



Speech by


Hon. Campbell Newman

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Thursday, 29 November 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Valedictory

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (11.05 am), by leave: I rise to address the House as we conclude the parliamentary year for 2012 today. While the House will observe the traditional valedictory debate later today, I will be absent from the House tonight given my departure leading a Queensland trade and investment mission to India. This is an important trade mission for Queensland. India is already Queensland's fourth largest merchandise export destination, but with its growing middle class it presents many opportunities to enhance trade in the construction, energy, education, tourism and mining sectors. This mission will be specifically focusing on these sectors, and I will be unashamedly encouraging the Indian government and business leaders to invest further in Queensland.

In March this year the people of this great state elected the 54th Parliament of Queensland. As honourable members well know, the election heralded Queensland's first conservative government since 1998, and it was a privilege and an honour for me to be sworn in as Queensland's 38th Premier on 26 March 2012. The state election and a closely followed by-election resulted in 51 new members joining the parliament. I understand that this is the single largest intake of new members in the history of the Legislative Assembly. While I am speaking of historic events of the Legislative Assembly, Madam Speaker, your election in May as Queensland's first female Speaker was another historic event.

The government was elected with a clear mandate. Our No. 1 priority is to get Queensland back on track, and we hit the ground running. Despite the \$60-plus billion legacy of debt left by Labor, the government implemented measures to bring government spending under control and delivered on our commitments to the people of Queensland.

My government went to the election with a commitment to lower the cost of living for families. We have delivered on our commitment by reintroducing discounted weekly fares for regular commuters; freezing the standard electricity tariff; halving the Labor government's scheduled public transport fare increases; reinstating stamp duty concessions for the principal place of residence; streamlining home sale contracts; and freezing the cost of registering the family car.

We are a government that actually does what it says it will do. We ticked off every item on our 30-day action plan and our 100-day action plan, and we are well on the way to completing our six-month action plan. We are committed to issuing a six-monthly progress report on the implementation of the government's 2012 election commitments and other action items.

It is vital that we continue to share our plans with Queenslanders and set out clear delivery targets. We are doing this because we are committed to delivering on our promises and to remaining accountable to Queenslanders, and we are not afraid to give them a yardstick to measure us against.

We are delivering for regional Queensland through the Royalties for the Regions program. Over the next four years, this program will invest \$495 million in new and improved community infrastructure, roads

and flood plain security projects that will benefit those who live, work and invest in our resource regions. Successful projects from the first round will be announced early next year.

The burden of red tape is something that must be dealt with, and the government has already reduced red tape and made planning simpler through amendments that have been made to the Sustainable Planning Act. Construction has commenced on the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital, which will open in 2016, and the Mary Valley Economic Development Strategy was released in July.

I want to now talk about the Bruce Highway, our economic artery which must be improved. To this end, the Bruce Highway Action Plan was released in October. This is a 10-year engineering based plan to fix the Bruce Highway developed by a technical advisory group. With this plan the government has lobbied, and will continue to lobby, the federal government for funding for this and other Queensland infrastructure priorities.

In growing a four-pillar economy, the government has scrapped the waste levy and increased the payroll tax threshold for 2012-13 to \$1.1 million, with planned increases up to 2017. The inaugural DestinationQ forum was held in June to focus whole-of-government support for tourism. It was the first forum of its kind to be held in 25 years in Queensland and I am reliably informed that tourism operators state-wide are still talking about the forum. In a vote of confidence for the state, new aviation routes to Queensland have been established this year, including China Eastern Airlines flying direct from Shanghai to Cairns, Qantas restarting flights direct from Sydney to the Gold Coast and Etihad Airways increasing its flights between Brisbane and Abu Dhabi from February 2013. These flights will certainly help our tourism industry as we strive to double annual overnight expenditure to \$30 billion by 2020.

Throughout this year, the government has commenced amending legislation to restore access for beekeepers to native forests, and access to national parks has also been granted for other multiuse purposes. Twelve additional officers have also been appointed to strengthen Queensland's biosecurity. In the area of racing, the Racing Act has been amended to establish separate control boards for greyhound, thoroughbred and harness racing, together with a new all-codes racing industry board. The government has also started rolling out 20 additional country race meetings across Queensland as we try to reinvigorate racing in this state.

The revitalisation of front-line services is being delivered, with over 450 new police recruits having commenced training as part of the government's three-year plan to put an additional 1,100 new police officers on the beat. The government is also cracking down on crime with tougher sentences for serious offenders. We have increased the non-parole period for murder from 15 to 20 years imprisonment and for multiple murders from 20 to 30 years imprisonment; we have established a new offence of murder of a police officer with a non-parole period of 25 years imprisonment; and we have doubled the maximum penalty for serious assault on a police officer from seven to 14 years. Legislation has also been introduced with tougher penalties for drug dealers who have unexplained wealth and those who target children. The government has also introduced legislation which will increase penalties for graffiti offenders and implement mandatory clean-up orders. This is supported by the establishment of GraffitiSTOP—a dedicated hotline for people to call to request the removal of graffiti. At the centre of all these initiatives is our aim to make communities safer.

In the environment sphere, the protection of dugongs and turtles has been increased through amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act. Under the government's Koala Habitat Program, more than 150 South-East Queensland landowners have offered to sell their properties, and in October the Koala Rescue and Rehabilitation Grants Program was opened for eligible front-line organisations to further develop their services now and into the future. Furthermore, the Everyone's Environment program was launched earlier this year, and the successful recipients in this program will be announced next month.

