




Speech by  
**John Grant**

**MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD**

Hansard Wednesday, 30 May 2012

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### **MAIDEN SPEECH**

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (6.08 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I begin with these words to the newly elected Speaker of the House and would appreciate it if you would pass them on to her. I am very pleased that you, having served in successive parliaments over two decades, have been elected to the position of Speaker and will now be afforded a place in history as the first woman to become Speaker of the Queensland parliament. You richly deserve this honour and I wish you every success in this demanding role.

The residents of the Springwood electorate have given me the opportunity to work for them by representing their interests in this the 54th Parliament of Queensland and I am honoured to carry out this task on their behalf. I thank them sincerely for their support at the ballot box and I will do all that I can to deliver what we have pledged to them over the course of the term of this parliament.

It is important at the outset for me to thank the Premier, Mr Campbell Newman, for the risks he took and the leadership he provided throughout the election campaign. His sacrifices, and those of his family, and his hard work paved the way for the historic swing in electoral support away from the previous government to the Liberal National Party. Thank you, Premier Newman. My appreciation also goes to John-Paul Langbroek, Lawrence Springborg, Tim Nicholls and Jeff Seeney for the manner in which they worked together as a unified team. Lawrence Springborg epitomised the great virtue of prolonged tenacity to see the Liberal National Party established, and John-Paul Langbroek displayed an outstanding level of graciousness after relinquishing the role of LNP leader. This unity that they have all displayed has been a major contributor to the success of the individual campaigns run by LNP members throughout the state.

The result of this election saw the residents of the Springwood electorate set three all-time records. They gave the Liberal National Party the highest ever primary vote of 55.7 per cent, the highest ever swing of 19.7 per cent and the largest two-party preferred vote ever recorded of 65.7 per cent in the history of the seat.

Springwood includes the suburbs of Rochedale South, Springwood, Daisy Hill, Shailer Park and parts of Priestdale, Cornubia and Loganholme, all in the city of Logan. It is bounded by the M1 Motorway and includes a major commercial and banking precinct in the north and the major Hyperdome retail centre in Shailer Park towards the south. It provides significant educational facilities, financial services, small to medium industry and many home based businesses. It also showcases large-scale sporting facilities, such as Underwood Park, and is home to the koala centre in the Daisy Hill Conservation Park. Research shows that the principal Springwood business centre has three times the potential as a driver for economic development than other major centres around Brisbane.

Literally thousands of residents spoke to me over the course of the campaign leading up to the recent state election and the messages given were these—one, there was personal and financial pain with the cost of living spiralling out of control; two, there was anger that we were told state assets would not be sold only to have them sold out from under us; and, three, there was concern about antisocial behaviour in the streets and hoon driving. On these three issues of importance to the residents of Springwood, I have the following comments. Firstly, on reducing wasteful spending to better control the cost of living,

managing government finances and the economy, history reveals and records that the Liberal-National governments excel, and I am firmly committed to such a course of action ahead to support families by reigning in rapid increases in the cost of living that we have been experiencing. In relation to item 2, the Liberal National Party has committed to not sell off major state assets without taking such a decision to the community. Finally, antisocial behaviour in our streets is a symptom of a society in which it is becoming commonplace for individuals to throw off restraint and practise an anything goes philosophy. I believe that the Liberal National Party's policies in the areas of crime and community safety will help to alleviate community concerns and that this type of behaviour will not go unchecked.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the specific instances of gross mismanagement and waste by the former Labor government which, amongst many other issues, served to fuel the fire of my discontent and motivated me to stand for change and help rid this state of such an incompetent government. This was epitomised when, just a few years after taking water and sewerage assets off local governments, the former Labor government reversed the legislation and Logan City Council is now in the process of dismantling Allconnex Water and moving assets and staff back into a council operation. What incredible waste and maladministration. Tens of millions of dollars could have been saved if these on again, off again changes had not been made.

Let it be put on the record that when the Logan City Council wrote to the former Labor state government to ascertain whether they would charge stamp duty—in the order of \$50 million—for Logan City Council on the transfer of \$1.3 billion worth of infrastructure assets back to council, no answer was given. People across the state lost faith in that government because they refused to be honest with the community. We in the LNP government have set about to rebuild that faith with the people of Queensland.

What of the current debacle that the taxpayers of Springwood are likely to face over, amongst other things, the expense to upgrade the road between Logan and Yarrabilba—a yet-to-be built, distant, model city—due to the incongruent decision made by the Urban Land Development Authority merely days after the 24 March election? The ratepayers living in the Springwood electorate will be paying off a debt for 20 years if this decision made by the ULDA is not significantly altered. I am bound to fight for this change for the sake of my constituents who do not yet fully understand the extent of the threat hanging over their heads at this time. This is a consequence of the former Labor government forcing council amalgamations and expanding Logan to four times the size it was in 2008, as well as establishing the Urban Land Development Authority, which has made decisions which have imposed between \$100 million and \$300 million of expense for Logan ratepayers without the concurrence of the local authority.

The final point to mention regarding the previous government is the deep disappointment the people of Springwood have that Labor ran the state into record levels of debt and that they also failed to rectify the M1 Motorway congestion. Widening works were completed to the north and to the south of Logan City, but bus lanes and the upgrading of the lanes through Springwood have not been finalised, resulting in lengthy delays for commuters to and from Brisbane. This is a source of constant frustration for residents of the Springwood electorate, other commuters and businesses in South-East Queensland. I know that wasted billions of dollars could have gone a long way towards paying for these long overdue works. I do not say 'billions' thoughtlessly, because in the order of \$2,000 million was spent on the aborted Traveston Crossing Dam and the mothballed desalination plant—both of which are now unproductive in providing water for the population. Unlike the former Labor government, we in the LNP will spend taxpayers' money wisely.

