

INAUGURAL SPEECH

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Taylor Martin is about to make his first speech in this place. I ask members to extend to him the usual courtesies. On behalf of all members I welcome to the gallery members of the Hon. Taylor Martin's family. They include his mother, Mrs Karen Martin, his father, Mr Bruce Martin, and his grandmother, Mrs Anne Martin. I also acknowledge the presence of a number of Ministers and members of the other place. I understand the Premier will also be joining us.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (17:00): I begin by accepting the weight of the responsibility that has been bestowed upon me in becoming the 875th member of the New South Wales Legislative Council, in Australia's oldest Parliament and in our nation's first State. I pledge to ensure that I will use my time here to work towards the betterment of our great State—the first State—and to continue the tradition we have in western society of aspiring to leave more for those that come after us. I make that pledge here tonight in front of many of my friends and family in the gallery. Many of them will have driven here along the F3—or the M1, as Sydneysiders call it. Not only was that vital piece of infrastructure crucial in opening up the Hunter and Central Coast to greater trade and employment opportunities for those already living there; it also opened up the region to families from Sydney like mine, beginning when both sets of my grandparents moved to the Central Coast from Sydney's western suburbs around 60 years ago.

My father's father, Gordon Martin, known to all as Bruce, spent years working away excavating along the rock face of what would become the F3 on his Caterpillar D9. He moved the family to Springfield, which is just east of Gosford, to a Housing Commission home with his seven children and his wife, Anne, a nurse at Gosford hospital. She is here tonight despite being a Labor voter all her life. I am sure that Nan will be a Liberal voter now, if only because we are the ones who have delivered the \$348 million rebuild of Gosford Hospital.

While my grandfather took part in the hard work of building the F3 he also built a life for our family on the Central Coast. He passed on to my father not only his name but also his work ethic. Having left Gosford High School in year 10, well before it became a selective school, my father, Bruce, did his apprenticeship and subsequently began his own kitchen manufacturing business while still in his early twenties and with two young boys under his care. More than a decade later, my mum would meet and marry my dad and become an integral part of our family business—basically running the whole show.

My earliest memories are of spending days on the factory floor, watching my dad and my older brothers, Miles and Tristin, at work. Every night our family dinner time was more like a staff meeting. I remember seeing the workplace grow and shrink month to month as demand varied and our local economy fluctuated through good times and bad during the 1990s. Since before I started school, when I would spend days playing in the office of our family's factory, I had a keen interest in how this world of ours worked: how people spent their days at work and their weekends at play in different ways; how some seemed to have a lot and some seemed to have just a little. When I saw my mum hand out the cheques on pay day, I would wonder why it would seem there was a lot to go around for those who worked on the factory floor but when it came time to pay the mortgage she was stressed and struggling.

I would wonder why there would seem to be dozens of tradesmen coming to work some weeks and other weeks there would just be my brothers and a few others on the shop floor, and why my friends would talk of their families' overseas trips but the furthest that we would get was Anna Bay caravan park, and on to Nelson Bay for fish and chips. This keen curiosity led me to choose to study finance, commerce and economics at my local university, the University of Newcastle. I was the first from either side of my family to attend university. I was also the first and only to go to a private high school. Having been harassed, bullied and physically assaulted to a point where I had one side of my face smashed in and swollen to an extreme extent at my local high school, there was no way I could continue to attend that school. That was an extremely traumatic experience for any 12-year-old to face, and it prompted years of intense anxiety and depression.

Bullying is a dreadful scourge that changes children's lives, steals their potential to contribute to our society and leads to the development of mental health issues amongst our youth. In this place

we need to take a stand against bullying in schools. That is why I was glad to see in yesterday's budget the announcement of a \$6 million broad-based anti-bullying program. The unpopular Safe Schools program was only targeted at one group of students, but all students deserve protection against this behaviour. I look forward to working with Minister for Education Rob Stokes in designing the program and ensuring that we put an end to bullying and support our kids at school. My experience of bullying has stayed with me every single day since it happened. It is why I will stand against violence and intimidation of any kind in any place—in schools especially, but just as importantly in the workplace, in politics, in Parliament and also in the home. No-one should be made to feel worthless and helpless in any environment.

Domestic violence hits a nerve with just about everyone in our State. As we are seeing reported incidents on the rise and more and more people taking a stand, I am certain every family has at least one story to tell close to home. I know I do amongst my friends and family. I will be an advocate amongst young men. I participate in the annual White Ribbon Day walk. I invite my friends and colleagues every year to join in, and I would like to see this initiative taken into all our schools. We need to ensure that young boys who will become young men get the mentoring needed to teach and emphasise the value of respect in all relationships even if—indeed especially when—it is not modelled in their home.

