




Speech By
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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (8.12 pm): One hundred years after our first Anzac Day, remembering the brutal battle which was the Gallipoli landing, and all the theatres of war which Australians participated in after that, it is an honour to stand in the Parliament of Queensland as the member for Maroochydore. We do not forget the sacrifices because we are all beneficiaries of the legacy that they left. Freedom is not free. Someone has always paid a price. That is why I find myself thinking of my grandfather Hugh Leslie Simpson and remembering others like him who were so young when they left our shores to fight in World War I and other battles since.

My grandfather went on to fight at Villiers-Bretonneux and on the battlefields of France and Belgium. He was badly injured but survived, thank God, otherwise I would not be here. If he had not met his best mate, Jock Catto, with whom he served, he also would not have met Jock's sister, Barbara, whom he married on his return to Australia. Barbara went on to become my grandmother.

This was a war that shaped our nation and thousands of families in so many ways with stories of triumphs and tragedies. It is because we have just commemorated Anzac Day and the centenary of the first devastating Gallipoli landing that I wish to acknowledge the legacy of those who gave their lives and risked their futures. We have the freedom today to agree or disagree on political philosophies. We have the freedom today to have elections which are not resolved at gunpoint but with ballot papers and pencils. We have the freedom as a community to identify solutions to problems and come together and have robust debate about competing ideas as to how best to serve our communities.

We have a land of safety and peace today because of those who sacrificed their future—lest we forget that legacy. It is important to understand that legacy. It is important to build upon it. What we do not understand we do not value, and what we do not value we do not protect or promote.

Our democratic institutions are not bricks and mortar but based upon the shared values of our community of people—people who work together to create a better world in the framework of freedom. As I salute the Anzacs and all who have served, I also salute community actionists—groups of people who volunteer and give of their time and money to serve through their actions, which make a difference. What more worthy a way to honour a legacy of freedom than to use it for the good of others rather than for self-interest. Community groups of volunteers self-organise to meet local needs and particularly help those in need.

This is one thing that we do not see in totalitarian states. It is at this point I really wish to acknowledge my wonderful community groups. I know we all stand in this place and speak with great passion about our communities. It is appropriate because no-one deserves to serve at a higher level unless they are willing to serve locally, to work with local communities, to work with those who make the fabric of our society stronger. I include my Salvos, St Vincent De Paul, Lifeline, my many surf lifesaving clubs, the View Club together with the Smith Family, Lions, Lionesses, Quota, Rotary, Coast Guard, Sailing for the Disabled—a group that I am privileged to be the patron of—Coastcare,

which does amazing work in protecting our coastline, my many residents and community groups and the chambers of commerce, Global Care and the list goes on. I risk naming some and not all. I hope in the course of our work locally that we can connect and support many groups. My local RSL clubs are made up of an amazing group of men and women of valour who keep looking out for others.

It is the area of children's sport where I am always amazed. There are always the parents who go above and beyond. Other community members who do not even have kids involved in the sport anymore as coaches and team members make it possible for kids to play sport. There is not a lack of children wanting to be involved in community sport; it is often a lack of adults who are willing to give of their time voluntarily that is the issue. I salute those who do that so graciously and selflessly to make it possible for the children in my local community to have access to a lot of great activities.

I mentioned surf clubs before. I have many surf clubs in my electorate from Coolum Surf Lifesaving Club to the Marcoola Surf Lifesaving Club, Mudjimba Surf Lifesaving Club, Maroochydore Surf Lifesaving Club—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: Yes, we have some terrific surf lifesavers of the year who have served in Queensland. Then we have Maroochydore Surf Lifesaving Club and Alexandra Headland Surf Lifesaving Club. I will come back to Maroochydore Surf Lifesaving Club. Maroochydore Surf Lifesaving Club celebrated 100 years of serving our community in January next year. That is extraordinary. We are now seeing a number of groups that have been going for a long time. This is based upon the efforts of volunteers. The work they do is at such a high level. As those who represent coastal areas know, it is like a community in itself. They are across the political spectrum and do not talk politics—or certainly not in the clubhouse. They are across the whole demographic of society. They are a wonderful organisation.

As I said, these community groups make up the very fabric of our local areas. I am passionate about local community. I talked about democratic institutions. We often think of parliament as being one of the bedrocks of those institutions. But I actually believe it is these community organisations, through active citizens who get it—being able to organise; they see a need, get together and make something happen—that are in fact the real foundation of our democratic institutions which we so proudly come into this place and talk about.

My commitment to my electorate is to work with my community so we can keep the Sunshine Coast beautiful and make it an even better place to live, work and raise a family. The role of government is to support local community in order for people to live their lives, hopefully in peace and safety and good order, with access to the services that we expect government can deliver where the private sector cannot.

Ultimately, jobs are vitally important and the economy is vitally important to the wellbeing of our local area. It is the role of government to work with the local community and the local job providers, small business, to enable that. Certainly in our time in government it was a passion of ours to ensure that we saw the job creators, small businesses, set free from some of the burdens of red tape. That is something that we will be paying very close attention to with respect to this new government. It has been very light on in talking about how it is going to help small business, because that is where the jobs are going to be created. We understood and worked very hard while in government with respect to workplace health and safety issues and workers compensation to ensure that we still had a fair system but one that also supported the job creators, the small businesses, to be able to employ more people.

