



Mr Craig Garland MP

House of Assembly

Date: 23 May 2024

Electorate: Braddon

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) (Inaugural) - Madam Speaker, it is a big occasion. I will take advantage of acknowledging my mother, who brought us up in difficult circumstances. Good on you, Avis.

To the rest of my family: Tanya; my sister, Lisa; my son, Arthur; Gracie, at the back; Bec and Jack; and my mates are over here; Charlie, Brownie and Butch.

I would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples of Tasmania. Particularly relevant are the 12 tribes of the north-west who are no longer with us. Their meeting place was Robbins Island.

I would like to also mention our forefathers, people like my grandfather who lied about his age to fight in the First World War. He went under the assumed name of Gordon Matthias Taylor at 14 and lived through two world wars, a pandemic, a depression and raised 11 children. People like him, that is what made us what we are today and the freedoms that we now cherish.

I would also like to recognise the multitude of different nationalities that now make up Tasmania and contribute to a society and add that diversity which we are now. My extended family and relatives - I am tied in with the Burgess family - the family tree book is about that thick. In the first election I did, I got 2200 votes, and I think most of them were family and relatives.

I would like to mention my election crew who stood by me. I did five elections in four years, lost eight kilos and had to have a year off the next year because it just sapped me. Norm Vanderfeen is a wealth of information. There is not an industry on the north-west coast that he has not had a hand in. Digger Cox, Codie Hutchison, my electoral officer who helped me no end, would not take any money and ran for the Legislative Council. Now he gets to experience what it is like in this environment. That is super important. Anyone who is young and wants to be involved in politics, give them every opportunity.

Now, to my story. I was born in Wynyard on 9 September 1964. I share the same birth date with both grandfathers - grandfather Garland and grandfather Chris; both born on that day. I never met my grandfather Garland. He died when he was 60. I think it was as a result of war injuries and what have you. However, I do remember my mother's father, Arthur. He was a wonderful man and one of the gentlest human beings I have ever known.

I was fascinated by fish and fishing. That is all I ever did. We used to live just outside of town and then we moved down to the main street, just along from the library

and the Wynyard Wharf. That is where I spent all my time. I remember David Charles' books on trout fishing and Neil Robson. If you looked at the record of how many times they were taken out, I would have been on there 100 times. I have always had a fascination with fishing.

My early school days - the first day at high school in grade 7, I was walking in the gate and a grade 9 fellow came up to me and he said he was going to put my head down the toilet. We had a bit of a box-on. Before the siren had even gone for the first day, I was sitting in the principal's office. Gerald Cross, I will never forget that man. He walked in like a shark, circled me, kept looking at me, and I was looking at him. I think he was intrigued to see what he had on his hands. I think the fellow I took on was a bit of a bully and, on my first day there, I had to tackle him.

I left early to join the Navy. That was at the behest of Gerald Cross; he could see that I needed a bit of discipline. My parents agreed, so I left to join the Navy. I was a junior recruit. One thing I was taught there was to get along with people from all backgrounds. We did not necessarily agree on certain situations. I find it uncanny that I am in that situation again; surrounded by people with a diverse view on how things should be managed. After 15 months in the Navy, because I was quite young, I realised that I did not want to have any active part in engagement or hurting anybody. I made friends with the petty officer. He convinced me that it was not the place for me, so I left. Much against my parents' best wishes, I came home. I did not know what lay before me, but luckily for me, I got a job on the waterfront.

Straight away, my first job was consigning the ship's manifest. It was a handwritten manifest that had to be rolled off on a methylated spirits printer and run down to the ship to give them their copies before they went. That job was really interesting because at the time we had 30 or 40 sawmills that were bringing bolster packs in, APPM Collection was going flat out, there were hundreds of containers of paper being shipped out, Tioxide. Over a period of nine years, I got to see everything that was being shipped out of Tasmania and everything that was coming in. The relationships I forged within that game are quite considerable. To this point now, I have the ability to ring up people who have an extensive working life and any information is available to me.

