

INAUGURAL SPEECH OF THE HONOURABLE SHAYNE MALLARD

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD [5.30 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): It is a great honour and a privilege to stand in this historic Chamber and deliver my inaugural speech in reply to the Governor's Speech outlining the agenda of the re-elected Baird Government in this Chamber last week. I am honoured to be in the presence of my parliamentary colleagues of both Chambers and of political persuasions, so many friends, family, Liberal Party members and supporters. Today I acknowledge that I stand on the shoulders of so many of the people either present today or here in spirit or indeed reading *Hansard* or watching the speech via the internet, as I know some are, on their iPhones and iPads. Welcome to you all. I thank you all sincerely for your part in my journey.

I stand here knowing that 239 years ago when my great-grandfather of seven generations removed, Private Thomas Lucas, came ashore on the First Fleet as a marine on the convict transport ship *HMS Scarborough*, the arrival augured massive change and indeed in many respects tragedy for the Aboriginal people of Australia, which we are still coming to terms with today. So as a direct descendant of the First Fleet and with great humility and dignity, I acknowledge that I speak here today on the traditional land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Private Thomas Lucas had no concept of invasion when he disembarked probably thankful to God that they had survived the perilous journey, nor did his future wife my distant grandmother, Anne Howard, a convict of the second fleet. Indeed as we know, Australia was to be colonised under the legal fiction of terra nullius—decreed by Whitehall, invoked by Cook in 1770 and overturned by our High Court in 1992. That decision—the Mabo decision—was to me a fundamental awakening as a non-lawyer to the majesty, breadth and reach of the rule of law to the centrality of good government. It confirmed in my mind the strengths of our civil society and its underlying liberal democratic traditions as the natural form of government for humanity in the never-ending journey of government.

I dedicate whatever good endeavours I can whilst in this Chamber to advancing the reconciliation process with our first people, including the long overdue recognition as first Australians in our Constitution. I am sure there are other members present from all sides of this Chamber who are doing the same. I echo the words of our friend Senator the Hon. Marise Payne in her inaugural speech to the Senate. She said, "It is with mixed senses of both responsibility and honour and not insignificant feelings of relief that I finally stand here today." Indeed I too am relieved to be finally standing here today. I think many others are just as relieved. My journey to this place has taken its time. I was never a hare, I was always a tortoise.

Along the way I have immersed myself in various aspects of public service whether that is through local government, where I served 12 years on the South Sydney City Council and City of Sydney council, or through policy work in both the private sector and in government and on the boards of organisations like the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust. Equally as important to my journey are the things I have learnt through numerous small business

ventures in horticulture, hospitality and catering. Every step of the way, with love and support from family and friends, this journey has been immensely satisfying and fulfilling.

The First Fleet may be in my DNA but complementing that English heritage are grandparents of Scottish and Danish immigration. This has perhaps given me a sound small "l" liberalism sensible approach to life and government. But I am pleased to report a dash of Irish blood on my father's Tasmanian side of the family to occasionally stir, some will note, the radical within. No doubt that partly accounts for my republican beliefs, although intellectually a true liberal democrat cannot possibly support a hereditary role—no matter how well it has served us to date—in a liberal democratic nation's constitution. So that will explain a lot now and in the future to many in the Chamber today and my new colleagues no doubt will see occasional stirrings of the radical blood in the years ahead.

As for the Australian republic, just as surely as my South Sydney Rabbitohs finally won a grand final, the republic's day will come, rest assured. On that note I acknowledge and welcome my fellow republican and Souths supporter and good friend the former Labor mayor of South Sydney, Tony Pooley.

Ancestry alone certainly does not account for who you are and what you believe in. I was born on my mother's seventeenth birthday—mum was just a young girl really. My father was 19, really just a lad, and they all said that the marriage would not last. Well my parents, Max and Margie, are still together stronger than ever after over 50 years of marriage. I very proudly welcome them here today.

I spent my early years in public housing in Doonmore Street, Penrith, the oldest of four kids. Yes, a "houso" start in life. Back in the 1960s and 1970s the Housing Commission was not considered a permanent solution to your housing needs. The cheap rents were a hand up; a way to get on your feet and move into your own home and make way for others to take up the same opportunity. Through the hard work of both my parents and support from the extended family, including Aunty Pat Thomson and our late family matriarch Nanna Gladys Peterson, who I know would be very proud and is here in spirit with us today, our family managed to become home owners eventually living in Kingswood.

