



Speech by

Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (6.12 pm): I reconfirm my allegiance to our Queen, Elizabeth II, by the grace of God, Queen of Australia and her other realms and territories, head of the Commonwealth.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr BLEIJIE: I also acknowledge Her Excellency the Governor in opening the 54th Parliament of Queensland. Her Excellency and Mr McCosker have always extended the most gracious courtesies to me and my family on the occasions that we have enjoyed their company, which is certainly not lost on this proud monarchist.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to convey my congratulations to Madam Speaker for the unanimous support that she received on her nomination to the speakership of this parliament. Over the past three years, we have worked together in opposition and we represent electorates that share a border and common issues. Therefore, I have every confidence in her capacity, not only to fulfil her role with honour and distinction but also to do it with her own style and good humour. On occasion, of course, that humour may be tested with robust debate and interjections from honourable members, but I trust that honourable members will be reminded when they cross the line that she sets. Mr Deputy Speaker, please convey to Madam Speaker my best wishes and remind her that I served with her in the shadow ministry and in opposition when she was under continual attack from the former government and that I was always there to backup Madam Speaker. I hope that Madam Speaker can now return the favour in parliament, by looking after both the member for Gregory and the member for Kawana. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would be pleased if you would convey that message to Madam Speaker and remind her of that fact.

In acknowledging Her Majesty as I did, I ought tell members that on 15 June this year Kawana will celebrate the most historic occasion of Her Majesty's diamond jubilee, which celebrates her 60 years on the throne. I invite all honourable members and the hundreds of Kawana residents and constituents who are watching the live feed of the parliament on the internet at the moment to the diamond jubilee celebration that we are holding in Kawana. It was unfortunate that our local council did not organise anything. However, I have applied to the Premier's office for the diamond jubilee pack, to get some bunting and other merchandise. Every year my Kawana Community Day Awards celebrate about 100 Kawana residents. I thought this was a prime opportunity to incorporate the awards ceremony, as we celebrate Queensland Week, with celebrating Her Majesty's most historic diamond jubilee. I am pleased to announce that her Excellency the Governor will be in attendance. It is a great coup for the Sunshine Coast and Kawana to have Her Excellency attend on 15 June. My constituents will be most pleased to receive Her Excellency into the Kawana electorate.

The Queensland public has had a say. As the Premier has indicated on many occasions, it is certainly the biggest committee in this state. That committee has put in its report and given the LNP a strong mandate to get Queensland back on track and, of course, to implement our policies on growing a four-pillar economy based on tourism, agriculture, resources and construction; lower the cost of living for

families by cutting waste; deliver better infrastructure and better planning; revitalise front-line services; and, the most important item that the Premier, other members on this side and I have spoken about, that is, to restore accountability in government. I suggest that if there was anything that disturbed Queenslanders most during the campaign, it was accountability and integrity issues. On this side we have accountability and integrity. A little later I will go into the elements of the campaign that Queenslanders had particular distaste for. Accountability in government and restoring that accountability is the highest priority of the Newman government.

As the member for Kawana, I thank my constituents for the faith they have shown in re-electing me as their representative in this parliament. Of course, my foremost responsibility is to my electorate and representing their needs and issues. I strongly attest that I will continue in the same grassroots approach of consultation and advocacy that the Kawana constituents have come to expect since I was elected in 2009. I know that on 24 March 2012, many Kawana residents voted for me and for conservative politics for the first time in their lives. That was evident to me on polling day. People did not want how-to-vote cards, they did not want to indicate preferences, but, of course, their wishes were indicated by the vote at the end of the day. That shows that Queenslanders wanted change. They were sick and tired of their electricity bills going up and the cost-of-living pressures they were subjected to, and they believed that the opposition, as it was at the time, had the plans and the policies to get Queensland back on track. I am extremely humbled to be a part of the team that will, in fact, reach that outcome.

I am honoured and privilege to represent Kawana in this 54th Parliament. My electorate is a place I hold dear. All members assert that their electorates are the best. We have heard that said in every maiden speech and every address-in-reply speech. Members will hear it again from the member for Kawana. Kawana is where I have lived for most of my life. It is where my wife, Sally, and I are raising our family. It is a place that is steeped with opportunity and it is a place that is spirited with people who value and love their communities. Kawana is a coastal urban electorate to the east of the Bruce Highway and home to the suburbs of Sippy Downs, Minyama, Buddina, Parrearra, Birtinya, Warana, Bokarina, Wurtulla, Meridan Plains, Currimundi, Aroona and Little Mountain. It was formed in 2001, essentially replacing the former electorate of Mooloolah, held by my great friend and supporter Bruce Laming.

