




Speech by
Carl Judge

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—LNP) (7.31 pm): I am honoured to reply to the Governor's address. May I begin, as others have, by congratulating Madam Speaker on her re-election as the member for Maroochydore and, significantly, on her election as the first female Speaker of the Parliament. I also congratulate all other members of the 54th Parliament on their election or re-election.

I value and respect my community. I feel humbled and privileged to represent the people of Yeerongpilly and I thank them for placing their faith in me. I will work with energy and commitment to serve my electorate, well and truly. As the member for Yeerongpilly it is only right for me to acknowledge the service provided to the community by the former member, the honourable Simon Finn. In doing so, I recognise the electorate staff who supported him from 2004 until the recent state election.

I have lived in the Yeerongpilly electorate with my family since 2003 and our affection for it continues to grow. It is the place where my wife was born and raised, it is the place where my two daughters have grown from girls into young ladies and it is the place where my wife and I welcomed the arrival of our first son.

Historically, the seat of Yeerongpilly has existed since 2001. Originally it was known as Yeronga, from 1950. The Liberal Party's Winston Noble served as the first member for Yeronga, holding the seat from 1950 to 1964. In turn, he was succeeded by Norm Lee, who held the seat for the next 25 years, until 1989. As a member of the Liberal National Party I am very proud to be associated with these two gentlemen, who represented the electorate so well for so long.

Yeerongpilly has changed considerably over the years and today is a very complex electorate. It covers the inner-southern suburbs of Brisbane and is roughly bounded by Kessels Road, the South East Freeway, the Brisbane River and Oxley Creek. In 2011 these waterways inflicted misery on many people in my electorate. I admire their resilient character and commend the work of the Yeronga flood recovery centre and the many other community service organisations and volunteers involved in supporting flood victims.

Yeerongpilly is a place where people from diverse backgrounds face wide-ranging issues, but to some extent they share similar challenges. Some people are still struggling to re-establish their homes after the 2011 floods, some people are struggling to re-establish their businesses, and other people are struggling to re-establish their lives and families after desperately fleeing foreign homelands. Many people are also struggling with cost-of-living pressures, and young families are struggling to secure a future that earlier generations took for granted.

As at 30 June 2010, the estimated resident population of Yeerongpilly was 48,314 people. I realise that each person in my electorate may have specific concerns, and that is why I assure all people that they have equal access to my representation. I will work tirelessly to improve health, police, education and other front-line services for my electorate so as to enhance people's safety and quality of life there. I will also work to improve green spaces so that parents can take their children to freely enjoy local parks, sporting fields and the environment generally.

In addition, I will work to address important issues for marginalised people. On this point, at the time of the 2006 census 1,642 people living in the Yeerongpilly electorate had profound or severe disability, all in need of assistance. Since the 2012 state election, many people in my electorate have informed me that the National Disability Insurance Scheme is a matter of high importance for them. I commend the Newman government for supporting the NDIS in principle, and I join in the call for the federal government to get serious by putting an affordable, long-term funding proposal on the table.

Taking similar responsibility for creating an affordable Public Service is a basic concept that the state Labor government also failed to grasp. Along with their incapacity to create and sustain an environment that allows businesses to survive and thrive, Labor's reckless spending is not the hallmark of a party that may lay claim to looking after working families. Quite the opposite. They deceitfully sold our state's assets and still did not pay down the debt. The shameful reality is that, because of economic mismanagement, the former Labor government is responsible for increasing cost-of-living pressures on hardworking families. It is the fault of the ousted Labor government that the Public Service must now be rationalised—a sad burden inherited by the Newman government because of the serious state debt, irresponsibly and unsustainably incurred by the Labor Party. Our side of politics understands that it is the relentless attention to the engine room of the Australian economy that is small business and medium-sized business that fundamentally guarantees security of employment for working families, not Labor's obsession with building a bloated bureaucracy of false jobs on temporary contracts.

