



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 22 April 2009

MAIDEN SPEECH

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (7.30 pm): I start tonight by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land where this parliament stands who have served and nurtured this land for centuries. I pay tribute to them and their great role in our history. It is in this reflection of history that I begin tonight.

In December 1862, three short years after the birth of our great state, whose 150th anniversary we celebrate this year, the sailing ship *Conway* arrived in the small Queensland settlement then known as Moreton Bay. History little records the fate of the *Conway*, its passengers and its crew, but one thing is known about that day in December 1862: that is the day my family arrived in Queensland and began its Queensland journey.

Almost 150 years later, that journey has taken me to this place, the Queensland parliament. I stand tonight as a representative of the people in our state's legislature, not only as a fifth-generation Queenslander but also with great humility and honour as a son of the state seat of Greenslopes, the electorate I now serve as a member of parliament.

My first thanks this evening go to those people who make up the community of Greenslopes. It is a wonderful and diverse community and I look forward to serving them to the best of my ability. This electorate is very dear to my heart. It was at Holland Park, in the Greenslopes electorate, that I was raised as a boy. I am proud to say I attended Marshall Road State School—a school that will shortly celebrate its 50th year—in the electorate of Greenslopes. It was at this school and in my family's Holland Park home that I learned many of life's important lessons, which have made me the person I am today. But my story is not special; nor is it unique. It is not unlike the story of so many residents and families of Greenslopes—people who came to our state, and to the south side of Brisbane in particular, seeking a new and better life, a life of hope and opportunity, where working together we can make a better future for all, no matter who they are or where they come from.

To be the state member for Greenslopes is to be a custodian. No one person, no single party, owns or is entitled to a seat and a voice in this place. I am extraordinarily privileged to serve the people of Greenslopes and that privilege, which humbles me greatly, is something I will not forget as long as I have the opportunity to serve as a member of the Queensland parliament.

My commitment to the people of Greenslopes is simple: to listen, to act and to deliver for the community. As the newly elected member for Greenslopes, I follow in the footsteps of a very long-serving member of this place, Gary Fenlon. All across the community I have heard the same story from residents: that Gary listened, that he acted when people needed help and that he delivered for the suburbs of the electorate he represented. I pay special tribute tonight to his service to his party, to this parliament and to the people of Greenslopes. I am proud to have followed Gary into this place.

As we embark on a new century, Queensland faces many challenges. We face unheralded and unexpected economic and financial challenges. We face the challenge of a surging population—people who are moving to not just the Sunshine State but the sunrise state, seeking new and better opportunities for themselves and their families. We face the problem of growing family pressures and, for some,

dysfunction, in a time of economic uncertainty. We face the need to ensure that we continue to grow the Queensland economy and deliver jobs. I believe there are three key areas the residents of Greenslopes are most worried about: the delivery of important infrastructure, the protection of jobs and our economy, and the protection of our lifestyle and our environment. These are issues I appreciate because of where I come from: the streets and suburbs of Greenslopes, the same streets and suburbs I now represent today.

My family's connection to Greenslopes and the south side of Brisbane travels back many decades. My great-grandmother, Margaret Green, lived in Douglas Street, Greenslopes, which I am proud to say is in the electorate. My grandparents on my father's side lived and began a small business along Wynnum Road in the suburb of Morningside. Both of my parents, who I am so very proud to have in the gallery tonight, lived through the Great Depression and saw firsthand the horror of a world economic downturn. My father served his country in the Navy during World War II and after the war my father began a successful small business career as a butcher on the south side of Brisbane with his younger brother, my late uncle, Milton Dick senior. Through sheer hard work and determination, they worked long hours to build their business. Like the children of so many Queenslanders today, I know what it is like for a father to go to work in the dark and then arrive home in the dark each day. I know what it is like to have a mother who always put her children first, so they could be the best they could be—so that my brother, my sister and I could be where we are today.

My mother and her family grew up not far from here in West End, and she trained as a nurse at St Martin's Hospital. After they married, my parents very wisely chose the suburb of Holland Park, almost five decades ago, to raise their family. Through their hardship early in their lives they demonstrated a commitment to hard work and the notion of a fair go. They also instilled in my sister, my brother and me the importance of volunteer work and giving back to the community. As some members would be aware, my brother, Milton, has also served the community through his leadership as a successful state secretary of Queensland Labor and now as a councillor and deputy leader of the Brisbane City Council opposition. But just as important is the work of my sister, Susan, who has been a dedicated primary school teacher for over 20 years, helping to teach the next generation of Queenslanders.

In times of challenge and adversity—a time like today—people also ask: why Labor? In answering that question, I look to the past and say people should look no further than our great early 20th century Premier, TJ Ryan. In 2009, the Queensland Labor Party will celebrate the centenary of Ryan's first election to this place. Ryan may have been elected to this parliament 100 years ago but his life and public service remain an example to all of us who carry the Labor standard.

Ryan was a fierce, uncompromising and passionate advocate for the cause of Labor his entire life. And in doing so he championed the cause of the average Queenslanders. He sought to expand the franchise by arguing both for an increased role of women in politics and for lowering the voting age to 18 years. He attacked vested and entrenched interests in society to ensure a fair go for farmers, labourers, tradesmen and public servants. He sought to expand the democratic project by abolishing the Legislative Council, thereby ensuring that power in Queensland was exercised by the many and not the few. He challenged market monopolies and combines by seeking a fair and balanced marketplace. Most importantly, both as a barrister and as a representative in this House, he stood up for working men and women, for their right to argue and fight for better wages and conditions and to do so through collective action through organised trade unions. He was a man who fought for safe workplaces and who introduced a landmark workers compensation bill into this House.