Along the way we spent some years on a dairy farm at Castlereagh—please note that my Nationals colleagues—and I attended the local country one-teacher school. Most of my family members, including my parents, now live in Dubbo, home of the Deputy Premier, and asserting further my connections with The Nationals. Cambridge Park High School was sparkling new and had just opened in the late 1970s with incredibly wonderful dedicated teachers who took me eventually to a degree in Australian history and politics at Macquarie University where, Mr President, I crossed paths with one of your predecessors, Dr Meredith Burgmann, who was a lecturer in trade union politics. I attended only one of her lectures before swiftly swapping courses! It was pretty hard line, I have to tell you.

My siblings and I grew up in a family and community that were proudly independent, one where we helped each other out, where we lent a hand to the neighbours and worked together

to improve our lives, whether that was supporting dad and mum to work long hours in two jobs and finance our first home or going to the school on weekends to build playgrounds and gardens or mow playing fields. Government to us was remote and frankly largely unwelcome in our lives. We took the opportunities that came along and made something of them both as individuals and as a community.

But somewhere along the way, I fear areas of our society have lost track of those values. This was recently illustrated in the controversial SBS documentary *Struggle Street* where we saw portrayed generational welfare dependency and a loss of hope and meaning leading to tragic self-abuse in the community. We cannot turn a blind eye to this; the challenge is for our Parliament. His Excellency the Governor, on behalf of the Government, made the observation:

... while strong economic growth is the hallmark of a successful State our economic might is meaningless unless it is used to support the most vulnerable, to protect the environment and to provide opportunity for all its citizens.

He also said:

Old problems need new solutions ...

I strongly endorse those sentiments. The challenge for us in 2015 is to break the entrenched cycle of poverty and abuse within large sections of our disadvantaged communities, to restore hope and rekindle that spirit of families and communities helping them to make their lives better for their future and that of their children. We cannot address this challenge alone; it requires a partnership with the Federal Government, which I believe is on the right track with difficult but essential welfare reforms. It is not just about welfare reform; it is also about the infrastructure of these communities—the housing, streets, parks, amenities, schools and services of the area.

The obsolete and rundown public housing estates of largely Western Sydney and parts of the inner city are a major contributor to this social disease. This is not unique to Sydney. We have seen the same challenges of dealing with these failed policies in the United Kingdom and the United States. Governments of all persuasions have identified this problem in recent years. We need to continue with vigour the redevelopment of these estates by both companies motivated by profit and those in the not-for-profit sector specialising in community housing projects. We need to seriously incentivise more public-private partnerships for renewal, similar to those proposed in the now seemingly shelved Redfern-Waterloo master plan. Money alone cannot fix this problem.

I am not a strongly religious man. I was brought up fairly Low-Church Anglican and in more recent times through my partner, Jesper Hansen, and his Danish family I have become more appreciative of the progressive wing of the Danish Lutheran Church. However, over the years I have also worked constructively with Hillsong and the Salvation Army as an elected local councillor. I witnessed their largely unheralded work in the poorer areas of our city. Whilst never an advocate of State-sponsored religion and a strong proponent of clear separation between State and church, there is no doubt in my mind that partnering with institutions such

as these to reach out to isolated and dysfunctional communities, as I have outlined, can have a benefit in turning lives around.

As a State schoolboy you will find no stronger advocate of a well-resourced State school system. I strongly support the reforms to decentralise the management of school resources and employment of good teachers introduced by the O'Farrell and Baird governments. Bringing local communities back into the schools to manage them and take ownership will only strengthen those communities and the outcomes we are all looking for. Building modern communities is not only about housing and changing social attitudes; it is about creating opportunity. That is why I am very proud to be part of the Mike Baird Government.

The recent election was fought on a plan of unprecedented and historic scale to build infrastructure across this State that will reinforce our economy for a generation to come. Whilst I know a first speech should skirt political controversy, I will say in passing that as I doorknocked swathes of Liverpool, Casula, Chipping Norton and Lurnea during the election campaign with my good friend Melanie Gibbons, MP, the new member for Holsworthy, who is present in the gallery—and congratulations to you and your team on an outstanding result in the former Labor heartland of south-western and Western Sydney—people we met quickly tired of and saw through the Labor and union scare campaign on the proposed lease of 49 per cent of poles and wires. They understood that the role of modern government is no longer to own and run assets like power poles, buses or, indeed, airports and ports. More importantly they understood that Mike Baird's infrastructure investment plan was going to support the creation of real jobs, long-term, well-paid jobs for their kids and grandchildren in Western Sydney.

