




Speech By  
**Annastacia Palaszczuk**

**MEMBER FOR INALA**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 November 2013

**VALEDICTORY**

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.25 pm): We started the year with much of our state under water, and we have ended it watching in horror and despair and with a sense of helplessness as water and wind and calamity engulfed some of our nearest neighbours. I want to touch on both of these bookends to 2013 in a moment. But firstly, as we wind down for the year in this parliament and as we look back at the year that was 2013, it is a time for reflection, a time for thought and contemplation, a time to look back on our achievements—our highs and lows—on where our Queensland is at this time and, importantly, where we would like to be in 2014 and beyond.

For many Queenslanders 2013 was in many ways a year of almost seismic change as they experienced their first full year of conservative government. Time will tell how Queenslanders will judge that year, but in the end this parliament is the venue in which history will judge each of us. This is the place where we carry out some of our most critical work—the place where we represent and stand up for those who elected us to this place. In that respect I want to thank and pay tribute to my colleagues on this side of the House. We are small in number but we are united in our genuine resolve and our unwavering determination to give the best representation to those Queenslanders who entrusted us to do so. That trust is not something to be taken for granted. It is something to be treasured and something that should never be regarded as anything less than a privilege.

I thank my deputy, Tim Mulherin, who every day stands up for the people of Mackay and spends most of his time away from his family. I thank him for his considered advice and good humour. I thank the Manager of Opposition Business, Curtis Pitt, who every day stands up for the people of Mulgrave as well as all of those communities in the state's Far North and I acknowledge that, as shadow Treasurer, he travels the state and spends many weeks away from his very young family. I thank the member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller, who every day represents and stands up for all in her area—not only those bounded by her electorate but those right across Ipswich. She is a very, very passionate woman and a good friend to all. I pay tribute to the depth and experience of Desley Scott, who stands up every day for the electorate of Woodridge as well as those in all areas of Logan and outer southern Brisbane. Desley Scott, the member for Woodridge, is the most compassionate woman that I know. Every day Bill Byrne goes that extra yard to stand up for the people of Rockhampton and those in other communities right across Central Queensland. I acknowledge his strong military background that ensures that we are all sharp and always on time to meetings.

And each day Jackie Trad gives forceful representation for the people of not only her electorate of South Brisbane but also other areas of our capital city. She always has a great ability to get across a lot of portfolio areas and I know that she is very passionate about the environment and her family. I thank each of these members for their hard work and commitment and for their camaraderie. I thank them for their unity in not only standing up for all Queenslanders but also taking up the fight to the government and holding the government to account.

As I mentioned at the outset, many areas of Queensland began 2013 under water. We are not likely to forget the challenging images that brought in the new year back in January. Those who were

at the epicentre as Queensland experienced its latest round of increasingly inevitable natural disasters are not likely to forget the very different, very terrifying experience of actually being there. In January, ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald and a monsoon trough passed over parts of our state, bringing severe storms, flooding and even tornadoes. Our hearts went out to those Queenslanders in the Wide Bay-Burnett region—in Mundubbera, Eidsvold, Gayndah and Bundaberg. It is all too easy to capture the onslaught in cold harsh detail. In fact, the rainfall level set new records and the damage bill from flooding amounted to more than \$2.5 billion. Houses and businesses were ruined.

What is all too often forgotten is the very human toll—the stories of those people left homeless, wrenched from their homes and left bereft of their possessions, much of them precious, never to be replaced as the winds blew in and the waters rose. We should remember them still tonight as, 12 months on, they continue to attempt to rebuild their lives. We recall unprecedented scenes as 7,500 residents of Bundaberg, including patients at the Bundaberg Hospital, were evacuated, houses were ripped from their stumps as streets became raging waterways and transport, communication and water networks were wiped out.

