



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Bailey**


**MEMBER FOR MILLER**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 September 2018

## ADJOURNMENT

### Miller, Ms E

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (7.03 pm): I stand in the chamber today proud to be the first member of the new electorate of Miller. The new electorate was created during the 2017 redistribution and includes the suburbs of Chelmer, Graceville, Sherwood, Tennyson, Yeerongpilly, Yeronga, Fairfield, Tarragindi and parts of Moorooka, Annerley and Rocklea. My electorate is named after Emma Miller, the pioneering unionist, suffragist and activist renowned for her fight for getting women the vote and for equal rights. I am very proud to have her name as my electorate name.

Emma Miller was born on 26 June 1839 at Chesterfield in Derbyshire in England. Like many young women of her time, she was forced to leave school at an early age in order to help support her family. Her parents, especially her father, who was quite politically active as a Chartist, instilled in her the values of improving the living conditions of working people. Emma Miller migrated to Queensland in 1879 with her husband and children but was widowed, sadly, shortly after. She relied on her specialist skills as a seamstress to provide for her family.

She was well renowned for her trade, but the working conditions at that early time in Brisbane's history were such that many women were required to work extremely long hours in terrible conditions for very little money. Drawing on her progressive values, Emma Miller encouraged women to join the trade union movement in order to improve their working conditions and pay. Just like the Labor Party, Emma Miller was a champion of the worker. This was best evidenced by her courageous decision to front the royal commission into shops, factories and workshops to give evidence of the appalling conditions women workers were facing in 1891.

Emma Miller may have been physically tiny, but her personality, values and courage were immense. She marched in the streets to support the shearers' strike prisoners when they were released. She was a trailblazer in the Australian Workers' Union by becoming the first woman to hold a position as an organiser and also the first woman to be a member of the Brisbane Workers Political Organisation.

As well as campaigning for workers' rights, she was also a champion for equal pay and equal opportunity for women. Emma Miller was at the forefront of agitating for legislative change to enable women to vote in Queensland and, as an early suffragist, she was steadfast in her position of one person, one vote. The modern Australian Labor Party owes a great debt to its groundbreaking pioneers like Emma Miller. Within trade union circles she was proudly known as 'Mother Miller' and she maintained her strong principles and activism through her long life, which ended at Toowoomba on 22 January 1917.

Last year I and the local branch members of the Miller electorate chose to honour our namesake and established the annual Emma Miller Memorial Speech. We were honoured to welcome other trailblazers of the union movement Sally McManus and Claire Moore last year and this year we

welcomed Minister Leeanne Enoch as the first Indigenous woman elected in Queensland, hosted by Matt Foley and with Jules Campbell the first ever secretary of the Queensland branch. I pay tribute to Emma Miller's great role in Queensland's history.

*(Time expired)*