



Senator Matt **CANAVAN**

LNP Senator for **QUEENSLAND**

10th Anniversary Edition



10 Years is a

It has been a great honour to represent Queensland as an LNP Senator for 10 years. I never thought I would be a Senator, but having been given a great privilege, I have tried to make the most of it.

When elected to the Senate in 2013, I lived in Toowoomba with my wife and three children. But it was better for the party, and for Queensland, to have a Senator based in Central Queensland, so we moved to Yeppoon, set up an office in Rockhampton, and had two more children too!

My career nearly finished before it started as I was accused of being a suspected Italian in the dual-citizenship controversy of 2017. Thanks to the support of my family, I was very lucky to keep my position. Since that near death experience I decided I may as well approach politics with a “never-say-die” attitude because it could end any day.

I am proud of what I, my committed staff, Parliamentary colleagues and local supporters have achieved in CQ. We have fought and defeated a

When we fight for our core beliefs and values, we usually win. And there is a lot more to fight for to protect our jobs, our families and our freedoms.

- Matt Canavan

Long Time in Politics

Green-Labor alliance who were opposed to building new mines, dams or anything.

Through our efforts more than 1500 people are now employed at the Adani Carmichael mine. The Rookwood weir is full and helping to grow thousands of macadamia trees. And, the Rockhampton Ring Road has finally started.

Because we fought for the jobs our community relies on, we won their support and helped win the 2019 election for the Liberal National Government.

In my time as Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, I tirelessly defended the importance of our resources sector and the need to develop our nation.

Despite the victories, there are many more fights ahead. There remains a well organised and well funded group of radicals who want to destroy the culture and institutions that have made this country great.

We are blessed to live in exciting times. There is great economic, technological and geopolitical changes occurring. This creates much anxiety and uncertainty. But it also creates an opportunity for individuals to show leadership and navigate our nation through these challenging times.

I believe that my small team here in Central Queensland has helped craft a positive response to these challenges. If nothing else people should get in to politics not just to win elections but to engage in the battle of ideas.

The Australian people deserve to have competing visions put forward so they can make the best choice.

When we fight for our core beliefs and values, we usually win. And there is a lot more to fight for to protect our jobs, our families and our freedoms.



What we have done

I have been lucky to have been part of an LNP team here in Central Queensland, and a Nationals team federally, that have achieved a lot. Here are some highlights.

- Fought and defeated the foreign funded Green movement to get the **Adani Carmichael mine** started. The mine now employs over 1500 Australians and the related construction of a 200km rail line has **opened up the first coal basin in Australia for over 50 years.**
- With Michelle Landry and Ken O'Dowd, secured the funding to build the **Rookwood weir** on the Fitzroy River. More than 300,000 macadamia trees are being grown from the new water rights and the weir is expected to help double agricultural output in the Fitzroy basin.
- Worked tirelessly with a local campaign to restore funding for the **Rockhampton Ring Road.** The road is now under constructions and is expected to open in 2028.
- Delivered more than \$1 billion of new funding for **Beef Roads**, including for the Hann Highway, the Outback Way and CQ roads like Springsure to Tambo and the May Downs Rd.
- Delivered a **Critical Minerals Strategy** that included a world first agreement with the United States to cooperate on securing critical minerals. This agreement helped Lynas, an Australian rare earths producer, secure a contract with the US Department of Defence.
- Introduced the first Bill to remove Australia's outdated ban on **nuclear energy** that was supported by all the Senators from one political



Announcing a bill to legalise nuclear energy

party (the Nationals). Removing the ban on nuclear energy is now the policy of both the Liberals and Nationals parties.

