




Speech by
Reg Gulley

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (7.47 pm): I wish to acknowledge the great privilege and the heavy responsibility it is to be elected by the voters of Murrumba. I congratulate the Hon. Fiona Simpson on her election to the high office as Madam Speaker, and I congratulate the Hon. Campbell Newman on his election as Premier of this fine state. I acknowledge Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who in her 60th year as sovereign of Australia has set a distinguished example of public service.

Murrumba is a great place, but do not take my word for it. The name 'Murrumba' was first used by the early pioneer, Thomas Petrie, who in 1859 purchased a property in the region then known as Pine Creek district and named it Murrumba. Murrumba is an Aboriginal word for good place. If Thomas Petrie were here today, I believe he would have called it a great place.

Today the seat of Murrumba includes the suburbs of Burpengary, Deception Bay, Griffin, Mango Hill, North Lakes, Rothwell and parts of Kippa-Ring. It is one of the fastest growing residential areas of Queensland, complete with its own bushland and national park, bayside parks, two rivers and suburbs where kangaroos still graze—a great place. But Murrumba is more than just place names; it is great people and great communities—communities that were suffering under the last government.

Cost of living—surprise, surprise—was the single most important issue raised by people when I was campaigning. Of the thousands of people I met and spoke with during the campaign, the one conversation I want to share is this one. With my manager, I met an age pensioner who said that they had voted Labor all of their lives but could no longer afford to vote Labor. It was humbling to listen to someone share their story about going to bed at 6.30 at night in winter because they could not afford the electricity. I could feel their anger, their disappointment and their surprise at sharing their story with a conservative candidate while standing in sight of the ALP member's office. Just a couple of days later at a public forum the previous member proudly stated that battlers are always better off under Labor. That clearly was not the case. What sort of government is that out of touch? Only a government that was, sadly, more concerned about itself rather than the people it was elected by.

The big issues for my constituents not only include cost of living but transport, and I support today and have always supported the Moreton Bay rail link. During the 2006 campaign for the seat, I actively campaigned for the railway at a time when my predecessor was chopping down Anzac pines to make way for the first and now only stage of the busway that was intended to replace the rail link. I look forward to working with the minister and the other two levels of government to see this vital piece of infrastructure completed.

I want to acknowledge the previous members for Murrumba. The seat is an old seat, created in 1912, and yet it has had only seven members, with me being only the eighth to serve. The most significant of the former members was Sir Frank Nicklin, whom the Premier spoke so positively about last sitting week as one of the great premiers of Queensland, who served Murrumba from 1932 to 1950. I know that Sir Frank Nicklin was known for his honesty—a reputation that I aim to emulate whilst acknowledging that a reputation for honesty is earned and not bestowed. I want to acknowledge the former member, the Hon. Dean Wells. The vanquished deserve respect and I acknowledge the achievements of Dean, who served

Murrumba for 26 years up until his defeat in March. Dean has only ever been professional in all of his dealings with me and I wish him well in his future endeavours.

Who is Reg? What is my background? On being elected to parliament I am continuing over 130 years of service by the Gulley family to society. English-born Frederick Burgess Gulley served as the first mayor of the northern New South Wales town of Casino in 1880 and served as its mayor eight times. His son, Frederick William, also served—being the publican of the Byron Bay Railway Hotel, a different type of service but a fine service nonetheless. His son, my grandfather, Don Gulley—‘the Don’—served Australia in the First World War as an air pilot and was injured twice. The town of Kyogle recognised his service to it by naming the Don Gulley Oval after him. My father, Bruce Gulley, who is in the gallery tonight, also served many communities, this time in Queensland—yes, and he does support the Maroons—in his capacity as a clergyman, an ancient profession, a profession that I believe includes the original community and social workers.

The other example of service that I want to draw attention to is that of my mother, Jannie, who came to Australia as a teenager with her family from Holland after experiencing the horrors of wartime occupation. The childhood example that my mother gave me in her own way was also of service in that my mother saw a need in her community and did something about it. In my childhood I saw her inspiration and leadership in setting up the Balmoral Uniting Community Centre, an activity of Wesley Mission Brisbane. This centre has been offering personal support for over 150 people each week for the last 30 years, working with the marginalised in society and offering them friendship and support. I am merely standing here today following the example of the service that was given to me by my parents.