I believe that I was gifted a keen sense of what is right and wrong from my mother, who in turn learnt from her parents, Jack and Ruth Stone. Jack worked on the floor at James Hardie in Sydney's western suburbs, the second generation of Stones to work on the factory floor there, with his father—my great grandfather—having died in that factory while at work. We are all now well aware of the dangers of asbestos but during those days few knew the damage those building materials could do to one's health. Jack was one of the first in a long line to call it out and advocate for action to protect his fellow western suburbs workers and the families they went home to. The trouble he would face as a result of speaking up was of no concern to him—he knew what was right, and he would not desist, even if it cost him his job. In the end, Poppy Jack passed away at just 59, with fibres of asbestos in his lungs.

Those who went before us, like my grandfathers and many others, literally built this country into what it is today—driven by a need and a desire to give their families a better tomorrow than the yesterday that they experienced. All the while, they inherently knew what was right and what was wrong. They stood their ground without yielding when the time came. In those days it may have been the unions and the Labor Party that focused on the needs of workers, but, as we have seen through the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption and the example of union leader Craig Thomson being parachuted into the Central Coast seat of Dobell, Labor and the unions are not standing up for the workers—they are picking their pockets.

It is clear that today it is the Liberal Party who are on the side of the workers. We are the ones who back those families—families like mine. We want them to succeed, we want them to contribute and we want them to thrive. We should be unashamed as Liberals, as conservatives, to stand up for the values and traditions that made New South Wales and Australia into the place that we know and love today. It is telling that today's Australia is an accepting and tolerant nation. However, those of us who identify as conservatives and traditionalists are pressured to feel ashamed and to conform to a perceived majority that is a construct of the Left. The political debate has been changing and it is still changing. The rate of change is quickening. With more than 25 years of uninterrupted economic growth, the strong economic message from the Liberal Party, and our side of politics, has slipped the minds of those in the electorates. We see the Left—The Greens and Labor—shifting the political debate towards one of social injustices and away from building the future of our economy and society.

I enter politics at a time when the debate has made a permanent shift. Previously the Right and Left of politics had sought to improve material standards of living for the population by differing means. The Right encouraged individual freedom, harnessing the power of incentives, and encouraging reward for effort, while the Left focused on the equality of outcomes backed up by the big hand of government. This debate has shifted and evolved with the exacerbation of identity politics and the rise of a victim culture. As Menzies said in his Forgotten People speech, "In Australia the class war must be a false war". Similarly—and with apologies to the great man himself—in Australia the identity war must be a false war.

Those who speak up for ideals and values that do not fit the narrative of the less-identity ideology are increasingly finding themselves told that they and their ideas are no longer needed or heard. Scaring people into submission is not the same as winning the debate. Silencing your opponents is not leadership. It will serve those in pursuit of power to create and exacerbate this division through tribal politics, identity politics and cultural conflicts. In creating and emphasising a victim culture I fear that we risk raising a generation of dependants with more leaners than lifters. We should continue to foster the great Australian culture of resilience, enterprise and ingenuity.

Our Parliament should reflect the values of the families we are here to represent and the individuals whose lives our legislation impacts and affects. The Westminster system should continue to channel society's values into the laws that we make. I fear we are seeing an increased situation where those who are involved in the process of law-making are imposing their political will to reshape the values of our Australian society as they see fit. Increasingly, we hear views espoused by those in positions of influence which would be unfathomable at family dinner tables around our country. Likewise, there are conversations and concerns raised at Sunday backyard barbecues across the State and nation which would be unwelcome and shut down if raised with most of the new political class who are, ironically, in a position to address those concerns.

Instead of people having their concerns heard and addressed we see people involved in the media and left-wing politics impose their priorities on the national debate. There is a top-down approach that has pervaded and taken root in politics in western society. It should therefore be of little surprise that Australians are moving their votes to independents and minor parties in search of the restoration of a bottom-up approach to the public debate. People do not want to keep hearing that they will be told what they can and cannot discuss and debate. They want to tell our elected representatives what should and should not be prioritised for debate. They expect the issues to be addressed and not ignored because they might offend a certain group, or because it is not considered politically correct, it does not fit with the political agenda of the day or the issue is too hot to touch.

These people are the majority in suburban Australia. They are once again the forgotten people. I believe it is the Liberal Party who is listening to them and seeking to represent them. I am proud to be here as a member of the Liberal Party and a member of a government that listens and respond to the concerns, ideals and aspirations of households around our great State. In listening to their hopes and dreams it is a Liberal Government that has ensured that our State is in a financial position to undertake a much-needed, once-in-a-generation infrastructure program to make record investment into schools, hospitals and roads and to address the critical issue of housing affordability. All of this is done without the need for increased taxes or increased debt.

