

## INAUGURAL SPEECH OF THE HONOURABLE DAVID CLARKE

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE** [8.11 p.m.] (Inaugural speech): I also oppose this legislation. In speaking for the first time I do so with a great and abiding recognition of the responsibilities that my new office places upon me and with the hope that my time spent here will be productive in service to the people of New South Wales. I come to this House as one who by conviction and belief respects, supports and upholds its history and traditions. As a member of the Legislative Council I will resist with all the vigour I can any and all attempts to bring about this House's demise, to weaken its powers or to diminish its stature and traditions in any way.

Over the years many outstanding and distinguished members have served in this Chamber. The late Jim Cameron was a member whose values and social beliefs I identify with. He had a unique and inspirational capacity to espouse values in noble and uplifting language as befits such noble values. A former and distinguished President of the House, John Johnson, representing an historic political institution of our country, the Australian Labor Party, has also been courageous, forthright and determined, especially in his elevation of the family, his defence of the right to life of the unborn child and his denunciation of abortion. He continues to champion these causes outside this Chamber.

I deem it an honour to find myself serving in this House at the same time as Deputy-President Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. I identify with many of the values that he so courageously and consistently enunciates for our State and for our nation. I believe that the membership in this place of the Hon. Michael Gallagher epitomises the Liberal Party's belief in the capacity of individuals to strive for achievement through their own efforts and sheer determination based on merit. He has come up from the grassroots through service to the community as an officer of our police force and today sits here as Leader of the Opposition. Our party takes pride in his achievement. My good friend the Hon. Charlie Lynn, by instilling patriotism and pride in our young people for our nation's history by his work on the Kokoda Trail and elsewhere, serves Australia in a commendable and inspiring way.

Tonight I want to testify to my commitment to the truths of the Christian faith—the faith professed by the overwhelming majority of Australians. I acknowledge the truths of my own church in all its holiness and all its goodness. I accept its teaching authority in matters of faith and morals.

I believe that there are unchanging core values that give recognition to God as the supreme inspiration for good and that those values represent objective truths and ideals that have come down to us through 2,000 years of Western civilising tradition anchored firmly on Christian ethics. I give testimony that Christian ethics and Christian society have provided the major humanitarian advances for mankind: in the abolition of slavery and child labour, in universal education, in the rights of women, in the sanctity of monogamous marriage, and in the protection of the innocent and the vulnerable.

I would like to provide an overview of where I stand on a range of issues that confront our society. I believe that the majority of the electorate of New South Wales will agree with me on the majority of these matters. Those who disagree that they are the views of the majority should at least concede that they are views held by a significant section of the electorate. In any event, that section of the electorate, whether it be a majority or not, needs to be represented, and I intend to be one of those who will speak on their behalf. I start from the premise that philosophically I am a conservative. I believe in conservative principles. I believe in preserving and building upon institutions and concepts that have evolved over time through trial and error based on virtues and ethical foundations that link together.

I am a constitutionalist. I uphold the Constitution of Australia and the Constitution of the State of New South Wales. I believe in the separation of powers and the three tiers of government at Federal, State and local levels. I support, and always will support, the pivotal place of upper Houses of review—the Senate for the Commonwealth and the Legislative Council for New South Wales. I support the sovereignty of the individual States and New South Wales. I am a State's righter. I believe that the sovereign powers of Australia should be retained by Australians for Australians. They should not be surrendered to international organisations and foreign bodies. Nations do not need to give up their independence in order to live in peace and co-operation with each other.

I have never understood the inconsistency of those who call for a republic with the erroneous claim that it will in some way enhance our independence and yet find these same elements leading the charge to hand over Australian sovereign power to the United Nations organisation. I oppose the centralisation of power as an article of faith. Never were truer words spoken than when Lord Acton said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. I believe in the independence of the judiciary to interpret and apply the law. But the judiciary is not there to override the Legislature and write new law through judicial adventurism. The job of writing laws belongs to the people of Australia through Parliament; it does not belong to judges. For judges to go down that path is a dangerous attack on the fundamental doctrine of the separation of powers. It is a usurping of parliamentary democracy.

