




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2018

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.56 am): As I have said, I nominate the honourable member for Caloundra to the high position of Speaker in this House. Honourable members, today we make a decision that will shape the life of this parliament. The role of Speaker is historic and it is central to the working of this parliament. It is also historic that today, for the first time since 1979, the government has not been able to find one of its members to second the nomination. We see in a unicameral parliament—

Government members interjected.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Order! Members!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: In a unicameral parliament especially, a Speaker who is honest and above reproach and not under the control of the executive is vital. Labor love to talk themselves up when it comes to accountability and transparency. Labor's claims are hollow mockeries, cheap tricks and nasty cons. Without a house of review to monitor their powers governments can overstep their mandate. They can push the limits of power and survive without scrutiny. A Speaker is an important check in maintaining control over that executive, so the Speaker must be someone who is independently minded and not the lapdog of cabinet. They must preside fairly over debates, ensuring the government is always held to account. The Speaker also ensures the integrity of members and must examine allegations of unparliamentary behaviour of members. These are serious responsibilities. They can only be fulfilled by individuals of real integrity.

This parliament has had many Speakers in its history. We cannot elect a member who has treated this parliament with anything less than integrity and honesty. The choice revealed by the government today reveals their arrogance. They do not appreciate that the Speaker should be an independently minded person. They think the Speaker's chair is the way to keep a humiliated man happy. Becoming Speaker should not be a consolation prize for a failed Treasurer. Let us not forget that it was this Premier who told Queenslanders that the member for Mulgrave would be the Treasurer after the election.

A year ago the member for Mulgrave, during the rail fail, told parliament that he did not issue a direction to the QR board. He said the agreement had been signed off and recommended by the board. RTI documents have revealed the true role in this matter. The QR board never recommended the deal. It was ordered to sign. The only people who recommended that deal were the union bosses. This government did exactly what it was told by their union bosses.

That is why this parliament needs a better candidate for Speaker and that is why I have nominated the honourable member for Caloundra. He is one of our most respected men in this House. He is a man who has always placed the best interests of Queenslanders above all else. He has served the seat of Caloundra for 14 years.

He has held important positions in both government and opposition. He was the leader of the Liberal Party from 2007, he was the first deputy leader of the LNP and from 2012 he was the minister for energy and water supply. He is a great parliamentarian. He is popular and an effective member for

Caloundra—but he is so much more than this. He is warm-hearted, he is a generous man and he listens. I, like many others, have been inspired by his strength he has shown in fighting cancer. I am pleased to see the member back in good health and ready to serve this state. His character is above question. He is wise, fair and a passionate believer in this parliament. We are fortunate to have him in this place, and I am pleased to commend him as Speaker.

Those opposite have an important decision to make today. Do they value a functioning democracy with a Speaker who will provide checks and balances, someone who will diligently and carefully monitor the executive power, or do they just want someone they can control, someone who has been proven to bend to the will of the union movement or someone who risks the very worst of government overreach? I urge all members to put their faith in the member for Caloundra.