



Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.36 pm): I stand here today and acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which my electorate stands, the land on which this parliament stands as well as the generations of elders, past, present and future. I stand here to pledge my loyalty to Queensland and her people. I stand here today as the first ever member for Bancroft in this parliament.

How fitting is it that in a Queensland moving to a knowledge-based economy under the Palaszczuk government we have an electorate named after some of Queensland's most outstanding medical researchers and scientists? Joseph Bancroft, his son, Thomas, and his granddaughter, Josephine, were founders of medical research here in Queensland. Joseph brought his family to Queensland in 1864 from Manchester. They were doctors and scientists and they conducted many of their experiments from their weekend homestead in Deception Bay.

It was at Deception Bay that Joseph Bancroft discovered how mosquitos transmitted the parasite that causes elephantiasis. He was amongst the first in the world to show how disease could be spread by insects. He was the first to demonstrate how hookworms enter the human body through the skin and the first to establish the life cycle of the Queensland lungfish. He was the first doctor to use the Queensland corkwood tree for its medicinal properties. The Bancrofts even set up a commercial meat-canning factory in Deception Bay. They were truly innovative Queenslanders.

If they were alive today, I know they would be strong supporters of our Advance Queensland program. I use the Bancrofts as examples when talking to the young people in Bancroft. I say to them, 'They did all this from Deception Bay. You can do world-leading work from Deception Bay or North Lakes.' Local kids need that encouragement to believe in what may be possible. They face too many barriers in their lives—the poverty and disadvantage I have seen in my own community, the lack of belief in themselves, and that is distressing. Too many in my community live in an Australia where there are too many working poor and an Australia where the wages for working people are stagnating while those at the top get an increasing share of the nation's hard-earned wealth.

The Chifley Research Centre found that since the mid-2000s wages for Australians have failed to keep pace with productivity improvements. Andrew Leigh MP said that in percentage terms those at the bottom have seen their wages rise by 23 per cent, but in that time those at the top have seen their wages rise 72 per cent. That is nearly a threefold increase. If Australian cleaners and checkout workers had received the same proportionate wage rise they would be \$16,000 a year better off.

As the member for Bancroft, how can I help local people counter such disadvantage? I can help build the skills and learning capacity of my local residents. As their representative here in this House, I want to ensure the long-term professional and personal development of the members of my community. That means that we focus on education, training and skills. Training and education are the key to giving my local residents a secure life. It gives them the ability and the confidence they need to look after their kids and their families. As the member for Bancroft I will push for training programs that deliver the education and training they need; the facilities and resources to deliver that education and training; and fair federal funding for education—the full Gonski.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering opportunities for education, training and skills development. I acknowledge the great work done by the member for Waterford in this space and all of our ministers. I also want to pay tribute to Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which will support up to 54,000 Queenslanders into work. Under Skilling Queenslanders for Work over \$5 million has been invested into 25 community driven programs in the electorate of Bancroft, and over 500 locals have gained jobs as a direct result of participating in Skilling Queenslanders for Work. In addition, there is the Palaszczuk government initiative to extend free TAFE to all year 12 graduates in Queensland. This is life-changing for all of those young Queenslanders who are finishing or have finished high school. It is a signal to these young people—a prompt—for them to aspire to further higher education or more training.

We are backing these training programs with job-creating programs. Under the \$600 million Works for Queensland program we have approved 1,350 vital infrastructure projects. As a result of the first two rounds of Works for Queensland, local councils estimate the works will support, sustain or create more than 12,000 jobs for Queenslanders. The \$650 million Advance Queensland program is one of the most important economic initiatives that we have here in Queensland. It will set up our economy for the future. Advance Queensland is building up our entrepreneurs, helping small and medium businesses innovate and grow, and it is supporting 11,000 Queensland jobs. I want to acknowledge the good work of the member for Algester in bringing this program back after it was cut by the former government. The Buy Queensland program is a great program which will ensure that local companies who employ local people win government contracts and government work. It tilts the field in favour of Queensland workers and Queensland businesses.

It is only Labor who opens up these pathways for people to get the skills and training they need to prosper and pathways for local businesses to grow and employ more Queenslanders. Labor has never been afraid to use the strength and advantage of government to sway the system in favour of working Queenslanders, to put the financial resources of our great state to work for the benefit of all who live in Queensland. We are not afraid to do these things because of the solid foundation of common values that we share: a fair go, equality of opportunity, a decent day's pay for a decent day's work, freedom from hunger, freedom from want and freedom from war.