Ryan believed in fairness and equity; in social, economic and industrial justice. But, most importantly, he believed to his core in the never-ending and always necessary need for reform and progress. These are Queensland values. They are enduring Labor values. And they will guide me during my period of service in this House.

In politics, as in life, individual success and accomplishment only comes through the hard work, enthusiasm and determination of others. To represent the Australian Labor Party in this parliament is to stand on the shoulders of giants—not just the great lions of our party like Ryan and Theodore, Forgan Smith and Hanlon, Goss and Beattie but also the unsung heroes of our party, rank and file trade unionists and party members who seek no greater glory, no greater reward than to see Labor candidates elected to public office and to see Labor achieve in government. They are people like local Greenslopes branch members. I cannot mention them all tonight, but as a few representatives of this extraordinary group of people I mention Dennis Cross, Brian Merrin, Paula Dove, Ray and Hazel Smith, Michael Garton and Joe Kelly.

I wish to thank my timeless Labor friends and supporters such as Peter Wood, Frank Inglis and Harry Zaphir, Len and Shirley Fallows, Phil and Carmen Davies, Jacki Power, Charis Mullen and Hazel Hubbard. I wish to particularly thank Troy Spence, who guided my campaign as my campaign director. Troy is a young man with a great future in our party. I wish to thank my dedicated electorate office team, Therese Ferlin and Jade Simmons, who to me epitomise the essence of hard work and loyalty. I wish to thank my great friend Anthony Chisolm, State Secretary of the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor

Party, who ran a brilliant campaign; Linus Power for his friendship, support and campaign expertise; and Mike Kaiser for his wisdom and advice.

As representatives of my personal friends, I wish to acknowledge Michael Noad and, in particular, Malcolm Catchpole, who have stood by me and with me for more than a quarter of a century. To them I say thank you. I also wish to thank Bill Ludwig, a leader not only of the Australian Workers Union but also of the ALP here in Queensland, whose faith in me and support over many years I will not forget. I also wish to thank the Hon. Con Sciacca, Senator the Hon. John Hogg, Senator the Hon. Joseph Ludwig and Chris Ketter for their kindness, encouragement and support over many years.

As I look around this House, particularly on this side of the House, I see people for whom I have enormous admiration and respect. More importantly than that, they are people whom I regard as my friends. People like my caucus and cabinet colleagues, Annastacia Palaszczuk, Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs and member for Inala, and Stirling Hinchliffe, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and member for Stafford. I have known Annastacia and Stirling for more than half my life. I am very proud to serve with them in the cabinet, to improve the lives of Queenslanders.

As I look up I see the Speaker of this parliament, John Mickel, the member for Logan. The member for Logan will distinguish himself as Speaker and will bring dedication and dignity to that high office. The member for Logan has been a voice of wisdom and I have always admired his passion and commitment to the cause of Labor. He has been a mentor and friend for a long time. I also wish to thank my caucus and cabinet colleagues Treasurer Andrew Fraser, Minister Stephen Robertson and Minister Phil Reeves for their friendship and support over many years.

I have known the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, Paul Lucas, since we were law students at the University of Queensland. Paul has carried the cause of Labor in his heart his entire life. He has one of the most incisive and penetrating minds in this parliament and is ceaseless and restless in his desire to improve life for the disadvantaged and the powerless. His complete dedication to public service is an example to all those who serve in the cabinet and in this House, and I thank him most deeply for his advice, his encouragement and his support over many, many years.

To the Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, I express my heartfelt gratitude. The Premier is a woman of great vision and fortitude. During the election campaign she demonstrated enormous courage and conviction. Like all great Premiers, she connects with the people of Queensland, and our great state is in secure hands with her at the helm. Very few Queenslanders have the opportunity to serve in this parliament. Fewer still have the very great opportunity to serve in the executive branch of government as a cabinet minister. The Premier has humbled and honoured me, as have the people of Greenslopes. The Premier has humbled me by asking me to serve as the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations in her government. I thank the Premier for her faith and her confidence.

I come from a close and loving family. More than anything else this evening I wish to acknowledge their love and support. To my parents, your life's example remains a beacon for me. To my brother, Milton, I wish to say not only is he one of the finest political strategists in the country; he is now a dedicated public servant of our party and the people of Richlands, whom he represents in the Brisbane City Council. But most importantly, Milton is my best mate. I thank him for his support and wisdom, his enthusiasm and perspective, and his energy. I also thank my sister, Susan, and her beautiful family, for their quiet and unquestioning belief in me.

If faith could move mountains then my wife, Therese, could single-handedly move the Great Dividing Range. Well before the possibility of my standing here tonight was realised, she believed in me. And she does so every day. It is this, her belief in me, that has sustained me through my journey so far. Her ongoing support means an enormous amount to me. Through the miracle of technology and by the innovations put in place by Labor Speakers of this parliament, she watches me tonight via the internet as she cares for our two young sons, Samuel and Jonathan. Sam and Jonny represent the future that all of us who serve in this place dedicate ourselves to improving. They are my greatest achievement and will always inspire me.

This speech ends where my life's journey began, in the state electorate of Greenslopes. I have a very big job ahead of me to serve the people of Greenslopes, which I will do to the best of my ability. My commitment to them is to work as hard as I can to honour the trust placed in me and to deliver real and substantial benefits for the people of Greenslopes and the people of Queensland.

Before his death, Robert Kennedy, who served as a United States senator and as the Attorney-General of the United States, said—

An honourable profession calls forth the chance for responsibility and the opportunity for achievement; against these measures, politics is a truly exciting adventure.

The people of the Greenslopes electorate have honoured me by giving me that chance and that opportunity. I am humbled to serve this community, and I look forward to sharing with them the adventurous days ahead.