




Speech by

Darren Grimwade

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Hansard Thursday, 17 May 2012

MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (5.39 pm): I rise in this place today for the first time to deliver my maiden speech in the 54th Parliament of Queensland. May I start by congratulating Madam Speaker on her appointment to the position. I am immensely proud to be part of a government that has provided the first ever female Speaker of the Queensland parliament, a role in which I am confident she will earn our respect as she carries out her duties with independence, neutrality, fairness and of course good humour.

It is an enormous privilege to represent the hardworking and ambitious people of the Morayfield electorate. I thank the people of my electorate for entrusting me with this role. I am truly humbled by this opportunity and the responsibilities that this role will bring. It is an honour to represent one of the greatest communities in our great state. The people of our community have strong aspirations and ambitions in life.

We should never define our success in dollar terms but rather by the happiness that we find in our relationships that we share with our families, friends and of course our local communities. One of the greatest strengths of the Morayfield electorate is the vast number of grassroots organisations that are inspired and created not by government but by the people themselves. These countless groups show their commitment to others and not themselves, and this is the glue that holds our communities together.

The greatest strength of our region is not our economic prowess or personal wealth but our social cohesion, our very understanding of ourselves and our proud sense of community. All of the state was witness to this during the terrible floods of January 2011. I saw firsthand how the community came together to lend a hand—friends, neighbours and strangers all helping each other.

While I am first and foremost proud to represent the local community, I am also proud to be a member of the first Liberal National Party government here in Queensland. I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of the member for Southern Downs, the member for Caloundra, Mr Bruce McIver and Mr Gary Spence for having the vision and tenacity to form what is now the Liberal National Party. Without your common commitment to our political cause and traditions I may never have joined a political party and nor would I have found myself in this place tonight.

I am a proud member of a political party that has embraced diversity and recognises individuals based on their merit. Today the Liberal National Party is representative of people all over Queensland. Our ranks encompass a diverse range of people varying in age, gender and work experiences. I myself come to this place being a small business owner, being the owner of a local pizza cafe in Burpengary. I am joined on this side of the House by many men and women whose previous occupations include small business owners, lawyers, journalists, dentists, engineers, medical specialists, nurses, painters and decorators, financial planners, NRL referees, environmental scientists and retail workers in a deli and in the retail sector, among others. We recognise, as Queensland has, that individuals should be judged on the content of their character and nothing else.

As I stand here today I am joined in the gallery by my family and friends, none more important to me than my wife and kids. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my beautiful wife, Leila, and my three children, Jesse, Meeka and Ella, for all their support and encouragement throughout this campaign. To Leila, your unconditional love, your fierce honesty and your endless support are a source of vitality and

strength for me. In our vows on our wedding day we made the pledge that we would never stand in front of each other and we would never stand behind each other but we would always stand beside each other, and it is through this partnership in our relationship that we have been able to navigate this current challenge.

To my children, you are the very reason I embarked on this journey. I want you to know that, while this job places demands on me that you may not understand or appreciate as yet, I am doing this to ensure the best possible future for you. I would not have been able to achieve the successes that we have without your support over the years.

I was brought up in a very large family and learnt through this experience what it was like to be a battler. I am glad to have my mother and father, Robert and Lorraine, join me here today. I know that, although we were raised in a reasonably non-political family, they would be happy with what I have achieved so far in my life. My mother and father probably unknowingly always instilled Liberal philosophies in me as they raised me as a child. Dad always instilled in me the Liberal philosophy of 'reward for effort'. He would always tell me that if you worked hard and believed in yourself then you will always be rewarded. This included many mornings waking up at three o'clock to run his son down to the local bakery where I worked, gaining life skills and experience. Dad supported me and nurtured the philosophy and the belief in the value of hard work.

My father inspired my family values—the same family values that I try to teach my children every day. I come from a family where dad was a blue-collar worker, working as a boilermaker, working hard to earn an income to support his five children. I had a mother who took her role as a stay-at-home mother very seriously. I was blessed to have a mother who would always be there and offered unconditional love to us kids, a mother who would always put herself last, even if it meant going without herself. I can only hope that when my children grow up they can recognise these values that my wife and I try to instil in them each and every day.