In 2008-09 there were 4,798 businesses in Yeerongpilly. Some 4,499 were small businesses, 253 were medium-sized and just 46 were identified as large-sized businesses. Many if not all of these businesses have struggled under the Labor government, responsible for stifling and strangling businesses with red tape—another Labor legacy inherited by the Newman government.

In 2008-09 the construction industry had the greatest number of businesses in my electorate, with 637 there—all typically small businesses. Because of the Labor government, many business owners in the industry are now desperately struggling to keep their businesses afloat and tradespeople and apprentices employed. The truth is that these good people and other business owners like them are the ones who support working families, not the Labor Party, and the fact is that the former Labor government failed to build an economy that produced real jobs on a permanent basis.

Labor also failed to build infrastructure and plan efficiently. In my electorate many constituents have informed me that they were not properly consulted on Cross River Rail or the transit oriented development. This angered them. I have assured these people that the Newman government will and can do better. Together with my LNP colleagues I will work tirelessly with the Premier and the leadership team of the Newman government to respect Queenslanders, including by honouring the five well-documented pledges that we have all made to the people of this state.

I understand that people, families and business owners across this great state are counting on us to get Queensland back on track. The Premier has spoken about our plans to build a broader and stronger Queensland economy based on the four key pillars of agriculture, resources, tourism and construction. During my life I have worked throughout this state and witnessed how the Newman government's targeted and much needed plan to support key industries and jobs in metropolitan, regional and rural communities is much needed. As the member for Yeerongpilly I will do everything possible to support our Premier and the LNP's leadership team to firmly set these pillars in place to revitalise Queensland's economy.

Let us not sugar coat the truth in here. The real difference between the members of the Liberal National Party and the Labor Party is that our members really do come from all walks of life. We possess the real-life experience and the collective experience needed to understand and represent all people and to competently perform our role.

Might I add to the personal backgrounds already provided by many of our LNP colleagues. My late father was a boilermaker and my late mother was a postal worker. My father, Clifford Judge, is a person whom I loved and admired. He loved his family, and during his short life he also served his country as a submariner in the Royal Australian Navy. Lyn Beasley was a wonderful mother to me and my brother, Leo. Mum did her best to protect and support us for her entire life, which also ended too soon. She died when my daughters were young and never met my son. Mum sometimes struggled to keep bread on the table but freely poured out her love upon her children. During troubled times in our young years, my grandparents, Alf and Dorothy Beasley, made sure that we were all okay.

My big brother, Leo, also did his best to help mum keep me in line as a kid but he stood up for me as needed and I still know that today I can count on him. My stepfather, Kevin Grubb, likewise made a difference in our lives and I respect him for it. He shared a few short years with my mother and brought her much happiness before losing his battle with cancer when I was 14.

These are the people who taught me how to be a good person in life. They taught me how to respect and care for others, to embrace and live life, to value it and, when the time comes, to leave it in the comfort of knowing you have made a difference for others, especially in the lives of children. I will always do my best to follow their example and live up to their standards, including as the member for Yeerongpilly.

I was raised by these people at Rockhampton where I attended school and then completed a trade as a motor mechanic before joining the Queensland Police Service in 1991. Over the past 20 years I have worked days, nights, weekends and weekdays as a police officer, paid a mortgage, raised a family and, in my spare time, studied to gain undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. I have always sought to broaden my knowledge and most recently completed a Master of Human Service (Management and Policy). I entered state politics to serve the people of Queensland. From this perspective, it has seemed like a natural progression from my policing career—from pursuing law-breakers to joining law-makers.

As a sworn officer, I had the honour of serving people in communities throughout our state: in the central region at Gladstone, Rockhampton and Lakes Creek; in the northern region at Halifax near Ingham; and in the south-east region at Indooroopilly, Logan, Browns Plains and Slacks Creek and later at police headquarters in Brisbane. I have worked as a uniformed police officer at small one- and two-officer stations and walked the beat in metropolitan areas like Fortitude Valley to deal with alcohol fuelled violence in drink-safe precincts. I have served as a detective in arson and fraud squads and specialised in child protection, serving at a number of dedicated units including Task Force Argos at State Crime Operations Command investigating historical crimes and online child abuse.