I believe our political debate needs to once again focus on improving the standard of living for all the people we are here to represent and serve regardless of a their gender, skin colour, sexual preference, religion or birthplace. We should be focused on allowing for improvement in the lives of all citizens. To do that there need to be opportunities for everyone. I have outlined how I see our body politic changing. We are witnessing a change in the economy. It is one that should be embraced and its opportunities seized. My generation will be the ones to deal with the challenges and benefit from the opportunities that will be brought by the increasingly fast-paced world.

In the 2019 Parliament members in this Chamber will be regulating for jobs and industries that we have not thought of and do not exist yet. When my predecessor, the Hon. Michael Gallacher, entered Parliament in 1996 email was a new thing. Google would not exist for another two years. Apple products had not yet found their way into homes let alone into the pockets of most of the community. Uber, and the handheld smart phone needed to access such a service, had not been conceived. The opportunities created by the next wave of capitalism will be enormous. We can see the beginning of this movement with the advent of Uber, Airtasker and Airbnb. We will see the removal of barriers to entry as people can transact on a peer-to-peer basis. That will remove the middlemen that currently handle business and free up resources for other areas of our economy. That, in turn, will allow other industries to flourish. In the long run it will provide more for all of us.

Deloitte Access Economics estimates that last year 92,000 people in New South Wales drew an income from involvement in peer-to-peer small businesses. That number had doubled from the

previous year. Included in it are my semiretired parents and their Airbnb business that supplements their superannuation while providing for tourists who visit the Central Coast. It provides a material benefit to local businesses, shops and tourist attractions. I know the advent of new technology and new ways of doing business will place regional New South Wales in a better position to assert its economic prowess—especially in the Hunter and Central Coast regions that I have been selected to represent for the Liberal Party. My time at the University of Newcastle has taught me it is through the proliferation of technological change that cities such as Newcastle and Gosford, and the people who call them home, will be in a position to have the successful future they deserve.

The city of Newcastle is going through a massive change from the old days of BHP to a future transformed by the culmination of the dreams and initiatives of those who choose to make it their home. It will be shaped by alumni who, like me, intend to live, work and invest in the region. My vision for the Central Coast, the Hunter and the State is one in which we as individuals, families, communities and a society build upon the opportunities gifted to us by our parents and grandparents through hard work. We must pick up the baton and continue to build. We owe it to them to continue the tradition of leaving behind more than we found when we came.

There will always be families such as mine who moved to the regions from Sydney to build a better life. Many of my fellow Central Coast residents commute two hours each way to Sydney in their quest to build a better life for their families. More than 30,000 residents from the Gosford end of the coast make the trip each day by road or rail. At the time I decided to enter politics I was one of those commuters travelling to and from Sydney, working at Mercer in the financial advice business. I did not believe that we had to accept the way things were on the coast: that we cannot make it on our own, and that we have to resolve ourselves to the fact that upon finishing school and/or university we must leave the place in which we were born, grew up and loved, and leave our family and friends to be able to find work and buy a home.

It was during one of those early commutes that I met my local Liberal candidate for Robertson who was meeting commuters at 5.30 a.m. at Gosford station. In just one meeting with Lucy Wicks I knew that she was the real deal, so to speak, and as we got to talking about what our region could and should become, I then and there decided to become a part of this team because they shared our vision for our local region, which would bring more opportunity, and back up local businesses—like my family's cabinet manufacturing business—to grow and transform our region into one of abundance and opportunity for locals.

Those of us who were recently on the campaign trail for the Gosford by-election saw the stark difference between the Right and the Left, as we saw Labor announce a \$100 million subsidy plan to give the coast a sugar hit with taxpayers' money. They would take \$100 million away from local schools that need an upgrade, schools that need real classrooms instead of demountables, which is a common problem that this Government is addressing after 16 years of Labor's neglect. They would take \$100 million away from local roads that are in a state of disrepair on the Central Coast and the Hunter, from Avoca to Anna Bay and out past Abernethy.

Labor, The Greens, and those on the Left want the Government to be the solution. They want to extract \$100 million from those who are working hard and pick out some winners that they will subsidise. As Margaret Thatcher said, "The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money." Sixteen years of a Labor government in New South Wales showed that and left our State in a mess. Time and again they want to tell the electorate just how much money they are willing to dole out. They want to feed that sense of economic dependency, but we know that what is needed is a hand-up, not a handout. I know instinctively that that is what those in my region believe in too.

