




Speech By  
**Hon. Fiona Simpson**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 November 2014

### VALEDICTORY

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, to our retiring members of parliament I say thank you for your service to Queensland and for some memorable valedictory addresses. It has been a pleasure to serve with you, as I am sure our colleagues will attest.

Members, what a year it has been for the Queensland parliament. Just a few weeks ago, of course, our parliament hosted a very significant and special meeting for the leaders of the G20, a meeting that may never again be replicated here in Queensland, or at least not in our lifetime. However, we have also hosted many other VIPs, or very inspiring persons, at parliament. As Speaker, one of my priorities has been to increase the opportunities for members to engage with their constituents here at parliament. Feedback from these signature events has been extremely encouraging, with members expressing their joy at the opportunity to invite guests and guests voicing their delight at being recognised and honoured in such a way.

I say thank you to every member who hosted constituents for the Queensland Inspiring Women's award and the Future Leaders lunches. Both events were sold out within days of invitations being sent out and we scheduled a second Future Leaders lunch to cater for demand. To see many regional MPs find ways to overcome the tyranny of distance, which our great state sometimes throws at us, and bring students or women to Brisbane to be honoured alongside those closer to the south-east corner was truly inspirational and is a testament to these members' attitude of service.

I would like to thank my team in the Office of Speaker who have risen to the occasion again and again as we have hosted signature events, a large number of international delegations and leadership dialogues that I have hosted here at parliament and throughout the regions. Our hope is always that we create a culture of welcome in our office for members and staff alike.

For many years the Queensland parliament has had friendship agreements with other international assemblies. In 2014 I had the honour of leading a delegation to China, along with the member for Woodridge, Desley Scott; the member for Stretton, Freya Ostapovitch; First Assistant Clerk, Leanne Clare; and my Chief of Staff, Ruth Limkin. Interestingly, it was the first all-female Queensland parliamentary delegation. As a direct result of our visit to Guangdong Province and a conversation with our hosts, Queensland recently hosted several Chinese chefs for the filming of a Chinese TV show that will air throughout China early in 2015 to an estimated 40 million people. This will showcase Queensland's great beauty and, of course, our great food to prospective tourists.

A recent visit to the national parliament of Papua New Guinea was also of great value, and I tabled the report about that visit this morning. Of course, much of my time is also spent fulfilling duties as the member for Maroochydore, which is the greatest electorate in Queensland. To my team in the electorate office, Wendy and Julia, thank you for your diligence and your care for the constituents whom I am privileged to represent. Advocating on behalf of the people we represent is a privilege for every member regardless of our political affiliations. This is truly what makes it the people's house—that the people's representatives can speak truly and without intimidation. Part of that freedom

develops because of the safety we enjoy here in our state and, more particularly, here at the parliament.

I sincerely thank all of the security staff and attendants here at parliament, led by our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr Michael Watkin, for their care in watching over all who enter the precinct and for assisting me in maintaining order in the chamber and precinct. I also thank my Deputy Speaker, Dr Mark Robinson, and the Temporary Panel of Speakers for their great assistance throughout the year. I thank the Premier and opposition leader for the important roles they fulfil, along with every member who represents their constituents. We never want to take our parliamentary democracy for granted.

I thank all of the staff who helped to make the parliament function so well. Thank you to the Clerk, Mr Neil Laurie, and his deputy, Mr Michael Ries, along with Michael Hickey, who is the Director of Corporate and House Services. To Lucinda Osmond, our Chief Reporter and your team, thank you for your diligence in recording parliament for today and the future. To Katherine Brennan, the Parliamentary Librarian, and your team, thank you particularly for the fabulous historical displays in the O'Donovan Library this year as well as the services you provide day in and day out. To our Property Services Manager, Darryl McCarthy, and all the team you lead who care for our building so beautifully, to the Table staff whose professionalism and attention is so appreciated and to Jaakko, Merle and Natasha along with all of the functions and catering team who have helped us with so many of the wonderful events we have here: I say a sincere thank you to you all.

I also wish to thank the parliamentary media gallery and its president, Steven Wardill. The job you do is important and necessary. Thank you for your cooperation around the precinct and also for your donations, along with many members, to the Christmas children's book appeal for the Buk bilong Pikinini in Port Moresby. I am so pleased that hundreds of books have already been donated as this will have a direct impact on children's literacy in Papua New Guinea. This will be a gift that will truly keep on giving.

There have been many highlights this year, but I must say that a personal highlight was just last night when I had the opportunity to honour the Queensland Police Service in their 150th year by hosting for the first time at parliament the entire Queensland police executive team along with the pipes and drums band to a dinner in their honour. Given my Scottish heritage, it was a special sight and sound to have the lone piper on top of parliament last night as well as the band's performance from the colonnade. The QPS do a wonderful job to keep us safe throughout Queensland, and their service to the state deserves the thanks of the parliament.

As the sounds of the well-loved and poignant hymn *Amazing Grace* floated over the parliament, it was a reminder of what we share in common. Written by a slave trader turned pastor and abolitionist, the hymn speaks of the chance for change and of the desire to see people's lives and futures improved. I know that this is a desire that many of us share. As we look to Christmas and the many activities and events which will fill our diaries over the next few weeks, my prayer and wish for each of us is that our hearts will be more full than our schedules are. May our hearts be filled with rest and hope as we acknowledge the birth of Christ and may our hearts grow in love for our neighbours both near and far.

As the sitting now draws to a close, we as members have the opportunity to serve the parliamentary service staff who have all been thanked through our valedictories today. This annual tradition is our chance to not only say thank you but also practically show our appreciation. I invite members, staff, media and other persons regularly and closely associated with the activities of the parliament to join me after the adjournment in the Undumbi Room for this traditional close to the sitting year.