

## INAUGURAL SPEECH

**The PRESIDENT:** Before calling the Hon. Sam Faraway, I remind members that he is about to make his first speech in this place. I ask members to extend to him the usual courtesy.

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (18:10:29):** At the outset, it would be remiss of me, on this day in the midst of a week of unprecedented fire risks that our State has faced and continues to face, not to acknowledge the tremendous capacity of our great State to pull together and to stand up to the worst challenges. I speak with the certainty that all our thoughts and prayers are with those facing the fires and with all involved: from local service organisations, property owners and our very own RFS teams dropping all their own lives to serve, right through to the Premier and even members of Parliament who are absent today and in their electorates doing what they can to help their communities.

I acknowledge the Clerk of the Parliaments and the Deputy Clerk, along with the entire staff who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that this place functions as it should, with the highest regard for the processes, transparency, traditions, practices and seriousness that comes with operating Australia's oldest Parliament. I have only been a member of this place for a short period of time, but I have already taken in a much higher regard and appreciation for the work that occurs behind the scenes. Many of these dedicated and passionate individuals do not seek gratitude or acknowledgement, but their contribution warrants appreciation. I also acknowledge those seated sort of opposite and behind me—it is a little bit difficult now; some of my colleagues are opposite me. I acknowledge the Opposition and those seated on the crossbench. We all have a job to do in this place and I look forward to working with all of you.

Particular mention must go to my fellow Nationals colleagues: the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, the Hon. Ben Franklin, the Hon. Wes Fang and the Hon. Trevor Khan. On appointment to this place and the other place, most of us arrive as part of a class or a year at a general election. But some of us come by a different path, like the kid who starts school after the term has commenced. I suppose I am an addition to the class of 2019. I thank my Nationals colleagues for all their help, guidance and support transitioning into this place—especially as the new guy. It is with great pride and humility that I stand here in this Chamber as a member of the Legislative Council. They say you have two opportunities in your political career to have the floor to yourself: when you enter Parliament and when you leave. So here is my story.

Out our way, you are either from the Central West or you are from somewhere else. I am not saying we are parochial, but I grew up believing it was a place on the outside of Trunkey. Some of you may actually know where Trunkey is. Born in the Bathurst Base Hospital in 1986, I am the eldest of five children of Warren and Leanne Faraway, who both have long family ties to the Central West region of New South Wales. My father was heavily involved in the automotive trade. In 1988 my parents took the plunge and purchased their very own small business: a Hertz car rental franchise in Bathurst. Like all small businesses starting out, it was very modest and not the largest operation you have seen. Their first office was set up in the oil room in the back of my grandfather's Ampol service station on the main highway into town. With just eight cars and one Pantech truck, they were in business and ready to go.

It is important for me to highlight this as part of my family's journey, as it played such a significant role in shaping our family and our community, and in developing my keen interest in business. Growing up, I was very fortunate not only to be close to my immediate family but also to have an amazing network of extended family and friends. I had the immense privilege of growing up with my grandparents. We were close, and it was just like having a second set of parents. Our family farm backed onto my grandparents' farm on the outskirts of Bathurst. This was so important to me, my siblings and my parents because mum and dad were tirelessly running the business in town. I remember with great affection my grandmother picking us up at school. She was a pretty cool gran. She would pull into the school carpark where my brothers and sister would pile into the car, all jostling for the front seat, and as we opened the front door she would have Bachman-Turner Overdrive or the Bee Gees blaring through the speakers. All the other kids would be looking, but not once were we ever embarrassed.

There were also the school projects we created with her assistance. She was very artistic. They were incredible. Mind you, we recycled those projects and they were handed down year after year. Thank goodness the school did not change the assignment brief too often. Having my grandparents play such an important part in our lives is something I will always cherish. I know nothing is more important than family. During my school years I worked in the family business. It is a familiar story, particularly for those on the land. On finishing my education at All Saints College, Bathurst, I joined our small family business in a junior role. It was a very junior role, yet I was keen and learnt fast by listening and doing. Unfortunately, as is often the case, it was not all smooth sailing. While I was finishing my schooling, my father became unwell and was forced to take extended time off work. My mother had to make a decision and at 18, armed only with a desire to succeed and enthusiasm, I was entrusted to step up and take over the business. It was a huge challenge and one that, thankfully, I was able to meet.

