



Inaugural Speeches

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Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [6.22 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Madam Speaker, may I offer you my congratulations on your promotion to the esteemed position as the first female Speaker of this House in the 100th year of International Women's Day. I am deeply honoured by the responsibility that has been entrusted to me by the people of Mulgoa to be their representative in this House. To become a member of the oldest Australian Parliament and, with my fellow members, to form the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales is a rare and treasured honour.

This opening paragraph would have been inconceivable to my grandfather, Alexander Szymoniczek. Alexander Szymoniczek arrived in Australia in 1948 as a World War II displaced person from the horrors of Hitler's failed fascist regime. He arrived, like so many others, penniless, friendless and homeless in a foreign land. But he knew one thing: he had arrived in a beautiful country with boundless opportunity and to live in peace.

My grandfather was employed on government contracts and continued to work diligently, saving money to bring his wife, his mother-in-law, his son and his daughter to this great country. His son, my Uncle George, and his daughter, my mother Zenona Pogmore, are in the gallery tonight. After working one year on contract my grandfather achieved his goal and in 1949 his family joined him in Australia. Three years later he opened his own shoe repair shop in Oxford Street, Paddington. He soon had a family of nine to provide for. He helped build the Russian Orthodox Church that still stands in Lidcombe today and he sponsored numerous European families out to Australia to live. My grandfather displayed a mammoth work ethic, integrity, a sense of duty for others and persistence. It was this trait of persistence—or, as I like to refer to it, stubbornness—that ensured he left an indelible mark on this world. His wife, my grandmother, was also a strong and stubborn woman.

There are many examples of such stubbornness, but one epitomises this quality. My grandmother persistently requested a new window be installed in the brick wall at the front of their house. She waited and waited. But fearing it would never eventuate, she took matters into her own hands and grabbed a sledgehammer and smashed out the bricks to the rough size of the window she wanted. Needless to say, there was now an incentive for my grandfather to finish the job. There is a saying that goes, "The apple does not fall far from the tree." That is, much of who we are can be attributed to our family and heritage. I can attest that I, the granddaughter, have not fallen far from the tree: the characteristics of my grandfather were passed down to my mother, and ultimately to me. The characteristic of stubbornness, likewise, has been successfully passed down to me, as my husband, who is in the gallery, would happily verify.

My father's parents likewise were strong role models of persistence and Christian character. As a young child I was unaware of what mental illness was, but my grandfather suffered greatly as a result of his war experiences, and as a consequence the family suffered as well. My grandmother stayed with him and displayed an amazing degree of persistence and Christian character over their many years of marriage. This trait of stubbornness or "stickability" I believe is a positive trait. It ensures one sticks at something, no matter how difficult it may be, until the finish line. This stubbornness has seen me persevere in situations where others would have given up.

While a school student I stayed working in my part-time job even though my boss would yell abuse at me in front of our customers. I turned up to school every day for four years even though I was the target of schoolyard bullies. I worked so very hard at school to become the first person in my family to enter university, and I completed a Bachelor of Applied Science in Physiotherapy at the University of Sydney. I moved house 12 times in six years, determined not to return home to Newcastle but to forge my own life in Sydney. Even when I was homeless for three months and ended up sleeping on various couches, I stubbornly refused to go home.

The other qualities that have formed the person I am include a strong work ethic, compassion for others, service to the community, and strong Christian values. These were modelled not only by my grandparents but also by my parents. I watched my parents work full-time jobs, my father as a minister and my mother as a house cleaner. Then on Saturdays they would work tirelessly on our 50-acre property. We lived in a crumbling 100-year-old farmer's cottage. I witnessed my parents' tenacity and stubbornness to build their dream home, even when facing many tough and heartbreaking situations.

We lived frugally, so much so that I remember our Christmas presents some years were pillow cases filled with canned food, toothpaste and soap. I was a part of seeing a dream realised through hard work and a persistent stubbornness to refuse to give up. While my family were not members of the Liberal Party, their life, choices and example reflected the Liberal Party foundation of the inalienable rights and freedoms of all peoples and valuing individual initiative. Now that I am in this place, I put on notice the Premier and Ministers that when I believe in something I do not give up.

I dare not break the current tradition of new members elucidating the reasons why their electorates are the best of all the electorates in the State. However, unlike the member for Coogee, who could walk around his electorate, you'll need to come with me on a driving tour to cover the 268.6 square kilometres that is the Mulgoa electorate. We commence the driving tour on the majestic tree-lined boulevard of Queen Street in St Marys. We drive around the corner to St Marys Public School, which celebrates its 150th anniversary this year and whose past student Peter Dodds McCormick wrote our national anthem, *Advance Australia Fair*.