In supporting Australia's constitutional framework I endorse at the apex of that system the constitutional monarchy. I am a constitutional monarchist, not only because of tradition, emotion and symbolism but because it is the most tried and trusted model for the protection of our freedoms. That is why it was endorsed by a majority of Australians in all States, including New South Wales, not that long ago, and will continue to be endorsed by the majority in the future. I love the Australian flag, and I love it the way it is with that Union Jack placed in the top left-hand corner comprising those three Christian crosses and symbolising so many of the unifying characteristics of our nation: our history, our common language, our Parliament and democratic institutions, the rule of law, and our Christian heritage. Let the present Australian flag, that great symbol of our nation, fly for all the years of our future.

I look back on our history with great pride. I honour those who came to our shores in those early years from the British Isles. They came here as settlers, not as invaders as revisionists would try to have us believe. They overcame great adversity and they laid the foundations, starting here in Sydney, for our State and our nation. They sanctified our nation through their efforts, achievements and sacrifice. It is a monumental besmirching of their memory and a falsification of history to claim otherwise. God can give a vocation not only to individuals but also to nations. Great Britain had a vocation that brought great humanitarian advances to many parts of the world, and certainly to Australia.

As new settlers come from other parts of the world, our nation is being enhanced and perfected. It has been enhanced by those who fled communist dictatorship and tyranny imposed under its boot. It has been enhanced by those seeking religious and economic freedom and a better and safer life for their families. Whether they were Polish, Croatian, Coptic or Chilean, they have blended in with what was here already. They have done that by virtue of their collective understanding and acceptance and collective support of the values upon which our country was founded. They have joined a great continent nation on the edge of Asia, but not part of Asia because we have our own unique identity.

As we survey the world around us, we can surely see that getting our immigration policy right is so vital for the peace, prosperity and cohesion of our society. Our policy must be decided by Australians themselves and by what is in the best interests of Australia. It should not be dictated by interfering dubious committees of the United Nations or self-appointed and unrepresentative fringe groups. I want to say what a great service the Howard Government has done by protecting our borders from those who would break the rules and arrive here illegally and uninvited. On this vital matter the Howard Government speaks for the overwhelming majority of the Australian people.

There is a growing feeling that future settlers need to have an understanding of and respect for core concepts of our nation and to work within those concepts. It is a nation steeped in Western and Christian values and ethics, a respect for the religious views and freedom of others, a respect for women and their equality, and therefore a belief in the institution of monogamous marriage and, above all, a track record of law-abiding conduct. We need to be not a continent of tribal groups striving to be partitioned off and in conflict with each other because of diametrically opposed values, but a society united in accepting our fabric of existing values—values with which no-one could reasonably take offence.

Internationally we are part of the Western alliance. Britain and the United States are our natural allies. The threat to humanity posed by communism would not have been confronted and defeated were it not for a strong and motivated United States led by a strong President, Ronald Reagan, and backed by Great Britain led by a strong Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

I now want to say something about the family. I believe in the institution of the family—the traditional family unit that has come down to us through the ages. It is the foundation stone for a prosperous and stable nation. It is a God-given institution devised for the proper

functioning of mankind. No success by our society in other areas can ever compensate for failure to enhance and exalt the family. By encouraging families we build stability and unity. They are the first line of defence in the fight against drug abuse, suicide, crime and other social ills. Family life makes good economic sense because a reduction in problems arising from broken homes and dysfunctional families correlates with a reduction in resources required to repair those problems. As a member of this Parliament I will always support legislation designed to enhance the family and its central nobility in our society.

Our greatest assets are our children. A child needs, wherever possible, the security and affection that should come from family life. Sometimes circumstances, many of them tragic and unavoidable, make that goal unattainable. Nevertheless, it is a target worth striving for. Every child deserves the innocence of those childhood years; every person deserves to be able to look back on those years with positive memories. Those who seek to rip away the innocence of childhood and those who prey upon children commit a crime of infamy. This is evil at its darkest; evil in its purest form. The protection of children is one of Parliament's greatest responsibilities. As a father of four children I feel the great weight of that responsibility. Children should not be starting life's journey disadvantaged because of neglect or abuse, or even unavoidable circumstances. I will be working in this Parliament to close that gap so that they have the same chance in life that every child should in a society based on morality and compassion. While I am talking about children, I point out that I will never vote to decriminalise drugs of abuse. That is because, to many people, especially the young, legalisation equates to community acceptance and approval. For the same reason I will not support drug trials or drug injecting rooms.

