




Speech By
Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

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VALEDICTORY

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (4.44 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, fellow members of parliament, family, friends, guests in the gallery and residents of the Redlands Coast and elsewhere who are watching online, it has been an honour and a privilege to serve in the role as the state member for Cleveland—Oodgeroo—in the Queensland parliament over the last 15 years. It was a big decision to run for parliament in the first place, to change profession at age 45, and then to decide to finish the race after five terms was equally as big a decision. I have had a good run. I have given it my best. I have achieved a lot of what I set out to do. I am glad to be leaving on my own terms and in my own timing, and to pass the baton on to a good female runner, as I said I would try to do.

Today for me is mostly about saying thank you and farewell, and to make just a few reflections rather than going through a long list of things. I want to take the opportunity to express my appreciation for all those who have made my service possible. Let me begin my thankyou.

I want to pay special tribute firstly to my family. First to my wife, Julie, and with the indulgence of the House and permission of the Opposition Whip, I sing—

And here's to you, Mrs Robinson
Jesus loves you more than you will know
Whoa, whoa, whoa
God bless you, please, Mrs Robinson
Heaven holds a place for those who pray
Hey, hey, hey
Hey, hey, hey ...

Sorry to put the House through all of that! For the love of my life to stand with me in this political chapter has been amazing. I literally live with an angel, at the very least a saint, and we are coming up to our 40-year anniversary next year—25 years in pastoral, chaplaincy, community development work in Asia and education work together, and 15 years in politics. Both chapters have been incredibly demanding on her, and I thank her for the sacrifices she has made for this to happen.

My family members have also been incredibly supportive. If you know me, you know that my family is important and central to everything. I am so grateful for each of them, all now young adults: Ben, Mitch, Laura, Mel, Joe, Susannah and Isaac. Yes, that is seven, and that is apparently how we get the numbers in the Christian Right. Somebody said biological growth is easier than membership recruitment. Four of our adult children have produced five beautiful grandchildren—Eli, Oscar, Roman, Meeka and Adelynn—all created just for Poppy and Grandma to play with and then to hand back as needed. I also want to thank my mum, Lauris, and mother-in-law, Clare.

I also thank the many community organisations, sporting clubs, chambers of commerce, Redland City councillors, school communities, volunteers, small businesses, church and charitable groups—all those who make our local community a better place in which to live, work, play, raise a family and retire.

I wish to take a moment to thank my staff, particularly Sue Hanlon, who has been my senior EO for 15 years, and she has served over 50 years in the Parliamentary Service. I thank my AEO staff now and the many over time, too many to name. I thank the parliamentary staff here. I also thank the many local LNP supporters and volunteers, ably led by chair Chris Reeves, and I would like to thank previous chairs and teams over the 15 years, again too many to name.

I want to acknowledge Henry Pike, our federal member of parliament for the Redlands—Bowman—who has hit the ground running in his first of what I believe will be many terms.

I want to also acknowledge and blame Fiona Simpson and Shane Knuth for their roles in talking me into running for parliament at a weak moment in between jobs. I jest, but they did have an involvement.

I want to thank Amanda Stoker for making herself available to run in the 2024 election as the endorsed LNP candidate for Oodgeroo. Amanda will create history if she wins by becoming the first female MP for the Cleveland or Oodgeroo seat, on either side of politics, in the 30-plus years of the history of the seat. I wish her all the best and a long career in state parliament.

I wish to acknowledge other Redlands Coast candidates—Rebecca Young for Redlands, Susanna Damianopoulos for Springwood, and Russell Field for Capalaba for making themselves available to run and serve. I wish them every success on 26 October.

I want to especially acknowledge Russell Field. Walking around with him among thousands of people at the annual RedFest show in Cleveland on Saturday was like walking with royalty. Many people came up to pay their respects. I have never been so popular! But it takes an incredible strength to go through what he and Ann have and to put your hand up to do something to bring about change. I saw a similar tenacity in Paul Stanley, whose son, Matthew Stanley, died in an act of violence just before I began my time in parliament. Paul and I become friends. He went on to make a powerful contribution to public life via the Matthew Stanley Foundation and the ‘One Punch Can Kill’ and ‘Walk Away Chill Out’ campaigns. I want to acknowledge the late Paul Stanley’s contribution to public life and his impact on me as a new MP at that time. Sadly, in the last 10 years youth crime has gotten worse, not better.

I want to thank LNP leader David Crisafulli for the opportunities he has given me for higher service. I wish him all the best on 26 October. I want to also thank my Christian pastors at Favor Church Brisbane, the recently retired Chris and Beverley Aiton. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement to run and serve. I also wish to place on record my thanks to God. I think people know that I am a Christian and a pastor. God has given me strength and patience in this work every day. ‘To those who choose to believe,’ He says, ‘my grace is sufficient for you.’ I have found that to be true. His grace and goodness, prayer and faith have been a great source of strength and motivation to me. It has not always been that way, as I grew up in a non-religious setting and found my faith in my university years.

