



Dr Shane Broad MP

House of Assembly

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Electorate: Braddon

Dr BROAD (Braddon - Inaugural)- Madam Speaker, I am truly honoured to have the opportunity to give my first speech in this place today.

I had honestly thought that for me the moment may have passed. It was a great surprise to receive that early morning phone call from Rebecca White informing me that Bryan Green was stepping down from the Labor leadership, she had just been elected Labor leader, and Bryan was also leaving Parliament after a long career.

After some deliberations with my family, friends and colleagues, I decided to contest the recount. I was fortunate enough and very grateful to win the recount and be sworn in less than a day later. I believe I have big shoes to fill but in the wash-up Bryan Green will, on balance, be treated kindly by history, not the least for helping to guide the renewal of the Labor Party which will continue at the next election and beyond.

In this speech today I wish to talk about my past, how I got to this point and perhaps some of the knowledge and skills that I may offer which will hopefully hold me in good stead in this place, before moving on to discuss why I have always been Labor and what I hope to achieve for the people of Braddon and Tasmania in the future.

The last few weeks have been quite a whirlwind and, in writing this speech, I have realised that like an autumn leaf trapped in a whirlwind I keep coming back to the same place over and over.

I grew up on a farm at Gawler just out of Ulverstone in the heart of Braddon on the north-west coast. My parents, Ian and Noela had four children in five years so we are all close in age and the house was always busy. I am the second youngest member of the family which includes my sister, Kerrie-Anne and my brothers, James and Stephen. I am very pleased that mum and dad and my brothers are here today. Unfortunately Kerrie-Anne was unable to make it but Stephen has made the journey all the way from Chinchilla in Queensland and I thank him for being here today. Thanks Steve, it means a lot - and James has come from North Hobart.

Growing up on the farm was a big playground. My brothers and I would roam freely, go fishing in the river, exploring the bush and getting dirty. Mum would subsequently ban us from one activity like playing in the mud so we would move on to building a cubby house in the hay shed. Bringing hay into the house would then lead to another ban so we would move onto something else before coming back to playing in the mud. And so it went on, much to the chagrin of my mother.

We also learned to help out and work hard. As we got older, if we were caught inside for any length of time, dad would allocate us jobs to do. I remember one summer when we were playing too many computer games we were given the job of picking up a tractor carry-all load of rocks each, per day. For years this was the benchmark for the worst job that everything else would be compared to. For example, working in the onion factory next door was better than picking up rocks, so it was not too bad.

It is funny how, as you get older, these things come back. Jumping forward to the recent past, our house is built on a pretty rocky site so I have picked up tonnes of rocks over the last five years or so and I have built about 100 metres of stonewalls. I actually enjoy it. Who would have thought? This brings me to the first skill from my past that I made need as a politician - stonewalling. Yes, the ability to stonewall ought to come in pretty handy.

As I grew up I went to Ulverstone Primary and Ulverstone High School before moving onto Don College in Devonport. They are all fantastic schools and I am grateful for the many friends I still have from these years. It was at this point during college that for the first time my life headed off in a completely new direction. I was selected by AFS to be an exchange student and was apparently off to Denmark for a year. I was due to leave halfway through year 12 and with only a couple of weeks to go, I still did not have a host family. I will always remember coming home one night, after visiting a friend, to see my father with a huge atlas we owned opened up to a big map of Denmark, where he had just been told I was heading. He was looking over it with a magnifying glass, trying to find the Faroe Islands. I then flipped over to a map of the North Atlantic and pointed out that the Faroe Islands were out in the middle of the North Atlantic, halfway between Scotland and Iceland. Everyone was very surprised and we all knew nothing about the Faroe Islands. The encyclopaedia said they were a group of small islands with a population of around 50 000 people of Viking descent and they collected birds, eggs and feathers and did a bit of fishing. There was no Google back then.

I left a few days later and began what was an extraordinary experience. I first stayed with the Husgaard family in a village called Syðrugøta with about 300 people and went to the local college equivalent with students from

the wider area. Everyone knew everything I was up to even before I did. It felt like I was the shiny new toy for a while.

On my first day of school I vividly remember that I was sitting up the back of the assembly not understanding a single word when, all of a sudden, all the 100 students and staff of the school turned as one to look at me. I stood there and wondered if my fly was undone or something, but it turns out that they had mentioned I would be at their school for a year. They all knew about me anyway and up until that point they were being polite and trying not to stare. Although everyone studied and spoke English, it was at this point I thought to myself, I have to get to know the local language or I am really going to struggle knowing what is going on.