This is the spirit that my grandfather had when he moved the family up to the Central Coast from the western suburbs in the 1960s. It is the spirit my dad had when he ventured out on his own as a young man, having not finished his studies at school, to start his own business as a cabinetmaker, which would underpin our family for almost 40 years. It is the spirit in which I followed when I worked from the age of 14 washing cars in a West Gosford car yard and washing dishes at the Terrigal Bowling Club, saving up to be the first one in my family to go to university. I am a product of my region. It is the experiences that I have had and the people that I have encountered to the north of the Hawkesbury

that have shaped the views and the priorities which I now bring to this Chamber as the youngest member in the first and oldest Parliament in the country.

To my extended Liberal family, I am picking up the baton in this relay, doing my part as others have done before me, particularly the Hon. Mike Gallacher, to advance the Liberal cause and preserve our values well into the future. We truly belong to a formidable team. I particularly give thanks to those who have led our local campaign efforts on the ground in my patch: Andrew Clark, Chris Wicks, Todd Kirby, Kristy Higgins, Harvey Thompson, Jack Wilson, Liam Covi, Bianca Collazos, Charlie Bowcock, Laine Edwards, Stella Shepherd, Bec Johnstone, Rhiannon Beckers, Rebecca Gale-Collins, Wendy Masula, Jessie Gale, and Tim, Karen and Lydia Sowden, the formidable Karen Macnamara, Sally Halliday, Teena McQueen, David Watts and Sharon Ani-Watts, Sam Giddings, Theresa Giddings, Jeff Strickson, Deanna Bocking, Elizabeth Reynolds, Godfrey Franz, Michelle Moffatt, Colin Marchant, Bev Ferrier, Pam Collins and Joy Burrows. You are integral longstanding stalwarts of the party who have always provided assistance and guidance to me.

Team Terrigal is headed up by the effective Adam Crouch, MP. He is a champion of the Liberal cause and our local community, along with Jill Donald, Kerryanne Delaney, Donna Golightly, Ben Sheath, John Barton and Anne McKay. I thank the whole Pilon family—Jilly, Mic, Fletch, Gabi and Banjo—for their support, friendship and tireless advocacy for our community. Banjo's skate park is just the first of many achievements that I know we will have as a team. I thank Bob Mudge, Richard Keogh and Bruce Macdonald, the former member for Kirribilli and former leader of the Liberals in this Parliament, for their mentorship and guidance and their unwavering support for conservative values.

To those that have gone before me on the conservative side of politics, I must thank the Hon. Scott Farlow for his guidance as I enter this place and replace him as the youngest member on this side of the Chamber. I thank the Hon. Alex Hawke, MP, for his full and frank advice; Hollie Hughes, Penny Fisher, Chantelle Fornari-Orsmond, Ben Shields, and Simon Fontana for your support and counsel. Nick Campbell, thank you for backing me from the start, imparting your wisdom to me, and challenging me time and again. Taylor Gramoski, thank you for your dedication to preserving and emphasising the grassroots nature of our party, and your keen sense of justice, which sets a good example for all young Liberals.

To my Mercer family—Justin Pratt, Bronwen Batty, Caroline Douglass, Chris Jurukovski, Hilary Anthony-Benson and of course Nataliya Dikovskaya, thank you for all that you did for me during my time in Sydney in the corporate world of finance before I was taken in by politics. To Lucy, your vision for our region gave me hope and got me involved. Your ability to gather and inspire those close to you has made me and many others become disciples in turning this vision into a reality. I am forever in your debt for the mentoring and encouragement you have provided at every step of my journey from being a constituent of yours to becoming a colleague. As we build our region together, bit by bit, to see that it can become all that we know it can, with a Liberal dose of hope, reward and opportunity, I know that Mollie-Joy and Oscar will be able to live out the vision that we share for young Coasties, and fulfil the potential that our region has to offer. Lucy, like Esther, you were born for such a time as this. I will take your advice, and the advice of Max and Mary Warren, as was given to Jeremiah, not to say, "I am but a youth."

To my family—our own Central Coast Brady Bunch—my brothers Miles and Tristin, my sisters Peta and Georgia, as different as we all may be and as far flung as we may be, spread out across the country and as far as the United Kingdom, you should know I will always be here for you, as I know you have always been here for me. To my mum and dad, Bruce and Karen, for all that you have sacrificed for almost half a century since my brothers came into the world in order to give us the opportunities that were well out of reach to you, I know all five of us will make your hard work worthwhile.

To my colleagues, to my party, to my community, to my generation, we owe it to those who came before us and it is our duty to those who come after us, by birth or by choice, to leave this great State a better place than when we came to it. I pledge to continue that tradition and work towards that goal every day I am here to enable aspirations, and opportunities. This will be reflected in the decisions I make and the positions I take during my time in this place. Thank you.