I congratulate the honourable the Premier on his election as Premier of Queensland, but what is more pleasing for me is to actually congratulate the Premier on winning the seat of Ashgrove.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr BLEIJIE: The new members—and it is great to see so many of them in here—would not have experienced the last 12 months of the parliament where the honourable the Premier, whilst having coffee in Ashgrove, sent his troops in here in their flap jackets to defend him, to defend his reputation and to fight the former member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones. I would say that she took a particular interest in Ashgrove in the last 12 months. In fact, I think she made more speeches about Ashgrove in the last 12 months than she did in the entirety of her time in this parliament prior to the last 12 months and prior to our candidate in Campbell Newman coming on to the scene.

I think Campbell Newman will go down in history as one of our leaders who ran one of the most positive campaigns. He was not distracted by the accusations and innuendos thrown at him from all corners, particularly that corner over there, represented still by five members, some of whom were ministers and were duly responsible for that campaign that was targeted against Campbell Newman and his family. I think Queenslanders will not be satisfied until the Labor Party in Queensland apologise, apologise not only to the people of Queensland but apologise to this honourable gentleman in front of me who now serves as Premier of Queensland. No-one—no-one—should have to go through what the Hon. Campbell Newman, his wife, Lisa, their children, their cousins, their aunts and their uncles—and I recall one press release, Premier, that mentioned dogs and cats—went through. No-one should have to go through what they went through when wanting to serve in public office. We fought a battle on positive policies, and I am just absolutely excited that Queensland accepted that campaign style and absolutely rejected the Queensland Labor Party's style.

What frightens me though, honourable members, is that the one person directly or deputised responsible for that is the member for South Brisbane, who was serving as assistant secretary of the Labor Party at the time. It concerns me deeply that that person now serves in this place and was put up by the Labor Party for preselection. If that was the type of muckery that she was going to be involved in prior to getting into this place, then it does scare me and should scare honourable members what that member is in fact capable of in the future.

We have seen in only the last two weeks how nothing has changed from that style. You would have thought that when the honourable opposition leader stood up at the May Day rally and apologised to the workers of Queensland for selling assets without telling them that they would have the decency to come into this place and also accept responsibility for that election campaign. But they cannot. They cannot do it because the person responsible for the election campaign now sits in that seat at the back there. And they cannot do it because we all know that the member for South Brisbane will be the leader of the Labor Party

in Queensland in the not-too-distant future, although from the way the member for Bundamba was acting today, who is their little attack guru now I suspect, she may be running for the job of opposition leader.

But we know that the honourable opposition leader will not be there for long, because we know that the Labor Party had a plan for the member for South Brisbane and that is to install her as leader of the Labor Party in the not-too-distant future. As the Premier said the other day, she is strategically placed in that seat behind the opposition leader. So we watch that with interest.

I congratulate the Premier again on a positive campaign to get Queensland back on track and for not getting involved in the dirty politics of that which is the Labor Party and which Queenslanders overwhelmingly rejected.

We talk about the honourable the Premier and its leads to family. His family supported him. We all have families who support us through this journey. Family is what grounds us. Of course without the love and support of family I know that I would struggle to fulfil this role in the public service of my electorate and the people of Queensland. I would like to thank my wife, Sally, of almost 10 years and our three children, Taylor, Madison and Jasper, for their love and of course unwavering support. I would like to thank my parents, Christine and Pieter, for their unconditional love and support of the Bleijie family and my extended family. I am extremely lucky and blessed to have parents who will do whatever they can to support all their children, something which I endeavour to emanate with our own children.

I would not be in this place without my campaign team and the support of local, good, solid grassroots Liberal National Party members. I acknowledge my campaign director, Ms Carol Humphries, and Ken Crooke for their leadership and guidance to me as the candidate for Kawana in both 2009 and 2012. I thank them for their honest and considered opinions and advice—particularly at times when I most needed their counsel and sometimes when I ought to have had their counsel but did not necessarily want their counsel or did not like what I heard. I always like to engage in grassroots politics and sometimes I get a little overexcited, and you do need people to ground you and to bring you back to a place or to give you a second option. So I always hold them dear in that regard for keeping me on the straight and narrow during my election campaign.

