




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2015

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.54 am): Thank you very much, Mr Presiding Member. It is my privilege and honour to nominate the member for Nicklin for the position of Speaker of the 55th Parliament of Queensland. This nomination gives honourable members the opportunity to support an Independent member to be Speaker of this House for this term.

The member for Nicklin, Peter Wellington, is known to be a true Independent. The facts speak for themselves. Since his election to the House in 1998, the member for Nicklin has voted with both government and opposition parties on a wide range of legislation and issues. In his maiden speech in 1998 he gave an undertaking to the people of Queensland. He committed to considering every piece of legislation carefully. He committed to taking appropriate advice before making any decisions that would impact on the lives and future prosperity of Queenslanders. On any objective measure, he has remained true to those commitments. The voters of Nicklin believe he has been true to his word because they have re-elected him six times. He has advised me that, if elected to the position of Speaker, he will remain true to those undertakings.

The member for Nicklin has always been a grassroots politician who believes in genuine community consultation. As a Maroochy shire councillor he used to hand-deliver his own newsletters. I have known him since 1998 and I know he is always willing to listen. He will stand up for people in need or people who have been wronged—and not just people in his electorate but Queenslanders as a whole.

That is why he has always been passionate about the community cabinet process. It was Peter Wellington who pushed for community cabinet meetings to be opened up to all members of the public and for the Premier to be questioned from the floor by members of the community. We will be returning to that process in our program of community cabinets. We will put the community back into community cabinets to restore them as a key part of our state's democratic process.

The member for Nicklin has a well-earned reputation for impartiality and integrity. He has the utmost respect for the tried and true traditions of our parliamentary system. He believes fundamentally in openness and accountability. He has already said he will reintroduce TV news cameras onto the floor of the House because Queenslanders have a right to see how their elected officials are doing their jobs.

This new parliament and this new government are an opportunity for a new beginning in Queensland. It is my hope that the election of the member for Nicklin as an Independent Speaker will start a new era in this House. This House has not seen an Independent Speaker for a century. I am told that the last Speaker without traditional party affiliations was member for Lockyer William Armstrong, who held the office from 1911 to 1915. So today, a century later, we can make history. We can elect a true Independent to be Speaker of the people's house. We can help strengthen the stature of this House in the eyes of Queenslanders.

In his maiden speech in 1998 Peter Wellington identified a need to raise standards of behaviour here and to raise the level of respect of all of us in the eyes of Queenslanders. There is one thing I am certain about: the member for Nicklin is the right choice to ensure decorum and genuine respect in this place. All members here know that school groups, including those from our own electorates, regularly visit this House. As they sit in the public gallery and watch us at work, let them be impressed by the respect we have for each other and for the people we are here to represent.

Robust debate is essential. Passionate advocacy is vital. Regaining the respect of the public starts with being respectful of each other and more respectful of this institution. The member for Nicklin, Peter Wellington, is the right person to make that happen. I urge all members to support his nomination.