Tully experienced massive rainfall during the same period. The town of Ingham became an island when it was completely cut off as the Herbert River rose dramatically over the space of three hours. We saw floodwaters in Gympie and Maryborough. Property damage was also experienced at Laidley in the Lockyer Valley and at Waterford in Logan City. These weather events took the lives of four Queenslanders. Tonight we remember the family of the three-year-old boy who was tragically killed by a falling tree at Gordon Park in Brisbane's north, the relatives of the man who was swept away by floodwaters at Oxley Creek as well as the two men who were killed at Gympie and Burnett Heads.

As we began the year witnessing these scenes of devastation and heartbreak in our backyard, we end the year witnessing scenes of misery and desolation in the Philippines in the wake of the overwhelming fury of a typhoon. As technology seems to make our world smaller and smaller and countries that once seemed far away now seem closer and closer, tonight I ask each member of this place to take a moment to spare a thought for the residents of these places. I ask everyone to think of the thousands who have lost their lives and those who have been left behind to grieve and to rebuild, not least the members of Queensland's strong Filipino community, of whom many lost friends and family in the tragedy. This is a proud community, a community that has acquitted itself with dignity and grace in the face of so much sorrow.

Tonight as we rise for the last time in 2013 it is a time also for thanks. Firstly, I would like to thank Queenslanders in all corners of the state and from all walks of life. The generous support that those of us on this side of the House have received from Queenslanders this year across the state has been not only appreciated but also valued. This year the opposition's program of travel has been extensive, as it will continue to be in the year to come. I thank Queenslanders who call Cairns and Townsville home; people in Rockhampton, Mackay, Gladstone and Mount Isa. To the people of Roma, Charleville and Miles and Dalby and Toowoomba and Ipswich, to those people who call the Gold and Sunshine coasts and Logan home, I thank them.

I make special mention of the good people of Redcliffe who, despite experiencing a very difficult year with very little representation in this House, have stood strong. I have been to each of these places, some on many, many occasions this year, and I thank the people there for welcoming me and the other members of the opposition into their communities. They can each be assured that they will be seeing us again frequently in the new year.

I thank my own community of Inala. This is a thriving corner of our city—a vibrant, eclectic, multicultural community and a community that I am so proud to represent in this House. I would like to thank my electorate officers, Charles, Mel and Michelle. I would also like to mention that, of course, the brand-new railway station will be open on 2 December. I am looking forward very much to the opening of that station, which is much needed in the western corridor.

I also want to reflect that many families in my electorate will be facing quite tough times coming into the lead-up to Christmas. I know that it is going to be hard for many of them to cope, but I know that we have strong community organisations that will make sure that they are there to lend people a hand.

Tonight is also a time to thank friends who have passed away. I make mention of Eddie Liu, whose funeral I was sad to attend earlier this year. Mr Liu was rightly considered to be one of our city's founding fathers—a giant of our ever-evolving multicultural society—and his larger-than-life presence will be sadly missed. I also pay tribute to Mr Tai Do, who was the president of our Vietnamese seniors society, who sadly passed away last week. He was a very well-respected, very proud Vietnamese man. And I also want to pay tribute to Aunty Pamela Law, who was a very proud Indigenous woman who did so much to help disadvantaged young people throughout Inala and the

rest of Brisbane. I thank the late, much missed Kevin Jones, the former Sergeant-at-Arms in this parliament, who passed away in August. Kevin dedicated more than 20 years of his life to serving this parliament and I for one will miss his fearless advice, his smile, his dedication to his job and his ability in all circumstances to remain calm and in control. I place on the record my deep respect for one of the leading lights of our party, Mrs Hazel Hawke, who passed away in May after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease.

