



Speech by


**Hon. Mark McArdle**

**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

Hansard Tuesday, 5 June 2012

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### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (3.57 pm): I rise to make a contribution today in the address-in-reply to the speech given by the Governor on 16 May 2012 when she opened the 54th Parliament. I have been in this chamber now on four occasions post the address. Can I say quite clearly that of all the four occasions listening to the words of the Governor this is the only one I have actually agreed with. I found the Governor refreshingly honest, her words incisive and her diction perfect.

Can I also acknowledge the monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen this year has been on the throne for 60 years. I recall a few days ago seeing a clip of the then Princess Elizabeth when she made the commitment to her people right across the globe that she would work tirelessly for their needs and for their aspirations. I do not think there is anybody in this House who could say that from that day to now she has not honoured that commitment. I do not believe there is a republican in this nation who would not agree with the fact that she has stuck by her word from those early days to today, 60-plus years on.

John Major, a former Prime Minister of Great Britain, recently made the comment that, in a changing world, the Queen reigning for 60 years has provided a sense of certainty so often missing. I think that is right. In our society, where we change quickly our thoughts, we change quickly the way we do things and our lives are moving at a rapid pace, it is the certainty of the monarch being there that has provided a sense of stability, at least throughout the Commonwealth. I congratulate her on that, and may she live for many, many more years.

I would also like to acknowledge the new Speaker of this House, Fiona Simpson, the member for Maroochydhore. The member and I go back a number of years. If I recall correctly, when I first came into the House in 2004 she and I were the only non-Labor members from the Sunshine Coast. Members of the LNP government now represent the area from Noosa to Glass House, with the exception of the electorate of Nicklin.

I want to say a few words about Premier Campbell Newman. Many members have spoken about what the Premier did. Without a doubt he took a party from opposition to government, but in my opinion what he did needs to be couched in these terms. About 12 months ago he was the Lord Mayor of Brisbane. He had 12 months to run before going back to the polls. There was every likelihood that he would be re-elected for a third term as Lord Mayor, but he put that to one side, left city council and took on the leadership of this party from outside the parliament. To my knowledge, that has never been successfully done before. He campaigned for 12 months outside this parliament to obtain the premiership and get us into government in the numbers we are here today. Winning the election campaign is certainly a mark of the man, but in my opinion the high point is the fact that he did what he did from outside the parliament—giving up an almost-certain future in the council to take us forward. In that regard, the debt to the Premier can never be repaid.

Many speakers have also spoken about the Premier's wife, Lisa, and his children. Throughout the campaign the Premier was subjected to the most vile and horrific attacks, but I believe that the person who would have suffered the most is his wife, Lisa, because she could not respond. She could not respond in

front of the media or to any other person, as members of parliament could respond in this chamber to an attack on us. She had to stand in silence and cop that beating, day in and day out. Lisa Newman is equally deserving of the label of hero. She stood by the Premier at the most difficult time in his life and assured him that she would always be there to support him, and I pay tribute to her as well.

We heard comment from both the Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeney, and the Treasurer, Tim Nicholls, that they sat with the current Premier and understood what had to happen. The battle that those two men took to the then government from March of last year to March of this year was nothing short of heroic. I can remember the first day we walked into this chamber when Jeff Seeney became the Leader of the Opposition, and he knew that he had to take the battle up to the Labor Party right from day one. Along with his comrade Tim Nicholls, he never failed in doing that. Every single day he battled in this chamber and elsewhere to convince the people that we were the party to be voting for in 2012. Those two men should be acknowledged.

The member for Gregory made a very valid point, in my opinion. When Campbell Newman determined to become the leader of this party, the member for Surfers Paradise, John-Paul Langbroek, had a very tough decision to make. It takes enormous moral courage to do what he did, and he did it with grace and dignity, and he did it for the greater good of the LNP. A large measure of the credit for where we are today must go to that man for his intestinal fortitude and incredible courage. I praise him for what he did.

There are other men I should mention including Bruce McIver, James McGrath and many others. But I want to bring attention to the name Daryl Fennell. For those of you who may not be aware of the history of the formation of the LNP a few years ago, on the Friday prior to the convention to call for the amalgamation, Daryl had taken a courageous step—and I do not mean that in the *Yes, Minister* sense of the phrase. He had taken legal action to ensure that convention could go ahead and he was successful. Without that legal action being taken, there would have been some doubt about the validity of the amalgamation on the following day. Daryl Fennell is not someone you hear a great deal about. He is a man who keeps to himself and who keeps quiet, but without that man's incredible step on the Friday we would not be here today, I can assure you of that.

In 2004 I came into this chamber with three colleagues—the member for Moggill, Dr Bruce Flegg; the member for Currumbin, Mrs Jann Stuckey; and the member for Surfers Paradise, John-Paul Langbroek. We were four of the five Liberal members sitting in the chamber at that time. We were not in coalition with the then National Party, but we were certainly close allies and friends in our battle against the ALP. We sat up the back there. I can remember on one occasion just after we had been elected when the four of us were standing just outside the doors, because the division bells had been rung and we did not know what to do until Bob Quinn came down and showed us exactly where we were to go. I make the point that being in parliament is a learning process and it happens over time.

A lot of members have raised the question of what it means to be a member of parliament. I will share something that I was told by a member who is no longer in the House. Every three years the front doors of parliament open and the people of Queensland elect 89 men and women. In the last election campaign there were about two million voters. After those men and women are chosen, those doors close and no-one else can get inside this chamber and you are then charged with governing this state for a period of three years. That explains to me the importance of understanding the role we have in this parliament. We are selected by the people in our electorates for a period of three years to govern for the whole of Queensland.

