

The SPEAKER: Before calling the member for East Hills I extend a warm welcome to her guests in the public gallery. I welcome her husband, John Lindsay; her daughters Lori and Ruby; her father, Colin Fullagar, and his partner, Sandra; and her mother, Janet Hamilton, and her partner, Robert. I also welcome her grandmother, Myrtle Fullagar; her sister Narelle Randall and her husband, Kevin; sisters Any Broome and Yvette Douglas; and parents-in-law, Ian and Yvonne Lindsay.

I acknowledge the former member for East Hills, Glenn Brookes and his wife, Karen, as well as Dr Peter Phelps, who was formerly a member of the Legislative Council. He has seen the light and come over here. I also acknowledge John Shields, Vietnam veteran and local East Hills resident; Emani Alaalatoa, President of the La'u Samoa Association; and Paul Burgess, the Senior Vice-President of the Canterbury-Bankstown Tennis Association. I welcome Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells and Mary-Lou Jarvis, Vice-President of the New South Wales Liberal Party and President of the New South Wales Liberal Women's Council, as well as Deputy Mayor of Woollahra Municipal Council. I know all of us are special to the member for East Hills and I am sure that you will join me in welcoming her. I now call on the member for East Hills to give her address.

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:30): I welcome my guests and thank them for coming, especially those who have come from interstate. In my youth, I spent many a cold frosty morning playing competition tee-ball and softball in Kelso Park, representing Revesby Heights ex-servicemen's club. I begin my speech today by reading a piece from *Our Fairyland*, written by John Kelso in the 1920s:

East Hills, a district fair

Happy homes are located there

It's green fields, fertile soil

Reward the worker for his toil.

We have historic fame,

We bear Sir Joseph Banks' name.

East Hills is indeed a district fair. The electorate is diverse in its ethnicities, its economies and its geography. The indigenous population consists of the Darug people of the Eora Nation. Historically it was a farming area with many market gardens and chicken farms. Now there are the industrial areas of Padstow, Revesby, Milperra and Condell Park. There are retail spaces amongst our villages and there is also still some farming left in the area, with one of the last equine and produce stores in the Sydney metropolitan area, located in Condell Park—a business that has been established for nearly 60 years and my father-in-law Ian has been a customer for at least 50 of those years.

Almost 50 per cent of the people in the East Hills area have a parent who was not born in Australia. Women outnumber the men; however, most households consist of families who are undertaking the great Australian dream of owning their own home and paying off a mortgage. East Hills is about 30 kilometres south-west from this place and is indeed unique. We have our own airport, horseracing track, hospital, river and national park. I grew up with the bush as my backyard—well, via the gate in the back fence of my best friend Jo-Ellen's house, who lived across the street anyway. With my annoying younger sister Narelle in tow, whose legs never seemed long enough to keep up with us, we jumped over rocks, caught lizards and watched birds. My sister would pick flowers to take home to our nan and if we ventured as far as the Georges River, which was actually out of bounds, we would go in search of tadpoles and hope that the older boys that lived in the street did not give us too much of a hard time in the process, or dob us in for being out of bounds.

That is the East Hills that I grew up in: the bush, the river, the kids in the street, the neighbours, all the aunties you had that were not really your aunt and when everyone that was the same age as your parents was referred to only as a Mr, a Mrs or an aunt. When the older boys would let us, we would play cricket on the street with them. The days of street cricket have largely gone. Most people in our area can afford a car now, if not two, and getting your feet burnt on the road during summer because you were not wearing shoes is a thing of the past, as is having to move the cardboard box—that is the wicket—so that the annoying 21-year-old up the road driving the Monaro does not run it over for kicks. It was a great place to grow up. It was a tough place to grow up. It was the hood. My grandparents were one of the first couples to build a house on Sandakan Road in Revesby Heights and moved their young family there after World War II. My grandfather was a gunner in the Australian Air Force during the war. I never heard him speak of it—ever. Many of the streets in Revesby Heights are named after significant World War II sites. This, in turn, gave the area its nickname, Hero's Hill.

My grandfather was always a hero to me. He could fix anything with a two-inch nail and a piece of string. He may not have fixed it very well but it would do, because he always made do with what he had. He had a big booming baritone voice and he didn't like greedy kids. So we never asked for anything extra; we didn't need to, because he spoilt us anyway. My grandparents grew vegetables, kept chickens, had a big mulberry tree that all the other kids in the neighbourhood were happy about so they could keep silkworms and nan would make mulberry pies—the best. The mulberry tree is gone now, but my nan, Myrtle, still lives in the same house in Sandakan Road, still grows vegetables and she turns 90 this year.

