



Speech by

LINDY NELSON-CARR

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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VALEDICTORY

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (5.42 p.m.): I rise to join others today—and it gives me great pleasure to do so but also some sadness—to farewell three ministers from this side today whose contribution to this place and to Queensland has been enormous. I will start with you, Matt. You have been, as everybody has said today, such a great reformer for so many years and your commitment to social justice has been legendary. You have always had progressive legal representation for those most marginalised in our community and your commitment to reforms and progression is just great, particularly amongst indigenous Australians. What I will remember you most for, though, Matt is your largesse, big laugh and dramatic theatrics in this place, which have been something that I have enjoyed. I also remember something that will stay with me forever: not only your commitment to poetry and to writing poetry at times when you should not be writing poetry, but our trip overseas some years ago when you taught us how to write haiku. That is something that will stay with me forever. Thank you, Matt.

To Steve: it has been great to know you, Steve. You have been a wonderful friend as well. You are very quick on your feet and you have a great sense of humour, as we have all witnessed this afternoon. Your commitment to the Australian Labor Party has also been legendary and I thank you for that. I have learnt so much from you. There have been moments in this House when you have wept in support of indigenous people, and I love you for it. You have always fought injustice and poverty. Something that I also love you for is that you have kept Vaughan Johnson's blood pressure way up there. I wish you both well on your journey. You will both be very missed. I say farewell to those on the other side who are also going—Joan and David. David, I remember the time you saw me when I was temporary chair and I told you that you needed a funky hair change. It has worked. You have got it. I wish you well in your journey, too. You have been a great comrade.

The person I really wish to speak about this afternoon is Wendy Edmond, the Minister for Health. As her parliamentary secretary, I have to say that she has taught me so much. Those members who know me well know that my background is in education, not in health. She has been magnificent. I really mean it when I say that I do not know anyone else whose knowledge about Health is as great as Wendy's. She can stand anywhere and speak with great knowledge about the Health portfolio.

Mrs Lavarch: And in so much detail.

Ms NELSON-CARR: Anybody who can last as long as she has lasted in the Health portfolio deserves a medal and great recognition. One of the things I love about Wendy is her sense of humour. She often uses detailed expressions about anatomy. Sometimes it occurs when you least expect it or probably when it should not be expected. Wendy, I will not say anything bad about you in here, because you have given me a great big new hospital in Townsville, so I will be very good. But there are a couple things that I wish to say before I finish—things that I will remember about Wendy.

I remember the trip to Darwin and the media frenzy with our derrieres. As we raced along, trying to get our bags, the media took photos of our backsides as we bent to get our bags and as we put our bags into the cars. I could not understand it, but that was the story of the day. I remember the time that you met with Townsville Enterprise during a community cabinet in Townsville. Wendy can be very determined and is very able to speak her mind. She does so with me and with everybody. On this particular day she had to set the record straight with Townsville Enterprise and she told them exactly what she thought of them in no uncertain terms. Whilst the DG nearly fainted and had a heart attack,

Townsville Enterprise actually told her that she was a breath of fresh air and even wrote to her expressing the same.

Lastly, one memory that will stay with me is a story that shows how she knows what to do and is very determined. We always get nonsmoking hotel rooms, although that can be very hard sometimes. Often it is very difficult to get the key into the door. Sometimes it sticks in the lock and does not work. On this occasion she got it to work on the fifth time. She walked in, saw somebody's things on a table and heard someone in a shower. She looked into the shower and she saw a man there. She went downstairs and said to the maitre'd, 'Have I got a bonus in my room or am I paying the same rates as everybody else? There is a man in my room!' He said to her, 'No, there is not.' She said, 'Yes, there is.' Wendy, it has been great working with you.

Government members: Finish the story.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I cannot tell you the rest of the story, but she would not share. Good luck, Wendy. Good luck to all of you and best wishes. When I saw the running sheet I was going to say that you were probably downstairs hard at work with the AMA. I guess they got sick of waiting. I can see that the minister is working in the chamber. We will miss you, Wendy, Matt and Steve. We will miss you, Wendy, very much. But I tell you what: Fiona will miss you more.