



# Inaugural Speeches

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Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Thursday 7 May 2015.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Seven Hills, I welcome his family, friends and supporters in the gallery. I make special mention of the Federal member for Mitchell, Alex Hawke, MP. I also acknowledge my friend and colleague, the President of the Legislative Council. I also acknowledge the Lord Mayor of Parramatta City Council, Scott Lloyd.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR** (Seven Hills) [4.59 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): On 9 June 1989 a young Australian cricketer, with a now famous name, walked onto the hallowed turf of the Headingley cricket ground in Leeds. On that day he scored the ultimate cricket career achievement of 100 runs in his maiden Ashes test. Whilst I doubt that this Mark Taylor's maiden speech will score a perfect 100, I can assure you of one thing, and that is that the butterflies in my stomach and the pounding in my heart are just as significant and no less perturbing as that cricketer would have suffered on that day. Just like that cricketer, I stand here facing up at my crease to a bit less of an opposition.

I stand here, with all my experiences, my upbringing, my education, my values and my years of practice of trade weighing in behind me. What really gives me the strength is that I know there are many in the Chamber seats behind me, and particularly in the gallery, sitting there quietly, leaning forward, with their fingers crossed, wishing me the best and urging me on. It is that support and that belief in this Mark Taylor that I find most humbling. To them I make a simple pledge: I promise you I will never forget you in your time of need.

To be elected to the Parliament of New South Wales in any capacity is an enormous privilege, but to be entrusted with the responsibility of representing the people of Seven Hills fills me with particular pride. Seven Hills is the electorate in which I have spent most of my life. It is the electorate in which I was born, raised, lived, played sport and worked, and probably more to my good fortune than hers, it is also the electorate in which I met my wife, Petrina.

The task of representing an electorate as diverse, culturally rich, historically significant and, above all else, as middle Australia as Seven Hills is an enormous one. But let me be clear from the very start, let me send a simple message to every constituent of Seven Hills: Whether or not you voted for me, I will serve you, I will advocate for you, I will be accessible to you, and I will put everything into being the local member that you desire and you deserve. I am acutely aware of the weight of trust that has been placed in me and this Government, and we will not let you down.

I am more than aware that several of my colleagues, young and some of them old, have stood here before and boasted very proudly that their electorate is unique. I will not be any different. Seven Hills, while being one of the newer named electorates in this Parliament, is by no means devoid of historical significance. In fact, some of its localities form the very foundation of our lives today, such as Third Settlement Reserve at Old Toongabbie. That site was established in 1791 following on, of course, from Sydney Cove and Parramatta. It was known as Toongabbie Convict Farm and used convict labour to grow barley, maize and wheat to feed the fledgling colony. By 1792 it had some 500 convicts assigned to it. The reserve continues to be maintained and improved by local residents of the Seven Hills electorate. It is inspiring to see such a significant place in history so well preserved.

While the electorate of Seven Hills may certainly be historic, it is also diverse. Each suburb is uniquely different in demography and geography with some quirky past political representation. For example, until March this year the suburb of Kings Langley, despite being a traditionally strong Liberal voting area, had not actually had a Liberal represent it for 53 years. The last was a dairy farmer named Alfred Hugh Dennis, who represented the area for a mere two years and seven months between 1959 and 1962. Yet, if we look at the neighbouring suburb of Winston Hills, named after that great Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, we find an area nestled in the very heart of the Federal seat of Mitchell, one of the safest and I should say most ably represented, Federal seats in the country. No wonder Winston Hills has been Liberal for as long as many of us can remember.

During the 2015 campaign, such contrast and diversity brought us great challenges, and nothing was taken for granted. There was never any assumption that parts of the electorate would remain Liberal, and there was never any assumption that others would naturally return to the Labor heartland. We fought for every vote on every street. We took nothing for granted, doorknocking every street in the electorate, some several times over. We know that people do not vote on postcode. The overriding message emanating from the electorate was that people want to engage with politicians. They want to hear our plans, they want to have their say. In some cases, they just wanted to know that their potential local member cared enough to visit and listen.