I am aware that it is customary for new MPs to provide some personal history in a short expose of their life journey leading up to their election to parliament. Therefore, here are some brief recollections. I was born in Manly, Brisbane, the fourth of eight children—Paul, Peter, Ruth, John, Beth, Dorothy, Heather and Margaret—to loving but strict parents. With the benefit of hindsight, I can add that our upbringing—in which we all had the opportunity to learn Christian values—has brought a great blessing throughout my life. I have continued with this Christian faith in raising my own family. I was educated in the state school system in Wynnum, Manly and Birkdale.

Following high school I completed studies in civil engineering to become a draftsman, working on projects like the Riverside Expressway here in Brisbane while with the special projects section of the main roads department. During that time I married my teenage sweetheart, Robyn, and we were subsequently transferred by our respective government departments to Rockhampton, where Robyn worked as a primary school teacher. In 1978 we were transferred to Springwood and, being such a great place to work and raise a family, it is with fondness and pride that we have remained living in this area for 34 years. Shortly after re-establishing there, I established a business in building design. The 1980s were boom years for the construction industry and the company grew, providing employment for many local people. This was not the only area of growth for us, as we also experienced the arrival of our three wonderful children—Carly, Lauren and Cameron. Even over the last three years our family continues to grow, with our two daughters giving us four beautiful grandchildren—Elijah and Emmanuel, Daniel and Talitha.

After some 18 years in business, my political interests came to the fore when I was elected to Logan City Council in 1997 and installed immediately as the chair of the Planning and Development Committee. I proceeded from there to the position of Deputy Mayor from 2004 to 2008, during which time I also served

as acting mayor for the period of a mayoral by-election. More recently, while still in council I focused my attention on housing, working with the state government on developing a model for a housing company to redevelop public housing and to provide other forms of new affordable housing in Logan City. Housing is still a passion of mine and it remains a significant challenge for this government to resolve. For many years I worked closely with Pam Parker, who is now the mayor, and Chris Rose, the chief executive officer. They are two of the hardest working people I have met and I really appreciated working with them throughout my time on council. I have learnt much about the practice of law making and the setting of public policy. I remember well a principle espoused by Mr Gary Kellar, CEO from 1979 to 2005, which is a good guide for legislators when they are grappling with complex public policy decisions. Put succinctly, it suggests that we choose from all of the options the policy which provides the greater good for the greatest number. This is exactly how I intend to approach policy decisions in this parliament.

While campaigning since 2010, I resigned my position as a councillor as soon as the election writ was issued so that I could campaign full time in the state election. Over the years I have also taken the time to be personally involved in humanitarian work in Asia, finding it immensely rewarding to see just how much can be achieved with funds raised in Australia when used directly to improve the quality of life of those who have so little. It is with this life experience that I enter this parliament, happy to work hard for the good of the people of Queensland and especially Springwood.

Recently the Chief Justice of Queensland arrested my attention when he explained to new members of parliament during their induction training that our courts do not deliver justice but rather deliver justice according to law. I found this quite a thought-provoking and profound statement, made all the more solemn because it was presented by the Chief Justice himself—a truly authoritative person. It takes us straight to the heart of our jurisprudence. While we like to think that our laws are designed to provide justice for all, some may not receive it fully. It caused me to quietly consider these thoughts in the context of my new role. Which current Queensland laws are more likely to give rise to a gap between justice and justice according to law? How do we visualise ahead of time the effect upon a person or families when a judge rightly hands down justice according to law and the person realises with gravity that they will not receive the justice that they were expecting? How devastating is this for affected persons? How do society and the law-makers reconcile such an outcome? For me, these are serious considerations as I embark upon my work as a legislator—a responsibility I will take with great sobriety.

It has taken me many years to realise this hope of serving as a state MP. My wife, Robyn, who is in the gallery tonight, has worked with great purpose and determination. She has supported me through seven election campaigns over 15 years. All of us here today would know that she has achieved no small feat and so to Robyn I say to you this evening: thank you for the load you have carried. You are truly a wonderful woman, have been a supportive partner for 36 years and I thank you lovingly and sincerely. I also thank my children for understanding the demands of public life and for the way in which they have continued to graciously support me. Phil and Alison Slade are two very talented people who sacrificed and toiled for many months in their role as campaign directors, and what a magnificent contribution they made, working day and night to achieve their goal—a change of government in Queensland. To Phil and Alison I say: you have been rewarded by realising what you believed could be achieved—an LNP Queensland government. My gratitude is expressed to you today with these sincere words of affirmation.

To the LNP team in head office including Bruce McIver, state campaign director James McGrath and Mitch Redford: thank you for the long days and nights you put in and the wisdom of the strategies you employed. To other hardworking members of our campaign team such as Clive and Syliva, who are in the gallery tonight, Erin Mallon, Mike Duggan, Angela Street, Richard Toy, Rachael Rose, Jeff and Cathy Charlesworth, Darren McCosker, Phil Jardine, Peter McDondald, Warren Tyson, Helen Buckle, Mitch Collier and Helen Cobanov, I pay you credit for the investment you made in this campaign. To my financial supporters, campaign zone coordinators, booth captains and the members of your teams, thank you one and all for persevering with the distribution of thousands of flyers, campaigning on weekends, placing signs and working so hard on election day. To everyone who helped carry out myriad tasks, I thank you for the effort that you put in and I am glad that you have been rewarded with a change of government in Queensland.

It is with the goodwill of a large number of people in Springwood that I look forward to serving in this parliament of Queensland throughout the years ahead. I will do it with drive, energy and enthusiasm, giving the very best I can to the residents of my great electorate.