The Faroe Islands are a unique place. They are a modern Scandinavian society of 50 000 people with a very high standard of living, perched on 18 rocky islands which are roughly the same land area as the Furneaux Group. The different islands are joined by tunnels, bridges and ferries. It is a spectacular place with soaring cliffs, deep fiords, traditional turf roofs and often terrible weather.

Some of you might be interested to know the combination of shallow soils and winter hurricanes means there are virtually no trees to fight over. Fishing is by far the biggest industry and the people speak an Old Norse dialect that is only understood by the Faroese but sounds a bit like Icelandic. They have their own parliament and are defined as an independent nation within the Kingdom of Denmark. They still get a big block grant of kroner every year from Denmark.

When I arrived the economy had only just collapsed due to overfishing and poor financial practices. Banks were going under and unemployment was on the rise where there had been none before. Things were bad.

But the Faroese people were amazing. They welcomed me with open arms.

I later moved in with my best friend, Arni and his sister Jóhanna and his parents, Andrias Petersen and Katrin Zachariasen. It really felt like a second home. I made a real effort to learn the language and the culture and I became one of them. This was a lesson that stays with me to this day. When you truly take time to get to know people, understand their language and cultures, they pay you back tenfold.

There were other exchange students there with me on the island at the time: Claudia from Bolivia, Ilse from the newly independent Latvia, and Nu from Thailand. Being an exchange student teaches you about other cultures. It was weird for me because people would want to talk to Claudia about all the

drug lords and cocaine in Bolivia, they wanted to Ilse about the collapse of the Soviet communist system, and Nu about prostitution and poverty in Thailand. Whereas, the same people would ask me about things like the beaches, the sunshine, Sydney Opera House, Uluru and beer.

When introduced to a Faroese person, they would often ask things like, 'I know such and such in Sydney, do you know them?'. They were so connected to each other they thought I should be as well. Sometimes I would say yes, just for fun.

When I met people I always said I was Tasmanian and still do, whenever I travel. I joined the wider exchange student movement and learnt about economic strife, different cultures and disadvantage but I also learnt how to handle new and uncomfortable situations and I became willing to 'put myself out there' - a bit like now.

After my year was up, I headed home but felt unsettled. I did not complete year 12 and instead I worked on the farm, mainly growing broccoli. A couple of years later my friend, Arni, stayed with us for three months and we headed back to the Faroes together for a quick visit. I ended up staying another year. This time I worked on a farm with the Patterson family in a place called Kirkjubøur. They were very traditional in their outlook and they had farmed the same property for at least 17 generations. I lived in a large 800-year-old wooden farmhouse, which is one of the oldest wooden buildings in the world. I milked 20 cows that were kept inside for 11 months of the year. Legend has it that the old farmhouse washed up on the shore from Norway like a big kit home all nicely bundled up and numbered, with the roof apparently arriving a couple of days later. I do not know if that bit is true.

I learnt even more this time about the Faroe Islands. I learnt other ways of thinking and I became fluent in Faroese. I thought in Faroese and I dreamed in Faroese. I made lifelong friends. I had returned and for the people who live in the middle of nowhere and sometimes feel forgotten this means a lot. Because I had been around for a couple of years on and off, and had no real accent, people from the other villages thought I was just from a neighbouring island. So much so that every now and then I would have to show my Tasmanian driver's licence before they would believe otherwise. After another year I headed home with much regret. Who knows, if I had managed to get a job on a fishing boat I could still be there now.

On reflection I now recognise the significant impact my two years living on the Faroes has had on me as a person. I would not be the person I am here, or here today, without my Faroese friends and experiences. For the benefit of my friends who may be watching the live stream half way around the

world, I would now like to translate these last two sentences. I thank you, Madam Speaker, for your permission to do what I understand is a first by saying:

Og nú vil eg fegin vísa a tan týðning tey tvey árini eg búi i føroyum høvdi á meg sum persón. Eg vildi ikki verið tann er eri, ella staði her í dag, uttan tykkum: mínar Føroysku vinir.

This brings me to my next skill that may come in handy for a career in politics, being able to speak a language that is totally incomprehensible, yet people still want to listen!

Members laughing.

Dr BROAD - When I returned to the farm at Gawler I decided to go to university the following year. At age 22 I left to study agricultural science at the University of Tasmania in Hobart. I was also keen to pursue another thing I love doing, and that was rowing.

