



## Inaugural Speeches

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Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Wednesday 3 May 2017.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:21):** It is an honour and a privilege to be here, and to serve the people of Manly. No matter the time or day that I am in this place, the comfort of Manly is never far because the window in my office looks directly out at a huge Norfolk Island pine planted across the road in the Domain. The Norfolk Island pine is an iconic symbol of Manly. The now massive trees were planted along Manly Beach in the 1850s. These symbols of Manly even adorned the letterhead of my predecessor, the member for Manly, Mike Baird, who I am delighted to acknowledge here this evening. Autumn in Manly is a beautiful time of the year. With the sun rising over the beach in the crisp morning air, looking north one can see the Central Coast, and at every beach from Manly to Curl Curl surfers will be enjoying the swell.

Weekends in my electorate are reminders of the timeless appeal of our beautiful natural environment. Beaches, national parks, dams and walkways, the people of Manly, often joined by thousands of tourists, certainly make the most of our piece of paradise. Manly's environment is one of our single greatest assets and is something that I will promote and protect.

This evening people are lining up to get on the ferry, hopping on a bus or getting in their car to head home to Manly. It is a picturesque place that 20 years ago my family first visited as classic tourists. Falling in love with Manly, mum and dad bought a block of land where they built the family home and still live today. It is important that I mention that mum and dad still live in Manly, because for all their married lives, and for the first 13 years of my life, we lived the nomadic lifestyle of an Australian Army family. Growing up as an Army brat is good fun. Along with my brother Tom, and sister Elle, we enjoyed postings everywhere from Townsville to Sandhurst in the United Kingdom, Melbourne to Randwick Barracks. We saw most of the Australian East Coast and every year brought with it a new adventure, a new school, new friends, and new community. However, it also meant that nowhere was ever really home. After 20 years on the move, mum and dad decided that Manly was to be the final stop. For years we had been visitors in someone else's community, but now had a place that we could call home. As a family we immersed ourselves fully into Manly. What a community to live in.

The fabric of Manly is woven and held strong by volunteer groups, institutions and associations which selflessly serve our community and which have done so for decades. From the Manly Community Centre, Rotary, the Friends of Freshwater and Manly Warringah Historical Society to name a few, to the proud, iconic surf lifesaving clubs of Manly, North Steyne, Queenscliff and Freshwater. The many volunteer organisations along with the sporting giants like the Manly Rugby Union Club—I acknowledge the president of the club, Anthony Bergelin, who is here tonight—and the Manly Cricket Club make Manly a shining example of the power of voluntary civic participation. These groups, institutions and associations consistently demonstrate that the old fashioned concept of community is alive and well in Manly in 2017. It was one of these community groups that led me to where I stand now. A number of years ago, the Little Manly Community Forum required a new chairman. I am grateful to Ray Mathieson, who was, and still is, a pillar of the Manly community, for giving me a go in that role. I acknowledge Ray and thank him for being here tonight.

Everything I do in this place will have the community of Manly at its centre. I am here to speak for the thousands of Manly families who deserve continued improvements in public transport and

roads, who deserve local schools that give their kids the best opportunities to learn, and who deserve safe neighbourhoods. I am here to speak for the local business owners, the entrepreneurs just starting out, and the young couple looking for their first home. I am here to speak for the grandparents who want to ensure the quality of life they enjoyed in Manly is retained for their grandkids. I am here to speak up for the vulnerable and voiceless in our community. Winston Churchill said it best when he said:

If we open a quarrel between the present and the past, we shall be in danger of losing the future.

I believe that the more things change, the more things get smaller, faster and more connected, the more we must be guided by our traditions, customs and values that have stood the test of time. The lessons of our history pave the pathway to an even better future.

I believe that Liberalism is the most effective and best-equipped approach to managing the changing realities and challenges that our society faces. As a Liberal, I believe in the freedom of choice and a fair go for all. The chance to succeed in life must be available to all in our society, irrespective of race, colour, creed, postcode or family history. The opportunity to thrive in our society, to live peacefully, to participate actively and to enjoy the rewards of our own hard work should be based on nothing more than personal choice and initiative. This Liberal Government has turned this State around. It has delivered on more than 200 commitments, including new hospitals, new schools and record jobs growth. This Liberal Government has the energy to do even more over the next two years, and I am excited to join its ranks.