Mr Speaker, you can understand my concern, as a person of faith, that we still do not have anti-discrimination laws at the federal level to protect people of faith from acts of discrimination. Despite the election promise of the Albanese government, there is still not an act, like the Racial Discrimination Act or the Sex Discrimination Act, for one of the main protected attributes—a person’s faith. So faith communities all across our nation remain unprotected. We also see faith-based schools and other organisations—Jewish, Muslim, Christian and others—being attacked by woke laws like the respect at work laws that passed the House this week that actually show no respect for faith-based schools and workplaces. I call on the Prime Minister Albanese today to get on with it and introduce the promised legislation so that people of faith are protected by anti-discrimination laws, not attacked by them.

Critically, I want to thank the residents of the Cleveland area, including North Stradbroke Island, for putting their faith in me and the LNP over five elections. I want to thank the diverse cultural groups for their support, including the Quandamooka people. In moving on, my greatest regret will be that I will not have the same time to be with the people I have come to deeply respect and appreciate, even though we will remain living locally.

I am immensely proud of my record of service in the Queensland parliament. I am proud to have been elected five times, the first time in 2009, as the first ever conservative for Cleveland. Re-elected in 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2020, I got great personal satisfaction from those campaigns. This dispels the woke myth that people of Christian faith, who have traditional family values and who are social conservatives cannot win city seats here in Brisbane.

I was proud to serve in frontbench roles as the shadow minister for main roads, fisheries and marine infrastructure. My Bachelor of Science in marine biology, some studies in fisheries at James Cook University and being a regular boatie and recreational fisherman came in handy. As Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees, working with Fiona Simpson—the first female Speaker of the Queensland parliament—and doing some of the Commonwealth parliament work, meeting prime

ministers and world leaders, was an incredible honour. I have greatly enjoyed my current role as shadow assistant minister for multicultural communities and international student education. My 25 years in community development in and out of the Asia-Pacific region before politics, working with people of Asian culture and faith, my Masters study at Griffith University and my doctoral research PhD at the University of Queensland in Asian and international studies were incredibly valuable to me for these roles.

I have served on various committees. Tennis Queensland was one of my most enjoyable roles. I was the inaugural co-chair, together with the late Duncan Pegg, of the Parliamentary Friends of Tennis Queensland. Being a tennis tragic myself, it was a lot of fun playing in the Parliamentary Friends of Tennis Cup and winning the prized cup on two occasions. I think it was more like a prized cap and a tin of balls! It was in the Tennis Queensland co-chair role that I had three of my most memorable moments. Meeting Australian tennis legends on separate occasions—tennis stars I had idolised since childhood—Rod Laver, the 'Rockhampton Rocket'; Margaret Court, the greatest female tennis player of all time; and Evonne Goolagong Cawley were incredible highlights.

I table a list of some of my key achievements over 15 years. I am proud of my record of achievements, including the Redland Hospital emergency department expansion, the palliative care service at Redland Hospital, the new Cleveland Ambulance Station, various school facilities, road upgrades and other transport commitments, boat ramps and other marine infrastructure, to name a few things.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Mark Robinson: Some key achievements' [1832](#).

Sadly, much more needs to be done to get a smaller Toondah Harbour back on track and the Dunwich Harbour development underway. North Stradbroke Island residents, businesses and registered tourism operators need a better deal than the 'Trad-broke Island' plan that has failed them.

I have also fought for pro-family values like improving maternity services at Redland Hospital and increasing counselling support for women with unplanned pregnancies. The woke fixation with promoting abortion services that is resulting in an increase in late-term abortion in this state and healthy babies being born alive and left to die is clearly another wrong priority.

In my inaugural speech I referenced former US president John F Kennedy and his citing of Psalm 127:1 in his address to world leaders. The scripture says—

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

These words are there in the stained glass windows of this very parliament building. I agree with the notion of the former president of the United States, and with this Queensland parliament, that members of parliament are the watch men and women who stand on the walls—we are the guardians and protectors of the people—but, further, that without reliance upon almighty God, who is our help, we may find that we watch and labour in vain.

I close with a prayer for all those who will be MPs in the 58th Queensland parliament—a prayer spoken by a former king of Israel for his people who at that time, thousands of years ago, lived in an expanded Israel in the Middle East. He prayed in 1 Kings 3:9—

So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?

This is my prayer for those who will be in the 58th Parliament: that to govern the great people of Queensland you will have a discerning heart and distinguish between right and wrong. May God bless you all.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!