




Speech by

Seath Holswich

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

Hansard Wednesday, 30 May 2012

MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (8.51 pm): I am truly humbled and honoured to be standing here today as the elected representative of the great electorate of Pine Rivers. After 23 years of Labor representation in Pine Rivers I am keenly aware of the significance of the trust that the people of my electorate have placed in me and the Newman government to deliver strong outcomes for our community and for our state. I do not take this trust for granted and I commit myself to serving my state and my electorate with passion, energy and vision.

As I reflect on my life so far, I trace my journey to this place initially back to my schooling years. It was as a student of a great Brisbane high school, Banyo State High—now known as Earnshaw State College—in the electorate of Nudgee, that I was first introduced to politics and first developed an interest in government. The leadership and development opportunities that I was able to benefit from at Banyo High significantly shaped my life. I thank my parents for allowing me to take up so many opportunities during my school years and my high school teachers for demonstrating a belief in my abilities.

My passion for conservative politics also stems from my high school years. It was the era of Keating and Hewson in our federal parliament and the 1993 federal election where many thought the coalition would take power. Dare I mention the word 'Fightback'? I remember reading through the coalition's policy documents from that campaign, and the values that underpin those policies resonated with me. In the Liberal and National parties I believed, and in the LNP still believe today, that I had found a political party that matched my beliefs and values. These values were stated quite succinctly by former Prime Minister John Howard in his autobiography where he writes—

I've always believed in an Australia built on reward for individual effort, with a special place of honour for small business as the engine room of our economy. I've always believed in a safety net for those amongst us who don't make it. I've always believed in the family as the stabilising and cohering unit of our society. And, I believe very passionately in an Australia drawn from the four corners of the earth, but united behind a common set of Australian values.

My life since high school has led me down many paths, some of which I will cherish forever, some of which I regret and some of which stretched me and built my character more than I could ever have possibly imagined. I know that each of these experiences has shaped the person I am now. They have shaped the representative that I am and I will continue to be for Pine Rivers and have shaped the vision and priorities that I bring to this parliament.

Pine Rivers is an area of natural beauty, an area of strong business and thriving industry and an area that offers a pleasant lifestyle for all our residents. The Pine Rivers electorate is diverse, from the urban suburbs such as Strathpine, Bray Park and Lawnton; the new developments around the lakes in Warner; moving west past Lake Samsonvale towards the beautiful township of Dayboro; and the surrounding areas such as Ocean View and Mount Pleasant. We have a strong industry presence, particularly in the Brendale industrial precinct, which is strategically positioned on the outskirts of Brisbane and is continuing to grow and attracting business of all sizes and various industry sectors into our region.

We are a resilient community. We suffered almost unnoticed at times through the 2011 floods. We lost the AJ Wyllie Bridge at Lawnton due to flood damage, and homes and sporting clubs were inundated with floodwater. Dayboro in particular suffered terribly with severe flash flooding. But through all of this our

community pulled together; we helped out our neighbours and we got the job done. This was particularly evident in Dayboro, where the township pulled together to ensure no-one was left suffering alone.

So what is my vision for Pine Rivers and what are my priorities for Pine Rivers? These are important questions for me, because my actions in this parliament and in my electorate stem from this vision and these priorities. A former employer of mine often quoted the well-known phrase that you need to start with the end in mind, and it is with that thought that I share my vision for the Pine Rivers electorate.

My vision for Pine Rivers is a lofty one in that I want to see our region become the envy of the state. I want to see our region as a business powerhouse. I want to see our residents enjoying a lifestyle that is unsurpassed throughout the state. I want to see our local schools graduating students who have achieved strong results and who are work ready and life ready. I want our region to be a place that people flock to for our wide range of tourist and recreational activities. I want to see our region as a leader in the standard of community services provided to those in need.

To this sort of grandiose vision some could easily roll their eyes and quote the great Australian icon Darryl Kerrigan by saying, 'Tell him he's dreaming,' but those who know me would know that I have spent a lifetime determined to prove people wrong when they have told me I am simply dreaming. It is like a red rag to a bull. In saying that, I do not necessarily believe that Pine Rivers will reach such lofty heights during my time as their representative, but I give an absolute commitment to the people of Pine Rivers that I will spend every day working hard to move us steadily forwards toward that goal.

My vision for Pine Rivers is that as a community we will reach our potential and that Pine Rivers residents, businesses, school students and community workers will grasp hold of the opportunities that are available to them, that we will create new opportunities and be innovative in responding to the challenges that face our community, that we will work together to create a better future for all those in our community and, ultimately, that we will play our part in shaping Queensland's future.