Driving west we enter Werrington and see the historic Werrington Park House—now known as Frogmore House—which was built around 1840. Frogmore House and my electorate's observatory form part of the University of Western Sydney's Werrington North Campus. Turning south we travel to Claremont Meadows, a recent residential estate that is the home of Angels of Mercy: the African migrant and refugee settlement assistance program that has changed the lives of hundreds of migrants and refugees in western Sydney. Driving further south we enter the undulating hills and scenic vistas of Orchard Hills, which boasts the starting point for the historical crossing of the Blue Mountains by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth.

We veer westward now and enter the Formula One-style tight bending roads of Glenmore Park. The remnants of Sir John Jamison's estate built in 1823 can be seen from the top of the hill within Glenmore Park. Sir John Jamison was a founder of the Sydney Turf Club and a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales from 1837 till 1843. Driving further west we reach Regentville, the home of the *Nepean Belle* and *Penrith Platypus*. These boats offer classic tours into the Blue Mountains National Park with restaurants, and can host your functions. To make a booking please call 4733 1274. We take a sharp left-hand turn and head south to Mulgoa. Mulgoa is a beautiful, rural setting for hobby and general farmers. It boasts St Thomas Anglican Church, a sandstone church that contains a functioning 140-year-old J. W. Walker and Sons pipe organ.

Travelling further south we reach Wallacia, home to Hopewood Health Retreat, which has been providing a sanctuary for good health and wellbeing for over 50 years. While detoxing at Hopewood Health Retreat if all the clean living becomes too much we can travel one kilometre for a beer at the Wallacia Hotel. Continuing to travel south we enter the predominately rural and farming pastureland of Greendale. The historic St Mark's Church of England is all that remains of the original township after a severe bushfire in 1939. Heading north now we enter Badgerys Creek. Badgerys Creek began as a land grant in 1806 and has continued to be a village with most people working small land holdings until the decision was made by the Federal Government in February 1986 to build Sydney's second airport there. The people of this region have continued to live in limbo ever since.

Still travelling northward we enter Luddenham. Luddenham is the home of the Sydney Society of Model Engineers. This society began in 1906. It is the oldest model engineering club in Australia and the oldest continuously operating model engineering club in the world. Also at Luddenham you can taste traditional German food at the Hubertus Country Club. Heading in a north-east direction we enter St Clair. St Clair is a major residential suburb with an abundance of childcare centres, schools, sporting grounds, open spaces and shopping precincts.

Travelling further northward we enter Colyton. Colyton is the home of Healthy Harold, Life Education New South Wales. Finally, our last destination as we head northward is Oxley Park. Now members may need to jump out of our touring car to stretch their legs for it has been a bit of a journey. What better way to stretch our legs than to have one leg in Sydney and the other in Adelaide or, for a bigger stretch, one leg in Brisbane and the other in Perth? Almost 50 per cent of the streets in Oxley Park are named not after capital cities but after HMAS battleships. This concludes the tour of the wonderful electorate of Mulgoa.

I am sure members will now agree with me that Mulgoa has certainly finished in first place. While I have highlighted the exceptional wonders of the Mulgoa electorate, it—along with every other electorate—has its challenges. With 67 per cent of our population leaving the region to travel for employment, it demonstrates the insufficient job and career opportunities for the people of western Sydney. Employment in western Sydney must be a major focus for this Government. Let us mandate no more housing developments but let us mandate lifestyle developments, where homes and employment with recreational opportunities are provided for current and future generations. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Education is the hallmark of a modern society. However, quality education provided in technologically advanced classrooms is the hallmark of a leading society. But the potential of our students is dampened when they are forced to endure the extremes of temperature because of a lack of air conditioning in classrooms. We must develop an urgent plan that sees all western Sydney classrooms air conditioned for the sake of our children and our wonderful teachers. The school curriculum must be strengthened in the critical life skills training, such as the debilitating effect of unmanageable debt. It is immoral for schoolchildren to graduate school with personal debt. The power and the experience of personal saving must be returned to our children's skills base. Conflict resolution skills are desperately needed as so often conflict turns to anger, which leads to violence and abuse. I firmly believe that the accurate teaching of our country's war history is critical to ensuring that due honour and respect for our veterans and their sacrifice remains a core value of our Australian culture.

Obesity and overweight children in western Sydney is a significant concern for me. Children in western Sydney have weights and heights higher than the published Australian values. The ever decreasing size of the Aussie backyard and cramped housing estates

do not help time-poor families allow children to experience outdoor exercise easily. I believe that the foundation stone of our society is the family unit. A good government will protect, enhance and strengthen families. I believe that the people of Mulgoa and New South Wales finally have a government that will put the people's needs first and that will build the infrastructure and social frameworks to make it easier to live and work in New South Wales. People are tired of just working for a living; they want to work for a life.

Having four members of my extended family with disabilities has taught me the additional struggle and pressure that falls onto a family unit. The mercury in the thermometer of society's advancement is measured in how well it cares for those who cannot care for themselves. I want to see the Government establish a fund that will provide wheelchair convertible vans to families who need this level of transport.

