



Speech by

## Aidan McLindon

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

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### MAIDEN SPEECH

**Mr McLINDON** (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.42 pm): Queensland's greatest years lie ahead of us, and I am honoured to be a part of this parliament, which has the capacity to steer our state in a direction beyond our imagination. Mr Speaker, I extend my congratulations and those of my brother Tristan, who is present here today and who recently had the privilege of having his name printed on the same ballot paper as your good self, on your elevation to Speaker of this House. I wish you all the very best in the instruction and wisdom you will provide to all members of Queensland's 53rd Parliament.

I do not consider myself to be right wing. I do not consider myself to be left wing. The bird with direction uses both to save it from going round in circles. I am merely one voice in 4.3 million people, but I have a clear objective: reform. Queenslanders are no longer interested in wings. We are a people seeking to support nothing more than common sense. I present myself to the parliament today as a reformist.

God willing I live to the age of 79, it is fitting that I divulge my short-term aspirations and a possible 50-year vision. The next 50 years will be the most exciting time of our lives. Come 2059, Queensland will have a high-speed monorail linking the Gold Coast to the Sunshine Coast. Moped and bicycle lanes will run parallel to all major arterial road networks across the state. A single income will adequately provide a comfortable lifestyle for the family. An 'Aus Vegas' project will be created, enabling revenue to be channelled from interstate and international participants whilst freezing and reducing gambling in local communities whose economies are being crippled.

Small business will continue to be the backbone of the state's economy. The Aboriginal culture and tradition will be thriving, with a society that appreciates and embraces its heritage. Government will actually take the time to analyse how successful business operates, with a view to reducing taxes and empowering the consumer. We will again become dependent on our local farmers to meet our global requirements. Globalisation will complete its 360-degree cycle and there will be a return to localisation. Stormwater will actually be collected for the not-so-rainy days. A complete state network will evenly distribute the land's resources whilst we act as responsible stewards of the environment.

All sides of politics will have a clear understanding of the importance of decentralisation. Government will realise that constant intervention and regulation is to its detriment. A fleet of helicopters will be strategically placed across the state for emergency services. New taxes will be introduced only by governments which have become politically lazy. Minimum gender percentages and reverse discrimination will be a folly of the past, as people will succeed according to individual merit.

Queensland will have an upper house, fulfilling its role as a board of review. Payroll tax will not exist. Reformative politics will be the new philosophy that dominates the political arena. The sun will continue to shine in this great state, and our numberplates will continue to proudly say so. We are all on the threshold of a new era. After all, the 52nd Parliament of Queensland was broadcast live for the very first time in this state's history.

As a collective parliament, we must immediately review the role of the state government. As simplistic as it sounds, it is my firm belief that our role and responsibility has been diluted to the point where we are suffering an identity crisis. An effective democratic process built on the obligation of

accountability has been missing since the suicide of the upper house. Seventeen-year-olds need to be given the right to vote. Our youth need educating on the levels and responsibilities of government.

In years to come we will have created an informed and engaged public. Decisions will be made based on the considered merit of sound policy in place of the populist surface politics we have seen emerge in recent years. This will lead to a higher calibre of public representatives and a greater pool of intellects willing to embrace the challenge of increased scrutiny by the general populace.

Government needs to introduce into its public health system the benefits of natural, preventative and complementary medicine. This will alleviate the bottleneck system that Queenslanders currently face. Medical doctors, as do truck drivers, need safe work hours given the demands, stress and high-risk environments within which they operate. Carers of people with disabilities need more government assistance and need to be recognised for the honourable role they play in an increasingly self-centred society.

Fluoride being forced into our water system was an ill-educated decision, coupled with the fact that fluoride tablets were already made available at local councils for those that needed its supplement. I never recall my mother telling me to swallow my toothpaste after I brushed my teeth. Maybe there is another poison out there we can add to the water which prevents obesity. How can one size fit all?

Queensland local governments need to be empowered and resourced. Any state government with a basic level of political savvy would work alongside them and assist in all ways possible. It is my hope that the recent injustices inflicted upon Queensland local governments and the Local Government Association of Queensland will be rectified in the near future with a warranted public apology.

The arts and entertainment industry is a sleeping giant right here in Queensland, and it is time the government gave it the resources it requires in order for it to reach its potential. This will not only boost both the artists and the organisations themselves but also make Queensland the entertainment capital of Australia. The talent is already here and will continue to increase. This of course does not include the oxymoron of reality television.

One of the greatest dangers facing my generation is the curse of drugs. Those who operate within the pyramid marketing scheme in this illegal industry need to be held truly accountable. After all, they are in many cases accomplices to grievous bodily harm, wilful damage and murder.

