



Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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VALEDICTORY

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.13 pm): Mr Speaker—

Respect is earned, honesty is appreciated, trust is gained and loyalty is always returned.

That is a quote I got from former member for Burdekin Rosemary Menkens in her valedictory speech. I used that quote in my maiden speech and have used it every time in the address-in-reply since I have been here. I have always tried to live by that quote in parliament and my time as the member for Gregory.

There are so many people to thank who have supported my journey as the member for Gregory: my wife, Peta; my children, Lucy, Ellie and Poppy; and my grandson, Archer. While we volunteer for these positions, they are conscripts and they miss out on so much.

I have been so lucky with my staff. I have had the same staff that the former member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson, had with Nicki Heslin and Laura Nolan. They have stayed with me all the way. I was very lucky. Nicki and Laura have been by my side and guided me. I could not ask for a better journey. I would also like to acknowledge Larissa Burnett, Alyisa Rutledge and Alex Scott, and of course recently departed but very important people to me are Julie Little and Kerry Lee Ferguson. They have worked in my office and they have done a great job. Nicki has been my organiser in making sure that I am somewhere I need to be, to make sure that I am—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr MILLAR: Very hard! Laura has been the brains behind what I have been saying, so thank you very much.

I also want to thank the opposition staff, led by Richard Ferret. Thank you, Richard; you have done a great job. To the Manager of Opposition Business, Andrew Powell: thank you, mate. To our whips, Mark Boothman and Pat Weir: thank you so much for what you have done over the last term, and especially to you, Pat. You have been a good mate.

To Neil Laurie and the fantastic parliamentary staff, especially security, catering and the cleaning staff: you make this place a home away from home, so thank you very much.

You cannot be the member for Gregory without the support of your local area. I want to thank Sonia and Guy Burton. Sonia is my SEC chair and has worked with me and supported me while I have been in this job. I would also like to thank Rosemary and Warwick Champion from Longreach, John and Joanne Milne, and Bruce and Helen Collins in Winton, along with John and Katrina Paine from Winton. I also want to thank Sonia and Peter Doyle in Blackall; Brett Walsh in Barcaldine; the Dillion family in Alpha; the Vella family from the Gemfields; Ian Burnett in Emerald; and of course a very close mate of mine, Ross and Andrea Drayton from Emerald. Thank you very much. Thanks also to the Enwitch family from Blackwater and Colin and Katherine Dunne from Daringa.

Over the past 10 years we have sadly lost some significant people who have guided me through this position: the former member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson OAM; Andy Cowper from Aramac; John Enwitch from Blackwater; and Mike Burns—a life member of the LNP—from Emerald.

I also want to pay tribute to my federal colleagues the former member for Maranoa, Bruce Scott, and the current member and Leader of the National Party, David Littleproud. Thank you for your support and thank you for your friendship. Thanks also to Ken O'Dowd, the former member for Flynn, and the current member for Flynn, Colin Boyce. Thank you so much for all of your support.

I also want to thank the leaders that I have served under: Lawrence Springborg when I first came here; John-Paul Langbroek; Tim Nicholls; Deb Frecklington; Tim Mander; of course now David Crisafulli and Jarrod Bleijie; and I cannot forget David Janetzki. You have done well.

The electorate of Gregory is a wealth creation region for the state's economy—Mitchell grass plains, gidgee, mulga country in the west producing the state's best cattle and beef, wool and sheep production and some of the best grazing and prime agricultural land that you will find, with the Central Highlands producing cattle, beef, cotton, grain and horticulture. It is really the salad bowl. The electorate of Gregory is basically an economic contributor to this state and it has done a great job. It has been an absolute privilege to see so many industries created and continue in the Central Highlands. You cannot get a better electorate. Of course I am biased and everybody here thinks that they have the best electorate, but I know that many on this side and the other side who visit the seat of Gregory love it. It certainly punches well above its weight and it does a great job in producing not only trade but also royalties, and we have had that discussion today.

On that note, we have to make sure that we spend those royalty moneys back where they came from. Not to get too political, because this is a valedictory speech, but I note that the Treasurer is here. You have to get the Blackwater Rolleston Road fixed. That is a danger at the moment. I have been on that road and I honestly believe that we are going to see a tragedy there soon. The Lilyvale Road going out to Kestrel and those others mines needs to be fixed. The Treasurer and the resources minister are here. You have to put that on your list because we have hardworking men and women who work in the mines who need a safe journey to work and a safe journey home and those roads are not great.

I know that the member for Callide is here, and we both have to deal with the Dawson Highway. The best way to drive on the Dawson Highway is to wear a helmet in your car because you are going to hit the roof all the time. Seriously, it is a disgrace and we certainly need to fix that up.