Looking back, this is when my passion and appreciation for small business and regional development began to take shape. I learnt to be tough earlier than most but also learnt the value of trust and leadership by example. Down the track, our business expanded, diversified and grew. With renewed vigour, I continued my late father's commitment and that is something I know he would be proud of. Through hard work and learning through adversity, I have, with the help of a great team and my family, built a successful business with hundreds of motor vehicles. It is a big leap from the eight cars and one truck that mum and dad started with in 1988. There are branches across New South Wales, in Orange, Bathurst, Mudgee, Lithgow and the Blue Mountains. In 2018, after celebrating 30 years as a family-owned business, my mother and I decided it was time for a change. We were lucky enough to sell our business to another family-owned operation, which has taken our 30-year legacy and continues our passion and commitment to serve regional communities.

My family have been involved with the land for generations and for the past 10 years I have continued that tradition through our family property and involvement with the Royal Bathurst Show as a councillor and president. The Bathurst Agricultural, Horticultural & Pastoral Association has conducted agricultural competitions for 161 years. In 2019 we conducted our 151st agricultural show and the twenty-sixth Royal Bathurst Show. It is the largest agricultural show west of the Blue Mountains and the largest annual community event in Bathurst. I am proud to be a part of the amazing team that continues to make this happen. As with the other 194 agricultural shows in New South Wales, the show is one of the most important community events in many regional towns. Once a year regional New South Wales communities come together at their local shows—in drought, in sleet and occasionally in good times.

Our showgrounds, reserved 141 years ago at the request of our association, are used and have been used in these past few days not just to conduct shows but also to help communities in times of dire need. Through the show and my community involvement, I have seen the work of other organisations that often come together to support their community: the Country Women's Association, the RSL sub-branch, Legacy, Lions, Rotary, Probus, the mighty RFS, NSW Farmers and many others. I will continue to stand up for our agricultural societies, our local shows and our local organisations that make such a tremendous and important contribution to the fabric of our regional communities. My interest in politics started in high school. There were some very heated debates in year 12 economics and business studies classes. It is fair to say that we always set out to challenge each other and we would agree to disagree most of the time—a sound preparation for this place perhaps.

By 2007 I had run the family business for three years and had learnt a great deal. I started to really engage with politics and set out to understand how it worked. Luckily for me, I met Kerry Bartlett, the then sitting Liberal MP for the Federal seat of Macquarie. A redistribution had occurred and the City of Bathurst had moved into the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury electorate of Macquarie. It was a redistribution that created an electorate without a community of interest—one half of the electorate was the Blue Mountains and the other half was the Central Tablelands and Central West. Placing all that aside, Kerry set out to introduce himself to the new constituency areas of Lithgow, Bathurst, Oberon and surrounds.

I met Kerry when I decided to attend a lunch with then Prime Minister John Howard. Everyone was in town—even a few Labor supporters. After meeting Kerry, I thought to myself, "I want to help this guy". He was genuine and he had a real story to tell outside of politics and about how he ended up in politics. I offered to help wherever I could. I learnt a lot during the 2007 Federal election campaign. I became a booth captain very quickly. I drove around for five weeks with a picture of Kerry's face on my car. I packed booth kits, manned pre-poll for days and met some amazing people who shared the same passion and enthusiasm for the very same causes I did. Whilst that election result was not what I had hoped for and was bruising to say the least, it ignited my interest and involvement in politics. Three years later another Federal redistribution occurred, and the City of Bathurst, Lithgow and Oberon were shifted back into the electorate of Calare.

A guy called John Cobb turned up. He was running for the newly shifted electorate of Calare for The Nationals. Despite the bruising result of 2007, I threw myself into the campaign. I was a booth captain and drove around with John's face on my car. I manned pre-poll for days and packed the booth kits. At the end of another busy campaign we had a win: John Cobb won the electorate of Calare comfortably at the 2010 election. The following 18 months included many discussions with John regarding small business, regional development, jobs, agriculture, regional communities and regional representation. After all these conversations John said, "It is time for you to join the National Party, son". And so I did. That began my involvement in and dedication to the Nats.

My involvement in the National Party has been extensive since joining—Bathurst branch chair, Bathurst State Electorate Council chair, Calare Federal Electorate Council chair, campaign manager for John Cobb in 2013, campaign manager for Paul Toole in 2019, central executive member, 2019 Senate candidate, and presently the senior vice chair of the NSW Nationals. Our party is truly a grassroots party, with a strong, open organisational wing that encourages all members to be active and engaged. It is the heart of our party and where our MPs are forged with a firm commitment to our objectives. First and foremost, it allows us to represent diverse communities across the whole State and allows someone like me to start as an ordinary member and in seven years arrive in this place.

