



Speech by

Mrs J. SHELDON

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND

Ms Quentin Bryce AO

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (3.28 p.m.): I rise to take part in this debate today as I have known Quentin Bryce and her husband, Michael, for a number of years. It is very good to see that a woman who has such a distinguished career—but, importantly, another woman—is to be Governor of the state of Queensland. The position of governor is one of great importance. It is not just a ceremonial position. The governors whom I have known over the years work very hard, as do their spouses. When they decide to take on the position, they give a lot of themselves, their time and, indeed, their life to the state of Queensland.

Of course, the job of governor is a job for two people. I know that Michael Bryce will be an admirable consort, if that is the word, of the new Governor, Quentin Bryce, when she is appointed. I worked with Michael when he was on the board of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and on the board of the joint orchestra—the new orchestra—called The Queensland Orchestra. I think it is important that his contribution to the state is known as well.

Quentin Bryce certainly is a woman of ability. She is a wife, a mother, a grandmother and a very well-educated woman who has held positions of academic note in Queensland and other states. She is well known for her stance on human rights and for her role in antidiscrimination matters. With that background, she has a sound knowledge of people, of their needs, of the less fortunate in our society and can bring that knowledge to her position. It is important in this day and age when there is so much conflict that people can look to positions and to the people in those positions and see stability, a giving of self, a sense of service and a sense of service to the community. I think those qualities are very important today. I know Quentin Bryce is a strong advocate for gender equality, and I spoke on that issue in this House today after celebrating International Women's Day. It is important that we acknowledge women's roles in society and their roles over a period of time and that women support each other in these positions. It is not that men do not fulfil positions as well, but they have always been much better—

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: I do not think men do it better; they do it well. Both genders have the ability and it should be recognised by both genders. I would go so far as to say that in some things women do it better and in other things men do it better. We each have our contribution to make to society. After all, over 50 per cent of the population are women. It is fitting to see a woman take the position as governor for the second time. I know Leneen Forde well and she did a great job as a woman governor.

Before I finish, I have to pay special respect to Major General Peter Arnison and his wife, Barbara. They have been exemplary in this role. At all times they have been courteous, stylish, accepting of others and have put themselves out there while making it look as though it required no effort whatsoever. They have gone to an extraordinary number of events. No matter what time of day or night, they are always as charming in the late night as they are in the early morning. Many people may perceive the position of governor as being a very easy job where one sits in the back of a car and waves or smiles sweetly, but it is in fact very hard. Members in this House who interact with the public a lot know that it is often quite hard work. Being interested in what people say and do and always being there and steadfast is so important.

I personally will miss Barbara and Peter Arnison in the positions that they have held. I thank them very much for the work they have done for this state and for the shining example Major General Peter Arnison was as Governor and for the position his wife, Barbara, held as well. I welcome Quentin Bryce to the position in July. I have no doubt that she will fulfil it with style and dignity. Similarly, her husband, Michael, will help her in what is quite often a very difficult and demanding job.