My priorities for the Pine Rivers region align with that vision that I just shared and with the priorities set by the Newman government. If the Newman government is going to get Queensland back on track then areas like Pine Rivers are well positioned to make that a reality. I am committed to jobs for Pine Rivers residents. I take our government's pledge to reduce unemployment to four per cent in six years very personally. I have spent many years in the recruitment industry, working both in my region and throughout the state with employers, industry groups, chambers of commerce and job seekers. It is a passion of mine to see that all people have the opportunity for meaningful employment and to develop the career of their choice.

I will work hard to ensure that business and industry grow in Pine Rivers, creating jobs for locals. Next month when I host a Moreton Bay hinterland tourism forum in Dayboro, ultimately it is with a strong desire to see more jobs created in our region. I am keen to see the four-pillar economy, based around construction, tourism, agriculture and resources, on show in my electorate. I will continue to work closely with local businesses, particularly small businesses. I will be their voice to government and will always be a vocal supporter of our local businesses.

I am committed to fighting for improved infrastructure in our region, to ensure that we have better infrastructure and better planning for the future growth that has already started. We are a growing region and for many years our infrastructure has not kept up with growth. In 1975 in this House, in his maiden speech, the then member for Pine Rivers, Rob Akers, said, 'Pine Rivers is bursting far beyond its facilities.' It seems that some things have not changed too much in the past few decades. I will fight for better transport infrastructure in our region. Just as I have already fought successfully for improved bus services for Lawnton residents and for openness and accountability with the rebuild of the AJ Wyllie Bridge, I will continue to fight for the road upgrades we need and the improved rail services and bus services that will meet the needs of local commuters.

I will also lead the fight for better health infrastructure, arts facilities, sport and recreation infrastructure and educational facilities. As well as better educational facilities, I am committed to ensuring our children have the best education possible and that they have opportunities, regardless of their family's socioeconomic situation, to succeed in their chosen fields of endeavour. Just last week I had the opportunity to be principal for the day at Lawnton State School. I was overwhelmed by the sense of community in this small suburban school and the dedication and passion of the teachers I met. I want to thank all the teachers, the school support staff and the parents and citizens organisations of all the schools in Pine Rivers for the work that they do in educating our children. They have my full support and I look forward to working with all our schools to assist them in their important work. Our schools are just one of the critical front-line services that so desperately need revitalising.

I am committed to fostering a strong sense of community in Pine Rivers. We have many fantastic community organisations, such as the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre; our rural fire brigades in Dayboro, Ocean View and Samsonvale; hardworking Neighbourhood Watch groups; environment and wildlife care groups; and service clubs such as Rotary, Interact, Lions, Apex and Zonta. I look forward to

continued opportunities to support those groups in the work they do for our local community and more broadly across the globe.

I am committed to ensuring that there is a sustainable balance between development and environmental conservation in our region. I have the privilege of living in an area where I still see the occasional koala wandering through my backyard. I want to make sure that, when my children grow, they and their children still have that opportunity to see wildlife in their natural habitat in Pine Rivers. At the same time I also want to ensure that we see the level of development necessary to support strong population growth in our region and that we see the continued growth of the local four-pillar economy. I will strive to see that we keep that sustainable balance wherever possible.

I am committed to going in to bat for those in our society who do not have a voice. I have spent a lot of my working life working with long-term unemployed job seekers, running welfare programs, working with community organisations and working with Queensland's Indigenous communities to create sustainable employment opportunities. As I mentioned earlier, I truly believe that there needs to be a safety net for those who slip through the cracks. I believe that we need to lower the cost of living for all Queenslanders. I believe that the disadvantaged in our community need a voice. I want to ensure that they do not just have a voice; I want to ensure that they have opportunity. I want to ensure that there is opportunity for everyone who wants to succeed and better their situation in life. Again quoting from his maiden speech, Rob Akers said—

I chose the Liberal Party—

in my case, it is the LNP—

because I want each man, woman and child to be able to raise his or her standard of living and, with it, the strength of the economy of this country.

Like my predecessor, I firmly believe that part of a government's role is to create a space for people to succeed and then to get out of their way while they make it happen. Those priorities and others as well are the things that I dedicate myself to as the member for Pine Rivers. I am passionate about this country that I live in, I am passionate about the great state of Queensland and I am passionate about the fantastic Pine Rivers region that I represent. This passion shapes the way that I carry out my duties in this parliament.