In the past I have made comments concerning the former Speaker, John Mickel. I rate him as the best Speaker I have served under to date. He once said to me, 'People need to understand that parliamentarians come here to do a job, not get a job.' There is a world of difference between those two terms. The understanding of each member in this House of that difference is pivotal and critical to the role they play in their electorates, in this House and across the state.

If members want to read a speech by John Mickel they should read the speech he gave on 1 December 2011—his valedictory speech, the last speech in the House for 2011. He made the comment that we are often criticised for what goes on inside this chamber—that is, the banter that goes back and forth and sometimes the aggression that goes back and forth. He made the comment, 'It should happen in here with words and argument rather than out there on the streets with tear gas and tanks.' That may seem over the top, but contemplate the news every morning from the Middle East and other countries. So members should not be concerned about being emotional in the chamber. It is where they should be emotional. It is where they should be putting their argument forward to the best of their ability and to the best of their capacity.

I also remember when I came into this chamber in 2004 I attended an induction given by a number of people in relation to what happens in the chamber, and again it was John Mickel—and it sticks in my mind to this very day—who said, 'Whatever you do, every week you pull out your dairy and you rule time through it. That is your family time, and don't let anybody change that.' He then went on to say, 'You may

come in here as part of a married couple or in a relationship, but you don't want to leave alone.' He is so right because, at the end of the day, what we do in here, though important, is not as important as the family we have outside. At the end of the day, it is the family that will support you in times of trouble.

24 March 2012 will go down in history politically as one of the most important days in this state and indeed in the nation for many reasons. It was on that particular night that we saw the Beattie-Bligh governments not only come to an end but come to a crashing disintegration. The people had clearly spoken their intent as to what should be the direction for Queensland in the next three and hopefully many more years after that. I can recall watching the poll results coming in in my campaign office and I thought I was living in a dream world. There was even one occasion where the seat of South Brisbane was called for the LNP. I can tell members that the cheer that went up when that happened raised the roof. There are also very clear obligations that fall to the LNP simply because of the majority we now have. It is absolutely pivotal that we understand that we have been given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to effect change in this state.

The people will hold us to a very high standard, and rightfully so. If we do not perform, I can guarantee you we will lose members at the next election campaign. If we do not perform individually, that will also be our fate, whether they be new members or older members. So I urge all members to make certain that they look to their electorates. Politics is all local. Politics is serving the community in which you live. Politics is not being an MP in state parliament per se; it is being a member of your community and representing it inside the chamber itself. There are some members of parliament—I think not in this chamber—who actually believe that they embody the title 'MP'. The title 'MP' is given to you as a consequence of your election victory. It is a transitional process that you will go through and pass on to somebody else. Do not confuse the two. You are a human being answerable to the people in your communities.

In the time I have left I want to say a few words of thanks to people who have helped me. As I said, I came into the chamber in 2004. In 2003 I won the preselection for Caloundra and at that point in time commenced a 12-month campaign to hold the seat after Joan Sheldon had retired. The people who supported me then are, in large measure, supporting me now. Frank and Pam Gower, Colin and Joan Butterworth, Neil and Rhonda Smith were there with me in 2003 and were with me in 2012. This victory is theirs, not just mine. Other team members who were there were Barry Hawes, Lyn Gohn, Sharmaine Roberts and many others. It was a long campaign, a bitter campaign and a tough campaign, but I tell you what: it is the sweetest victory of all because we proved that we could do it after so many years in the wilderness. My wife, Judy, has always stood beside me. In fact, one wag often claims that she should be the member.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr McARDLE:** The interjections I have heard of course are, 'What's new?' My wife has always been supportive of whatever I do. If I cannot be there, she is there. She speaks for me, she acts for me and she represents me, and I will always love her for that.

In the few moments I have left I want to acknowledge the fact that the Premier has given me the portfolio of Energy and Water Supply. They are pivotal issues in our economy, whether it be on the home front or the economic front. If we do not get those right people suffer, and people have suffered in the past under the former Labor government as a consequence of the cost-of-living initiatives that it has bungled time in and time out. It is unbelievable that in 2005 Peter Beattie really believed that the cost of power would decrease over time, and he made that comment in this chamber and also in the media. But can I make this point: between 2007-08 and 2011-12 power has increased by almost 60 per cent in that time line. That is a disgrace! The LNP government will move and is moving to arrest that situation by dissecting the industry and ensuring that we get a better outcome and a fairer deal for everybody in this chamber, everybody across Queensland and, equally importantly, business right across this state. The issue of water is also a drag on the purse of every householder in Queensland, and we will take steps to ensure that that no longer continues in the manner it has. That is our commitment to the people of this great state.

I also want to thank the people in my office in Caloundra: Lisa Williams, who has been with me now for a number of years, and Michelle French. Both ladies have worked hard. They worked very hard during the campaign. Without their support I would not be where I am today. I want to thank my ministerial staff. I want to thank in particular Jeff Summerfeld, my Chief of Staff. Jeff and I go back a few years. He has always given me the advice I need to hear and if I am wrong in his mind he has never failed to bring it to my attention that in his opinion I am wrong, and invariably of course I am wrong. I also thank Peter Sommer, Danielle Keys, Kate Collins, Hayley Coultis, Liz Lowdell, Ryan Burton-Ree and Ben Maxwell. They are all new people on board in my ministerial office, but can I say this: they are as keen as mustard and without them I could not achieve on a day-to-day basis what I have achieved to date. I say to all of the new members in this chamber, whether they be government, opposition or other crossbench members: welcome to the state parliament. This is an opportunity to provide for the people of this state and your electorates everything you can to make their lives better. I congratulate every single one of you and look forward to working with you.