After nine years of sitting in an office, it got too much for me. I could not wait to get out and get on the ocean. There was not much money in the particular fish species I was catching, so I had to value add. I decided I would start my own shop with my good mate, Robbie. We set up a fruit and vegetable business and a fish shop. Four or five years in there. I won a small business award; it was just an ABC radio award for best fish and chips in the state. My turnover tripled in a matter of weeks. Then I was beholden to the shop, and I could not go fishing. After a while I thought, 'I have to get out of here'.

Then one thing happened on Australia Day 1996. A mate borrowed my boat and they capsized. They were lucky not to die. I thought, 'How could you capsize my boat?'. I did not think it was capsizable. I borrowed a dinghy and fished for a week and caught enough fish to cover the cost of replacing that boat and had it back two weeks after it was fixed. Guess what I did? I capsized the boat. I laughed as I was walking up the shore. I thought, 'The futility!'. I had known for quite a while that I should have moved

on, but I stuck to it and stuck to it until I got the big kick in the arse. The boat was over. After that I swapped my business for a shack at Rocky Cape.

Prior to that, I saw a movie, *When the Whales Came*. It was about a man and his partner and three children who lived in the Orkney Islands. Basically, all he did was row around and catch fish; he had a garden and spent time with his kids. I thought, 'That is the life for me'. I took the first step and got that shack. I was waiting for my lady love to appear but that never happened. After a while I thought, 'I have to get out of here'. I sold my shack.

I was sitting there one day - I had had hard times: I broke my leg playing football, I had a plate and six screws put in; I got a handful of change from the footy club; my power was cut off; I was looking to lose the lease on my shack. Then, again, a fortunate thing happened. A fellow from Sydney came along and he gave me \$200,000 for that shack. It only had one window that was not broken. Everything else was sold or in Save A Buck. That got me back on the road. I had five or six years on walkabout, I would call it, because I did not know what I wanted to do.

I pulled myself out of that and started working hard. I had quite a bit of money in the bank. One day I was sitting there, I thought, 'What do I want to do?'. I did not want to travel. I did not want to buy anything else; I had everything I could possibly want. I had had some good relationships, but I just decided that I was not able to co-inhabit any place with a member of the opposite sex. It really concerned me because I thought, 'What do I want to do?'. I had nothing driving me. Then I met Bec. In a short time, we had three kids, a couple of mortgages, five elections. She never saw that coming. I never saw that coming. Nobody saw that coming. I am here today.

There have been a number of things that have happened to my fishery which, ultimately, made me go to politics. One day I was driving along, I was very depressed, and I passed a seal relocater. I chased him and caught up with him at the traffic lights. I had \$2000 in my pocket. I thought, 'I am going to try to convince him to stay at home, stop dumping these seals on us' but it did not go well. It nearly got violent. I started crying afterwards. I rang my industry representative; I told him what had happened. Then the seal relocations were stopped, then the fishery that I relied on. I thought that I had everything: I had a beautiful family, I had a great fishery. Then, over a period of years, that came to the point where now it has been shut for three months.

I am an issues-based politician. I never thought I would be doing this, but I am so grateful that everyone in this state, if they have an issue and they are not getting satisfaction, and if they want it resolved, this is the ultimate. This is where you can get it done. I am so privileged and fortunate that we have this system whereby you can take advantage of this.

Geez, I do not know what else to say. What I would like to say, everyone I have met in here, you sit on the outside and you are here, and everyone is going, 'oh, that bugger' or 'this bugger', but what I have realised since I have come in here, we are just all normal people with a range of backgrounds and a range of views.

Right now, this state is looking for leadership. They are looking for a parliament that can take everyone along together. My role in all that, in some way, some small part, is contributing to the greater good.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr GARLAND - I will leave it at that. I have not taken that long, so we will get to go home a bit earlier tonight.

I would like to acknowledge Mr Abetz, too. Much-maligned character. Listening to his speech the other day, when everyone was giving him the number one vote - I have not had that. Maybe next time round I will be afforded that as well.

Madam SPEAKER - Feel free to make comment on any member.

Mr GARLAND - Good luck, and let us try to make it work for the best interests of everyone.

Members - Hear, hear.