I will share a story. On the umpteenth time doorknocking on Bandella Road in the suburb of Toongabbie, we came across a remarkable lady with a remarkable story. She was 92 years old and had been a resident in the area for more than eight decades. She told us she had never voted for Liberal. But this time, well, I think she may have. Why? For the sole reason that I took the time

to drop in and say hello, and I took the time to stay for a cup of tea. I listened to her concerns and I acted on her concerns. This may seem trivial, but I cannot stress the point enough because I cannot find a better example of how important it is to stay humble as a local member, to take no constituent in any suburb for granted—to take nothing for granted.

Friends, despite a statewide swing, Labor did not even make a dent in Seven Hills, which was part of a show of faith by the people of Western Sydney. It is clear that the people of Western Sydney have seen this State Government at work over the past four years and they decided they liked what they saw. The North West Rail Link, upgrades to hospitals such as Blacktown and Westmead, additional bus services and, of course, the Opal card. In Seven Hills, upgrade accesses to Wentworthville, Pendle Hill and Toongabbie railway stations make the trip to work and home again so much easier and so much faster for commuters. These are just some of the initiatives that this Liberal Government has undertaken to improve the quality of life in Seven Hills, as well as the entire area of Western Sydney.

I truly believe that under this Premier's leadership, we will redraw the electoral maps across Western Sydney, and Seven Hills is testament to that. Under the bold leadership of this Premier, we have a chance as a Government to leave an enormous legacy. Visionary infrastructure projects like WestConnex and NorthConnex means we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to cement our legacy as the infrastructure government of our time. We have, over the past four years, changed people's lives for the better. Madam Speaker, I genuinely believe that. The reforms and projects we have delivered over the past four years—and plan to deliver in the next four years—have made and will make a great impact on the lives of people in New South Wales. In 40 or 50 years my children's generation of this great State will look at the tenure of this State Liberal Government and deem it an era in New South Wales politics when we expanded the economy and drove economic growth—an era when great things were achieved.

Despite all the good that has been achieved and is planned for the next four years, it will mean little in respect of electoral success unless we effectively communicate our messages. That is the significant role that the Young Liberal Movement played in the Seven Hills win. It was not only in Seven Hills, but across New South Wales. In the trusted hands of Dean Shachar and Josh Crawford, the New South Wales Young Liberals were out several times a week and were indispensable to the victory in Seven Hills. Josh and Dean, your stewardship of the campaign's wing of the New South Wales Young Liberals was remarkable. If it were not for your efforts in coordinating things such as the flying squad, we would not have recorded the victory we did. In addition to such things as the flying squad, there were two Young Liberals who gave up months of their lives to be attached permanently to the Seven Hills campaign. I take the opportunity today to thank them. Manning Jeffrey and Jordon Lew, who are both here, you have very bright futures in the Liberal Party.

In fact, it is thanks to each and every one of you, the entire Young Liberal movement, that I am standing here as a member of this Parliament and I want you to know that I am grateful every day for the support of your movement. I want you to know that you are the heartbeat of our party and I want you to know that you are the reason we win elections like Seven Hills. Not only is Seven Hills an electorate that I have had a connection with for my entire life, but it is also one where I have worked for most of my career. For the past 25 years I have been on the frontline of the justice system in both the Australian Federal Police and the New South Wales Police Force. As a police prosecutor I spent my working life representing victims of crime, witnessing the tragedies that befall them. From this I have developed a passionate interest in the term "justice".

I am a firm believer that our justice system must prioritise the victims of crime in a more strident manner, and I note the Premier's shared commitment for this, appointing the State's first dedicated Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Minister Pru Goward will do an outstanding job, and I share the Premier's comments that there is no-one better suited to this role than the Minister is. Having seen firsthand the impact of domestic violence on victims, I am extremely proud of the strong stance the New South Wales Government has taken on this matter. It is often said that some issues are above politics, and the specific issue of domestic violence as well as the broader issue of how our justice system responds to victims of crime are clear examples of such issues.

Victims of crime must have a significant say in our justice system. Of course there is a balance to strike in deterrence, rehabilitation and retribution. However, the pendulum must swing back to deal with the issues confronting victims in a timely, compassionate and responsible manner. Whilst our justice system will always stand apart from the Executive and this Parliament it should never stray far from contemporary community desire; it should never be obliquely skewed against the will of the people. So for however long I am privileged to serve as a member of this place I will always be a strong advocate for victims of crime. We must feel the gravel underneath their feet, we must see through the tears in their eyes and I make no apologies for that. We must ensure that our judicial system represents the community it was designed to serve, and I make no apologies for saying that.

