




Speech By  
**Michael Hart**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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### VALEDICTORY

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.26 pm): I thought long and hard for a good 30 seconds as to whether I would write a speech today and decided not to, so, I am sorry, you are going to have to listen to me rambling on for another 15 minutes, but I do promise this will be the last time. My wife is in the gallery today, as are my children, my grandchildren and my staff. I do not think my grandchildren actually know what Poppy does in this place for a living and I do not think my speech is going to add anything to their knowledge of what goes on in the parliament, but I will try.

I thought the member for Oodgeroo's contribution was very interesting when he sang to his wife. My wife's name is Sally. I just had a quick look on the internet to see what songs might be available for Sally. I do not think that any of them would be appropriate. If anybody knows the words to *Mustang Sally*, *Ride Sally Ride* or Eric Clapton's *Lay Down Sally*—and that is completely inappropriate—I will give it a crack. If not, I am sure Jarrod could probably do it for me.

When I was sworn in in 2012 my mother and father were here. Sadly, today is the anniversary of my father's passing away. He has been gone for nine years and I miss him every day. My mother, brother and sister are watching somewhere. As I thought about what I might say in my speech I thought I would have a look at my maiden speech. I would like to read part of my maiden speech because I think that sets the scene for how I have presented myself in this chamber for the last 12½ years. In my maiden speech I outlined my basic philosophies of life. I said—

My commitment to the people of Burleigh, to the people of Queensland and to members here present is to participate constructively in this place and to act in an honest, forthright manner, always keeping in mind the best interests of the people of the electorate of Burleigh and the people of this great state of Queensland.

...

... I place on the record my overriding philosophies of life. The opinions and decisions I make in this place will reflect those philosophies.

I believe in the right of people to make their own choices in life. Regardless of whether or not I agree with them, they have a right to their own opinion and their own choices. I believe in small government with minimal regulation. I believe in a hand up from government, not a handout. In basic terms, I believe good government needs to ensure the population is secure from interference from the action of others. If a government does just that one thing, I believe it succeeds.

One of the key choices I believe a person should be free to make is to work hard, earn a good living and improve the living standard of their family. I do not believe that they should be made to feel ashamed or, indeed, ridiculed because of that choice. I believe this great country of ours is in danger of becoming a nanny state. Presently, too many people rely on the government for handouts for survival. Previous governments have encouraged this attitude and for many people it has now become a way of life. Our ageing population cannot afford for this to continue. If we are not careful, there will not be enough taxpayers left to fund our ongoing social responsibilities.

Not much has changed in the past 12 years, I have to say.

I turn to public transport because I have been ridiculed quite a bit about my stand on light rail on the Gold Coast. In May 2012 I said—

To work, public transport must take you from where you are to where you want to go, be reasonably priced and convenient. If it is not, it does not get used and it may as well not be there. That leads me to the much discussed rapid transit system under construction on the Gold Coast.

To meet the criteria I have just discussed it is clear to me that the rapid transit system must cover the Gold Coast from one end to the other, not a small section in the middle. It must connect to other forms of transport and therefore must be linked to heavy rail and the airport. This concept can be delivered by extending the rapid transit system from Broadbeach, where it is scheduled to terminate under stage 1, to Burleigh and then out to Varsity train station. This could be stage 2, with stage 3 being the replacement of the proposed heavy rail with light rail from Varsity station to the airport using the rail corridor already designated.

Again, that was 2012. I have stuck with that throughout my whole time in this parliament.

I would like to make a few comments about the parliament in general. Members would be aware that I have been quite critical about the committee system. The committee system does not work. It just does not work and something needs to change there. If anything has reinforced my decision to leave this parliament, it has been the conduct at question time over the last two sittings. There is way too much politics going on and not enough good government. It is a nasty environment and you all need to wake up to yourselves.

I would like to thank the people of Burleigh. It has been one of the great privileges of my life to be the member for Burleigh. I have been in this place for 12 years and seven months. On 26 October it will be 4,598 days. I have made 271 speeches. Those 4,598 days make me the longest serving member for Burleigh since its inception in 1992, when it changed from South Coast. Judy Gamin was the first member for Burleigh. She held the seat for about 10 years. Although Christine Smith was a Labor member, she is a good friend of mine. She held the seat for slightly longer than that and I have now beaten them.

