



Speech by

## John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Thursday, 8 March 2007

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### MOTION: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (12.22 pm): I rise to support the amendment to the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. I express my disappointment at the politicisation of a motion that is normally moved and seconded with bipartisan support. The fact that only working women are acknowledged rather than just women in Queensland generally, I think, is a reflection on the minister who did not even know the standing orders this morning about referring to a motion she had already moved and did not know the standing orders about personal reflections. She did not know anything about the body corporate bill yesterday and today she could not even deal with a Dorothy Dixier properly.

In spite of the Beattie government's gross attempt to bastardise this significant day, I would like to acknowledge International Women's Day and support the amended motion that rightfully takes the politics out of this important day and recognises the value and contribution of women in Queensland. Queenslanders have celebrated International Women's Day since 1929. I am happy to say that women have achieved many of the rights they deserve and I commend them on their achievements.

Women's suffrage has been a long battle in this country, born of the 1880s when the first women's union was formed. In 1897 Australia saw a woman, Catherine Helen Spence, stand for federal election for the first time. In 1903 women won the right to vote in federal elections and this right to participate in government, I believe, was a turning point in this country's politics. In 1915 Queensland women gained the right to stand for election to state parliament. The value of women in politics should never be underrated, as Australia's first female parliamentarian, Edith Cowan, noted in her maiden speech in 1921. She said—

Were the Minister for Railways forced to parade the streets of Perth for the whole of one afternoon, with a heavy infant in one arm and a bag of groceries on the other, it might make him more sensitive to the plight of mothers unable to bring prams to town because of the shilling charge for them on the train.

Thankfully a lot has changed since 1920 and today we have many women from all sides of politics who make a positive contribution in debate and the political processes of this state. I and others thank these women for their input into this parliament.

The success of young women in society today is certainly something we should be proud of. Our mothers, wives and daughters are not only an invaluable part of our own lives but also play an important role in society. Whether in the boardroom or at home, Queensland women and women in general are strong, resilient people who deserve the same rights men have. Unfortunately, women are all too familiar with a fight and the fight is continuing. In 2007 many women have still not achieved equal pay; women are still not present in equal numbers in the workforce and in parliament; and, in many respects, women are still worse off than men. While women are making ground on rectifying these injustices every day, perhaps the biggest fight they will encounter is the fight they sometimes have with themselves.

The success and achievements of women have had the effect that many women today want to have it all—as they should if they so please. Many women feel under pressure to achieve everything, which is a big call for anyone, male or female. It is something that I am conscious of, with teenage daughters of my own. I am incredibly proud of my girls and as a parent I have always encouraged them to pursue whatever dreams they have in life, including any family aspirations they might have. Achieving equality for women should not result in reverse discrimination, where women who opt for the traditional family values are

looked down upon for not pursuing their destiny in the corporate world. Traditional families will always be the backbone of our society and therefore I would like to take this opportunity to recognise women—those who are working and those who are bringing up the next generation of Queenslanders.