Now is not the time to separate church from state. More often than not it is the political sphere that initiates religious interference, which would explain why the collective body politic would prefer that the body church absent itself from the policy equation altogether. It often amuses me to see crusades of people set out to save the world under the banner of social justice whilst distancing and in some cases divorcing themselves from Christianity, when in fact the Christian ethos was based on social justice and social justice is based on the Christian ethos. As long as people continue to attempt to separate the two spheres, which are intrinsically related, then disorganisation and confusion will always be the consequence. There has never been a better time to be proud of our culture and our heritage than now.

More funding needs to be directed to subsidising children's sport and sporting facilities. This will give families the real ability to participate and become active, physically and socially.

I am proud to see that Queensland has Australia's first Indigenous liaison officer in any state parliament right here in George Street. I congratulate the government on this implementation. As a contemporary culture we do not sufficiently appreciate the original culture of this land. We can only showcase our culture to them until such time as we have empowered their own.

At the age of 15 my father suggested I undertake a work experience placement at this parliament and I thought he was mad. In the fullness of time, I think it is fair to say rather it was I. These five days became a critical turning point in my life before embarking on a 14-year journey which led to my being here today. I pay tribute to the then protocol officer, Ted Newton, who is present here today against all odds, whose encouragement, goodwill and sense of humour has been one of many driving forces in my early years. I see time has not wearied some of the parliamentary staff I came in contact with then who are still here today: Graeme Kinnear, Rona Lynch, John Polistena, Sandy Musch, Kevin Jones, Mary Kolosowski, Helena Simpson and of course the one and only Bob Bradbury in the bills and papers office. Since I first stepped into parliament in 1995, my age has doubled alongside my chin, yet these parliamentary staff members seem to be drinking from a fountain of youth. As a result, it is a pleasure to see some familiar faces around the traps.

I would also like to publicly thank a true Queensland legend in Wayne Bennett, who supported me when I needed him most by launching my 2004 local election campaign in my backyard. It was Wayne's support and encouragement that propelled me into public life and I am forever indebted to him.

To my father and mother, Tony and Kaye, and my siblings, Luke, Lisa, Shawn, Matthew, Michael, Stephen, Bradley and Tristan, and to my wife, Christy, who is present here today, you are all a bunch of champions and you all keep me motivated. To Alice Warby, Barry and Liz Dittman, Rod and Sheila Venz,

Dick Darvell, Darryl and Brenda Dennis and the crew of over 200 helpers throughout the campaign, I am here only because of your enthusiasm and commitment to the cause.

I acknowledge the wisdom given to me by my grandfather, Bernard, who, in his living years, was an ardent Labor supporter at a time when the party actually had an agenda and a distinct identity. Today also marks the birthday of grandma Agnes, who left this world before my arrival—I must have given her the heads up.

To Kev and Alison Lingard, on behalf of the Beaudesert electorate, thank you both for your service since 1983 and the difference you have made in the lives of thousands. To Lawrence Springborg and the 2009 state election team—Bruce McIver, Gary Spence, Michael O'Dwyer, Mary Carroll and the crew—you have done us all proud in bringing a political party just eight months young to a whisper of governing Queensland. I now look forward to being part of an effective opposition that will provide positive alternatives under the leadership of John-Paul Langbroek.

Thank you to one of the states most effective federal members of the Australian parliament whom I had the privilege to work for and be mentored by, former member for Forde, Kay Elson, and her dedicated husband, David, and their family and to Jolene, Telena and Selma, who have been a tower of strength behind the scenes and supported me in the times when I enacted my political plans as a bullet proof 17-year-old.

To my competitors for the state seat of Beaudesert—Brett McCreddie, Keith Gee, Pauline Hanson, Richard Somers, Russell Pata and Andy Grodecki—I acknowledge you all have something to offer our community and I look forward to working with you over the coming term. To my university lecturers—Professors Pat Weller and John Wanna, Doctors Liz Van Acker, Giorel Curran and Robyn Hollander—I thank you for sharing your knowledge with me. My appreciation also goes to Associate Professor Paul Reynolds for divulging with me his sea of knowledge.

I wish to congratulate the member for Ashgrove on her appointment as the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. I had the privilege of going head to head with her in Queensland's inaugural Youth Parliament held in this chamber in 1996. We fought it out as Youth Premier and Youth Leader of the Opposition. Those days were great and those days are back. It is the mother of the newly elected member for Everton who guided me as a prefect at Springwood State High School, which was the commencement of my leadership amongst my peers. I thank Kathy Watt for assisting me in those early challenges.

