



Inaugural Speeches

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Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [11.32 a.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on being the first female Speaker of the House in its history. I stand here today truly humbled by the honour of being elected to this House as the Liberal member for Coogee. I want to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, but also those of Coogee, the Bidjigal people, their elders, past and present. The name "Coogee" is believed to be derived from a Bidjigal word meaning the smell of rotting seaweed. It is not the most poetic of images, but it is a description you are never likely to forget. In inaugural speeches to this House new members have waxed lyrical about the attributes of their respective electorates. Over the past few weeks I have searched high and low for that which is uniquely Coogee, and it hurts to me to confess I do not think I have found it.

Coogee being the smallest electorate in New South Wales, I considered a walk around the electorate may be beneficial in my search for inspiration for this speech. I fuelled myself with caffeine at Bazura Café next to the Coogee Surf Club. The sands of Coogee Beach were full of nippers training to take their place as lifesavers. Ross Freeman, the last Liberal to win Coogee back in 1973, was a regular at the club. I set off and glanced back out to Wedding Cake Island, just off the coast. It is a stunning sight and it protects the beach from the most violent of swells. I stopped across the road from the Coogee Bay Hotel, whose part 3A application was the source of much community angst during the election campaign, but I was pleased that our election commitment to scrap part 3A had been fulfilled.

Throughout my campaign I spoke of the pressing need to reduce the incidence of alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour, a problem which has plagued Coogee for many years. When I was Mayor of Randwick I called for a 1.00 a.m. lockout at Coogee pubs, and the situation has since improved. Some have cruelly suggested that the improvement is largely due to me no longer going out drinking in Coogee on Saturday nights. Be that as it may, the Liberal Party's increased move-on powers for our police and our Three Strikes and You're Out policy will further improve the situation for long-suffering Coogee residents. So I was able to tick the boxes of two of my election commitments in the first 150 metres of my walk.

Coogee Bay Road still retains the character of a small beachside village of yesteryear. It is where my grandparents, Neville and Lillian Notley-Smith, lived in the 1920s and where they opened an electrical contracting and appliance store. Neville's business went well enough for him to buy a brand new car in the mid-1930s. Every afternoon arriving home from work he would stop the car at the foot of the hill and beep the horn, and dozens of kids would run out, climb aboard and ride to the top of the street. In 1940 Neville volunteered to go and fight in the war, but was refused entry as he was considered too old at 40. This was easily fixed by going to the next recruitment post and lying about his age—a scandalous thing to do, lying about your age. I would never do that. After action in the Middle East, he was captured and spent the next three years on the Thai-Burma railway.

In Neville's absence, Lillian became the area commandant for the Voluntary Aid Detachment, assisting veterans with nursing care and first aid, and running the Randwick Municipal Council child immunisation program, a job she hated, she told me, sticking needles into toddlers every day. Little Nan, as we called her, taught me the art of bandaging and caring for a wound. Some years later, albeit for a short time, I became an ambulance officer. It was she who inspired me. Neville died just

before I was born, but I was always immensely proud when people would walk up to me and ask if I was related, and then tell me how wonderful a person he was.

I return to my walking tour. I left the beach and ascended Dolphin's Point, where the stunning bronze sculpture stands in memory of the victims of the Bali bombings. Coogee lost a lot that day, and now this special place honours the memory of all those from New South Wales killed in Bali. Further up the hill sits the fine 1916 home of the Wirth family, owners of the famous Wirth's Circus that toured the country in years past. Often they would rest their circus animals, including elephants, in the grounds of the house.

My other grandfather, Allen Peisley, was as proud a railwayman as you would ever find. He spent five years of his 42-year New South Wales Railways career as the guard on the Wirth's Circus train. Pa Peisley was elected to Griffith City Council in 1949, representing the Australian Labor Party. He was a unionist, fierce anti-communist and a loyal Jack Lang man to the end, thus he became one of the strongest Liberal Party supporters you could ever meet. In fact, a Peisley ancestor served in this House in the 1860s, the son of convict parents. It was a handy fact to remind my Dad that Mum's side of the family had an elected member of Parliament and his did not. This cruel fact assisted him to open his wallet again and again to boost my campaign funds to address the imbalance. Pa Peisley taught me a lot of things, but one thing will always stick with me. "Son", he said, "whenever you've helped somebody out, forget about it straightaway, because if you think of it as a favour it means that you expect something in return."

