbourne, Brent Marshall and Geoff Godfrey. Brent, I hope you are watching from heaven. You would have loved to be here for this day. I miss you dearly—taken too young but never forgotten. May you rest in peace. Special thanks to Geoff, who, aged 84, has done three campaigns with me. Anyone who has been to Redcliffe has met Geoff Godfrey. He was more devoted than anyone to see us win.

To Jake Scott, whom I first met in 2014 in the Redcliffe by-election: you were just 12 years old and school captain of Humpybong. You have remained loyal and faithful, despite being vilified and bullied in the 2020 state campaign. If political candidates or members needed perfect volunteers, we would have none. We all deserve a second chance, no matter what we have said or done. You are

forgiven. I am so inspired to see that you have remained committed to the LNP, despite politics and the media being brutal to you. We need more young people like you who will learn from and rise above their mistakes, to remain engaged and steadfast.

To all the members of the Redcliffe SEC—volunteers like Gary and Sue Wilson, who set up at market stalls every single Sunday—and to each and every one who donated, letterboxed, roadsided, doorknocked and phone polled—you all know who you are: thank you. To Wade, Ryan Nunn and Jordan, who are in the audience tonight: thank you for all your support. Today is testament to your hard work and your commitment to the values of the LNP and our shared vision to see generational LNP government in Queensland.

To my heavenly Father and dedicated prayer team, Neil, Alison, Marion, Kay, Jan, Jane and the whole Lean family, Fiona and members of Redcliffe Uniting and Citipointe churches: thank you for your treasured prayers, love and support. God is able to do exceedingly above all that we ask, think or imagine.

Lastly but most importantly to the people of Redcliffe, who have entrusted me with their vote: thank you for voting for hope over fear. You voted for safety where you live, a place to call home, health services when you need them, respect for your money and a government that works for you. Thank you for trusting me with your issues, heartaches, challenges, ambitions, hopes and aspirations at your doors, on the phone, at the markets, at mobile offices and at cafes. I carry this incredible privilege with immense responsibility, open hands and an open heart. I pledge to work every day to serve and represent you, so help me God.