



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 October 2017

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Scott, Dr E, AO; Lenton, Mr G; Las Vegas, Incident; State Election**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.40 am): Let me start by joining with the Premier in expressing condolence regarding the passing of the late Dr Evelyn Scott. I add my personal support and that of the entire opposition to those words of condolence in respect to Dr Scott AO. Born in Ingham in 1935, Dr Scott was an unfaltering fighter for equal rights for Indigenous Australians across more than half a century. Her Vanuatan grandfather had been brought to Queensland as part of the slavery-akin indentured labour trade. It was Dr Scott's father who once told her, 'If you don't think something is right, challenge it.' For Dr Scott, they were words that reverberated and then perennially echoed—words that she poured into action time and time again.

Her early forays were stirred by employment, housing and health discrimination issues in and around Townsville in the 1960s. Dr Scott quickly built momentum to rise to the forefront of the campaign to change the Constitution in the landmark 1967 referendum—the Premier mentioned the results of that here in Queensland—yet, following the successful vote to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, she was far from done, devoting the rest of her life to further improving the circumstances of Indigenous Australians and pushing back against discrimination whenever and wherever it reared its hideous head.

Perhaps most of all, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, Dr Scott believed in and focused on the transformative power of education. Dr Scott's family has said her life served as 'a metaphor for the changing circumstances of her people'. In many respects those circumstances have changed but in others they have not changed as much as they ought. Shadow minister Steve Minnikin attended the state memorial service held in Townsville last Friday. On behalf of the opposition we extend our condolences to those family members, her many friends and the many, many lives that she touched during her time here. Her work still continues.

I also rise to add my personal support and that of the opposition to the words of condolence for the late Graham 'Butch' Lenton. I know that the member for Gregory will have something to say as well. Kind, compassionate, instantly likeable—these are just some of the expressions of admiration bestowed in memory of 'Butch' Lenton since his sad loss more than a week ago after a two-year battle with cancer.

Butch was Winton to his bootstraps. He was born there, educated there and he stayed there, living and working in Winton right up until becoming mayor in 2012. I had dealings with Butch in his time as mayor and in my time as treasurer and always found those dealings to be straightforward, forthright and a pleasure. I last saw him at the Western Queensland Local Government Association meeting in Barcaldine in May, and it reaffirmed that he is a good bloke, quintessentially from outback Queensland.

He was initially elected to council in 1997, and he was an exemplar of the paradigm that a good leader is also a good listener. There is no doubt he had his opinions, some strongly held, but he welcomed others' opinions and his ultimate determinations were always applied evenly, fairly and with

only the best interests of Winton at heart. In recent times Butch was instrumental in the redevelopment of the Waltzing Matilda Centre. He adored Winton's Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival but at the same time embraced the Central West Rugby League, of which he was a life member.

Butch's passion for his community will be sorely missed and I suspect his community will sorely miss Butch, if the more than 1,000 attendees at his memorial service at Winton yesterday are any indication of the high regard he was held in. As I indicated, the member for Gregory, Lachlan Millar, attended on our behalf. We wholeheartedly support the Premier in naming Butch Lenton Way, as it now should be called, as the new road to the Age of Dinosaurs museum. To Butch's family, his wife, Ros, his daughter, Carly, and two grandchildren, our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with you. Butch's vision, his hard work and his soft heart will not be forgotten but perhaps the enduring epithet for him is that he was just a damn good bloke.

The incidents in Las Vegas certainly shocked those around the world who deplore senseless acts of violence, no matter what their genesis. I think there are many people—many Queenslanders—who have travelled to that city and know that strip very well. I am fortunate enough to have been one of those and to know the mass of humanity that traverses that strip nearly every day seeking entertainment, enjoyment and a good time.

We join with those condemning the senseless attack, and we join in condemning those senseless attacks wherever they may be. To the people of Las Vegas, the state of Nevada and the US, and particularly the families of those who were simply attending a concert seeking a good time, we express our condolences and our sympathy at this terrible time for their loss and their tragedy. It is a very complex issue in America, dealing with their constitution and their second amendment. I think we need to consider their view on the world, not just that of our own.

Very soon Queenslanders will go to the polls and make a decision about who will lead Queensland for the next three-something years, and the contrast between the LNP and Labor could not be any more stark. It is a choice between a do-nothing Palaszczuk Labor government that has presided over record low investment in infrastructure or a Liberal National Party team with a plan to build the roads, bridges and dams we need to create jobs right across Queensland.

It is a choice between an LNP government that will build a better Queensland so families can get ahead or a Labor government that is so captured by the unions and green groups that it will always put its own survival before what is in the best interests of Queenslanders, Queensland families and Queensland businesses. Sadly, our great state has suffered under three years of a do-nothing Labor government led by Annastacia Palaszczuk. We have had three years of missed opportunities from a government that clearly was not ready to govern when it was elected and still is not ready. Queenslanders have been stranded for three years without leadership, without direction and without a clear plan.

There have been job losses, cost-of-living increases, raids on public servants' superannuation and long service leave fund, shovelling of debt onto government owned corporations and a soft-on-crime approach that has put fright into regional Queensland. Labor's legacy of devastation is across-the-board. Queensland is stagnating and, with a government stuck in neutral, the community is crying out for leadership.

This Premier's softly, softly approach is failing Queenslanders. Doing nothing is not working and the economy is hurting. Much needed infrastructure across Queensland is still—three years later—not being built. Instead of leading the way in job creation and job security, we are falling behind other states and Labor's third budget, delivered earlier this year, confirmed that for the first time ever total state debt will crash through the \$80 billion mark.

An LNP government has five key priorities to create positive change for Queensland families. We will create jobs across Queensland and better manage our finances. We have a plan to help 20,000 young people get a job and get the skills they need to succeed. That has to be important when youth unemployment is at crisis levels across the state. At 13.5 per cent our youth unemployment rate is one of the worst in the country and appallingly in outback Queensland it is over 50 per cent. If we want young people to be valued members of the community we need to get them working or train them to get into a job. We will stop the wasteful government spending and focus on better service delivery. Like business or a household, government needs to live within its means. Expenses growth over the term of this government is nearly double the expenses growth under the LNP and yet services are no better.

We would take action on the cost of living. We have already highlighted how we will freeze car registration, saving a family up to \$200 during the next term of our government, and how we will support a new privately funded clean coal, low-emissions coal-fired power station in North Queensland. We will better support Queensland families. We will address the rise in violent crime. Under Labor, crime has increased by six per cent across the state. People should feel safe in their homes and our plans will deal with that.

An LNP government will provide safe and livable communities, dealing with the problem of ice that Labor has ignored for too long. Importantly, we will build the roads, the bridges and the dams that Queensland needs. We will start talking about the M1, a duplication of the rail line to Nambour and building water supply throughout Queensland.