My primary goal is to ensure that Manly continues to get its fair share. If the people of Manly need something, I will not stop fighting for them. There is a long list of initiatives, policies and ideas that I want to ensure are delivered for Manly. Some of these include: delivering the B-line which includes a fleet of new double decker buses that will save valuable commuting time to and from the city; three new commuter park-and-ride facilities at Brookvale, Dee Why and Manly Vale; and new bus bays, lane widening and road improvements to support these new bus services. I propose to push for more ferry services; fast tracking the use of the Opal card; opening up a new direct route from Manly to Barangaroo; pushing for an upgrade at the Manly wharf to ease the commute when it rains; opening the \$50 million Brookvale Health Centre; fixing up Curl Curl Lagoon; fighting for more funding for our local community groups; and progressing the concept of the Big Bear Cottage.

The Beaches Link tunnel is long overdue. Over the next six months 235 borehole sites will be tested. I am grateful to Roads and Maritime Services for the excellent level of engagement it has already had with the residents of my electorate who are most likely to be affected. I stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Manly in saying we welcome the commitment from this Government for the Beaches Link tunnel and look forward to the completion of the geotechnical drilling. Only a Liberal Government will see the tunnel become a reality.

I believe that the long-term success and prosperity of Manly rests on its ability to foster a high-growth, high-tech, local innovation economy. This is coupled with the light manufacturing zone in the already buzzing Brookvale area. I am especially proud to have had support from the Manly Chamber of Commerce, and I acknowledge two executive members, Mark Stanley and Drew Johnson, who are here this evening.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce.

The concepts of work and manufacturing are undergoing profound shifts around the world. Robotics, new technologies and globalisation are not only changing business models but are leading to the changing nature of many traditional jobs, both blue and white collar. Jobs are not disappearing; they are changing. Manufacturing is not disappearing; it is changing. And so the proximity of Manly to the Brookvale light industrial area and the central business district [CBD] makes it a smart location for people to live, work and invest. That is why one of the five community panels I am forming will consider innovation and the local economy. As a priority, I will be banging on the door of Jobs for NSW to discuss expanding their Sydney Startup Hub into Manly. Tonight I am issuing an invitation to business, big and small, to consider Manly and Brookvale as a destination for investment and workspace. As a former startup co-founder, I am not advocating for government to take the place of enterprise but to fill the gaps, remove red tape and support people willing to have a go.

We have witnessed dramatic technological change over the last two decades. A manufacturer in Brookvale can sell products in a global marketplace with the click of a button. We are also seeing the evolution of work, including the rise of the "gig economy". Governments are struggling with the reskilling and retraining needed to help keep up with this change. The solution to this lies in education. I wholeheartedly agree with remarks by Minister Constance in his inaugural speech in 2003. He said:

Education is the silver bullet. It lowers unemployment, improves economic growth and engenders social change for the better.

I believe the right to choose a school for one's child should not just be a privilege for the rich. The right to a first class education should be blind to financial circumstance. One of the proudest moments for me during the election campaign was attending the opening of the \$13.5 million upgrade for Harbord Public School with the Premier and the Minister for Education, Rob Stokes. The families of Manly deserve the best education available. I will continue to fight, just as Mike Baird did, for more funding for local schools across Manly.

In Manly we have a proud military history. Every Anzac Day tens of thousands of people attend services throughout Manly. It is, however, a national tragedy that suicide has claimed more Australian soldiers' lives than the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined. Suicide impacts not only the families involved but entire communities. We must and we can do something. That is why I am supporting the veterans group Soldier On in their bid to lease the vacant North Head School of Artillery.

