



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Thursday, 18 October 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Crossland, Mr I

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women) (10.03 am): Women around Queensland would have been just as outraged as I was to read the claim in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* that when it comes to politics women simply are not up to it. The National Party candidate for the federal seat of Leichhardt, Ian Crossland, would have lost scores of votes in the far north when he said that a woman could not properly represent the vast electorate. The job, he claimed, was too tough for a woman. What a joke! Mr Crossland's comments prove that there are still people in the National Party who are stuck in the 1950s.

Ms Bligh: They are all stuck there.

Mrs KEECH: I take the Premier's interjection. His comments reveal the National Party as the dinosaurs many of them are. There are obviously those like Mr Crossland who still believe that a woman's place is in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant. For Ian Crossland to suggest that a woman could not represent the constituents of Leichhardt is offensive to women and men. Those of us on this side of the House are proud to be serving the people of Queensland alongside our first female Premier, the Hon. Anna Bligh. The people of Australia have the opportunity on 24 November to vote in the nation's first female Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard. Women like Qantas chairperson Margaret Jackson, businesswoman Janet Holmes à Court and hundreds more have proven themselves in the corporate jungle.

I am sure that the member for Mount Isa, Betty Kiernan, who serves a massive electorate very well indeed, would have something to say to Mr Crossland. I had wondered how outspoken National Party MP De-Anne Kelly reacted when she read the outrageous claims. Now, thanks to today's *Courier-Mail*, we all know. Her words—

He is so politically incorrect that I am sometimes rendered speechless.

Ms Kelly revealed that Mr Crossland regularly calls her 'the dumb blonde'. So it is probably not surprising that National Party senator Barnaby Joyce and former National Bob Katter found time to support Mr Crossland. I wonder what people like Annie Clarke, the mayor of Burke Shire, former Cook Shire mayor, Fran Seagram, and Cook Shire deputy mayor, Robyn Maxwell, thought of Mr Crossland's outburst. I bet they will not be voting for him on 24 November.

Last Saturday the newest Labor member was voted into the Queensland parliament. Grace Grace, the new member for Brisbane Central, is the 25th female Labor MP in this parliament. There are 25 women out of 59 members in the Labor ranks—that is just over 42 per cent of government members—who have been voted in by electors across Queensland. That is a statistic that we are very proud of.