Government and Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Ms WENDY LINDSAY: But don't tell her I told you. I went to Revesby South Public School and Picnic Point High School, as did my father, Colin, before me. I always enjoyed school. I was a pretty good student and was vice captain at both schools. I had a great social network through school and to this day I am still in contact with many of my fellow students. Several of them are here today. Three couples from my year at Picnic Point High ended up getting married—the Dalys, the Walshs and the Lindsays. All of us still live in the area. I met my husband, John, at Picnic Point High and we have been married for 23 years. We have travelled the world together and have two beautiful girls, Lori and Ruby. John is one of the most genuine, funny and kind humans you will ever meet. He has now been aptly named by his mates the First Bloke of East Hills.

The gravity of being the first female elected in the seat of East Hills did not really hit me until writing this speech. It is an absolute honour to be able to represent the area I love and to be the first woman to do so. I have always said to my girls that they can achieve anything they want to in this world if they are prepared to work hard for it. Their future opportunities have been forged by the groundwork of the many women before them, who have paved the way for a fairer and more equal society where women can have as many opportunities as men. As I stand here in this place, the oldest Parliament in Australia, we are led by the first elected female Premier of this great State, Gladys Berejiklian.

I have been fortunate to have many fantastic female role models in my life: my nan, who is the solid foundation of our family; my aunty Rhondda, who has always been there for me and is the epitome of patience with her work with special needs children; my aunty Lyn—one of those aunts who isn't really an aunt, but was one of the first females in the ANZ Bank to be "allowed" to be a part of the foreign banking team—and my mother-in-law Yvonne, who is the Aussie version of Carol Brady. She married John's father Ian, after he lost his first wife, Pam, to cancer when John was only four years of age. That merger consisted of four girls and two boys, and Christmas lunch is now a minimum of 36 people. That's a lot of salads, hey!

All my mother's sisters have had successful businesses and careers, as has my own mother, Jan, who was named one of the top 50 female entrepreneurs in Australia in 2015. It is a tough act to follow but with mentors such as these, I have always strived to emulate their successes and strengths in everything that I do. Having these role models taught me how to be brave and give anything a go, and they eventually led me to where I am today. I have studied, lived and worked overseas, managed teams of people in the corporate worlds of information technology and insurance, toughed it out in the construction industry and also worked in the not-for-profit sector in community radio. My work in community radio and the many years spent volunteering for Padstow Park Public School P&C, Panania RSL Youth Swim Club and Bankstown Theatre Company has forged great connections in my local community and brought me into contact with many different cultures, religions and people from vastly different socio-economic backgrounds. These connections strengthened my resolve to run as the candidate for East Hills, as I always felt that I would be the best local voice to represent them in this place.

My connection to the Liberal Party is largely due to both of my parents having their own businesses. My parents showed me how hard the owners of small businesses work. Small business is the backbone of our economy and our success within those family businesses was often determined by who was in government. Only the Liberal Party understands small businesses and what they need, and appreciates the way in which they put food on the tables of so many families in our country. My great uncle Jack was a triplet in one of the first sets of triplets to be born in the Crown Street Women's Hospital. There are photos of the triplets with Billy McMahon holding them, so my family's connection to the Liberal Party goes way back to then. Uncle Jack was a master craftsman, a small business owner and built the original lifts in the new Parliament House in Canberra. He was an avid supporter of the former member for Hughes, Danna Vale, and she was often at functions that he held in his home in Yowie Bay. Uncle Jack is no longer with us, but I know he is looking down on me today, with a glass of wine in his hand and a big Uncle Jack Hicks Liberal loving smile on his face.

Music has been a big part of my life. I have trodden the boards for decades here in Australia and internationally. For the past 12 years I have portrayed June Carter Cash in the Johnny Cash show *Cash Only*. It is a seven-piece show, with a crew totalling 10 and we have travelled the country performing. The show is a testament of true friendship and musicianship and the large majority of those 10 people have performed and worked together for the good part of a decade. It is not only a testament to friendship but also our respect for each other, as a band is not an easy dynamic to get right—a bit like a political party, really. You have your members from the Left, the centre and the Right, and as long as everyone gets their turn in the spotlight, everyone generally stays pretty happy. There was much speculation that I would sing a song instead of say a speech at this auspicious occasion—so I won't. I turned to June Carter for words of inspiration:

June was a wildwood flower,
with waving brown hair,
with roses so red,
and lilies so fair.
The myrtle was so bright
with the emerald dew,
and she was cherished
and loved by all that she knew.