The North Head School of Artillery consists of 34 buildings and is set amongst 74 hectares of pristine bushland. The site sits largely empty and parts of it are up for lease. Soldier On intends to provide mental health, respite and rehabilitation services for returned service men and women and their families. I believe that connecting the successful Veterans Employment Program recently launched by the Premier and the Minister for Veterans Affairs with the good work of Soldier On and other existing health providers at North Head would go some of the way towards dealing with this tragic problem. I invite the Minister for Veterans Affairs to visit the North Head School of Artillery for a tour and to meet with the Chief Executive Officer of Soldier On to discuss their vision for the site.

**Mr David Elliott:** Done.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** First job done—it is that easy. Thanks to the good work of this Government, Sydney won the bid to host the 2018 Invictus Games. The Invictus Games are an international sports tournament for wounded and injured veterans. The games use the power of sport to inspire recovery and support rehabilitation. I take this opportunity to also extend an invitation to the organisers of the Invictus Games and its patron, Prince Harry, and ask them to strongly consider Manly as a venue for some of the sporting events as part of the eight-day program in October 2018.

**Mr David Elliott:** That might be a bit harder.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** We will talk. No part of Manly is more than two kilometres from either the harbour or the ocean. Surrounded by the world's best harbour, brilliant beaches, national parks and Manly Dam, we are blessed with our natural environment. Mum, yes, I do agree with you that the Northern Beaches walkway is fantastic and should be funded to include North Head. The continuous 36-kilometre all-weather coastal walkway from Palm Beach to Manly is a joint initiative of the Northern Beaches Council and this Government. The walkway integrates with the B-Line and will support hundreds of local businesses along the way. It is made possible through the Stronger Communities Fund. Tonight I call for the walkway to be fully completed and instead of ending at Marine Parade, Shelly Beach, link up with the existing North Head walking track.

Over the next two years I believe all of the above can be achieved or will be underway. This is only the case because of the hard work done by the Liberal governments of O'Farrell, Baird and Berejiklian, along with the members in this place. I am immensely grateful for all the opportunities I have been given in life. I am grateful for my high school education not far from here at St Mary's Cathedral College, which is, in fact, the oldest Roman Catholic school in Australia. It was founded in 1824 to educate mostly poor children of the emerging colony of New South Wales. I am proud to have attended St Mary's Cathedral College. I had the privilege of meeting John Brogden when he came to the school to address the student leadership group. As college captain I met John and gave him a tour of our school. I am not sure who spoke the most because by the end of it John had sparked an interest in me for politics. I am grateful to him for that.

I am grateful to the University of Notre Dame Australia. Notre Dame is unequivocally Catholic but welcoming of people of all faiths and of none at all. Notre Dame is an excellent university and I am proud to acknowledge two of my lecturers here tonight, Dr Peter Dean and Dr John Rees. As Harold Garnett said:

The best teacher is ... the one who kindles an inner fire, arouses moral enthusiasm, inspires the student with a vision of what he or she may become, and reveals the worth of permanency of moral and spiritual and cultural values.

Peter and John, you certainly did that. I am grateful for my time at KPMG. KPMG employs more than 5,000 people across Australia. Through its 5,000 people, it is deeply embedded in hundreds of local communities. KPMG has a soul and a conscience and is led by good people. It demonstrates that profit, people and purpose can and do coexist. I am proud to acknowledge the presence of many friends—in particular, Greg Daniel—and former colleagues from KPMG here tonight.

To the Liberal Party members of Manly: Without you, I simply would not be here. You demonstrated your commitment to the values of our party when you got out there during this campaign. People forget that our party is a volunteer-driven organisation. So much is expected of you, and time and again you prove you are up to the challenge. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the former member for Manly, David Hay, who is here this evening. David, I am proud to follow in your footsteps, with Jean right beside you.

To Chris Stone, Alicia McCumstie, Ian Zakon and the phenomenal Stuart Smith: Thank you for your energy and professionalism. I thank my campaign executive and, in particular, Phil Nicol, Dan Rubenach and Tom Loomes, along with Lee Furlong, Stuart Sprott, Mark Westfield, David Begg, Natalie Ward, Adam Achterstraat, Steve Pickering, Chris Rath, Matt Cross, Liz Young and Phil Young. To the Young Liberals who came out in droves to support the campaign: Your involvement brought a level of energy that the Manly conference welcomes with open arms and we look forward to growing that relationship. Alister Henskens and Catherine Cusack, thank you. From street stalls to doorknocking, I cannot thank you and the other members who helped me throughout the campaign enough.