I respect the right of individuals to live their lives as they choose, unmolested and without harassment and persecution, provided they do not bring harm to others or to institutions and concepts that protect others. Accordingly, I cannot agree with key elements of an agenda that seeks to institutionalise homosexual concepts and elevate them to the same level as the family. I believe this is a process contrary to the natural law as perceived by virtually all civilisations, cultures and religious faiths down through the ages. If legally enshrined, it would seriously devalue the concept of the family and its ability to act as an anchor for society.

In practical terms, what does this mean for me as a member of this Parliament? It means that I will not support the legalisation of same-sex marriages, I will not support the reduction of the age of consent for males to 16, I will not support the legalisation of infant adoption by homosexual couples and I will not agree with the use of taxpayers' money to fund IVF procedures for homosexual couples. I believe in a culture of life, in the sanctity of life and that there is no greater right than the right to life itself. I therefore express absolute and unchangeable opposition to the culture of abortion. The use of abortion to terminate the life of an unborn child for reasons of birth control convenience or other dubious reasons is a tragedy made all the more abhorrent because it occurs in a society that considers itself enlightened. In a similar vein, I cannot support the legalisation of euthanasia. To do so would be to open a floodgate for abuse. The Hippocratic oath would become an oath without meaning.

I will now turn briefly to stem cell research, an area of medical science that promises to bring huge benefits to mankind. As I understand it, those benefits are coming from research using adult stem cells. I support and welcome that research. However, I totally oppose research using stem cells extracted from human embryos. I therefore oppose its legalisation. I also oppose the legalisation of human cloning, which I see as a slippery slope pathway to the debasement of society.

We all agree that the future of our State rests on the quality of education and the standard of our institutions of learning. However, our education system needs to reinforce community values, human virtues, family life and pride in our history and institutions. We need basic literacy and numeracy skills for all and a rejection of the policy of reducing all students to the lowest common denominator. Our education system is made stronger because of its diversity. I support the democratic right of parents to choose to send their children to a government school or an independent school. The fact that parents, at great financial sacrifice, are sending their children in ever-increasing proportions to independent schools must surely show that there are deep concerns about some aspects of public education standards, discipline and what children are being taught in some areas.

I am heartened by the greater freedom of choice now offered to those in tertiary institutions. I look forward to the day when that freedom of choice extends to the right of students to decide whether they belong to student unions. Compulsory student unionism is a very sore point for those who believe in freedom of conscience. Another sore point with many, including those involved with religious organisations and their schools, is the growing tendency of anti-discrimination bodies to extend their empires by scouring for complaints, touting for business and lobbying for their statutory powers to be continually expanded. It is a culture in which everyone complains about everyone else. Perhaps the time has come for less scrutinising by these bodies of citizens and more scrutinising by citizens of these bodies.

I take great comfort that issues that I have talked about tonight are more openly discussed and considered in the media, academic institutions and the public arena generally. For too long the media was a closed shop, off limits to those who were not part of the left elite establishment. Now we see the emergence of commentators who are articulating the mainstream views held by the great majority of Australians. One who did persevere in difficult times was the late Bob Santamaria. I pay tribute to his memory; he was a man of heroic virtue. In present times, the *Daily Telegraph's* Piers Akerman is one who articulates what the majority of the New South Wales electorate thinks. Rare is the occasion when I find myself in disagreement with him. I find Miranda Devine, Christopher Pearson, Michael Duffy, Janet Albrechtson and Paddy McGuinness also worth reading, as I do Paul Sheehan, whose book *Among the Barbarians: the dividing of Australia* should be read by all who share a concern about Australia's future.

I have high regard for Peter Coleman, a former editor of *Quadrant* magazine. His scholarly research has for years exposed double standards practised by the Left establishment. In broadcasting, Alan Jones, by representing the views of the mainstream majority, shows why he is king of radio.