The last point is not talked about much these days, but the centenary of the end of the Great War is upon us. I am acutely aware of the sheer waste and cost of war, and that is a cost borne disproportionately by men and women. During my research I discovered that on the home front there was not much celebration on 11 November 1918. In many houses mothers and fathers quietly closed the curtains and wept. If there are values we should share across both sides of this parliament, it is a rejection of warfare as the solution to any modern problem.

Another value I would like to see shared across the aisle is the importance of combating climate change. We have to develop a common determination to reduce our emissions and counter the effects of climate change. We are going to see a warmer and dryer Queensland in our lifetime and our children's lifetimes due to climate change. The average annual temperature will go up two degrees by 2050 and our rainfall could decrease by an average of 21 per cent by 2050 if we do not drastically alter our emissions. Sea surface temperatures around Queensland could go up by 3.6 degrees Celsius if we do not turn things around. We need to protect the Great Barrier Reef. There is \$6 billion worth of reef-based tourism in our state and 60,000 Queensland jobs rely on the reef.

Queenslanders have shown that we can take action and make a real difference regarding climate change. We have adopted new fair and balanced vegetation management laws. These are absolutely crucial to combat climate change, which is why UNESCO placed such faith in us to get these laws passed. By 2015 we were responsible for 80 per cent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions arising from land clearing. There were 19 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, but with the Palaszczuk government's fair and balanced vegetation management laws we can wind that back.

We are also transitioning into a renewable, low-emissions energy industry. We now have a renewable energy sector, and that sector simply did not exist under the former LNP government. Now we have a nation-leading renewable energy industry with an estimated \$4.2 billion worth of projects underway or financially committed. We have created CleanCo, Queensland's new renewable energy publicly-only electricity generator. CleanCo will build, construct, own and maintain our own renewable energy assets. Queensland is now on track to deliver our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030, which will massively help us reduce the greenhouse gases we emit.

As I did in my inaugural speech, I want to pay tribute to my family. My mother, Margaret, gave me a card when I was elected that I still have on my desk. It says, 'Dear Chris, you too can be anything you want, but please don't stuff up the world.' That is very sage advice. I pay tribute to my adored sisters Liz and Jillian and their beautiful daughters Meaghan, Harper, Charlotte and Josie; Greg Crocombe, Ben Broad, Jeff Hopkins-Weise, Elspeth McKenzie and Pat and Joy O'Callaghan. I pay very special

tribute to my beautiful and smart-as-a-whip wife, Sian, who is with us today, and our adored and beautiful children Guy, Rebecca and Arabella. They are here in the chamber today, and this is the first time we have all been together in this place. They know that I disappear for days on end, and today I want to them to see what their father does.

Lastly, I want to thank those people who have helped return me to this House as the very first member for Bancroft. I seek leave to have their names and the rest of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. I have approval from the Deputy Speaker.

Leave granted.

Thank you to my campaign manager the indomitable Jan Sheppard.

Thank you to my campaign field organiser Ged Kearny, now Ged Kunkel, and my blessings to her first born Sebastian and husband Andrew.

Thank you to Brendan Waite and his wife Diane.

Thank you to:

Jenny Foster and Frank Foster

Finn and Kaylene Scott

Marx and Julia Smith, and Richard

Our ever loyal and hard working local Labor members Mick O'Brien, Jan Macintyre, Colin Ellicombe and Barbara Williams, Vern Feeney and Jennifer Whitlock, Mick Denton.

Thank you to Together Union—Alex Scott, Vivienne Doogan and Irene Monro.

Special thank you to Geoff and Dennis from the Miners Unions, and Stephen Smyth

Thanks to Neil Henderson and The Services Union.

And a big thank you to Eddie Bland and my local CFMMEU members.

I want to pay tribute to our local construction workers—I think there are more steel fixers in Deception Bay than probably anywhere else in Queensland.

I know every day they go into workplaces where an instance of neglect or inattention can lead to a fatality.

Once again, I want to assure them that I want to see more workplace protections that makes sure they come home safely at the end of their working day.