It should never be a simple decision taken lightly to enter politics. After a great deal of contemplation and discussion with friends, family and mentors, I arrived at the conclusion that my genuine commitment to make a difference, to use my experience for the benefit of others and to serve the people of New South Wales was strong. I believe in our political system and I want to make a meaningful contribution that provides tangible benefits for all those who live in New South Wales, in particular regional New South Wales. I have a deep respect for our traditions and institutions; a respect, though, that is informed by modern views. I have a healthy regard for the past with a broad view of where we need to go in the future. It is clear that The Nationals are not, as some would paint us, just the voice of akubra and R.M. Williams wearers—although we do wear them far better than most. We are far more than that. We are the voice for regional workers, the voice for families, whether it is on the farm or in town. We are the voice for the family business.

For me, that means we should continue to build strong communities, providing the circumstances that allow our families and businesses to thrive through their own hard work and innovation. Small business is at the heart of our communities and our successes, and it is in my blood. I am not one to dwell on things. When my father passed away I was forced to make a choice: Go off to Sydney and university, like many of my mates, or, as the eldest of five children, grow up, get stuck in and work hard, running what was our family business. As I have said, I am passionate about small business. I know what it adds to families and regional communities. I know the importance of the jobs they create and I know how difficult they can be to manage and run. Providing full-time jobs has strengthened my community, kept families in regional New South Wales and supported many other local businesses.

Whilst there are sacrifices, knowing that people's ability to pay their mortgage, buy the groceries or put fuel in the car is reliant on you, it is a serious and very personal commitment but one that is enormously rewarding when you get it right. My experience tells me that, whilst university is important, it is not for everyone. You can build a successful career in the regions through hard work, motivation and determination. There are opportunities in small businesses, in trades and in apprenticeships. In fact, there are opportunities across all sectors in the regions, even in drought—through agriculture, education, manufacturing, mining, forestry and emerging technology. It does not matter whether they are small or large enterprises. It is through getting stuck in, adhering to your values and building relationships with people that the job will get done.

Bringing opportunity to country people is the reason The Nationals have existed for 100 years and it is the reason we will exist for another 100 years. Agriculture, small business, investment in critical regional infrastructure and water security are the vital policy issues right now and for the next decade. I believe that there are real opportunities to build on the hard work of the past eight years and to see the ambitions of regional New South Wales come to life. In my view, that means building dams now to improve our resilience, readiness and survival for the next drought. It means investing in the capacity of our towns to meet their water needs for families and business right now and into the future. It means making sure that the rules that our farmers operate under are fair—rightly prosecuting the few who give the many a bad name but not cruelly pursuing the others. It also means that those who provide advice on how our rivers run and how our environment is managed should live in the communities they are making those decisions about.

Regional communities want government to push ahead with this agenda and deliver better water security and a fairer system. I will push for shovels in the ground, for smarter systems and for more public service jobs in our towns. I believe in giving people a fair go. I believe in the value of hard work. I believe in the best possible opportunity for all people, no matter their postcode. The Nationals in government are, together, showing that we can tackle our big problems from all angles, which means listening to the community, making the hard decisions and delivering the resources needed. The \$4.1 billion that was quarantined by the NSW Nationals from the sale of Snowy Hydro was an outcome delivered by the Deputy Premier and his team and an outcome that has directly benefited regional communities.

I also take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge some people who have helped me along my political journey. Firstly, I thank the members of The Nationals Bathurst Branch and Bathurst State Electorate Council, some of whom are in the gallery today. I will not name everyone individually, as I could be here for a while, but there are a few who must be mentioned. I thank Brett Kenworthy, the current chairman of the electorate council, who has been, and continues to be, a very good friend. At the end of the day, he is always on the end of the phone to offer an opinion, advice or a good laugh. I also thank Lachlan Sullivan, the current secretary/treasurer—better known as the "Windradyne Whisperer" in my home town. Only a local newsagent could pull off that title. It is exciting to see him venturing into a new role with The Nationals, and I think he will do a fantastic job.