Descending through the melaleucas to Thompson's Bay, a small inlet with fishing boats stowed upon the beach, I remember as a boy exploring the vast derelict mansion Cliffbrook that commanded views across this bay. Maybe that was what kindled my interest in the history of Coogee. I joined the Randwick and District Historical Society and teamed up with a range of community activists who campaigned to protect our natural and built environment. Nellie Peisley, or "Big Nan" as we called her, would sit for days with me at the State Library, without a word of complaint, as I pored over books on Australian history. But back to my walk: Passing the safe sheltered cove of Clovelly, I crossed the newly opened elevated walkway passing below Waverley Cemetery. It has the best ocean views for all those great Australians who lie there, such as Henry Lawson, Dorothea Mackellar and the aviation pioneer Lawrence Hargrave.

But it is time to stop for a coffee, a latte of course—it is Coogee—at relaxed Bronte Beach, home to the world's first surf lifesaving club and the favourite swimming haunt of Paul Pearce, the former member for Coogee. Paul is a good man, principled and respected by all, and I want to thank him for his genuine affection for, and his dedicated service to, our community going back over many, many years. I wish him, his partner, Ingrid, and all his family a happy and prosperous future. Passing Tamarama and its leafy gully that soars up behind me, I climbed the headland, like thousands of others do every summer, and marvelled at the Sculpture by the Sea exhibition. Coogee loves its culture—the Spot Film and Food Festival and the Australian Film Walk of Fame, Waverley and Randwick councils' literary awards, and so much more.

The long walk up Bondi Road to Bondi Junction, and the bustling mini-metropolis that has some of the finest shopping in the country, is testament to what a heavy rail line can bring. The Eastern Suburbs Railway was first considered in this House in the 1870s. Stations in Waverley, Randwick, Kingsford and beyond were planned. We are a patient people in Coogee; we are still waiting for our

railway to be finished. One week after I was preselected, Bondi Junction was awash with Liberals spruiking our cause, one whole year before the election. Candidates do not win elections, campaign teams do. From the start were Young Liberals Sam Ison, John Koutsoukis, Rohan Alexander and Andrew Hay; and, of course, my trusty lieutenant for over eight years, James Farrar. The not-so-young Liberals were Nandan Wandakan, Belinda Archer, Jono Elias, Angela Burrill, Hugh Ellens and Peter Wessels, who sadly passed away during the campaign.

I want to thank my ongoing Liberal Party supporters and workers: former Senator Chris Puplick, Greg Hamilton, Patricia Peisley, Tony Gentile, Grace Guerrera, Rosemary Colman, Professor Bruce Warren, Patricia Murrell, Phillip Boyle, Christie Hamilton, and of course Dominic Kelly and the Mosman Young Liberals, for their tireless work as well as my great mate, Nick Wright, for all his incredible insights and his calming, sound advice when it was all going pear-shaped. Today Gresta Semmens has come up from Melbourne to assist me, just as she has done for every election since 1995. She is my good luck charm.

But every campaign team needs a decisive captain at the helm. I believe that if the Allies had had Bev Martin in charge, they would have won World War II within weeks. Bev moves, talks and thinks faster than the Porsche she drives. Her stamina is more than a case of energy drinks could ever deliver. I first met Bev in 1998 when I volunteered for the Coogee campaign. She is a self-made successful business woman, who has worked tirelessly for 20 years to bring Coogee back into the Liberal family. The former Liberal Mayor of Randwick, Margaret Martin, who has been a supporter and friend of mine over many years, also ran for the seat of Coogee and came to within a whisker of winning it. I thank all of you who assisted me in this campaign. And Bev, this is as much your victory as it is mine. I left the busy Oxford Street Mall and headed for some respite amongst the tranquillity of the undulating hills and freshwater ponds of Centennial parklands. While Centennial Park, the home of our nation's federation, is not strictly in the Coogee electorate, it marks its western border.