I thank the entire campaign team who have worked tirelessly and diligently for the past three years and particularly, I think in this new realm of electoral disclosures and funding laws, our campaign treasurers—laws that were not of our making, laws that were passed for the benefit of the Australian Labor Party Queensland division and the unions because we all know that Peel Street funds dried up. They dried up because they thought the Labor Party was not going to get elected. So, instead of accepting that proposition, the Labor Party came in here—and I was shadow AG at the time—and changed the electoral laws in Queensland to benefit themselves. As I recall correctly, we had the debate in parliament between the budget and Gordon Nuttall coming in. I think that legislation was passed on the middle day of that week.

We know that now in government we have an opportunity to correct those wrongs and I certainly look forward, as the Premier said, to that review taking place to those electoral amendments to balance it out in Queensland and to not pass laws that simply benefit one particular party. Hence, we are bringing section 57 of the Criminal Code back in.

Coming back to my local Kawana branch, I thank all the branch members and the state electorate council, because it was humbling that we received what I think is the second highest primary vote in Queensland and the fourth highest two-party preferred vote in Queensland. Coming into Kawana, which in fact was held by the Labor Party for a period of time—and some honourable members, particularly the member for Gregory and the member for Callide, will recall Chris Cummins in this place, who actually quite embarrassingly was the member for Kawana for a period of time—

Mr Seeney: The 'minister for nothing'.

Mr BLEIJIE: The 'minister for nothing'; that is right. I believe he nearly burnt down Parliament House because he left his toast in the toaster and set the fire alarms off in his bedroom.

Mr Seeney: That's what he's remembered for.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is right. The biggest issue in Kawana is of course health and also jobs, the economy and the cost of living. The Labor Party delayed the Sunshine Coast University Hospital for two years, from 2014 to 2016. I congratulate and encourage the community of Kawana because over those last three years we have continually shouted in the streets, 'Hospital delay; no way!' We have run a successful, highly politically engaged and public campaign against the delay, because we have over 200 people travelling each day to Brisbane to get health services for a region of some 300,000 people on the Sunshine Coast. So again it was another broken promise by the former government. They said just prior to the 2009 election, 'We are building this hospital,' and three months after the election they delayed the hospital by many years. We have a commitment to get that hospital built, to build the hospital on time and ahead of budget.

I look forward to working with my ministerial colleagues. I thank the Premier for giving me the opportunity to serve in his first cabinet as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. I do not take that responsibility lightly.

Queensland faces many challenges. Over the last two weeks I have been meeting with members, particularly the enthusiastic members from North Queensland, who have particular issues with juvenile justice and crime. We will get these matters sorted out. It will take time—Queenslanders understand that—because we are dealing with the legacy of 14 years of failed policy.

I look forward to a new era of opportunity in Queensland—an era of job creation and cost-of-living reductions. The policies implemented by the Labor Party over a number of years directly hurt the people they always purport to represent—that is, the working-class people of Queensland. Yet the working-class people of Queensland use electricity, have showers, use water, fill up their car with petrol and register their car. Everything the Labor Party has done over the past 12 years has in fact contributed to the cost-of-living pressures felt by all Queenslanders but particularly the workers they say they represent.

I look forward to the opportunity for the Liberal National Party to right the wrongs. In my portfolio area we can offer our Safer Streets Crime Action Plan. We can tackle illegal hooning across Queensland. We can break the cycle of youth crime. That will not be an easy task, but it is one that all Liberal National Party members will undertake with absolute courage and determination. We understand that the answer to young juvenile offenders is not to lock them up and throw away the key; the answer is to encourage them and instill in them responsibility and respect so that they know they can contribute positively to society and get a job. We on this side of the House understand that.

I look forward to tackling the bigger issues—illegal drugs and illegal weaponry, particularly on the Gold Coast at the moment with respect to handguns and sawn-off shotguns. We need to restore the faith of Queenslanders in our justice system by ensuring community input into the issues of sentencing and our laws. In my role as first law officer of the state I will uphold and protect the separation of powers between the judiciary and executive government.

I conclude by congratulating all honourable members on their election or re-election to this House. One of the best parts about this job is the camaraderie between parliamentarians and the friendships developed during these long sittings in this grand old building. I look forward to working with all members over the next three years, particularly with my colleagues on this six-eighths of the House, and making the state a can-do state. Let us all get Queensland back on track.