I want to publicly thank my band members for sticking with me over the years through thick and thin and I want to let them know that, even though politics ended up getting me hook, line and sinker, they will do well and carry on the dreams we each have within the music industry. I have also been waiting for this moment to place on the public record for the journalists who dubbed our band anti-establishment that, on the contrary, society always needs a form of establishment in order to function properly. My lyrics only ever questioned the sincerity of authority.

The Beaudesert electorate is truly a beautiful desert and I look forward to representing this patch of Queensland to the very best of my ability. My initial focus will be directed towards the reinstatement of the Beaudesert Hospital maternity ward, a public transport system that connects us to our neighbouring regions and the Brisbane CBD, a 24-hour police station in Beaudesert, the construction of the Boonah to Kooralbyn Connection Road, the relocation of the proposed rehabilitation centre from Mount Tamborine—as it will be unable to provide public transport or 24-hour emergency services to those who are at a crucial point in their life—and a carefully considered Bromelton state development area. These projects can all become a reality built on strategic partnerships with the Scenic Rim Region Council—and I recognise Councillor John Brent, who is present today in the public gallery—the Logan City Council and the federal members for Forde and Blair. Members, please also remember that when you sip on some of the wines here at Parliament House you will find the great tasting ones are the fruits of the finest wineries direct from the Beaudesert electorate.

Since serving my first hotdog at Dreamworld to working in a hostel in Hollywood, I have poured over 100,000 beers and served my fair share of munchies in numerous venues over a six-year period in the hospitality industry. I have had the privilege and opportunity of personally doorknocking more than 30,000 homes in two state elections and two local elections since 1997. These experiences made me listen and understand what all of us are thinking and feeling. Furthermore, my political life thus far has been in what Antony Green would describe as Labor heartland. I know what it is that this so-called Labor heartland and the ever-increasing swing voters are seeking—reformative politics.

Whilst I respect every member of the Labor Party in Queensland, it is a reality that they are collectively plagued by the curse of regimental factionalism which will never be able to have the capacity of reaching the point of political utopia. Whilst the Labor Party may appear to be a unified strength on the outside, to the learned it is simply an aged ox that is overweight and burdened by the weight of three separate wagons—one laden with an entrenched factional fundamentalism, another the lack of identity and the last a yearning for politics with substance which it will never have the capacity or opportunity to reach within its current internal regime. While some academics may cast this assertion as incorrect, I am

simply translating an observation and a ground truth of what I have analysed through my personal experiences.

To the members for Springwood, Waterford, Albert, Woodridge, and Logan, whom I have worked alongside for the past five years as a local councillor, I recognise the struggle you have in getting your government to assist Logan City in addressing unemployment, the lack of apprenticeships, upgrades of the M1 and the scourge pokies is having on your local economy and the lack of will your government has in bringing your electorates into line with the rest of Queensland and I offer my assistance where possible in your plight.

Humanity is at an intergenerational collective point in time and it is looking for leaders from all ages and from all walks of life to restore our reason for existence. As elected leaders in this parliament, the greatest tool we can provide to our unique generation is one of hopes, dreams and realistic goals. It is our responsibility to empower people and enable them to utilise the gift of opportunity. As the Chinese proverb states, 'If you give someone a fish, you feed them for a day—if you teach them how to fish you will feed them for a lifetime.'

Most importantly, we need to become a parliament that protects and defends those who are the most vulnerable in our communities. This includes those who are elderly, weak, incapacitated, disabled or are without voice. If we are not a voice for the voiceless, then this chamber will merely become a puppet show echoing in an empty vessel floating down the river of time. I believe in the potential of every human being that has been created from day one, including those who will remain forever young.

We all have a journey to share or a tale to tell. Whether you are a Che Guevara, a BA Santamaria, a Zack de la Rocha, a Mahatma Ghandi, a member of Yothu Yindi or the Red Hot Chili Peppers, we are of the same make-up, constantly struggling for justice and peace, of desire and hope, and together we can pool our strengths and weaknesses to create the ideal society we all strive for in the true spirit that is succinctly scribed in Latin on the Queensland coat of arms—'Bold, aye, and faithful too'.

If I wear my boxing gloves during policy debate in this chamber, I will always remove them before exiting. A good sportsman knows that a foe on the field can be a friend off the field. Let us never forget that we have all been elected not to be served upon but to serve others. If we are all here for the right reasons and we collectively strive towards the pursuit of best policy then surely the greatest years lie ahead for Queensland.