It was my grounding through the values of my family upbringing that led me to join the Liberal National Party. When I joined the LNP I knew I was joining a party that would provide Queenslanders with a better future, a future of opportunity and a future of hope. I joined the LNP because I wanted to be part of a government that would scrap unnecessary taxes, cut wasteful spending and reduce the tax burden on business. We need a government here in Queensland that is guided by the belief that it does not have its own money; it only has the people's money and that it is held in trust. If Queenslanders are going to have every opportunity to achieve their aspirations, we again need a government that understands that a hand up is always better than a handout. We need a government that understands that opportunity is always better than subsidy. We need a government that recognises that, while it may not have a solution to every problem, sometimes it is the problem. As a member of the Liberal National Party, I believe that we need a smaller government and a more efficient government.

It is our commitment to our party's philosophy that should serve as our guide to an effective government here in Queensland, a society based on opportunity and fair reward for hard work yet tempered by a safety net for those in the community most in need—or, as it is more simply understood in this great state and country that we live in, giving Queenslanders a fair go. It is these principles of government that create a tolerant Queensland, a fair Queensland and of course a prosperous Queensland.

When Sir Robert Menzies was laying the foundation of our modern political movement, a movement that has resulted in the creation of the LNP, he founded it on the ideals and beliefs that are still here today. He spoke about the forgotten people—the hardworking mums and dads, the blue-collar workers like my father, the middle-class people who were often pushed aside for political advantage. The Morayfield electorate is full of these forgotten people. It is full of hardworking people, mums and dads doing the most Australian thing of all—giving it a go, trying to get ahead in life and making a difference in their communities. It is full of small business owners and families investing in an opportunity—true Queenslanders laying everything on the line to invest in a small business, to employ more people and to support the community, to work hard and to look forward to the reward for the risk and the hard work they have put in. We understand on this side of the House that small business is the engine room of this economy, and we will work hard as a government to ensure that opportunity and reward is made possible to all.

I am proud to be part of this can-do government, a government led by a man who was not afraid to be bold, not afraid to take a risk to do what was right—a Premier who may have taken a path to this place that may not have been perceived as the most likely course for an individual to take. In doing so though, he demonstrated to Queenslanders in the most audacious of manners that politics does not need to be practised the way it always has been, that politics can and should be better.

I am proud to be part of a government that has plans to grow a four-pillar economy in construction, resources, tourism and agriculture which will help many businesses grow and offer opportunity. I am part of

a government that will reduce the burden on families and business through delivering cost-of-living relief and lower taxation, a government that will offer better planning and better infrastructure and a government that will provide better front-line services to all Queenslanders—services that are expected to be delivered not just from a good government but from an accountable government. I am part of a government with a clear focus on building trust in the community for their elected representatives.

It was the soaring cost of living that the people of Morayfield demanded I wage a war on as I took up my campaign. It was the cost-of-living relief that I campaigned long and hard on, and I am proud to be a member here today now that I will be able to deliver this relief to the mums and dads, the seniors, the small business operators and those with a disability and most in need of financial relief. I am proud to be part of a government that will deliver lower registration for family cars, lower water bills, lower electricity charges and bills, lower public transport costs, which is a key issue in my electorate, lower taxation for businesses through payroll tax amendments and the reinstatement of the transfer duty on the home concession for those purchasing their family home.

I am extremely humbled and excited to be part of this government and our plans to get Queensland back on track. All Queenslanders should look forward with hope and opportunity as we move into the future and once again become the No. 1 state in Australia to live, raise a family, start a business and gain an education.