I would not be leaving unless I had a really good candidate to back me up. In Hermann Vorster we will have a great member for Burleigh, if he is lucky enough to be chosen by the people of Burleigh. I have absolute faith that he will do the sort of job that I have been trying to do for the past 12 years. Along with Bianca Stone we will turn the Gold Coast blue again, as it should be. I am not going to talk about what I have achieved or what I have not achieved because they are what they are.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you personally for allowing me to be one of your deputy speakers. I wish you all the best in your retirement. I thank all of the parliamentary staff—the cleaners, the catering staff, the library staff, the security attendants and the travel, admin, IT and table staff. In particular, I thank the Clerk. When I have been in the Speaker's chair, the clerks at the table have saved my bacon a number of times. I would really like to thank those people.

I would like to congratulate all of the members who have decided to retire. I wish them all the best in the future. I would like to provide my best wishes to those who have not decided to retire but may retire at this election. I wish them all the best as well. A couple of members have asked me to speak about them. One of those was the member for Bundaberg. The only thing I have to say about the member for Bundaberg is that I think, one way or the other, he has had his last birthday cake delivered by the government jet—one way or the other. The member for Stafford wanted me to mention him. I have nothing to say.

I have a lot of friends on this side of the House. The LNP team is a great team. We all stick together. We all have each other's backs. We have worked as one for the past nine or 10 years that we have been in opposition. For the past four years we have done a fantastic job of sticking together and taking care of each other.

I would like to make special mention of Tim Nicholls and Deb Frecklington. As leaders, they put me into the shadow cabinet. That was a great experience and I thoroughly enjoyed that position. I also acknowledge Lawrence Springborg. I will paraphrase some words from the *House of the Dragon*: those people are premiers who never were. I think the people of Queensland have missed out by not having them as premiers of the state.

We will have an LNP premier of this state in David Crisafulli and a deputy premier in Jarrod. They and their team are going to have a massive job to fix the mess that this government has left the state in. That is about the only political thing that I have to say.

My mobile number is not changing. Everyone on this side of House has it. A couple on that side have it and they can lose it; that is all right. Those on this side may keep it, and if they need my assistance in some way then I am happy to contribute as much as I can.

Turning to the opposition office, to Richard and his team, I thank you for your support—and I acknowledge previous chiefs of staff. We cannot do the job that we do without our staff. I thank my local campaign managers: Mark Henry, Darren MacIntosh, David Pourre and Zac Reveer. In my previous life as an aircraft engineer with East-West Airlines and Ansett and then running a chain of businesses, I found that the best way you can run a business is to hire the right people and then let them do their job. I have done that.

A few people came through my office before I settled on the staff I have now and they are here with us today as well. I had Richard Towson, Jill Gommers, Mark Henry, Matt Taylor—Matt is with us as well—Gordon Watson and Gloria Johnston in my office before I discovered Renee Whitehead in April 2013 and Anna Honeyman in February 2016. They have been with me for 11 years and eight years respectively. The only times they were not with me were when they went off to have their babies and then I had Jacqui Wild and Ashleigh Marrinan. Now I have Karen and Samantha in my office helping out. I would have to say that one of the greatest pleasures of having great staff is walking down the street and having people come up to say thank you for fixing something but having no idea what they were talking about because my staff had fixed it before I even got involved. Girls, thank you. I love you.

I turn to my family, and I bought a box of tissues because I knew I would need them: Tim and Aimie, Simon and Jess, Hayden and Anna and my grandchildren Josh, Isla, Cameron, Boston and Aurora. Aurora is a little too small to be here today and is not feeling overly well. My granddaughter is in the gallery. She is the one in purple and my darling. They have helped me get elected every time. They have stood on the side of the road and waved at cars. The boys and the girls have gone out and set up the booths for me in the middle of the night. If we do not have a strong family behind us, we just cannot do our jobs. They have been the best that they can be.

To my wife, Sally—we have been married for 43 years. I think I have mentioned in this place before that we walked to school together when we were five or six. That is how long we have known each other. We met again when we were in our late teens and we have been together ever since. She is my rock. I am looking forward to spending more time with her and with my grandchildren. They are just precious.

I am going to mention one more Labor person. As we all know, thanks to the member for Miller, I had a cruise in Alaska that keeps coming back to bite me. Sally and I will do a bit more travel. We have some great friends in former member for Keppel Bruce Young and his wife, Geraldine, and we are going off on a couple of trips next year. The first one will be to Japan in November so I have learnt a few Japanese words, and the one that springs to mind is 'sayonara'.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!