

Full transcript

Maiden Speech

Dr. Gordon Reid MP Member for Robertson

August 1, 2022 - Parliament House Canberra

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Thank you.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which we gather today, the Ngunnawal people, and also to those in my electorate of Robertson, the Darkinjung people.

I pay my respects to all elders past, all elders present, and all elders emerging.

What we all must recognise is that the land upon which we work, the land upon which we love, and the land upon which we live, always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

As a proud Wiradjuri man, living on Darkinjung country, to be here today, to have the honour and the privilege of speaking in this place, representing my community, is the result of not just an electoral victory, but the sacrifice, courage and commitment of those that have come before.

We have an essential duty to listen to our elders, to hear them, to understand them, so that our light may shine brighter today, than it did yesterday.

And this begins by implementing the Uluru statement from

the heart in full.

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I will start by thanking the hardworking and welcoming people that are the constituents of Robertson.

You are the reason I stand here today, and it is an honour and a privilege to represent you.

You are the reason that I will fight with all I have for the Central Coast.

From the mighty peninsula, where I grew up in Umina, to the Gosford CBD, the leafy suburbs of Empire Bay and Kincumber, to the waters of Davistown and Saratoga, over to Narara and Niagara Park in the North, to the sparkling beaches of Copacabana, Avoca, Terrigal and McMasters, Kariong on top of the mountain, to our more rural areas of Mangrove Mountain and Spencer. This is our place.

To our world class volunteers on the Central Coast, the rural fire service, state emergency service, surf life savers, and all that help our community in times of need, your dedication goes above and beyond, and we thank you.

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The campaign for Robertson, was extraordinary. It was a grass roots movement centred around what matters – the health and wellbeing of others, the protection of our natural world, and the accountability of those elected to govern.

It was inspiring to see so many people, both in the party and

throughout our local community, come together to bring about much needed change.

It was, and is, a time of unity for the Central Coast, where every voice matters.

There were also some exceptional people, that must be mentioned today. Firstly, my family.

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To my beautiful partner Shaylee, you inspire me every day, to be a better person, and a better doctor.

Your empathy and compassion have ensured that our journey here has been one of inclusivity and equality.

With you by my side, everything is possible, and nothing is unachievable.

My father, Bryan Reid, raised in the council flats of Newtown, a nurse, a paramedic, and now a small business owner, recognised the importance of education to overcome barriers.

His father Ronald Reid, who is no longer with us, and my beautiful nan, Aunty Robyn Reid, raised a giant of the Central Coast.

My mother, Leanne Reid, a successful small business owner, is the most generous person you will ever meet, and is the embodiment of selflessness. She was lovingly raised by her single mother, Elaine Rowan, who is watching on from her home in Woy Woy today.

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Mum and Dad, I still remember you walking me to Umina Beach Public School.

I still remember you being there when I finished school at Central Coast Grammar.

I still remember looking out at the crowd at the University of Newcastle, and seeing you there when I became a doctor.

There has never been a time in my life where you have not been there for me. Growing up you taught me the importance of people.

You showed me and continue to show me how important it is to not leave people behind, and make sure no one is held back.

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To my little sister Grace.

A powerful, strong, Indigenous woman, capable of changing the world. Grace, you have always had a strong sense of right and wrong.

And it is because of that, you have always made sure that I have remained true, and that I have remained focused on why I am standing here today. People.

To Jo Lloyd, one of the greatest campaign managers anyone could ever ask for.

Your commitment and loyalty goes above and beyond, and the people of Robertson and myself are so fortunate to have

you on our side.

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To Jesse Corda, the days we spent door knocking, in the rain and the blistering heat, sometimes both. And to the thousands of phone calls we made in our small campaign office, we did it, thanks mate.

To my role models in our Labor community. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Ministers Jason Clare, Chris Bowen, Ed Husic, Assistant Minister Emma McBride, Senator Deborah O'Neill and State Member for Gosford Liesl Tesch. Your support and guidance throughout the campaign has been absolutely invaluable, and I will be forever grateful.

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Given we had the backing of such a strong community led campaign, including our wonderful branches, it would be impossible for me to single out individuals. But you know who you are. The community gave so much to our campaign, and I owe each and every one of you an incredible thanks.