June penned the lyrics that when bound by wild desire one would fall into a ring of fire. She walked the line with Johnny Cash and their story has added much to my own over the years. I was 14 when the music teacher, Jon Smith, at Picnic Point High School discovered that I could sing. He was a great advocate for musical theatre and due to his dedication our school was well known for the shows that we performed, including the Australian premiere of *Dear World*. The genre has always been a passion of mine and led to the creation of a radio program that I hosted named *CHOOKAS*. It was funded by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and promoted community theatre in Sydney and was syndicated to Adelaide to promote theatre in that region too. It has afforded me great friends amongst that vast community and my long association with Bankstown Theatre Company. Musical theatre has taught me many things. You are never fully dressed without a smile and, in my case, without a pair of heels. It's all politics, and what's that got to do with us? And if just one person believes in you deep enough and strong enough then don't be anything less than anything you can be.

There was one person who believed in me enough for this journey: Glenn Brookes. He watched the local girl with no political experience make every mistake you could in the 2017 local council elections running as an independent. She was ungrouped, below the line, had no budget and not much campaign time. She had, however, read many council meeting minutes, had a small army of letterbox droppers, dedicated locals who were happy to have her face in their space, and showed true grit showing up to pre-poll on her own every day. With the odds against her, by some miracle—and who in the Liberal Party doesn't love a good miracle?—she managed to achieve over 4 per cent of the primary vote, whilst only being able to man five booths on election day.

It was not enough on that occasion to get her over the line, but Glenn could see in me the same East Hills heart as himself, with the best interests of our local community always at the forefront of our intentions. I will be forever grateful to him for his belief in me and breaking the 58-year-old Labor stronghold on our area and forging a new path for our electorate where significant outcomes are achieved. Brooksey never blew his own trumpet—he never did—so I am thrilled to be able to do it for him now. His achievements were many, including a new commuter car park for Padstow; a complete train station upgrade at Panania including a new covered walkway, ramps and lifts; countless projects at schools and associations with outcomes such as my personal favourite, new kitchen classrooms at Sir Joseph Banks High and Padstow Park Public School; new clubhouses and resurfacing of tennis courts; and a cath lab and five new dialysis machines for Bankstown Hospital.

The new hospital for Bankstown was part of Glenn's big picture vision for our area. He fought hard for it. I look forward to bringing his vision to life and being a part of this Liberal State Government's plans for the largest ever spend on a public hospital in New South Wales. The hospital project, the widening of Henry Lawson Drive, a new Service NSW centre, more commuter car spaces for Revesby, a hall for Milperra Public School and a new clubhouse for Marco Reserve are just some of the fantastic things planned for East Hills by the Berejiklian State Government. I have no doubt that these projects, as well as the everyday concerns of the constituents of East Hills, will keep my staff and me busy over the next four years. I hope you are ready, guys. It is going to be big.

Besides Glenn, there are many people who helped me get to this place. They include Richard Noonan, my right-hand man and campaign manager, and the unflappable Ruth Le Bas, my left-hand girl. We spent many an hour together in 2017 on pre-poll at those ill-fated council elections and many more at the Revesby Young Men's Christian Association pre-poll in 2019 with a much better result. My A-team were the completely reliable Clayton Hopper, Dom Bondar, Gebran Habib, Harry Fuelling, William Derederanalagi, Alex Mishalow and Fouad Karam. We walked many miles door-knocking, spent many hours at train stations together and put up and pulled down many A-frames.

Early on in the campaign I had a couple of weeks with the guru, Peter Phelps. Peter literally taught me how to knock on a door and we spent some of the hottest February days ever out on the streets of Panania. We learnt that we made a great trivia team called The Camels but we also learned never to gamble all our points to take out the final win. Lou Amato also did some pretty hot days of door-knocking with me in our hometown of Padstow. He was with me on one of my less happy days on the campaign trail and gave me the most unorthodox advice. That advice was: At all times, never sound like a politician.