There have obviously been some great times in the seat of Gregory as the member for Gregory. I have had almost 10 years here, and it has been a privilege and an honour. I have had some fantastic opportunities to catch up with my colleagues here and take them out there. I would like to mention one trip I had with David Janetzki when he first became the shadow Attorney-General and we went out to Yaraka and Isisford. I do not think he has forgiven me for that yet. I know that the police minister is here, but I was probably just a touch over the speed limit to try to get to a place on time. David thought I was flying. We had to get to the Isisford pub by lunchtime to have a steak sandwich. The steak sandwich at the Isisford pub is two pieces of white bread with a rib fillet in the middle.

I am pretty sure the opposition leader has also not forgiven me. When he first became Leader of the Opposition I took him out west to Longreach. I am not sure if the Leader of the Opposition is too good on small planes—especially a Dash 8 in the middle of summer experiencing turbulence. It was not a great trip for him. To make things worse, I put him straight from the Dash 8 into an R44, piloted by a good mate of mine, Tim Rayner, who used to run helicopters up there, in the middle of summer to travel 100 kilometres. I am pretty sure I was not the most popular bloke at the time and I do want to apologise for that.

Tony Perrett is a good mate. We have only had one argument and it was my fault. Fiona Simpson, the member for Maroochydore, was a part of this. She jumped me on a speech where I was giving a tribute to Father Dan from Emerald, who I was very close to. I blamed Tony for it. It was my fault. Fiona jumped and I am sorry. It looked like we were going to have a brawl down here in front of Fiona giving a speech. So sorry about that, mate.

No matter what side of politics you are on, we have to have an appreciation for areas in the seat of Gregory. There needs to be more appreciation for the gem fields and opal fields in my electorate. We have a world-class resource which is sought after worldwide. We need to give the gem fields and the opal fields a little bit more respect and opportunity to expand. They are a trading opportunity for the seat of Gregory. In the seat of Gregory we have a declining population. People are leaving. While things are expanding here in the south-east we have to invest more and more in opportunities in outback Queensland to make sure that our populations do not decline. The member for Warrego faces similar issues, as do the members for Burdekin, Cook and Traeger. Those big seats face a declining population. We have to understand that we will have fly-in, fly-out workers, but provide opportunities for people to live and work in the local area.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the Longreach Pastoral College and the Emerald Agricultural College. The decision has been made. The problem is that there is a lack of agricultural and pastoral training in Queensland. I understand that we do not need the two-year courses—that is outdated—but we need to have those induction courses so we have people ready and available to work on farms. Farmers are screaming for more people to work on their farms. We need to re-establish some sort of agricultural and pastoral training in Queensland.

Finally, I have to mention the person replacing me as the candidate, Sean Dillon. As many of you would know, he was the mayor of Barcaldine. I have known Sean for a long time. He is a lovely young bloke. To give you the measure of the man, he went in for preselection against me in 2014. I won the preselection, but he was my campaign manager. He was in the middle of drought, but thank God they got a burst of a storm over their place and bogged their water truck so he had a couple of weeks available and he came along and helped me out. Sean will be a fantastic candidate. I am hoping he will be the next member for Gregory. He will do a good job. He will be ready to go. He is only 42 with a young family. He is basically the same age I was when I came in here. As I say, he will be Vaughan Johnson 3.0. I was Vaughan Johnson 2.0. We have a better version now: it is 3.0. I hope Sean does well. I am looking forward to seeing Sean succeed as the member for Gregory.

There are a few people on our side retiring and also a few on the other side. I would like to acknowledge Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh. He is an excellent bloke who was very good to me, when I first started here, as my deputy chair of the infrastructure, planning and resources committee. He has always been a good mate and very helpful. He is a lovely bloke and I wish him all the best. Mark Robinson, the member for Oodgeroo, has been a great man in this place. He has always stood up for his values and I understand and respect that.

Mr Speaker, you have been a good man. I wish you all the best. You have spent a long time in this place. Your family is important to you and I wish you all the best. To the member for Sandgate, Stirling Hinchliffe, thank you. You have been a good bloke. Thank you for your friendship. To the member for Redcliffe, Yvette D'Ath, thank you so much. Member for Rockhampton, Barry O'Rourke, well done, mate. I wish you all the best. Member for Mackay, Julieanne Gilbert, I wish you all the best and I hope it goes well.

To all the people who have supported me, thank you so much. Apparently there is life after politics, and I am looking forward to that. I will still advocate for rural, regional and Western Queensland. I am looking forward to a bit of time on a tractor or a header or chasing something down a paddock. Thank you so much. I wish everyone here all the best.