It is the playground of my constituents—thus it should be in Coogee. Note for the next redistribution. The noise of the crowd across the road at Royal Randwick Racecourse, which is Australia's oldest and most famous racecourse, took me back within Coogee's borders. Kensington still retains its strong links to racing. Million-dollar racehorses clop along the street every morning. I joined Anzac Parade, Sydney's widest boulevard that snakes its way from the city to La Perouse. The Paragon Seafood Restaurant, which was the set for the series *Underbelly*, is just across the road in Heffron. And that great Australian actor, Roy Billing, is with us today in the gallery. Running up the hill from Anzac Parade towards that world-class medical precinct of the Prince of Wales Hospital is the University of New South Wales, Australia's finest tertiary institution. Maybe one day I will finish one of those degrees that I started there. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Fifty years ago Sydney's last tram trundled its way past here on its final journey. When you see the thousands upon thousands of bus travellers that use this route almost every day, you know that the tram's time has come again. I campaigned to bring back light rail along this boulevard to the University of New South Wales, and I aim to see that long-held dream come true. Lunch-time in Kensington and Kingsford is always a challenge: Which Thai, Chinese, Indonesian, Mexican or Greek restaurant do you choose? The streets teem with students from all over the world. Such a diversity and critical mass of people from near or far always ensures a vibrant town centre, full of the finest authentic cuisine—and students always ensure the food remains cheap.

Heading along Rainbow Street, the southern border of Coogee, I passed my old school, Randwick Boys High. Randwick Boys was always great at rugby, but that is no surprise because Randwick's rugby team has always been the world's best. And Coogee is the home of the former Wallaby Captain, Simon Poidevin, who is here with us today in the gallery. More recently, Randwick Boys High, together with Randwick Girls High, won the New South Wales Rock Eisteddfod twice. It is little wonder, though, because Randwick Boys most famous son is Jim Sharman, director of the greatest musical ever, the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Further down Rainbow Street is my family home. My parents, Alan and Gloria Notley-Smith, bought this home in the 1950s. They recently moved away, allowing a new young family to enjoy growing up there just as much as we did. My Dad, Alan, left school at 15. He applied to be a bookbinder, but they had only one position, and that was for an apprentice compositor. "That'll do", his mum told the boss, and his future was sorted. Dad thrived in the printing industry and soon bought an old pedal-powered printing machine of his own. He established his own part-time printing business and laboured long into the night in the garage. Maybe it is in his DNA, maybe it is in my DNA, but as far back as we can discover, Notley-Smiths have always been self-employed. So with a mortgage, three kids, and another one on the way, he left his job and set out on his own.

Our home was always a hive of activity, being blessed with a work-at-home dad and a stay-at-home mum. My mum, Gloria, spent her time raising her five boys, looking after her hardworking entrepreneurial husband and always volunteering at Coogee Public School where later she was made an Honorary Life Member. As we boys became teenagers, there were always unannounced guests for dinner. Mum never disappointed. "Duck down the road and get another leg of lamb, please", she would say, and the eight or nine uninvited guests were catered for with yet another roast dinner. Every one of my mates wanted my parents as theirs, they were always so welcoming. One mate of mine came to stay for a weekend and he did not leave for two years. But nothing challenges and defines a family more than adversity. When my youngest brother, Anthony, was tragically killed, just before his seventh birthday, I really learnt the true value of love and of human life. We will always miss you, Doodie.

My mum and dad are Liberal to the core, not through membership of the party but because of how they live their lives. They did not need to read Adam Smith, Mill or Menzies to know that determination, optimism and sheer hard work can deliver a life far beyond their modest expectations. No political dogma taught them that unqualified love for your family builds society's strongest bonds, no matter what the make-up of a family may be. They know that charity for fellow citizens should not come through some philosophical sense of obligation, but rather through a heartfelt sense of humanity. They know that no matter how difficult our lives become, there is always someone else who has less—someone who is doing it tougher than us. The values passed down to us from those we respect, those who live by what they say, I believe, are the strongest guide to a good life.

I am very proud of my brothers Greg, Stephen and Paul and their partners and wives Michelle, Sue and Ly. I am proud not just of what they have achieved but of the values by which they live. They will ensure that my gorgeous nieces and nephews Lauren, Lilley, Stewart, little James and Benjamin will inherit the same. Mum and dad are nearly 80 years old, but they still spend most of their time giving

to others, organising social and fundraising events at their retirement village. Thank you, mum and dad, for the trust shown and freedom given me, and for always loving me.