I started rowing when I was 14 with the Ulverstone Rowing Club and competed at Lake Barrington, where I also volunteered at the 1990 World Rowing Championships. At times I had been fairly serious about rowing, but had not quite cracked the big time. Going to university would also allow me to train more effectively and be close to my coach, John Driessen, at the now Huon Rowing Club.

It was a chance discovery that I had exercise-induced asthma that changed everything for me in sport. I thought that not being able to breathe at the end of a race simply meant that I had gone pretty hard. As soon as I got my asthma under control I went from being easily knocked out in semifinals to coming second at the Australian Championships in the lightweight single scull. This was a change that would lead to bigger and better things.

I went on to represent Australia in various crews over four years, winning silver and bronze medals at the World Rowing Championships, along with some 10 Australian titles and five Penrith cups for Tasmania. The Penrith Cup is the prestigious annual interstate race for my category. You would also note that I have my Australian team tie on today.

I never became a world champion or an Olympian, but I always tried my best, especially in big races. I am proud to say that both times I was on the medal dais at world championships I had to be held up by my crewmates, because I was completely exhausted. You can see that in the photos.

My proudest moment in rowing was not at the world championships. It was on my home course at Lake Barrington, racing for the Penrith Cup in Tasmanian colours. The last time I had raced for Tasmania at Barrington was 1997 and we had come last. In 2003 we had won four titles in a row, with our fourth being a dead heat with the Western Australians which, after racing 2000 metres, is very rare. They could not separate us by centimetres. There was also a bit of expectation as we were Tasmania's best chance for winning an interstate race. It meant so much to me to be cheered on by a parochial crowd and to come from behind to beat the Western Australians in an incredible race to win five in a row. That is my highlight.

I would not have been able to get anywhere in sport without the scholarships I received from the Tasmanian Institute of Sport and the university, as well as the effort from my crew mates over the years and the guidance of my coaches, John Driessen, from the Huon Rowing Club, and the late great Sam Le Compte, from the TIS.

This brings me to my next skills. There are two that come from rowing. One is being able to move in one direction while looking in another and, two, just like rowing in an eight the ability to handle somebody else holding the rudder and doing all the talking while just pulling hard on the oar and trying to stay in time. My rowing career had come full circle and it was time once more to move in another direction. I had taken up to four months off a year for many years without pay to travel and train in the national team. Now it was time to work on something else.

During my rowing years I graduated with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science with First Class Honours. After a couple of years in the workforce I decided to do a doctorate. My PhD was unusual in that I received support from the School of Agricultural Science, in particular Professor Rob Clark, to undertake a research project of my own choosing. This was on top of the Australian post-graduate award scholarship I had received. I set about looking at reducing chemical use in vegetable cropping by scaling up the concept of companion planting and ended up focusing on insects in broccoli; so broccoli once again. I did all my work at the Forthside Research Station and completed a larger semi-commercial trial on my parents' farm. Once again I returned to where I started - this time not as a farmer but as a scientist.

It was during this period, in 2005, with my now wife, Alicia, that I returned to the north-west coast to live after nine years in Hobart. We got married, built a house at Gawler close to my parents' farm and started a family. In 42 years I have travelled a lot but I have not moved far.

My thesis was titled *Reducing Chemical Inputs in Vegetable Production Systems using Crop Diversification Strategies*. It is a bit of a mouthful, I know! Out of this work I published a number of papers and it has been downloaded over 2500 times. For their guidance, I thank my supervisors, Dr Shaun Lisson and Dr Neville Mendham. I may be a doctor but I am sorry that I cannot help you with a medical diagnosis unless you are a very sick potato!

The reason I use the title Doctor for official occasions is because firstly it took eight years of hard work to get it and, secondly, I would like to highlight that education does not have to stop with a degree. Indeed I am a strong supporter of life-long learning. I also want to highlight that a kid from a farm on the north-west coast can get a PhD, become a researcher which means you can then go on to work for the likes of CSIRO, Canberra University and the University of Tasmania, like I have.

I would also like to note that all of my siblings have graduated from university - my parents did not attend university and finished school relatively early - yet none of us matriculated. We were all mature-age students when we started. In my career up to this point I have worked in almost every aspect of agriculture from actually farming to agronomy, rural sociology, licensing, policy, nutrient and hydrological modelling, consulting, finance as well as teaching sustainable resource management and most recently agribusiness at the University of Tasmania.