Education is central to our future. State schools with special education programs have been provided with more than 7,000 e-tablets. We have also provided up to 20 iPads and e-tablets to more than 40 state special schools across Queensland and up to 10 devices to other state schools offering special education programs so that children have access to the latest technology. At the beginning of the 2013 school year, 26 independent public schools will commence and 154 prep classes in 107 schools will get a boost in teacher aide hours. The Get in the Game grants initiative for local sport and recreation clubs was also launched in September. And, after years of Labor neglect, we are dedicating \$200 million to fix the school maintenance backlog and give our children safe places to learn.

The government is also restoring accountability. We have again made it illegal to lie to the parliament, and we have given communities a greater say about the previous government's forced council amalgamations. We have appointed a Boundaries Commissioner to oversee the process and identify those local councils best suited to be de-amalgamated. We are also delivering accountability through our open data initiative. Already we have released diverse data sets—ranging from dental waiting

lists to 15 years of crime statistics, and more is coming. My government has also committed to releasing both my diary and ministers' diaries monthly as part of the government's commitment to a new era of openness and accountability.

The government established the Queensland child protection inquiry on 1 July this year. The inquiry is reviewing the progress related to the recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions, otherwise known as the Forde inquiry, and the Crime and Misconduct Commission's report entitled *Protecting children: an inquiry into abuse of children in foster care*. The inquiry's final report, due by 30 April next year, will propose a plan for child protection for the next decade.

These are but an outline of some of the government's achievements and other initiatives that we have been progressing since coming to office this year. We have done a great deal already, despite the economic challenges we face, and I assure Queenslanders that the energy and commitment my government has displayed in its first eight months will not flag. As the 2012 parliamentary year comes to an end, I assure the House that the government remains committed to delivering better government for Queenslanders and ensuring Queensland is a great state with great opportunity.

In 2013 my government will continue working to ensure Queensland remains a great place to live, work and raise a family where the cost of living is low. We will continue our work to deliver a strong four-pillar economy focused on tourism, agriculture, resources and construction and we will empower businesses by cutting red tape and regulation. By working with business and industry, we will create jobs, opportunity and prosperity, keeping our best and brightest here in Queensland. Across the state, we will continue working to provide access to the best health care and to provide our children with the best education. We will ensure our communities are safe and our vulnerable are protected. We will deliver well-planned infrastructure across the state. And we will ensure that we have a government that is open and accountable and delivers the results Queenslanders expect.

As I alluded to earlier in my statement, 2012 has been a historic year for the Queensland parliament. There are many people I would like to thank including the Clerk of the Parliament, Neil Laurie, the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries, and their team and all of the officers of the Parliamentary Service; Michael Hickey, Director of Corporate and House Services, and his staff; the Chief Hansard Reporter, Lucinda Osmond, and all of her staff; all of the officers from the Committee Office, managed by Stephen Finnimore, together with all of the officers from the Parliamentary Education and Communications Secretariat; our Librarian, Katherine Brennan, and all of the library staff, as well as the officers of Chamber and Procedural Services, managed by the First Clerk Assistant, Leanne Clare; the Manager of Property Services, Darryl McCarthy, and all of his team, including the gardeners, cleaning and maintenance staff; the Acting Manager of Security and Attendant Services and Sergeant-at-Arms, Michael Watkin, and all of the parliamentary attendants and security officers; the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel, led by Theresa Johnson; the Manager of Human Resource Services, Peter Morris; the Manager of Financial and Administrative Services, Craig Atkinson; the Manager of Information Technology Services, Mike Coburn; and all of their respective officers, including the executive support services staff. I would also like to thank the Catering Services team, led by Jaakko Ponsi, for keeping us all well fed, and the food in the parliament is certainly wonderful. They do a tremendous job. They are wonderful, wonderful people.

Madam Speaker, as you well appreciate, the parliament is a diverse operation and the Parliamentary Service is made up of a wide variety of dedicated officers with many skills who ensure that the parliament runs smoothly. I want everyone in the Parliamentary Service to know that their efforts are fully, totally and unequivocally appreciated by all members of the House.

Before I conclude, I would like to say a few words about the great electorate of Ashgrove. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the electorate as the local member and I have got to know so many more constituents and learn about their needs and issues. I have enjoyed celebrating special milestones and occasions with the community. I have especially enjoyed meeting with my constituents who have taken the time to share their personal stories and concerns with me. Indeed, a lot of the conversations I have had have motivated me even further to drive change for the better, and in some cases they have inspired me to look at issues in a different way.

I have also had many one-on-one meetings. Indeed, I have met with every single principal in a formal way in all 18 schools in the electorate and I have met with many school community representatives, and I thank them all for being so very welcoming. I have invited sporting groups, small businesses and church leaders to my office to share their feedback and network with each other on Friday afternoons. This has been a great opportunity to hear more about how we can work together.

Finally, I want to thank the cabinet team, the assistant ministry and, of course, all the LNP members for their hard work this year. I would like to conclude by wishing everyone in this place a safe and joyful Christmas and a happy new year. I know we all look forward to continuing to serve Queenslanders and deliver for Queensland—a great state with great opportunity—in 2013.