Thank you to my Federal counterparts Jason Falinski, who I proudly acknowledge here tonight, and my friend Tony Abbott whom I look forward to sharing the surf with again soon. I especially look forward to working with you, Tony, in our mutual support of Soldier On. Along with Rob Stokes, Brad Hazzard and Jonathan O'Dea, who went above and beyond for the campaign, we all look forward to delivering for the Northern Beaches as a team. A huge thanks to all the Ministers who supported the campaign. I will see you in Manly soon. Premier, thank you for making so many trips to Manly. The people of Manly thoroughly enjoyed having you back and look forward to seeing more of you. Thank you for your friendship and support.

Family is everything to me, and I am blessed to have such a wonderful family. I thank Jann, Rob, Eliza and Angelica for coming up and helping me. The support of Viv, Uncle James and Jenny, Jimmy Archer, Tamo and Edwina has been amazing. I say to Mum, "You are an inspiration." She has achieved so much in her life—from being the first female Commandant of Victoria Barracks to achieving the rank of major. From her, I have learnt how enthusiasm and positivity are often all that is needed to kickstart an idea. She has such a big heart, and I love her. I say to Dad, "From being a bricklayer to becoming a brigadier, you have given your family every opportunity they could ever need or want in life." He instilled in us the belief that public service is a noble pursuit, and that we should all try to fulfil our civic duty in some form or another. He taught us that respect, honesty, integrity and compassion are the foundations of a life well lived.

I thank Elle for travelling halfway across the world to campaign for seven days straight. I am proud of, and take full responsibility for, introducing her to the Liberal Party as I know that one day, if she so chooses, she will become a leader in her own way. I say to Tom, "You are, and always have been, my best mate." His forthright and fearless advice whether on the footy field—where it was often wrong—or in the arena of life is something that I am grateful for and value. I thank Annie for her level-headed and unwavering support. There was not a voter she did not impress. And I say to Elissa, "You have been there for me through thick and thin. You are my single greatest source of inspiration. You are the most impressive woman I have ever met. I love you and I cannot thank you

enough for the encouragement, ideas and support you give me every day. Ted would be so proud of you and I know he is up there watching."

I believe leadership comes from both the head and the heart. I once sat in the gallery as a visitor to listen to an inaugural speech of someone who said, "Governor Lachlan Macquarie was an example of what a visionary leader can achieve for this State." Well, the person who said those words, Mike Baird, is, in my mind, the modern example of what a visionary leader can achieve for this State. I say to Mike, "You have set the standard, and I look forward to carrying on your approach of integrity, passion and achieving results for Manly." Mike Baird should be so proud of what he achieved for Manly and for New South Wales. I thank him for his support, guidance and friendship for what has now been over a decade. As a side note, I remind him that he left two surfboards in the office—so I will just assume I can keep those! I cannot find words adequate enough to express my thanks for the honour that the people of Manly have given me. John F. Kennedy said:

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

Over the coming years I hope that the people of Manly will feel that I have listened and have served them with distinction. I hope they will see how hard I have worked to ensure that our schools continue to get the funding they require and that the tunnel gets underway. I hope they will see how hard I have worked to ensure that the vulnerable in our community get the care and support they need. I hope that the people of Manly will be proud of my efforts. Ultimately, I hope that people will feel optimistic about the future of Manly with me as their member.

To conclude, I learnt from my Dad about the value of humility and the work ethic. Humility and fierce resolve deliver outcomes. With that, I shall stand in this place, hoping that I will make a lasting, positive contribution for the good people of Manly and to the State of New South Wales.

*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I congratulate the member for Manly on an excellent inaugural speech. They were called maiden speeches when I first came to this place. Well done and congratulations. I look forward to your friendship and comradeship.