I was born in Penrith and had grandparents at Badgerys Creek. In fact, that small family farm and the family graves are now in the centre of the Federal Government's second airport site. It was from Badgerys Creek that my 19-year-old great-uncle Frank Farrar set off via steam train from Liverpool station in October 1917 to enlist in the Great War, only to fall like so many others in Peronne, France, 11 months later. Military service has touched my family with my late grandfather, Bruce Peterson, also serving in Papua New Guinea in the Second World War and my sister, Michelle, and her son, Michael Larsen, having served in the Army in recent times.

I note at this time of Anzac commemorations the moving tributes being made in this House to those who have served and continue to serve our nation. I particularly take this opportunity to pay tribute to my staff member here in Parliament, Michael Baker, who is in the gallery, and his family who on Monday farewelled their 102-year-old poppy, Keith Baker, a decorated veteran of the Second World War. It was indeed a special memory for Michael to be with his grandfather in the Anzac Day parade only a few weeks earlier. The connection of this place to war and sacrifice continues today. Lest we forget.

It was somewhat of a homecoming when Mayor Ned Mannoun, who is in the gallery, rang me to ask if I could give him a hand at Liverpool City Council. A three-month project became two years as I worked with our Liberal Party's talented then 32-year-old popularly

elected mayor and his team at the council. With nearly a lifetime largely in or around politics and public policy one could be forgiven for thinking that I know almost all there is to know on the subject, but I found there is always more to learn. At Liverpool, working on the second airport project—a project wholly within the Liverpool local government area and estimated to create 60,000 jobs over the next generation—I was reacquainted with the aspirations and changing nature of the people of western and south-western Sydney.

Liverpool is the State's, if not the nation's, leading example of multicultural harmony. No one cultural group dominates and they all—whether the diverse Middle Eastern, Indian, Fijian, Tongan, Serbian, Croatian, Italian or more traditional Anglo communities—celebrate their unique cultural identity but without hesitation come together as Australians to celebrate our nation as their home. It was here more than at the City of Sydney that I really appreciated the role of local government in supporting cultural events and building community harmony. All this was led by a mayor and council that understood and strongly identified with the aspirations of the people of Western Sydney. I say thank you to Liberal councillors Tony Hadchiti, President of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, Mazhar Hadid, Sabrina Mamone, Peter Ristevski and Gus Balloot for the experience and acknowledge the work you do on behalf of the community and the Liberal Party in south-western Sydney.

To Liberal Mayor Ned Mannoun—an inspiring young leader; a modern Australian Muslim leader—I say thank you for the lessons you taught an old hand like me. My departing advice to you is that you have a great future and indeed you are needed in Parliament, whether here or in Canberra, in the not too distant future. Liverpool and the region have a firm friend in me and I will do whatever is possible to assist in helping the region reach its great potential. None of us is here without our supporters making it possible and for me none more so than you, Mr President. We have travelled parallel journeys in life and in politics and it is a tremendous honour to be in this House serving with you as the President.

I apologise in advance if I miss someone. These Hollywood rollcalls are always very dangerous. First, I must thank the New South Wales Young Liberal movement. I first joined the Young Liberals in the late 1980s. We had a slogan back then "Vision today—Leadership tomorrow", an ideal we strived for and I have no doubt we have delivered. I became lifelong friends and colleagues of party leaders like you, Mr President, Senator Marise Payne, Federal Treasurer Joe Hockey, State Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian and transport Minister Andrew Constance, who are both present in the gallery and I welcome them, the Hon. Catherine Cusack and former Leader of the Opposition John Brogden. I welcome also friends and colleagues Minister John Ajaka, Mark Coure, MP, Gareth Ward, MP, Minister Stuart Ayres, Bruce Notley-Smith, MP, the Hon. Greg Pearce, Matt Kean, MP, and Minister Gabrielle Upton. I acknowledge also my newly elected colleague the Hon. Scott Farlow. They have joined me along the way and been instrumental in my arriving here today.