To all those sitting in the gallery and those watching on from home, thank you for not only making this journey with me, but for every moment of your unwavering support.

I want to recognise the previous Member for Robertson, for her commitment to our community, and I wish her and her family well for the future.

Health is not simply a state of being free from illness or injury **Health is** the strength of a society and a community.

Health is a community having access to affordable and equitable care and services.

Health is having the freedom to go about your daily lives with the reassurance that those elected to represent us are held to account.

Health is having a clean, strong, protected and sustainable environment. **Health is** having a sense of belonging through cultural acceptance and representation.

Health is having the ability to participate in the workforce all while knowing your children are being cared for and educated to the absolute highest standard.

Health is having a safe and secure place to call home.

The **health** of our nation and indeed the Central Coast, is front and centre to what we must achieve. I am so honoured to be a part of a Government that **will** change lives for the better.

I have been fortunate to serve my community through our health service, in particular, in our emergency departments.

To work alongside great doctors, like Dr Matthew Ingram,

Matthew Knox, and Liam Clifford, and provide care for our most vulnerable, truly, is a privilege.

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Our hospitals are a place where it does not matter who you are, where you come from or the circumstances leading to your presentation – you will be cared for – and you will be cared for free – due to the hard-fought, Labor initiative, that saw a little green card come into the lives of all Australians, a little green card with the words that represent complete and universal access...Medicare.

A place where the lights are always on, a place where you will be met by some of the world's most highly trained and highly skilled nurses, doctors, and support staff.

A place where people do not expect to be, and often is, the worst day in someone's life.

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The shift I will now describe, is not that dissimilar to many others that have come before it, but it was the turning point, and why I stand here before you today.

I stand removing my PPE and washing my hands after seeing a patient, and then I hear the sound of the BAT phone, a high pitched shrill, piercing the already noisy environment.

The sound of that phone, the pre arrival notification of a critically unwell patient, commands the attention of

everyone in the room.

Over the loud speaker – “BAT CALL”

So it begins – the team assembles in the resus bay, roles assigned – airway, breathing, circulation, drugs.

We stand, ready, in full PPE – to try to shield us from COVID-19 – face mask essentially suctioned to the face, eye protection and face shield, long splash resistant gown with gloves.

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You feel the sweat running down your face, your neck – but no time to sit, no time to rest, the room must be prepared for the incoming patient. You hear the sirens.

The ambulance, drives up to the resus bay, having to slow down because of the many other ambulances ramped, filled with unwell patients.

The doors to the resus bay open, paramedics are doing chest compressions and rescue breaths on the 55-year-old male that was found unresponsive on the floor of his home by his wife and young children.

Cardiac arrest protocol begins in order to save the man’s life.

In the time this happens, his wife arrives, understandably distraught.

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Just under 20m away in the waiting room, more patients present within minutes of each other, one with a stroke,

another with a heart attack, and many who are unable to afford, or unable to see a GP in a timely manner.

This on top of a waiting room and subacute area that **only** has standing room remaining, and an acute section without any beds.

The corridors of that waiting room are not just filled with medically unwell patients, but those fleeing domestic violence, those at risk of homelessness and those who just have nowhere else to go.

Back in resus, return of spontaneous circulation has occurred, his heart now beating properly again. This patient needs to be transferred to ICU for critical care, but there are no beds.

The stroke and the heart attack need immediate attention, but there are no beds.

No beds, not enough staff.

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While all of this is occurring, others come through the door.

The five-month-old child with a femoral fracture as a result of domestic violence.

The 17-year-old in crisis due to a deterioration of their mental health.

The 80-year-old presenting unwell, someone's mother, and yours will be the last hand they ever hold.

The people that come through the door, on their feet, in a

chair, in an ambulance, or in the arms of a loved one, all know one thing, that we will be there for them.

The emergency department, however, can surprise you. It can be a place of love and new life.

The healthy baby boy that is born in the resus bay.

The Saturday sporting injury, that, after an x-ray, turned out not to be a fracture.

The child presenting in the middle of the night, unwell, who just needed an ice block, medicine and lots of hugs from mum and dad.

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Shifts like this formed a turning point for me. I stand before you today, not because I no longer want to be a doctor...I love being a doctor, and will always love being a doctor...but by undertaking this most important role, my skills and my experience will no longer be limited to the bedside.