Towards the end of my career, I also served as a senior sergeant in the policy and legislation development unit. I want to put it on the record that the Queensland Police Service is today a very professional organisation with rigorous systems of accountability to prevent and detect corruption—far removed from the so-called Fitzgerald era. It is an organisation that is made up of fine men and women and they deserve to be collectively recognised for their integrity. They also deserve to be respected for their brave commitment to upholding the law while protecting our communities. I pay respect to Senior Constable Damian Leeding.

I value integrity and commitment, and I stand here today equally proud to be associated with my LNP colleagues in the same way that I was proud to be a member of the Queensland Police Service. Accordingly, I challenge the opposition to move away from their smear tactics and attempts to portray the Newman government as somehow being on a slippery slope to an 'abuse of power and corruption era'. The Labor Party should have left this nonsense behind after its vile state election campaign. Such behaviour now serves to warn the public that the Labor Party is still out of touch and simply cannot do better. While listening respectfully to the member for Rockhampton give his maiden speech, I noted him saying that every member of this chamber should commit to raising people's opinions about the political process and politicians more generally. Let us hope that his Labor Party colleagues listened to him.

Because of my real-life experience and commitment to broadening my knowledge, I comprehend the importance of ensuring that legislation translates into operational effectiveness for police on the front line who are tasked to fight crime and keep our communities safe. I also understand the importance of research and ensuring that political initiatives and responses are evidence based. To this end, I highlight the importance of information sharing and partnerships between our universities and the government. To illustrate, Griffith University's Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security is located at the Nathan campus in the Yeerongpilly electorate. It is an unrivalled resource that we can effectively engage with to help investigate and strengthen our law enforcement responses and community safety initiatives.

I will work tirelessly to create a stronger, safer and even more supportive community. I am proud to say that Yeerongpilly already has a record of being a supportive community. At the time of the 2006 census, it was identified that there were 7,314 volunteers in the electorate. That is more than 20 per cent of people aged 15 years and over, and it is a figure which is higher than the state's average. Many local volunteers joined the mud army response to the 2011 floods. I also recognise that a large number of volunteers regularly work in our local community service organisations and, likewise, many do their best to keep our sporting clubs operating. I realise that these community groups and sporting clubs are at the heart of community life.

To illustrate, I recently attended the 100-year celebration for the Yeronga Bowls Club in my electorate. Club officials, all volunteers, spoke about how the club was started and has developed over the years, along with the successes of the club in terms of outstanding sporting representatives. What I also heard during the evening were stories of people becoming lifelong friends and supporting each other through the challenges of their lives. For these reasons, I will do everything possible to support community service organisations and sporting clubs in my electorate.

At this point, I want to thank the people who voluntarily gave their time and energy to create this opportunity for me to be here and serve my community. First, I want to thank my campaign director, John Matthews, for his leadership, guidance and friendship. I also want to thank the other campaign team members who worked so tirelessly to support me during every week over the past year—in particular,

Annabelle Matthews, Marcus Knapp, Anthony Stokes, Andrew Kriedemenn, Paul Darwen, Ray Wilson, Ana Brown, Angela Yin, Rhys Bosley, James Burgess and Judy Holland. I also pay special thanks to Deb, Eliza and Robert Matthews, Angela and Jules Moxon, Marilyn Wilson, Gillian Dawson, and Don and Lila Cameron. There are just too many people to mention by name but I sincerely thank everyone who helped me. It was a hard-fought election but I respect having to earn the trust of the people in my electorate and the privilege of being their local member of parliament.

Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank my family. My wife, Melissa, and two daughters, Keely and Haley, have all supported me and travelled beside me on the challenging journey to get here, and my baby son, Braden, has been a joy since birth and keeps life in perspective for us. I love you all and know that I am a very fortunate man to have each of you in my life.

I conclude by paying an everlasting respect to my late parents and grandparents who all helped shape me. I accept that they would be proud of me today. I feel very humbled and privileged to be the member for Yeerongpilly and reaffirm that I will work with energy and commitment to serve all people from my electorate well and truly.