




Speech by

Hon. Dr Bruce Flegg

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard Wednesday, 30 May 2012

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. BS FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (9.52 pm): I am delighted to speak and acknowledge Her Excellency the Governor and her opening speech to parliament.

A government member interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I am not taking those interjections.

Mr Newman interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I will take the Premier's in that case. The election on 24 March 2012 was a momentous occasion and an expression of democracy by the people of Queensland. They swept aside a tired, ramshackle government that no longer deserved their trust or deserved to be put in office and they put their trust in a Newman LNP government to fix the mess that was left behind by the previous administration. Perhaps the less I say about the Labor Party in this speech, the better. I take great pleasure in that their filthy campaign was so roundly rejected by the electors of Queensland, because had that sort of campaign received any sort of endorsement, encouragement or succour from the people of Queensland it would have become the norm. The people of Queensland rejected it. They do not ever want to see it again. I hope that those opposite picked up that lesson. The people of Queensland showed that they would never support a government that was so out of touch that it decided to tax the family home at the same rate it taxes a negatively geared investment property, or a government that was prepared to waste billions of dollars on so many things, whether it was the Health payroll, the Traveston Dam or a dozen other travesties. The people of Queensland passed their judgement.

I want to pass on my congratulations to my 51 new LNP colleagues here. I have sat and listened to many of their maiden speeches. As politicians, we get a bit of bad press occasionally. I have to say that we have the most impressive people here I have seen—people who are passionate to make a difference, people who have come from every walk of life and who have life experience. Overwhelmingly, what really stands out to me is that they are people from and representative of their community. When we see these sorts of people being chosen to represent their communities, I think the people of Queensland can have confidence that their parliament is in good hands going forward into the future.

I would like to place on record my very sincere thanks to our now Premier, Campbell Newman, and his lovely wife, Lisa, who took a very big step that very few people are prepared to do in stepping away from the comfort of a very important job in the city of Brisbane because he had a bigger vision to make a bigger difference for a bigger community of people right across Queensland. I think everyone here in the LNP understands the debt that we owe to Campbell and Lisa. I would record also my sincere thanks that Campbell has put his trust in me to be appointed to his ministry to the portfolio of Housing and Public Works—something that is very exciting for me—where I will be able to make a difference in the lives of many Queenslanders, particularly Queenslanders who suffer disadvantage.

I want to record my thanks to the people of Moggill. This is my fourth term that the people of Moggill have been good enough to privilege me with, and on each occasion with an increased majority. It is a wonderful part of the state of Brisbane—

Mr Stevens: Not as much as Mermaid Beach.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Noosa. No more interjections, please. Moggill is a wonderful part of Queensland. It is a wonderful place to live. It is a community that pulls together and cares about other people.

In all my glowing praise of our wonderful new members, I am going to take issue with one of the new members. He has made his maiden speech so he is fair game. The member for Beaudesert made some comments that I have to refute in relation to the Brookfield Show. Brookfield is an absolutely wonderful community. It has the best show in Queensland. I know that Beaudesert is a fabulous place.

A government member interjected.

Dr FLEGG: They made a very good choice to elect my friend there as their member. However, we can beat him with the Brookfield Show. We can beat you there.

Mr Hopper: Never been to Bell.

Dr FLEGG: Seriously now, there are many things that need the urgent attention of the new LNP government, but a number of things stand out. One of those is that we have a big job and a duty to the people of Queensland to restore some faith in the government. After years of a government that ignored people, that did not honour its word to people, that failed the Queensland community so roundly, we have a very serious responsibility to restore some faith and trust back in the parliament. We have an enormous task ahead of us in managing one of the worst debt situations that a state government has found itself in in living memory.

Mr Nicholls: Ever.

Dr FLEGG: I will take that interjection. It is one of the worst debt situations a state government has ever found itself in. I think Queenslanders are smart people. They will not be taken for granted. They certainly will not be told things that are not true. But they understand that this government will need to make some hard decisions. The circumstances dictate that and I believe that they will roundly support us for that.

One of the roles of this government, and a critical role it is, is to restore some confidence in this state. One of the things that has driven our economy, employment activity, housing activity and retail activity so low is the complete loss of confidence that people have had. It is reflected in a dozen consumer and business confidence figures. Confidence is a very important ingredient to the success of a community and a state. This government cannot afford to simply curl up in a ball and say, 'We are broke. We are not going to do anything.' We certainly will not have any money to throw around, but there are many ways that we can run this state and achieve things and engender some of that confidence. I will take this opportunity to acknowledge the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier who, in their respective roles, will have a critical role, perhaps in many ways the pivotal role, in turning around the confidence in this state. They have the very strong support of everybody on this side of parliament and a strong respect for the job that we know is a challenging job but that we know they will be the equal of.

I want to mention some of the issues that confront my constituents in Moggill, as I believe everybody here in this address-in-reply will do on behalf of their constituents. The stand-out issue that effects the lives of my community are transport issues. My friend and electoral neighbour, Scott Emerson, will no doubt be hearing from me. He has already got a file full of my letters. On Moggill Road, which has now been neglected for decades, motorists travel with the worst commute in Brisbane in a morning peak hour where frequently the speed is walking speed. That is not an exaggeration.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. Every single cyclist rides past the cars on Moggill Road.

