




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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VACANCY IN SENATE OF COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Election of Senator

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.39 pm): I reflect on that most ungracious speech by the Leader of the Opposition. At a time when protocol demands that this House behaves in a decorous way and that it respects a decision under the Constitution regarding someone who cannot respond, the Leader of the Opposition chooses to attack the party, the process and indeed, by implication, the man himself in a most underhanded way. Let me simply say from a party that gave us Jim Elder, Mike Kaiser, Bill D'Arcy and Keith Wright: your words also sound hollow. For a party that put in their own biggest traitor in Queensland, Mal Colston, their selection process leaves a lot to be desired. When the ALP can get out of their back rooms, brawls and factional deals, then we will listen to them in terms of how we go about selecting candidates. I join wholeheartedly with the Premier and those on this side in supporting the nomination of Mr Barry O'Sullivan to the high and honourable office of Australian senator.

It will not come as a surprise to many members that Senator-elect O'Sullivan and I come from very different backgrounds and some may well say we have some different outlooks. However, Barry and I also share some common experiences and traits, and some might be surprised by that claim. Our common experience, first and foremost, includes being treasurers of organisations. Mr O'Sullivan, who since 2008 was treasurer of the LNP, steered a course that saw our party be able to provide services and deliver representation to all of Queensland from the cape to Currumbin and west. Of course, Mr O'Sullivan, in attending party functions, receives more well informed and sensible questions than I do in this House. In that respect my position is a little easier, but on the flip side he did not have to pay down \$80 billion worth of debt.

Another shared trait is a willingness to stand up and call a thing for what it is. Anyone who knows Barry O'Sullivan knows that he will tell you straight exactly what he thinks—sometimes what he thinks of you and sometimes what he thinks of your argument. That is politics. That is the game we are in and we should value people who have the courage of their convictions to stand up and tell it to you, to them and to the people of Queensland and to take up the cudgels. When it comes to heading out into the bush and the rural regions I have no doubt—and I heard it at the preselection in Mackay—that Barry O'Sullivan will be a fierce advocate for the people of Queensland and for the policies that support small business, growth, jobs and employment. He will ensure that Queensland gets its fair share.

Barry and I do not always agree; there is no harm in that. That is the game that we are in, as I said. That is the business we are in. That is politics. However, we also ferociously defend our positions and those of our friends and colleagues. I know from speaking to people in this House that he has leapt to their defence on many occasions, that he has helped them out by more than just talking about them; he has helped them out in innumerable ways. I know that many people in this place are very grateful for the friendship and support that Barry has given them in tough times and

good. When it comes to our opponents in this business, we both know who they are and where they hide. Barry will ferociously find them, disclose them and call them for what they are.

We also show our dedication—and Barry shows a strong dedication—to service and to family. Barry's service spans two decades in the Queensland police force and in custodial services. He worked right across the state serving the communities of Moranbah, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Mackay, Longreach and Brisbane, among others, in some capacity—that rural outpost of Brisbane; I am sure he would have found it that way, anyway. Since his retirement from the police force, Mr O'Sullivan has been involved in agriculture in the Emerald region. He also started a business and employs 100 people in and around Toowoomba and makes contributions in that respect. Of course, then there is family. That particularly stands out. Members will remember the tragedy that struck the O'Sullivan family when young Patrick, Barry's grandson, was thrown from a ride in Toowoomba last year. Patrick is here today, and I say welcome to him and congratulations. Many people will remember the care with which Mr O'Sullivan represented his family, his concern for the welfare of his grandson and the thanks and graciousness with which he received the outpouring of community support.

He also ferociously believes in Queensland, as I mentioned. Mr O'Sullivan has spent years and years both working and travelling the state as a police officer, as a businessman and as a member of the LNP. He spent months travelling around the state to get to know what matters most to the people of Queensland. Put simply, he knows the state. He will be a passionate advocate for rural and regional Queensland in the Senate, just like his predecessor, the now Minister for Agriculture and federal member for New England. I join with others in wishing Mr O'Sullivan all the best for his new role. I congratulate him on this significant and proud day. I welcome his family to the Queensland parliament and trust he enjoys it as he is entitled to do and deserves.