At the bedside I have the opportunity to help one family at a time. Here, in this place, I have the opportunity to be part of something that can change the lives of everyone in our community, for the better.

I have the opportunity to use my experiences to bring about informed, systemic change.

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When people come through the doors of the hospital, they

put their absolute trust in those caring for them.

They know that you will do your absolute best for them, against all odds. The decisions you make, will make a difference in their life, for their life.

And that is what I want to help bring to this place. The public must, they must be able to trust in us.

We have been given an incredible honour to represent our communities, and people need to know, and need the guarantee, that they can trust us to do the right thing.

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I will fight day and night to ensure, that those in power, every person in this place, including myself, are held to account – because the health of our nation depends on it.

A healthy democracy, has at its core, accountability – and I see it as my responsibility, no, in fact our responsibility to ensure that we safeguard and protect it for future generations.

Our government developing the nation's first independent anti-corruption commission, is one of the missing pieces of the puzzle in restoring the community's faith and trust in their elected representatives.

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Our future generations should be at the heart of each and every decision that we make.

Without them, we are nothing, and this great Australian

story ceases to exist.

Therefore, we must provide them with an environment, with a planet, where they can continue to grow, to love and to become whomever they want to be.

In the afternoon, with the sun setting, and an orange glow filling the sky, if you look out from Umina Beach, you see a small island, Lion Island, on it a colony of penguins. Surrounding it, and the remaining coast, rolling waves and ocean, teeming with marine life. Truly something to behold.

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The scene I describe is not dissimilar to many parts of Australia, although the peninsula is truly one of the best places on the face of this earth, but it places front and centre what we must do – protect, preserve, and nurture.

I want to see a world where our policy brings people and business into the future, where Australia becomes an environmental and climate superpower, benefiting us all.

To improve the health of our climate and environment, is, what my father would describe as, a generational project. We must leave things better and stronger for future generations, for our family.

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Many families across this country, and across my electorate, own and operate small business, the backbone of this nation.

To have a small business is not to just have holidays when

you want, or have an easy life, like some people believe.

It is to risk everything. To risk everything, because you want to aspire to something better...to provide for your family...to have the capacity and ability to provide local jobs for local people.

That is small business, and Labor supports them.

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For myself, family is everything, as is my community.

Part of that story is my nan, Aunty Robyn Reid, an incredible aboriginal elder and leader.

Nan has spent every waking moment being part of and supporting the local Aboriginal community on the Central Coast.

And I am so proud to be part of that.

1 of 7 children, she spent her childhood in what was inhumanely branded 'The Camps'.

Nan grew up where severe abuse and poverty were the norm.

The threat of not sleeping or living somewhere safe and secure was real. The threat of not eating was real.

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But she was able to escape this cycle, with the creation of social housing, in Newtown in fact. The provision of social housing, which my nan refers to, to this day, as a blessing, was a pivotal opportunity in her life – an opportunity that

gave her the safety, security and support to strive for something even bigger.

And with her perseverance and incredible resilience, she was able to go on to be the first person in her family to ever own her own home.

My nan loves being able to use her story to help support and inspire members of our local Aboriginal community, and let them know that if they are struggling, they have the whole community behind them, supporting them.

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I am so proud of my Aboriginal heritage and couldn't be prouder of the incredible role that my Nan plays in our local community as a strong, female indigenous elder.

Every person deserves the right to have a secure roof over their head, and I will endeavour to ensure those sitting in the emergency department waiting room, those on our streets, and those at risk of homelessness have just that.

A nation's health depends on its ability to care for its most vulnerable, and Labor's housing vision, is a part of the therapy that is needed to resuscitate our social and affordable housing across the country.

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Our movement, the **Labor** movement, has always been one of opportunity and access.

Whether it be:

- the health of our loved ones;

- the education of our people;
- acknowledgement of the past,
- housing our most vulnerable,
- making sure employment becomes more secure
- OR, the expansion and modernisation of our economy –

Our movement is one that has, and will continue to improve the lives of all Australians.

These are the pillars of the Labor Party, and they are the foundations of our society, and they are who I am.

As your member for Robertson, I will work to protect our most vulnerable, grow our region, and unite our community.

Together we are healthier. Together we are better. Together we are stronger.