In order to ensure that Queensland has the future it deserves, we need to recognise that the government will not prescribe its future; it can only help create the society that can ensure this future for Queensland. We must harness the creativity and the capital in our private sector. We must not let down future generations of Queenslanders by failing to effectively plan long-term in a strategic sense—planning that recognises the importance of sustainable development and the balance between growth, infrastructure provision, social cohesion and of course environmental sustainability. If in this planning of Queensland's future we remain committed to these values, we can harness the opportunities of growth in this state. We on this side of the House understand that growth does not need to be a dirty word; rather, it can be a word of boundless opportunity. As members in this place, it is our responsibility to secure the prosperity of this state not just for today and not just for our generation but for generations of Queenslanders to come.

Whilst we recognise that the challenges before us are great and the financial situation that we have found ourselves in today is unfavourable, we must never waver from our bold vision for this state. We must at every opportunity choose good policy over political pragmatism. Let me once again look to Sir Robert Menzies for inspiration. When Sir Robert Menzies launched the first Liberal campaign, he said—

We need to return to politics as a clash of principles and to get away from the notion that it is a clash only of warring personalities.

I would like to take this opportunity to respectfully thank my predecessor in the seat of Morayfield. Whilst we certainly do not share the same political ideology, we do share a commitment to politics being about local representation and, above all else, a recognition that it is always and should always be not about ourselves but about the people. I thank him for his contribution to the House whilst he served his community in this place.

I would like to take this opportunity to particularly thank those who have supported me in the role as a candidate and now as a member here in parliament. Like all of us, I would not be standing in this House tonight without the support of a great team. I sincerely thank my parliamentary colleagues for their help during the campaign. I also record my appreciation of the professional support that I received from the LNP executive and support staff within the Liberal National Party. This includes my regional chairperson and mate, Mr Greg Newton. I would also like to thank those who have become my political family throughout this campaign—my Morayfield campaign team.

It would be humanly impossible for me to name every single person who lent their time, money, blood, sweat and tears to this campaign. However, there are a few people whom I feel compelled to mention here today for their support—support that has not always been physical or time consuming but personal and emotional support and words of continued encouragement that have enabled me to believe in the task that we were all undertaking.

Firstly, to my campaign manager, Mrs Lisa Armitage. You were the glue that held this campaign together. You were the person who believed in me not for a day and not for a week; you were the person who believed in me for 16 months through this whole campaign. You believed in me and you believed in what we were both fighting for. I thank you for everything that you contributed.

Secondly, to Mandy and Marcus Edwards. You are a truly magnificent couple, friends and definitely true Liberals. This campaign would have never been the same without your professional assistance, time and organisation. I will be forever grateful for the many sleepless nights and sacrifices to your personal family time that you have contributed.

To Noel Hawes, Richard Green and Cary Bielenberg: you guys certainly were the workhorses on the streets with me. Your commitment to the cause, your belief that change was needed in Queensland and

your time committed to this campaign is something that I will never be able to pay back to you. I sincerely thank you and everyone for everything you did throughout the campaign.

I would also like to thank my friend and mentor Wyatt Roy MP, the federal member for Longman. I worked with Wyatt on his campaign and it was through his contact that I became enthused with politics. I have observed and admired the way in which Wyatt is now able to make a difference in his local area. Working with Wyatt was instrumental in my decision to stand for preselection in Morayfield and it has led to me standing here today in this place. At my campaign launch, Wyatt finished his address as the guest speaker by saying, 'Let's go make history.' Well, mate, I think it is fair to say that we certainly did that.

There are many more people whom I will remain forever indebted to—a debt of passion, commitment and friendship that I will never be able to repay. You know who you are and as I stand here tonight all I can say is thank you.

In conclusion, I want to say to the people who have placed an enormous amount of trust in me that I can only repay your trust through dedication and hard work. I will use my time in this place—however long that may be—to serve your interests first and foremost. May the words of Sir Robert Menzies again provide a guide for me, when he stated—

What may be before us we do not know, nor how long the journey. But this we do know, that Truth is our companion on that journey; that Truth is with us in the battle, and that Truth must win.

As a newly elected member of this parliament, I think this is a good principle to follow. To the people of the Morayfield area who elected me, I commit to you that I will use this time as the member for Morayfield to add value to your life and not to mine. In the deliberations of this place, I see my first responsibility as my service to you in the public and the community. I thank the House.