



Speech by

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APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND

Ms Quentin Bryce AO

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (3.38 p.m.): I think it is a breakthrough that the parliament is debating the appointment of the next Queensland Governor. It is entirely appropriate that an appointment of this importance be referred to the representatives of the people for their comment. Representative government and responsible government require us all to be accountable to the people for the decisions we make in this state on their behalf. It is more than time that the people's representatives had the chance to comment on such an appointment. This process is all the more important in Queensland because we have a unique system of parliament—a unicameral system. The doctrine that I hope is established here today is one where the parliament, with a 66 per cent vote, will decide upon and approve the government's choice to be Governor. In the past it has been solely a secret decision made usually by one person—the Premier—and ratified by the cabinet. In other words, the whole process has been one of exclusivity of the executive government.

People these days are demanding more accountability and more transparency in the decision making of government as a whole. This debate gives expression to the desire of people to be part of the decision-making process. I hope the precedent is set today whereby all sides of the House, through a vote in this House, can give overwhelming endorsement to the person nominated by the government. This is no reflection on the existing Governor, who served the people of this state in the appropriate manner, with due regard to the protocols required of the office. Indeed, in recent times I can recall only one Governor who traduced the office by straying into partisan political matters. It is up to this parliament today to determine, by its expression in this House, the suitability or otherwise of the person nominated by the Premier.

I commend the Premier for taking this parliament into his confidence by allowing commentary on this appointment. It is an innovative proposal whereby the nominee will be acclaimed, as has been indicated today, or in future may even be rejected by the parliament at large. Ms Bryce is only the second female Governor, following Leneen Forde, who served in the office with great distinction. In time I am confident this gender bias will be rectified by successive governments. For now I wish Ms Bryce and her partner every success in the role they will undertake on behalf of the people of Queensland.