This parliament is more than a place of work; it is a community within itself. It is a place where we work hard, sometimes for hours that defy belief. I think sitting until the early hours of this morning was testament to that. It is a place where we sleep and eat and, on occasions, some members can even find some time to enjoy a party or two—not on this side of the House. As a community, it takes a community to keep it running. In that light, Madam Speaker, I first thank you for overseeing the proceedings in this place. I thank the Clerk, Neil Laurie, for his valued advice and his ability to remain calm in all circumstances. I also want to thank the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries, the First Assistant Clerk, Leanne Clare, and all of the other clerks who assist us here in this House. They are always very polite and they always help us whenever they can. I thank the Sergeant-at-Arms, Michael Watkin. For recording our words for the future so people can judge what we have done here when we may not be here in years to come, I thank the Chief Hansard Reporter, Lucinda Osmond, and all of the Hansard staff. Our Chief Librarian, Katherine Brennan, and her staff have been of invaluable help this year, as has the Parliamentary Counsel, Theresa Johnson, and her team. Jaakko, the Manager of Catering Services, along with head chef Sucil and his team ensure that we never go hungry, particularly during the late sittings. I want to thank them all. They are always so welcoming. They are always smiling and nothing is too much trouble for them. So on behalf of all members, I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Darryl, the Manager of Property Services, ensures that we have offices to work from and Head Gardener, Chris, keeps the precinct green and those magnificent roses blooming. I make a very special mention of our parliament cleaning supervisors, Azra and Sanja, who work so hard to keep this House presentable. And I have to mention all of the parliamentary attendants here. At times I do not know how they sit here with such a straight face. It must be very, very difficult and I would love to hear their stories in years to come.

I would also like to thank the members of the media who also play an important role in holding the government to account. We do not see eye to eye every day, but I pay tribute to the professionalism of the newspaper, radio, television and online reporters who cover the proceedings of this place each and every day. I want to mention two significant people of the parliamentary press gallery who left us this year. Spencer Jolly spent more than 40 years reporting on the parliament for the Nine Network and retired this year to take a much deserved break. We all miss Spencer and his utter professionalism and dedication to his craft. I wish him all the best. Patrick Condren spent 11 years as the Seven Network's political reporter and I similarly pay tribute to Patrick's devotion to reporting the goings-on in this place. Patrick will now be the new voice of 4BC's morning program and I know that I will be tuning in to hear his insightful commentary, which I am sure will be delivered in his normal Patrick style. I actually think all members would agree with me that both Patrick and Spencer would have given anything to be here this week.

I thank my family and my friends for supporting me. I also make a commitment here in this House that I will be taking my father to the cricket this Saturday. I make special mention of my niece Annie who, during the very busy week that we have had, insisted on speaking to me to debate the swimming pool rules that I have set for the family christening on Sunday. I say to the Attorney-General that I think my niece Annie would give him a run for his money. She is a very, very bright young girl and I had to give in to her by the end.

I pay tribute to the opposition office. I am not going to mention everybody by name. We have an amazing staff. We have a very important job to do. We have skilled and dedicated staff who go beyond the call of duty. They work extremely late hours. I think a few of them even came in in the early hours of this morning to assist. These are incredible people. They work on weekends. Nothing is ever too much trouble. On behalf of the opposition team we thank each and every one of them. We all hold them in high esteem. We would not be able to do our jobs without them.

In conclusion, I acknowledge that a workday in this place is a workday like no other. This is a place of robust debate. It is not a place for the weak of character, for the feeble of spirit. But it is a place where I would hope that irrespective of politics each and every member shares a common goal and that common goal must be to never lose sight of the fact that each of us is here to make a better Queensland. We are each entrusted and privileged to have been chosen to represent our communities and I would hope that every member of this place never forgets that fact. I for one will

not. Each of us on this side of the House will continue to stand up for Queenslanders, we will continue to take the fight up to the government and we will always hold this government to account.

That said, we each have our own lives away from work. We each have families we care about, friends we probably do not see often enough with interests outside of the job. I make these comments because I understand how tough this job can be and how much an effective member of parliament must put to the side to be effective in our electorates. I hope that each and every member of this place can find some time over the season to catch up with friends and family and celebrate Christmas and New Year. I wish the Premier, his cabinet and all of the team and their families a very merry Christmas. I wish all of the attendants and all of the parliamentary staff and, Madam Speaker, yourself and your family a very peaceful and prosperous Christmas and a very happy New Year.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!