I thank the current Young Liberal leaders, including president James Wallace and his team for their support in assisting me to this position. I am not sure what the current slogan is for the Young Liberals, but you cannot go wrong by recycling that old one. There are others to

thank as well—friends and party leaders like Liberal Party vice president Trent Zimmermann whose time to serve in Parliament will not come soon enough. And how can I not sincerely thank a mentor to so many and a dear, dear friend, the former Minister Michael Photios—who may not be here. He will pay for that. Friends and mentors like Chris McDiven and Kathryn Greiner need special mention for their role in helping me in my career. Other friends like Chris Muir, Scott Jeffries, Councillor Peter Cavanagh, Jason Collins, Josephine Brodsky, Michael Tiyce—you have to mention your branch president—branch treasurer Scott Quine, Matt and Brooke Daniel, Keith Wherry and Marie Harland all deserve acknowledgement among many, many others.

Local government is close to my heart and I chair the Liberal Party's management committee in this area. I acknowledge the nearly 200 endorsed Liberal Party councillors across New South Wales for their service to the party, the community and their assistance—sometimes not always welcome—to me over the years. I particularly acknowledge Mayor Sally Betts, Mayor Ted Tsang, Councillor Scott Nash, Councillor Christine Forster and Councillor Edward Mandla for the support and commitment to the party, the community and me over that time.

I owe a huge debt to the Liberal Party for the opportunities I have been given. I thank the party preselectors, many of whom are here today and the State executive led by president Chris Downey, for their trust. I will not let you down. The Liberal Party founded by Menzies and traced back to Alfred Deakin is my natural philosophical home. In my view there must be a natural wrestle of ideas, ideals and philosophy in any functioning political organisation. But I am reminded of Sir Robert Menzies' words when thinking about why I joined this great party: He said—our mantra:

We took the name 'Liberal' because we were determined to be a progressive party, willing to make experiments, in no sense reactionary, but believing in the individual, his (or her) rights and enterprise.

I now turn briefly to my family. I think members already have a taste of the sort of family I am from. To my parents, Max and Margaret, thank you for instilling in me and my brothers and sisters the values of enterprise, personal worth, acceptance of diversity and family love. You taught all your children—I think it is the most important lesson you taught—from the earliest age never to judge other people for their differences. To my brother, Danny, who is sitting in the gallery too, thank you for not only being the sometimes suffering younger brother—as is a role of younger brothers—but also being a dear friend to me. I thank my sisters, Michelle and Colleen, and nephews Michael, Curtis, Nicholas, Alexi and Lucas, as well as my only niece, Ashley, for all their love, pride and support.

Now to my partner of 14 years, Jesper Hoejberg Mallard Hansen, of Denmark—how much the world has moved forward since we first met. I must say, marriage never featured in our plans. Our relationship, our love was private, one shared with only family and friends, but that changed when the Danish parliament took the step to move from same-sex civil union partnerships to a non-discriminatory Marriage Act. The timing seemed right to marry and in 2013 in a wonderful embracing non-judgemental Lutheran Church in Copenhagen before so

many friends and family—many of them here today including you, Mr President—we were married. To have friends and family bear witness to our commitment and share our love is something only those who have been married can really appreciate. To have the State and the church accept our relationship without prejudice—only those who have experienced discrimination can really understand.

Our marriage is recognised in most of the western world—New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, most of Western Europe and in one way or the other to be determined in the United States Supreme Court later this year—but is still not recognised in Australia. So I take this moment, whilst thanking you Jesper from the bottom of my heart and in a million ways for all you have done to support me over the years—as you say, to stop me crawling up the walls—by joining the party voices calling on our Prime Minister and my Federal colleagues to allow a full and free conscience vote for all members on marriage equality when the time arrives. For Jesper's Danish family, mother Tove and father Poul Bent Hansen, I say thank you for letting Australia have your son. Our country is a better place for his devotion, strength and enterprise—not to mention his amazing chef skills as many members here can attest. I was going to say that in Danish but I gave up.

As I mentioned earlier, I worked here in the Legislative Council in the 1990s for President Max Willis and quickly came to appreciate the important role the upper House plays in the good government of our State. As my long-time friend and mentor Chris Puplick, who is here today, said in his maiden speech to the Senate—dare I say the date Chris—in 1978:

It (the Senate) has ensured that executive Government remained responsible to the wishes of the people.

Those words are as applicable to the Legislative Council today as they were to the Senate all those years ago. I worked here for giants of my party—Ted Pickering, Virginia Chadwick and John Hannaford, with supporting roles from people like Marlene Goldsmith, Brian Pezzutti, Patricia Forsythe and John Ryan, who is here today. They strode this Chamber with purpose to deliver good government for the people of New South Wales on behalf of the Greiner and Fahey governments and they did that successfully. I only pray that we, as their successors in this Chamber, can live up to the ideals and achievements of those good men and women who went before us. Thank you.