



Charlie McKillop

Liberal for Leichhardt



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LEICHHARDT 2007 CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

Minister Mal Brough
Warren Entsch
Lance Royce, chairman of the Liberal Leichhardt Federal Electoral Council
Lyn Warwick, my campaign manager
Ladies and gentlemen

You have already heard from two important people whose involvement in launching my campaign is symbolic of both the achievements and the future of the Coalition Government.

Warren Entsch has served our community with distinction as the Member for Leichhardt for more than a decade. Warren has raised the bar in terms of representation of our region. His legacy – more than any single achievement – is that the people of Leichhardt know now what they can expect from their local Member and in future, will demand it.

Mal Brough is a prime mover in the Government. In his current Ministry he has been relentless in pursuit of change for the better in our community – in the Families & Community Services portfolio, and perhaps even more so, in Indigenous Affairs.

Mal represents the future of the government—a future I want to be a part of and a future I want for Leichhardt.

I have been privileged to have worked with both of these men. They have provided and will continue to provide me with role models for the sort of representative I want to be for our community.

Leichhardt is unique – our industries, our environment, our way of life and most of all, our people, are as diverse as they are dynamic.

Meeting the challenge of that diversity demands flexibility and a federal representative that can relate to people of all walks of life.

I know this because I grew up in Far North Queensland. I was educated here, worked and lived here most of my life. Like many young people I have had to move away from the region to gain experience at another level, but North Queensland always has been and always will be my home.

Everything I am and can be is a result of my upbringing in a family that above all, put the welfare of its children first.

The most significant figures in my life are here with us today—I want to particularly acknowledge my mum and my grandmother, the strongest, most amazing women I know and without whom, I would not be standing before you today.

They do not see it as anything out of the ordinary but the sacrifices they made to ensure we kids had the opportunities they did not, are nothing short of extraordinary.

My grandparents owned and operated a small business, working 6 days a week, while helping to raise me and my sister. Meanwhile, mum was out at sea working on a prawn trawler to put us through school.

Later we went to live with Mum. In a sense I had the best of both worlds.



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The freedom and security of growing up in Karumba, a small town where everyone knew everyone and looked out for each other.

But thanks to my mum's determination that we should go to boarding school, we also had the pathways that come with education.

Like mum, one of my first jobs was on a fishing boat in the Gulf of Carpentaria. But in contrast to my mother's circumstances, I had the opportunity to go to university and pursue a career.

And that career was journalism. For as long as I can remember that's what I wanted to be. After finishing my cadetship, I returned home to Cairns where I wrote about the people and issues I cared about most.

After four years I realised writing about problems was not enough for me. I am sure that's what led me to Warren Entsch's door in the first place... the opportunity not only to highlight problems, but be part of the solution.

At a local level, I have been by Warren's side for some of the biggest battles.

- Standing up for fishing families in the Far North by opposing unfair and inequitable restructuring of the fishery;
- fighting for the rights of freehold landholders in the Daintree Coast community; and
- tackling complex telecommunications issues right across the electorate at a pivotal time in the government's roll-out of infrastructure to improve television, mobile phone and internet coverage.

These experiences that have shown me what can be achieved when you go into politics to change things. It also taught me no matter what you achieve, there is always more to do.

And there is still more to be done in Leichhardt if we are to continue being the best place in the best country on earth—a place in which we can live and work, raise our families and realise our hopes for the future.

I don't believe we are well served by having Labor Governments across the spectrum in North Queensland. Whether it is the state of our roads, our hospital or the complete failure to undertake even the most basic planning, the Beattie Government has treated this region with contempt. I do not want to give Kevin Rudd the opportunity to do the same.

This vast electorate is such an amazing, dynamic place. We, Far North Queenslanders are proud, capable and optimistic people. But we cannot afford to take our prosperity for granted.

We need strong, effective representation to ensure we continue to get our fair share.

I want the people of Leichhardt to have a new, strong voice in parliament. I intend to be that voice.

As I have been going out around the electorate the feedback from people has been very positive. People respect Warren and they are pleased to see that the Government has the ability to renew itself. That it is not afraid to put forward new ideas, new candidates with a fresh perspective.



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As I have been talking to people, four issues keep coming up again and again

Roads.

Education.

Infrastructure.

Security and safety in our homes and our community.

These are the fundamentals that make our society a better place. These are the issues I will fight for:

- A road system that is safe and of a standard that will drive, not hinder economic development in our region.
- More opportunities to develop professional skills and career pathways for young people growing up in FNQ so they don't have to go to capital cities to pursue their careers –
- I would start by pushing for a new Technical College in Cairns; and a school of dentistry at JCU Cairns Campus
- Investing in infrastructure— not just roads but local schools, aged care facilities, our telecommunications network – investment that will build our future
- Backing local crime prevention initiatives that will help keep our communities safe. I would also like to see more of the proceeds of crime being used to support victims of crime, instead of the perpetrators
- A shared vision for Cape York Peninsula that includes— not excludes— pastoralists, traditional owners and residents in managing our natural resources and realising the economic potential of the land and water of northern Australia.

I have to confess I did not grow up a child of the Liberal Party (my grandma would attest to that!)

But I have worked as part of this government for eight years and integral in that, is my strong belief in the Liberal Party and its values.

The values of a running a strong economy so you can afford to pay a social dividend to families, older people and small business.

Of recognising and rewarding individual effort.

Of mutual obligation.

Of the belief that our country does not owe anyone a living, but that it owes every one an opportunity to make a living.

These are Liberal values, they are Australian values and they are my values.

So to Mal Brough, as you push ahead with your positive reform agenda, I want to be right there beside you. The government needs people like you in Cabinet and people like me in the party room.

People who can draw on their life experiences and speak from the heart about the people and places they represent.

I will work every day between now and the election to give the people of Leichhardt every opportunity to know me, to know what I stand for.

Warren, you have left an indelible footprint on this electorate. I am ready to forge my own path to take the needs and interests of the people of Leichhardt to Canberra.