This is where I segue to my next change of direction, and that is agreeing to stand for Labor in Braddon for the 2010 state election. It may seem a bit random changing from being a scientist to a politician but there were reasons behind this decision. We have always been a Labor family and we have always discussed current affairs and politics round the dinner table. My mother is a life member of the Labor Party and a long-time president of the Leven Labor branch, I think 17 years. It must be said she is pretty one-eyed. In fact, she informed us last night that when she first met my father she wanted to know if he voted Labor before things went any further!

Members laughing.

Dr BROAD - Dad is a bit more level headed but it is not too surprising that this is where my politics lie. What it comes down to for me is the idea of a fair go. This may come from our working-class roots or my Irish and convict heritage, but I have an inbuilt reaction to something that does not treat people fairly. During my professional career there have also been frustrations at being able to write scientific papers, reports and so on, make recommendations, but not being able to make actual changes. Changes happen in this place.

I was also attracted to politics by what I could see as a renewal of the Labor Party with young candidates such as Rebecca White, Scott Bacon and others standing in 2010. I am proud to now be part of this renewal, albeit a little bit later than others.

That brings me to something I hope to bring to Parliament: using the scientific method in decision-making, or taking a scientific approach. This, I hope, comes in the form of developing and testing ideas to solve the long-term challenges we face as Tasmanians in health and education, while also trying to carve out a place in an increasingly global economy, rather than focusing on the daily cut and thrust of the 'he said, she said' that modern politics can become. The scientific method to me also means that when presented with evidence I am able to change my position. To some this may be a backflip but I see this as a guiding principle of science and hopefully my politics.

After running unsuccessfully in 2010, my contract with CSIRO and TIA ended, so I worked at home for Canberra University developing a salinity model for the Upper Murrumbidgee. I also managed to get elected to the Central Coast Council. It was around this time federal Labor MP, Sid Sidebottom, offered me a position managing his office. I have a lot to thank Sid for and he remains a mentor and friend. When Sid was promoted to parliamentary secretary for agriculture, fisheries and forestry in the federal parliament, I became his chief of staff and was witness to a tumultuous period in both state and federal politics.

During this period I also committed to running again for Labor in the 2014 state election. Doorknocking in the 2013 federal campaign really brought home to me how difficult the upcoming state election was going to be for Labor, but I ran anyway. It was tough. I especially thank those supporters who helped me during this campaign when help was thin on the ground. My own recent election is as much to do with them as me.

After this campaign I was in and out of work on short-term contracts. It can be hard for professionals outside Hobart and Launceston to find professional positions while also being over-qualified for everything else. Moving to the mainland was a definite option. Alicia and I talked at length about it, about what was important to us, and we decided the north-west coast of Tasmania was where we wanted to live and raise our three children, Maisie, Zoe and Lachlan. We have so many friends, the people are great, it is safe and a beautiful place to live. What more could you want? We decided to tough it out and I put more energy into my council role. I learnt so much from being in local government and I will truly miss my fellow councillors and the staff. I hope to keep working together, just in a different capacity.

Then I fell on my feet workwise, finding myself back at UTAS developing and lecturing a new online agribusiness course. I was offered a five-year contract, the longest contract I have ever been offered. After three difficult years workwise, I thought everything was now mapped out. How wrong I was. There are challenges in being here. It is not just the travel and the workload. Not being around means my wife, Alicia, has more to do in looking after our three young children, on top of her own job as a primary school teacher. I will not be home as much to see the everyday little things, share the load and just be a father.

Growing up on the farm I always had dad close by. I can only ever remember him going away for a couple of days. If I ever wanted to see him, I just had to follow the sound of the tractor or, failing that, let his old sheepdog Shep off the chain and follow him. He always knew where dad was. Now I have been elected to this place my children will not have the same experience and this is a price I will have to pay.

This is why standing for the recount was such a big decision. I especially thank my wife, Alicia, for her support now and always. The decision came down to what I really want to do, which is representing the people of Braddon and being able to make a difference. Now I have been fortunate enough to win the recount and take my place here.

As you have heard from this speech, even though I have headed off in different directions, with my exchange student days and travels, with rowing and going to university, I keep coming back home. I have tried to get away but like that autumn leaf in a whirl I keep coming back because my home is the north-west, my home is Braddon, and my home is Tasmania. I will now do my best to make Braddon and Tasmania a better place.

Members - Hear, hear.