For the Sunshine Coast it is vitally important that we have a diversified economic base. You cannot kill off the traditional industries. You must support new industries at the same time and recognise that diversification is about building other industries in addition to those that have traditionally supported our economic base. The Sunshine Coast University Hospital and education are key parts to that. The LNP while in government worked to bring about the contracts to enable the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital, which my colleague the member for Kawana referred to before. Unfortunately, the previous Labor government slowed it down and delayed it by two years. That hospital now will come online in 2016. It is vitally important because of the shortage of hospital beds that the Sunshine Coast experiences. That hospital is vitally important to provide tertiary level services and ultimately higher levels of education across a multitude of clinically related and support services that the health sector has. This is part of diversifying the economic base of the Sunshine Coast which we are so greatly in support of.

We have some great schools on the Sunshine Coast. Many people decide that they love the lifestyle but when they check out the quality of the schools they say, 'Yes, this is where we want our kids to go to school.' There are great public and private schools, and we are seeing some really great outcomes through very committed teachers and ancillary staff and parents. Under the LNP we saw something like \$2 million in additional money spent on literacy and numeracy programs. The feedback from my principals in regard to the way we said, 'We trust you as local school communities to know how you should spend this money best'—to see that money given to schools where they were able to apply that money to programs and to tailor that money to the needs of the school was, quite frankly, very smart, if I can say so with respect to the previous education minister. But it was really about knowing that the smarts are local—they are with the local school community—and in being able to help kids at the point when they need it most with access to better literacy and numeracy.

We also saw more police on the Sunshine Coast. There was also a focus on expanding funding for the protection of our environment. About half a million dollars was spent on the walkway at Mount Coolum. For those who have not visited Mount Coolum National Park, it is a magnificent focal point for the Sunshine Coast. There will be an expansion of the Maroochy River Conservation Park with land that has been set aside. I am certainly keen to see that final gazettal soon. I will be urging the minister—with the election being called, the gazettal had not been finalised. But we are keen to see that formal expansion of the Maroochy River Conservation Park take place, with about an extra 15 hectares being converted to conservation park.

I also want to pay tribute to my colleague the member for Buderim and the work in regard to the local sports and community groups. We saw \$1.6 million for Get in the Game funding which is just a fantastic program. I was raving before about my local sporting groups. They deserve the help because for every dollar that they get to help kids that is multiplied in the long-term benefits not only for the kids but also for our community. I would really like to see this new government take on some of the great policies that we initiated. I ask them not to throw those policies out because they are of a different political ilk but to acknowledge that these are good programs and that they are working.

Similarly, there were some essential road upgrades, new boat ramps and improved facilities locally in addition to the sporting grants that we saw on the Sunshine Coast. There are more projects that within the short period of time we were in government we were not able to complete but we flagged were part of our plans for this term, and I urge the new government to take these up, such as the duplication of the north coast rail line. It is interesting that the RACQ came out and acknowledged that this was one of the most significant initiatives of the last state election for the Sunshine Coast. Why would a motoring group come out and support a rail upgrade? It was unusual but it was practical because we have a situation where the Sunshine Coast does not have the proper rail services for a region connecting to Brisbane. We have about 320,000 people living on the Sunshine Coast and we do not have the level of service required with the existing rail line. On the Gold Coast they have about a half-hour service in peak time. There is nothing that even comes within cooee of that with the Sunshine Coast service. In simple terms, a proper rail service can only be made possible with the duplication of that rail line. That is necessary not only to help the commuters but to take the pressure off the Bruce Highway.

The Bruce Highway is important. We did see significant funds committed by the federal government in cooperation with the state government. About \$100 million was provided in the 2014 state government for upgrades to the federal highway between Caboolture and the Sunshine Motorway interchange. I call on this government to commit to the ongoing funding of the Bruce Highway. Not to be forgotten, I talked about the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the access to that hospital. The key spot that needs to be fixed is the Sunshine Motorway interchange with Nicklin Way and the new access to that hospital that is required. It is a bottleneck that needs a plan. We had a plan to fix it. We are still waiting to see what this new government's plans are.

We have said that this new Labor government has been light on plans. So we are keen to see as soon as possible what it plans to do to fix these infrastructure requirements. So far it has been certainly very light on. There have been no plans and no indication as to what it intends to do. That is probably the reason why we are not seeing a lot of confidence in the business sector. I talked before about the fact that it is small businesses that create jobs. Confidence matters when it comes to creating jobs. Confidence is very low at the moment in our community. I would be delighted if that turned around, because it would ensure that the money flowed into our economy to support those much needed jobs. Jobs have to come from the private sector with a government that acknowledges that you cannot burden them with extra layers of red tape that strips away their ability to be competitive and to employ those extra young people.

I call on this government to fess up and to come out with its infrastructure plan in regard to the road network not only on the Sunshine Coast but throughout Queensland but also with its plans with respect to businesses. It is one thing to talk about jobs; it is another thing to really understand and listen to the business sector, which has expressed concern about the growing hiatus of ideas from the current government. I am keen to see Queensland get moving and to see confidence pick up. It does require leadership though from a government, to stop announcing more reviews and to start making decisions that will actually support the community.

In bringing my comments to a close, I thank the Governor for his attendance at the opening of parliament. As has been mentioned, there has been some criticism that the address that the Governor was provided by the government was extremely political. It is disappointing to see not just convention trashed but basic courtesy in regard to the way the Governor was treated. That is not a political role.

As we have seen with the way the election unfolded with the hung parliament, these are not ceremonial roles. They are often called ceremonial roles, but they are constitutional roles, ones which we must respect. We must acknowledge that there are apolitical roles that serve Queenslanders in times when there is a change of government to have that surety in the system. There should be some respect for the constitutional practices. I would urge the government in future to not seek to politicise the Governor's role.