The magnitude of the result achieved in Pine Rivers on 24 March was unexpected, but I think it sends a clear message to all political parties. Residents of Pine Rivers clearly sent a message to the former Labor government that they were sick of being neglected and sick of not being heard. That the former Premier would issue a press release on the one-year anniversary of the 2011 floods boasting that all damaged bridges in Queensland had been reopened when our AJ Wyllie Bridge still sat not only in disrepair but also, after 12 months, still without a signed contract for it to be rebuilt epitomised Labor's neglect of our region, which was so keenly felt by Pine Rivers residents. However, the result was also a message to myself and the Newman government. It was in no small part a warning that our elected representatives will be harshly dealt with again in the future if we do not serve our community and our state, if we do not stand up and fight for the issues that are important in our community and if we do not get our hands dirty and get involved in our community. To the voters of Pine Rivers I say that I have heard this message loud and clear and I will continue to fight for you and work for you for as long as I am your representative in this parliament.

No-one can make it into this parliament on their own and certainly there are many people whom I need to thank. They are people who have walked the journey with me and supported me through good and bad. Firstly, to my parents, Seath Senior and Ria, thank you for the example that you set for me when I was a child and that you continue to set today. Thank you for the opportunities that you gave me, especially during my teenage years, which encouraged me to dream big and not shy away from big challenges. Thank you for the values and work ethic that you demonstrated that have shaped my life. Thank you for passing on your Christian faith and values to me. To other members of my extended family, particularly my two sisters, Janelle and Alison, I thank you for the support you have shown to me through the good times and through the struggles in life. To my good friends and my church family at City Church Brisbane, thank you for your support, your encouragement and your valuable input into my life.

To the members of the Pine Rivers branch of the LNP, thank you for placing your trust in me and selecting me as your candidate. Thank you for your support and hard work during the 16 months of our campaign. To my campaign manager, Ben Ives, and his wife, Lorraine, thank you for so often pulling things together when I thought they were about to fall apart. To all my team of amazing volunteers, if it was not for each and every one of you—for the dozens of kilometres that you each walked delivering flyers and for the early mornings and rainy Saturdays when you sat on the side of roads with our signs—there is no way that I would be standing here today. I pay particular mention to one couple, Keith and Joan Penman, for the fantastic work they put in to my campaign. They worked tirelessly day and night, pushing themselves to the brink of exhaustion to make sure that the LNP won the seat of Pine Rivers.

To the LNP leadership and headquarters campaign team, thank you for the professional campaign that you ran and for the constant support that you gave me during this campaign. To the Premier, I express

my sincere thanks for the leadership and vision that you bring to this government and to our state. To the Treasurer and to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, I thank you both for your guidance, which helped me in the very early stages of my campaign. To my colleague, neighbour and good friend, the member for Kallangur: the people of Kallangur do not know how lucky they are to have you representing them. Thank you for your friendship.

To those former members of this parliament who have served as the member for Pine Rivers and, for a period between redistributions, the member for Kurwongbah, thank you for your efforts in faithfully serving our community. I make particular mention of the Hon. Yvonne Chapman who served Pine Rivers in this parliament from 1983 to 1989 and who was the first female cabinet minister in Queensland and, later, the first and only mayor of the Pine Rivers shire council. Her commitment to our region is an inspiration and to be following in her footsteps is an honour.

To the voters of Pine Rivers: again I say I am truly humbled that you have put your faith in me and I will do everything I can to ensure that I do not let you down. I will be a voice in this parliament, not just for those who voted for me but for my entire community. Sometimes I will not agree with your point of view; sometimes you will not agree with mine. But I guarantee that I will always give you a fair hearing no matter what your point of view. You might not always agree with everything I do and every decision that is made by our government concerning our electorate, but be assured that I am always working with your interests in mind and fighting for our electorate.

To my wonderful children, Liam and Jake: to see the way that you put your best into everything you do and to see you growing into two fine young boys makes your dad stand tall with pride. It is an honour to be your daddy.

And, finally, to Elissa, my wonderful, tolerant, understanding wife: it has been an amazing journey over the past few years. When we met I was a modest IT project manager. You supported me unconditionally when I changed careers and travelled the state working with Indigenous communities. You have stood by me through a long and hard campaign and to have you by my side in life and now as I stand here in this place confirms to me that I am truly the luckiest. I can't wait for our baby boy to be born and look forward to the next chapter in our lives together when the newest member of our family arrives in August. I toyed with the idea of mentioning my preferred choice of baby name here so that it would be recorded in *Hansard* and you would have no option but to call him that, but our lounge is not comfortable enough that I wanted to spend the next two months sleeping on it!

It is an honour to be representing the wonderful electorate of Pine Rivers and it is an honour to be a member of the Newman LNP government. For however long I have the opportunity to serve my community as a member of the parliament of Queensland, I will give my absolute all in serving the people of Pine Rivers and in helping to make Pine Rivers the envy of our great state. I pledge myself to serving my electorate and my state faithfully so that we can make Pine Rivers and Queensland an even better place to live. I thank the House.