At the top of Rainbow Street, I had enough of walking and sat and enjoyed the spectacular view from Blenheim Park up along the coast, across the valleys to Bondi Junction and west to the university. You can almost see the entire electorate. It gives me time to thank the many other people who have assisted me to get to this place, the many members and Ministers who supported me throughout the campaign, with Jillian Skinner, Gladys Berejiklian and Mike Baird making repeat visits. Thanks also to the inspiring leadership of Barry O'Farrell. I thank my former boss Malcolm Turnbull for his support. No member is more deserving of my gratitude than the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC. I am told that he is a bit busy in the other place. Don is the President of the Legislative Council. I thank him for his friendship, his outstanding intellect and his unwavering support of me over so many years.

Thanks also go to Nick Berry, Ron and Dianne McDonald, Sally Cray, Trent Zimmerman, Dr Brian Lindsay, Simon Moore and Michael Photios, Mark Neeham, Chris Stone, Lisa-Maree Schnell, Paul Kaspar and Sam Paino. To Libby Lambert, nee Bowen, who was my closest mate and partner in crime when I was a young boy, who sadly passed away last year, thank you. I thank also my fellow councillors Ted Seng, Scott Nash, Kiel Smith, Robert Belleli and Her Worship the Mayor of Waverley, Councillor Sally Betts. Thanks to all the branch members in Coogee and beyond, to Randwick City Council General Manager, Ray Brownlee, and all 500 of council's staff and, of course, Jaymes Boland-Rudder—JBR—who is a top bloke.

I have to confess that I did not complete my walk around the electorate all in one day; my partner would burst into fits of laughter at the thought of me walking 16 kilometres. But the journey Paul Weston and I have made together is much longer. I met Paul in London 20 years ago, just weeks before I left to return to Australia after a year of backpacking. I only got as far as Bangkok when I was on the phone sobbing that I missed him and convinced him to come to Australia. He arrived two months later. We were just a couple of kids. I set up my business a couple of years later, and Paul went to law school. Paul encouraged me to run for council when the opportunity arose. He and I ran the entire independent campaign in 1995, staying up late into the night utilising his artistic skills at designing brochures.

Politics is always hardest for politician's partners. They put so much of their lives into our careers, and they silently suffer the stresses and frustrations, the setbacks and the difficulties that a life in politics inevitably brings. After a long day of campaigning, Paul and I would sit on the balcony with a glass of wine and judge the success of the day by the number of times we broke up. If we broke up only three times, that day was a pretty good day. Just as no parent deserves a child like me, nor does anyone deserve a partner like me. Any achievement of mine over the last 20 years has been in partnership with him. I stand in the shadow cast by Paul's amazing talent and intellect. I am dwarfed by his clarity of thought, compassion and honesty. I am engulfed by his love, his loyalty and affection.

So much needs to be done in New South Wales to make it the place we all know it can be. I bring to this House experience, strong views and sound ideas for reform in this State. I recently received an SMS from an old customer of my cleaning business. It said, "Darling, I have just updated my phone contacts. You've gone from Bruce my cleaner, to Bruce my mayor, to Bruce my member." It was a

short, humorous message, but one that speaks volumes of the opportunity that this great State offers all those who persevere. Today I have chosen not to rake over the past 16 years; the people of New South Wales said it all on 26 March. For now, this is the time to offer my constituents, those who have placed their trust in me to represent their interests in this House, my deepest appreciation, and give them my word that I will tirelessly discharge my duty with integrity, honesty and enthusiasm.

My journey across Coogee turned up nothing unique. Other electorates have a university, rugged coastal scenery, sparkling beaches and sheltered coves, a racecourse, a major hospital stunning vistas, great shopping and restaurants, world-class rugby teams, multicultural populations and proud public schools. Perhaps none of these things matter. Electorates may or may not be showpieces in the eyes of others but, most importantly, they are our home. Home is a place to feel safe and comfortable, to raise our family and to share life's experiences with those we love. It is a place where we can work and prosper, become part of a community, contribute to that community, a place to grow old and recall memories. Home is where we are free to be ourselves. Whether you have recently arrived or have lived in Coogee for decades, it is my job to ensure that Coogee remains the best home we could ever wish for because Coogee is my home.