My opportunity to be the voice of the people of my electorate and to speak of my hopes and dreams is due to the amazing people of Mulgoa. I thank all those who came out in the thousands to select me above all others on 26 March. I thank the hundreds of previously loyal Labor voters who voted Liberal for the first time. They are all decent, hard-working salt of the earth Aussies who just want a fair go. I stand here today because of them and I sincerely thank them for their trust. People told me on many door steps that they felt taken for granted. I stand here on the precipice of this new Government and say to everyone in my electorate that I will not take them for granted.

I also thank the hundreds of others who helped during the campaign but I cannot name you all. I thank the Liberal Party headquarters team of Mark Neeham, Chris Stone, Richard Sheilds, Wendy Black, Mark Hyrcek, Lisa-Marie Snell. I thank the Coalition parliamentary team who supported the campaign: Barry O'Farrell, Gladys Berejiklian, Mike Gallagher, Andrew Stoner, Greg Smith, Ray Williams, Brad Hazzard, Catherine Cusack, Kevin Humphries, Pru Goward, Adrian Piccoli, Andrew Constance, Jillian Skinner, Mike Baird, Don Page and Greg Pearce. I thank those who door knocked with me: Chris Hartcher, Aaron Henry, Marie Ficarra, Matthew Mason-Cox, Marcus Cornish, Ben Goldfinch, Colin Willis, Lindsay Harris, Mark Davies and Mark Holmes. I thank parliamentary staffers Jaymes Boland-Rudder and Mathew Cross—you guys were amazing. I thank also the local Liberal stalwarts: George Bilic, Steve Simat and Tom and Joan Beram.

I thank my committed campaign team: Marcus and Margie Cornish, Robert and David Ardill, David and Christine Pettitt, Tina Shinn, Ben and Rebecca Goldfinch, Scott and Glynis Wheeler, Darryl and Erin Buckley, Stephen Rowe, Pat Sullivan, John Vrick, Paul Buddeke, Kevin Scoby, Steve Koulous, Steve Kokotovic, Myron and Janine Seeto, Josh Ballard, Charlie Chahoud, Joe Parker and the Young Liberals Flying Squad. To the RAID group: Mark and Carmen George, Dirk and Lindy Kurver, Tony and Angela Maltese, Richard Battersby, Vince and Karen Azzopardi with Jack and Hannah, and Ben and Carmen Attard with Stephanie and William, thank you. To the ROAR group: Peter and Regina Maltese and family, thank you.

To my long-suffering friends, Kelly-Anne Cummings and Belinda Garratt, thank you for your patience during this time and your steadfast friendship. Finally to my family: to my parents-in-law, Roy and Laraine Davies, thank you for postponing your holiday in your new caravan for two months to campaign every week. To my 11-year-old niece Emily Davies, thank you for coming along to street stalls. To my parents, Paul and Zenona Pogmore, we could never have achieved this result without your steadfast, unwavering love, support, patience and home-cooked meals and for becoming surrogate mum and dad to our daughter, Laura. Your Christian character, hospitality, loyalty and genuine care for others will always inspire me. This victory is also yours.

To my delightful daughter, Laura, you are a magnificent, unique, spirited, compassionate and inquisitive gem. In everything I do I strive to make your world a better place. I hope that when I am finished in this place, and ultimately finished on this earth, our community will be a better place for you and your generation to take the reins and lead your community onwards and upwards. Let me say this now to you and all the children in our great State:

You are unique and destined to be here at this time.
You are designed and endowed with gifts and abilities
Do not give away your confidence which has great reward
When you change your thinking, you can change your world.

Finally to my husband, Mark, my campaign manager, you said when we were engaged that you could not guarantee what would happen in life, but you could guarantee that it would be an adventure. You were right. You were one of the very few people in my life who believed in me and my potential and encouraged me to achieve more. In the campaign you were a great strength and tireless worker, strategist, defender, organiser, coordinator and joint winner with me. No-one worked harder than you under immense pressure. You led the best team in one of the toughest campaigns in this State. I could not have done this without you. Thank you for believing in my potential and releasing me to this position of responsibility.

In closing, I will finish by sharing the story of one more role model who continues to challenge me. Her name is Esther. She was an

Israelite young orphan woman whose story is told in the *Bible*. God raised her up out of anonymity to become queen in the land of her captors. God elevated her to a place of pivotal influence for one purpose—to save her people from annihilation. Would she speak up on behalf of her people or remain quiet? Her uncle challenged her with these words recorded in Esther 4:15:

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?

Thankfully, Esther spoke up and her people were saved. Like Esther, I believe that I have come to this place for such a time as this. I believe that we all have come to this place for such a time as this. A time for stewardship, not squandering. A time for courage, not cowardice. A time for service, not selfishness. A time for visionary ambition, not indecision. A time for compassion, not coldness. A time for steadfast Christian values. A time to make New South Wales number one again.