

SPEECH BY INDEPENDENT QUEENSLAND MP LIZ CUNNINGHAM ON THE FORMATION OF MINORITY GOVERNMENT WITH ROB BORBRIDGE

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Title Cunningham shows her considered hand.

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Article: AT the outset, I would like to thank local residents for their understanding during this entire process.

Often when people have rung the office for assistance, they have found the lines busy or my schedule full and in all instances, local people have been co-operative and understanding.

I have also been fortunate that in the main, local people have not been hammering for an imprudent declaration.

Your willingness to wait is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

In spite of the media position that I am procrastinating, being indecisive or "holding the state to ransom", formal completion of the by-election at Mundingburra is yet to be reached.

Only last week, a decision was clear on the last of the 89 seats contested in the July 15 state election.

A declaration is yet to be made by the Electoral Commissioner.

Even at this point, there is no constitutional requirement to declare my position.

However, **given the** agenda to infer I am holding up the process, I do believe now it is better to clarify my views.

It should be pointed out very clearly that even after my views are known, the responsibility for establishing or confirming the governance of this state rests with Her Excellency Governor Leneen Forde and then on the floor of the Queensland Parliament.

There are a number of options.

Firstly, to support the current Premier, Wayne Goss.

Secondly, to support Opposition Leader Rob Borbidge on the issues of supply (money Bills) and confidence motions; effectively giving the coalition a working majority on the floor of Parliament.

Thirdly, to refuse a decision - that is, to abstain.

It is my understanding that this stance may be acceptable until the first vote of confidence or no confidence in the Premier.

My actions subsequently could lead to a fresh election.

I believe this to be a most destabilising option.

Mr Goss made a statement earlier last week to the effect that he believed it inappropriate for a Member of Parliament to abstain from such an important decision.

On that point I must agree - we have no guarantees on entering Parliament that our decision-making role will be an easy one.

To comment on the issue of a fresh election: Since July 1995, the most repeated comment to me in this regard has been that people are sick and tired of elections, of the tactics used during the election campaign and the financial costs involved in running an election.

They want to see a finalisation of this whole issue to enable the decision-making process to continue, as well as private and public-sector activity to recommence with vigour.

On the issue of fixed terms in Government, I did consider statements by both Mr Goss and Mr Borbidge, which indicated their intentions with regard to an early election versus serving the remainder of this current term.

I would also emphasise that no deals have been done, no tradeoffs agreed to in exchange for my support. My decision is based on what I firmly believe is best for my local electorate and for the state as a whole, given the information communicated by the community, and my own experience over the past six months.

In spite of challenges by parliamentarians and the media that Gladstone is a "Labor" town, and that if I want to protect my chances for reelection in the future I should "vote Labor", I stress again that my decision has not been made on the basis of protecting my seat - that would be far too insular and self-motivated.

It is made, to the best of my ability, for the benefit of those people we, as elected representatives, are supposed to work for and with: the people of Gladstone, Calliope and the broader community. In reaching my decision, I considered two different but inter related areas: local implications and state-wide implications. Locally, projects for the Glad stone area have been stalled. The High School at Tannum shows little or no progress. It is reported to me that party members are reluctant to progress the issue for fear "the Independent" may get some credit for the work.

Such an obstructive attitude is entirely unacceptable to me and, I believe, to the community.

The students at **Tannum/Boyne** need a high school; **police** numbers continue to dwindle in spite of a growing population and demonstrated need; the hospital is now receiving some attention; however, critical things like leaking roofs remain unattended to.

(On matters of) state, one factor which had to be considered was the oft-quoted state-wide primary vote.

Given that Mr Goss, via the EARC process, has fixed what has been called the "gerrymander", voting patterns, I believe, now reflect more accurately state views.

Approximately 53 percent (and possibly slightly higher with the Mundingburra result) voted for the coalition.

Additionally, and to me, of significance, the people of Mundingburra, knowing full well the implications of their vote, again rejected a Labor candidate for their traditionally Labor **seal, and** instead supported the Liberal, Frank Tanti.

Approaches by residents of my electorate on statewide issues are also concerning.

Small business continues to bleed from a multitude of imposts, both financial and administrative, which preclude them increasing employment.

On the basis of these types of issues, I will advise Mr Rob Borbidge and then Governor Leneen Forde of my intention to support Rob Borbidge on the floor of the House on the matter of Confidence Votes and will further indicate that he can be confident also of my support with regards the financial Bills, i.e. Supply.

It is my intention to retain my Independence on all other Bills to come before Parliament.

I ran and was elected as an Independent.

I make the above decision only because of the unique situation we find ourselves in, in this state.

I acknowledge that there will be many not at all happy; however, I must reaffirm that I believe that, given the choice, I can better represent my electorate in an atmosphere of co-operation rather than competition.

To all in my electorate, my decision today will be confirmed or rejected at the next election.

I would also emphasise that no deals have been done, no trade-offs agreed to in exchange for my support. My decision is based on what I firmly believe is best for my local electorate and for the state as a whole, given the information communicated by the community, and my own experience over the past six months.

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