Mr Newman interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I will take the interjection from the Premier. We would love a bridge at Colleges Crossing. That was the next point in the speech, actually.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Dr FLEGG: We are not taking that interjection from the Treasurer. The circumstances of transport from this very large community in western Brisbane are circumstances that nobody anywhere in

Queensland should be expected to tolerate. There are other important issues that I would like to assure the people of Moggill are of great concern. One is the future prospect of the plans of the University of Queensland for their large property at Pinjarra Hills, which may in many respects dictate what sort of future development occurs in our area. The Premier has already allowed me the opportunity to mention Colleges Crossing, the state of public transport and the fact that we have a situation in education where Kenmore State High School is at 100 per cent of capacity, is expecting another 350 to 400 students in 2015 and has excluded from its catchment large areas even very nearby areas like Mount Crosby, Karana Downs and Chapel Hill.

I have already written to the new transport minister seeking the release of the Kenmore bypass community consultation. This was a community consultation that thousands of local people responded to. It was conducted in 2009 by the previous government and then they refused to release this study to the people of Moggill. This sort of arrogant refusal perhaps says it all about the Labor Party: to have a community consultation and then three years on still deny them the right to even see the result of that consultation. I left a very successful career some years ago to take up my current career because I wanted to make a difference. After years in opposition it is now very exciting to be able to work towards influencing the future direction of our state.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I take that interjection from the Treasurer who I know feels exactly the same way. Exciting is the right word, maybe challenging as well. The responsibilities that I have—and that I am absolutely delighted to be pursuing—are to fix up the shambles that is denying so many thousands of Queenslanders access to social and public housing, to ensure that agencies—and there are many, many agencies in this department—like the BSA perform to the very best that they can in protecting consumers, and to take charge of redeveloping the government administrative precinct and administrative arrangements so that we stop wasting money and provide good working facilities for our public sector workers.

Finally I would like to make a few personal thanks—certainly to my family. My four sons are all graduating in the school of life and making their own way. Like the children of many people in this chamber, they have gone overseas for work or for education. They are independent, they are not always on the phone every day to their father, but if they are listening it is time to give me a ring. They are a wonderful family who I am very, very proud of. I want to thank the LNP campaign team in Moggill, my campaign director Leigh and her husband Chris Warren. I want to thank Fraser and Joyce Stephen who supported me personally and in a campaign sense. Fraser, of course, is now performing even greater service to me as my chief of staff. I could not have done what we have done without the assistance of Susie Heath, Susie Burke and Darryl, and I thank them. Councillor Margaret de Wit and her husband Hank and councillor Julian Simmonds and Maddie have also been wonderful supports and are wonderful representatives out in the western suburbs of Brisbane. Mr Graeme Hallett, who is looking after my media needs, left a very comfortable position in the Premier's office in Western Australia to come over and work in Housing and Public Works here. I really appreciate the trust that he has put in me to be prepared to make that move. My ministerial staff, Geoff, Julie, Sue, Kate, Marty—it is a wonderful office and it is wonderful as a minister to know that I can depend on people. I thank Mr Barry Arneson, who assisted prior to the election over a long period of time preparing policy, and two of our elder statesmen in the LNP, Mr Bruce McIver and Mr Barry O'Sullivan. I guess if Bruce and Barry were here I would say to them, 'Well, you can't please everybody all the time,' but I am pretty well sure Bruce and Barry have already learnt that. But they also live by something that is particularly important—you may not be able to please everybody all the time, but you need to be true to what you believe yourself, and Bruce and Barry have done that in showing a lot of leadership and inspiration for the LNP.

I pass on my congratulations to two very special people. The first is Madam Speaker, who is not present in the chamber. For many years I have sat in a party room with Fiona. I am very proud to see her as the first female Speaker in this place. Indeed, I am very proud to see her as Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to pass on my congratulations. Another person of who the parliament and I are very proud—he is sitting in front of me—is the Leader of the House, the member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr Stevens: Manager of Government Business.

Dr FLEGG: He is the Manager of Government Business. There is a bit of a secret: he can be a bit of a pain in the backside sometimes! We are very pleased to see him elevated to this position, which his work over the years more than justifies.

There are many people here with whom I have sat in opposition for quite a number of years and many of them have become very good friends. Some of my friends have been christened the 'red poets society'. It is an anonymous society, so I shall not name them here. A couple of them are sitting extremely close and a couple have just walked out because they got a whiff that I was going to mention them. They

say that if you want a friend in politics you should get a dog. Although that is probably not bad advice, it is not entirely true. Opposition is a very tough place to be. We were not doing what we left our careers and gave up time with our family to do, but I say to those on the opposite side of the House that still we were fulfilling a very important role for the people of Queensland. Over the years I have sat in the party room with many members who are here tonight. They are wonderful people and I am very privileged to be here with so many of them now.