I was born and raised in Eucalyptus Street at Old Toongabbie. I attended Westmead Public School before heading to Model Farms High School and later James Ruse High School. These are great examples of public schools around my electorate that provide excellent educational experiences. To this day many of the boys and girls in my electorate still take advantage of what these schools have to offer. It is a testament to the New South Wales Government that public schools across my electorate and the entire State are flourishing.

But from the very start my mother, Jean, and my father, Neil, instilled a strong sense of community spirit in me. My goal, successfully achieved some years ago, to gain admission to the Supreme Court of New South Wales as a solicitor was motivated by a desire to help those in the community. My father led by example, achieving community outcomes as he rose through the New South Wales Police Force, reaching the position of acting commissioner. My father always said to me, like good parents do, "Son, never do anything wrong that will keep you awake at night." As a young fellow I thought it was always better to stay out until four and go to sleep with a few beers under my belt. It is funny how things change when you become a parent. My quote to my young children will share the same philosophy, "Integrity will always be the softest pillow for your head." I am immensely proud of both my parents for all that they have achieved in their lives and I thank them dearly for what they have instilled in me.

Community often leads to politics and in my case it was the Liberal Party. Simply put, it is the only party in our great country that advocates for the rights of the individual, for the chance of every single person to reap the rewards they sow. It is a party that focuses on outcomes. It enable individuals to determine their own outcomes based on their own choices. The election of John Howard as Prime Minister stoked a fire in my belly that has not yet been extinguished. As Prime Minister, Howard epitomised our party values. He was an inspiration to me, an inspiration to many; he was a great leader of this country.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to show great gratitude to some very important people. I thank the Winston Hills SEB—Ben Jackson, Fred Lloyd, Rees John and Councillor Bob Dwyer, and of course the good Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Mr Scott Lloyd, who is here today. I make particular mention of Kirsty Lloyd, a true trailblazer in the area of Toongabbie, and Mr Don Stein, AM, a man of great fortitude and character. I thank the councillors of The Hills Shire Council but especially Mayor Andrew Jefferies for all his astute advice and guidance during this campaign. I make special mention of the valuable guidance of Mr Alex Hawke, MP, and the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC, for all those mornings at railway stations, days at shops and afternoons doorknocking. I thank the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC, and Ray Williams, MP, for teaching me how to roll my sleeves up in a campaign and get into it. I thank also Mr Nick Campbell and Minister Pru Goward.

To State Director, Tony Nutt: Under your stewardship our campaign was outstanding and our local effort in Seven Hills was successful. This was due to the operation that you ran so well from central headquarters. To Chris Downy: Your work as party president is tireless. You do not get enough credit for what you do behind the scenes, but I can assure you that it is greatly appreciated. Of course, I will never forget the campaign team, including Matthew Liddle, Bill Tyrrell and Brendan Jenkins. Words cannot thank my campaign manager, Deputy Mayor Michelle Byrne, who ran the whole campaign whilst pregnant with twins. What an outstanding effort. To the Hon. David Elliott: thank you for your support and mentorship. You are an integral part of this Government. The work you do will be crucial to our success. Your recent elevation to the ministry is more than deserved. You will continue to achieve good things.

I express thanks to my in-laws, Ron and Ruth Sadler, who are here today; and my sister, Sonia Porter, and their extended families for all of the out-of-hours support and emergency babysitting. To Petrina and my beautiful children, Finnley and Seronique: I love you dearly. When I explained to Seronique what Hansard was about she said, "Can they put the words, 'I am an epic netballer'?" When I explained the same to Finnley he said, "Can you put I am good at being a good boy?" I have reached my first ethical dilemma. I have not stated the truth. I should seek privilege, particularly in relation to Finnley. I say to Petrina: Thank you for your support. I love you dearly. You are the greatest thing to have touched my life.

I started with cricket so I am going to finish with it. I might not be as fast as that good looking, blond Brett Lee and I have not got the style that Mr Glenn McGrath has, nor do I have that special touch or whatever it is that Shane Warne has—and that is probably a good thing—but I tell you what I have got: I have rock-solid integrity, I have bucket loads of commitment and I have an absolute passion to represent the people of Seven Hills. I can promise you today here in this Chamber, each and every one of you, that I will put my heart and soul into representing the people of Seven Hills because to me, for this Mark Taylor, Seven Hills is far, far more important than any Ashes test.