I had the good fortune of some great state schools and attending the University of Queensland. I paid my way through university by fruit picking in the holidays in such great places like Hervey Bay and Gympie and by being groundsman during term. I am the fourth son in a family of six and my theory is that my parents ran out of names, hence Reg—not short for Reginald, no middle name—Gulley. I remember my first T-shirt which had a print on it. I remember walking to school in bare feet, making my own go-carts out of spare parts, taking myself to high school on the first day and I remember asking my father whilst still in primary school to help me set up my first bank account and getting the reply, ‘I think you’re old enough to do that yourself, son.’

Members will be interested that I was awarded the citizenship award at the end of grade 12. I was not expecting it, having only attended that school for one year. I only mention it today as the award was the Lin and Jan Powell Award. As many in this chamber will know, Lin went on to be Speaker of this very House.

I bring to this House and to Murrumba over 20 years of professional and commercial experience in senior accounting and executive roles in Brisbane, Sydney and London—and, yes, accountants can speak; sometimes—in industries such as communication, retail, finance, manufacturing and education. This background in the rough and tumble world of commerce has given me a wide set of experiences to draw from in order to serve both Murrumba and the state of Queensland.

What do I believe in? I believe Queensland is a diverse and secular society, rightfully represented by the secular principles of Westminster government. I am not going to be shy in declaring that my personal foundation is based on my Christian faith, of which I am certain will sustain me in carrying out my responsibilities. I believe in the freedom of the individual to choose his or her own course in life. I believe that the most important structure in our society is the family, which should be supported and not undermined, and that we owe a great responsibility to our children to nurture them to their fullest potential. I believe we have a great responsibility to the frail and marginalised in our society and that government has a heavy responsibility to act on society’s behalf whilst at the same time protecting the liberty of the individual. I believe that governments should be efficient, effective and ethical and face the heavy chore of balancing social needs, economic needs and environmental needs in every decision. I believe that free commerce is the best engine room to create wealth for both individuals and for society as a whole and should be supported by small and nimble government. I believe in the following quote from Martin Luther, one of the most influential men of all times—

There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor political, nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him it is right.

Many people asked me why I chose to run for political office, which, for the record, I first ran for as a Liberal for Murrumba in 2006. I can say that the catalyst for me joining the Liberal Party as it was known then was Gordon Nuttall’s treatment of the health workers at the Bundaberg Base Hospital.

The more I read and heard of his bullying tactics towards the staff of that hospital and the complete lack of respect shown to servants of society, the more it made me realise he could not be acting alone and that he was only able to act in this manner because his party and his leader allowed him to. I came to the recognition that the once proud ALP—the party that once was a party of social conscience—was now devoid of ethics and, therefore, reprehensible. I could no longer sit on the sidelines and decided to do

something. I refer again to Martin Luther's quote, 'My conscience told me I needed to do something.' Later in 2006 every state member of the ALP voted to change section 57 of the Criminal Code to allow lying to parliament—arguably the most shameful legislative action ever committed by the ALP. This only reinforced my drive to work hard to see this government defeated.

Before I start my giving my thanks, I would like to say that arguably the most satisfying aspect of the 2012 campaign was working with volunteers of such high personal character and integrity. It was such a joy to lead and work beside such a great bunch of people. I would like to thank Luke Howarth as the manager of the campaign, my financial supports, branch members, booth captains, booth workers, letterbox droppers, my sign site manager and the generous people who put my sign in their front yards, to the crew who joined me each Saturday morning for waving and doorknocking and to Bruce McIver and Campbell Newman, on behalf of the LNP, for such a great campaign.

In addition to my parents—and my parents are here today—I need to thank my parents-in-law for which my own family has relied upon so heavily during the campaign. To Captain Peter Hooper and Annabelle Wikiahu Hooper, I thank you. Did they ever think that the long-haired young man who turned up to their Petrie home in a HQ panel van would one day become their son-in-law? My last thankyou goes to the most important member of the campaign, my wife of 20 years, Jodi. I will not repeat here what she thought of me when she first met me, but I thank her for relenting to my persistence. Thank you for supporting my endeavour to serve and accepting the consequence of now living in the public eye. Thank you for your counsel and for carrying my share of family life. To my daughters, Tabitha, Cassia and Ester, thank you for the resilience, patience and understanding that you show your father.

In conclusion, my commitment is to return the concept of service to the phrase 'public service'. My commitment is to live to the highest example of public and private life. My commitment is to represent all constituents from all walks of life and regardless of political persuasions. My commitment is to vote in the best interests of Murrumba within the political philosophy that I was elected to. I humbly accept the great privilege and profound responsibility to serve the people of Murrumba.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!