For too long left political correctness maintained a tight grip over academia. But, thank goodness, this also is being challenged by high-calibre academics like Dame Leonie Kramer, Professor David Flint, Professor Geoffrey Blainey and Keith Windschuttle, who has well and truly let the cat loose among the politically correct pigeons with his book *The Myth of Frontier Massacres in Australian History*.

In religious life, Sydney finds itself in the enviable position of having the leaders of its two largest denominations, Anglican and Catholic, speaking out forcefully for Christian concepts and moral values. Whilst Archbishops Pell and Jensen differ on some theological points, their unity of thinking and support of good social values will greatly benefit New South Wales as their influence hopefully increases.

I now want to say something about a great institution of our country: the Liberal Party of Australia. I uphold, exalt and pay honour to my party because it represents great traditions, truths, principles and policies. I believe in its values, and I believe in its philosophical concepts. It represents the heart and soul of the Australian nation: it stands for mainstream views. It is comprised of people motivated by good intentions for our country's future. The founder of our party, Robert Gordon Menzies, was a man of stature. He was a man who, through his soul and his vision, comprehended those sentiments that manifest themselves within the majority of Australians.

In many ways the Government of John Howard is leading Australia to new heights of progress—not only in economic management and growth, not only in freeing up the productive energies of Australia and getting government off our backs, but in restoring a focus on sound social and moral virtues. He is restoring pride in our history and traditions, and in our symbols and institutions. Some years ago I heard John Howard speak at a function. He was not then the Prime Minister—he was not even the Leader of the Opposition. He laid out his values and his views, and they were the values and views that I believed in as well. And I want to tell you that from then on John Winston Howard had won me for life. He is a man cast in a hero's mould, and every day that he remains as Prime Minister is a blessing for the Australian nation.

Other Liberal parliamentarians from this State—like Tony Abbott, Bronwyn Bishop and Ross Cameron—inspire by articulating the sound principles underlying the Howard Government. And there are still others like Jackie Kelly, Helen Coonan and Bill Heffernan, each of whom contribute to our great party. The Liberal Party now has a new young generation of members of talent and dedication to carry our party forward. Nicholas Campbell of our party's State Executive, Alex Hawke, the new President of the Young Liberals, and his three vice-presidents, Natasha McLaren, Anthony Orkin and Kyle Kutasi, are all in the vanguard of our party's organisational wing. I take great pride in being a member of a party comprised of such good young people as these.

I acknowledge with deep thanks a multitude of friends within the Liberal Party; they have been pivotal in my becoming a member of this House. There are too many to mention by name, but they will know who they are. I deeply value their advice and counsel. Those who

know my wife, Marisa, will understand why I acknowledge her here tonight. She not only believes in decent things and good virtues, but in her thoughts and in her deeds she actually lives them—and certainly infinitely more than I could ever dream of being able to do. However, in our beliefs she is at one with me, and I am at one with her.

My daughters, Caroline and Ann-Marie, and my sons, Michael and Andrew, are here tonight also. In many ways, in a reversal of roles, because of my political involvement they have often had to carry me on their shoulders. But, in spite of that additional burden, they continue to achieve in their lives and in their goals. To my wife and me, they are our pride and joy. To my parents—my late father and my mother, who is present here tonight—I acknowledge the affectionate home life that both my sister, who is also present here tonight, and I were part of. They always put their children first. Finally, I acknowledge with gratitude the Liberal Party itself. I would not be here without its endorsement and support. My life has been spent in membership of that party, and any years ahead of me will be spent in membership as well.

As a member of this Parliament I will be working to fulfil the trust the Liberal Party has placed in me. I will be working to ensure that its trust will never be betrayed. And as I work to uphold and advocate the conservative, mainstream and Christian-based truths and values that I believe our nation is based upon, I will be working to do so with determination, I will be working to do so with dedication, and I will be working to do so with missionary zeal. At all times I want to work in a way in which I hope I can act with charity and compassion, with integrity, and with generosity of spirit, but in the absence of meanness of spirit. If I can manage to do all those things, then, God willing, I cannot go wrong.