My flak jacket and fellow candidate was Councillor George Zakhia. I cannot thank him, his wife Mirielle and George's campaign manager Nick Smerdeley enough for their support throughout the campaign. George was my protector, my greatest advocate and an understanding soul who knew the pressure I was under, running in the most marginal seat in New South Wales. He knew how important it was for the Liberal party to hold the seat of East Hills. His team threw as much effort into his campaign as my team did with ours. It was an outstanding and commendable effort.

Another fellow candidate was Alister Henskens, alias Mr Smiley. Once Peter and Lou were occupied elsewhere Alister took up the East Hills flag with a smile and ran with it. Many more miles were door-knocked with Alister and he kept me focused at pre-poll whilst under attack from the nurses' union, other union members, Labor councillors, former Labor councillors, Labor State members, former Labor State members, former Labor Premiers and anything else Labor could find to throw at us. We were always outnumbered, but we were never outclassed. Alister's dedication to the East Hills team and his focus on the greater objective was exemplary.

Many others helped out throughout the campaign and during pre-poll, manned booths on election day and scrutineered afterwards. There were far too many to mention them all by name. I thank our Premier Gladys, the Upper House members and many Ministers who visited East Hills, my small army of letterbox droppers, and everyone that helped at pre-poll—particularly David Elliott, Robert Hamilton and the unstoppable Ivy Estaphan, who was absolutely outstanding. I thank those people who manned booths on election day and scrutineered afterwards. I also thank Eddie Nader and Kharen Brookes, who drove around on election day ensuring not only that the Liberal Party volunteers were fed and watered, but also that volunteers from the other parties were. On the day of the election it was fantastic to visit as many booths as I could in the electorate and see so many smiling volunteers wearing Liberal and true local T-shirts. I will be forever grateful for their support. I also thank Stephen Julian, who crunched the numbers, and my number one fan, my dad, who put up many a corflute. [*Extension of time*]

The Young Libs were fantastic and always seemed to show up right when I needed them the most. Nagendra Prasad Adhikari helped also, which was remarkable considering he was managing two other campaigns. Councillor Nancy Liu sent us people for pre-poll when we really needed them. I am grateful for the way that Emani Alaalatoa, Ranjeet Singh, Mr Lin and Michael Hong rallied their communities. I also note my great friends Pallavi Sinha, Mary Lou Jarvis and Natalie Ward. I thank them their contributions, encouragement and great big smiles. David Coleman and Vanessa Gaucci, David's campaign manager, have always been great supporters and were always confident that I could get it over the line. I thank them for their belief in me.

No Liberal election campaign in East Hills would be complete without the Walther family. Their dedication, passion and tenacity are what wins votes, as well as the fact that they are all very smart and can talk policy until the cows literally come home. I thank master campaigner Jim Daniels for everything that he did behind the scenes. Along with Michel Heloui, he manned what we affectionately called "Club Med", the Revesby pre-poll booth with water views. Last but not least, I give a big shout-out to Sandra Hawkes, who kept my family alive and still continues to deliver lasagne to our house at regular intervals to ensure that we have a home-cooked meal every now and then.

I have always been a great believer that one person can make a difference and be the catalyst for change. In the Chamber today is a special lady all the way from the Gold Coast—Dian Hammond. Many people would know her as Di Underwood. She founded Grandparents Rights Needs Support. Di was a champion for grandparents who, during the unfortunate circumstance of divorce, would lose access to their grandchildren. Di began the long hard fight through the family court system to secure rights for grandparents. I am sure she would say that there is much more to do in this space. However, without her initial campaigning at great personal sacrifice many grandparents would have lost contact with their grandchildren through no fault their own. In conversation with Di late last year, I told her that I was going to run for the seat of East Hills and give it my best shot. She turned to me and said, "No, Wendy. You are not going to give it your best shot; you are going to do better than your best." She was right.

East Hills has changed a great deal since my grandparents first moved there and it has changed a lot throughout my life. It is no longer full of Anglo-Saxon Christians; it is now like a mini United Nations with just about every religion and ethnic group possible. But a few things have not changed. East Hills is still peaceful and harmonious, it is still a great place for families and it is still full of aspirational hardworking battlers who want a good life and a better life for their children. As a true local, I understand them and will always do better than my best for them. Thank you.

Members and officers stood in their places and applauded. [Business resumed.]