I thank Sheena Rigby; Rosaleen Sullivan; John and Judy Nicoll; Harvey and Cheryl Sherlock; Nino and Tracey Di Falco; Melissa Inwood; Peter Woodward; Jim and Liz Inwood; Col, Cathy and Kirby McPhee; Ean and Rhonda McMaster; and Sue and Bill Thompson. In fact, I thank the entire branch for all their support. I truly appreciate it. I thank the NSW Nationals Central Council, our party's governing body, including the past and present members who are the driving force behind our grassroots organisation. Without their passion and dedication we would not have the National Party. I would not be here today if it were not for these dedicated individuals and I acknowledge the trust they have placed in me to be their representative of our great party in this place.

To the former member for Coffs Harbour, a 28-year veteran of the other place, now turned party chairman, Andrew Fraser: It is an absolute pleasure to work with you as senior vice chairman. You are never dull and you are always willing to fight for and represent the interests of regional New South Wales. Thank you for your support and friendship. To the State director, Ross Cadell: Rosco, you lead a great team at our NSW Nationals head office and I acknowledge all the hard work that is done behind the scenes by you and your team for the entire membership of our party.

To my fellow Young Nationals, including current chairman Jock Sowter: The Young Nats are an important element of our party and have a significant role to play in progressing the agenda for young people in the regions. To Will Rollo, Alysia Smith, Nat Openshaw and Jess Coles: Thank you for all your support and friendship. I must also thank Rebecca Treloar for agreeing to work with me. You have been a huge help in the transition to this place and I am looking forward to all the fantastic things that, hopefully, we can achieve for rural and regional New South Wales.

I am fortunate to have had a number of political mentors. Kerry Bartlett showed me what a hardworking, genuine and passionate member of Parliament looks like. John Cobb got me involved in the National Party and encouraged me to put up my hand to serve the party as an electorate chairman after he became the Federal member for Calare. We have always had a fantastic working relationship. We know we can be frank with each other without ever affecting our friendship. His wise counsel is always welcomed. Paul Toole, who is my local member, would have to be one of the hardest-working MPs I have ever met. He never stops, he is driven to serve his community and he has earned a great deal of respect from the voters of his electorate of Bathurst. I have enjoyed playing a small part in his campaigns and successes. I appreciate all his advice, support and friendship and I am looking forward to being able to work alongside him in the Central West and western New South Wales.

Finally, I count myself lucky to include our former Federal leader and former Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson, as a mentor and friend. I will always remember his line: You cannot get good public policy out of a bad public debate. He reminds me that The Nationals may represent rural and regional communities but we are the party that governs for all. To Michael McCormack, Deputy Prime Minister: I am looking forward to working with you and my Federal colleagues in partnership to continue to deliver for regional New South Wales. To my new boss and good friend, the Deputy Premier and Leader of The Nationals, John Barilaro: You are an excellent example of a Nationals leader—a chippie from Queanbeyan who brings real-life experience and leadership on the tough issues. I am excited to be entering Parliament and serving the regions with you as Leader of The Nationals in government.

It would be remiss of me not to thank my new colleagues whom I have not already mentioned. I include not only The Nats in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly but also our Liberal partners in coalition, as well as other members in this Chamber. I believe that, no matter what side of politics we are on, we all put ourselves forward to do this because we are all genuinely here to serve our communities and make a difference in society. I thank those members from all parties who have welcomed me and I look forward to working with all of them. To my close friends—and real mates—many of whom have made the journey to be here today: Alex Bland, Lachlan Bullock, David West, Nick Sharp, Jim Cooley, Matthew Press, Jeff McCormack and Emma Watts, you have all been so supportive and I am so lucky to have you all as friends.

It is often said that family is everything. I am so fortunate to have a supportive family that has been by my side from the beginning and been supportive of my political pursuits, even though they have called me mad several times. To my mother, Leanne, my brothers, Toby, Ben, Liam, and my one and only sister, Sarah, thank you so much. It is your support and love that has got me to this point today. To my grandfather Norm Sweetnam, who is here today, thank you for all you have done—not just for the unconditional support you have given me but because we have always been close. Having you here today means so much.

Finally, there are two people I want to particularly mention. Unfortunately both are no longer with us. It is truly a shame that my father, Warren Farraway, and grandmother Gwen Sweetnam are both not here today. They played such a significant role in my upbringing, life and education. They always kept me grounded and gave me the strength to always have a go. I am sure they are both looking down proudly today. I will always remember the journey and the people who got me here and will use their example to guide me in my role. The promise I make today is that I will do my best to deliver for the people of rural and regional New South Wales. I will play my part in representing the regions. I will fight to develop outcomes that have a real benefit for our communities. Thank you, Mr President, and fellow members.

**The PRESIDENT:** I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 8.00 p.m.