- Achieved 60 per cent support for a **Radioactive Waste Facility** in the rural South Australian town of Kimba. Unfortunately, the new Labor government walked away from this result.
- Developed a comprehensive **“income splitting”** option to Tony Abbott's Tax White Paper review, which would help correct the injustice of the tax treatment of single income families.
- With my Nationals Senate colleagues, successfully fought for the government not to challenge the court decision awarding **live cattle industry compensation** for the 2011 ban on live cattle exports.
- Successfully lobbied to get **Port Alma accredited as a live export facility** providing CQ graziers with another option to sell cattle.
- Worked with the **Quilpie** community, so that they could receive funding under the Drought Communities Program in 2015.
- Led the push to strengthen competition laws to help small businesses by inserting an **“effects test”** into the misuse of market power provisions.
- With George Christensen, Warren Entsch and others, helped develop a **Federal Sugar Code of Conduct.**
- Stood up for the people's freedoms by crossing the floor to **oppose vaccine mandates.**
- Chaired a Senate inquiry on **regional bank closures** that helped save 11 branches.



At the Carmichael mine with George and Michelle



Delivering my first speech on 16 July 2014

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr President I am honoured to give my first speech in the Senate and I am honoured to have been elected by the Queensland people to represent them. I will do my best to serve their collective interests with courage, integrity and humility.

It is a privilege to follow a great friend of mine, Senator McGrath.

I just want to put on record the vast majority of people in the galleries are here for James. I say good on you James for being able to get more people to attend a speech in the Senate than the Raiders are able to get to most of their home games!

Mr President, in my time here I want try to make sure all Australians can choose their own job, buy their own home, start their own business or have their own family. For each small Australian to be big they must be free from big government, big banks, big unions and big corporations.

I believe that the best way we can give Australians that independence is to keep taxes low, make it easy to employ someone, promote property rights, protect the family and to continue to develop the “plains extended” of our vast continent.

I have been lucky to have two wonderful parents, Bryan and Maria, who are here tonight and my brother and sister, John and Emma, are here too.

I will never forget the hours upon hours playing cricket in our backyard in Logan, just south of Brisbane. My Dad built us a full-length, concrete cricket pitch. He boxed up the pitch and even started mixing the concrete himself in a wheelbarrow. A few yards into the full 22, however, he

saw sense and ordered in the cement truck.

I joke now that while my Dad is very proud that I have been elected a Senator there is still a tinge of disappointment that I did not reach my true calling to wear the baggy green for Australia!

I have been even luckier to have met my beautiful wife, Andrea. I feel so blessed to have one person that I can share everything with: the ups and downs, the moves all around the countryside and most of all our three beautiful sons, William, Jack and Henry. We are expecting our fourth child very soon ... just in case people are wondering the due date is not nine months from election night!

I started talking about my family tonight because that is the reason I got involved in politics. I wanted to do something where my children could see the differences that I was making.

So one day when I was sitting in front of a computer at the Productivity Commission, I cold called Tony Abbott’s office and asked if they needed an economist. They didn’t, but Barnaby did, so I ended up with him.

I did not know Barnaby, but I met someone that I grew enormous respect for. You get to know people quickly in politics. A few months in we were in an election campaign, and one night we were sharing a particularly comfy room where the two single beds must have been just half a metre apart. We tucked ourselves in for the night, and then I remembered that I hadn’t called my wife, so I got out the phone and texted my wife “Hi babe, love you lots miss you.”

At least I thought it went to my wife. Instead I had been texting Barnaby so much it went to him by mistake.

But seriously, in the words of TE Lawrence, Barnaby is someone who “dreams with open eyes” and I feel lucky to have worked for him.

One of our first trips together was to Cubbie Station and we were coming home late after a drink at the Dirranbandi Hotel. We got talking about climate change, the ETS and all that.

I said that what I could not understand, while working at the Productivity Commission, was that the Renewable Energy Target had bipartisan support even though it was clearly the most costly policy because it made poor people pay rich people to invest in wind farms or put solar panels on their rooves. At this Barnaby riled up and said that it did not have the support of the Nationals Party, and of Ron Boswell in particular. That was my introduction to Bozzie.

There is no one like Ron Boswell, and I certainly cannot replace him alone. It is up to us all in the Nationals Senate party room -- Nigel, Fiona, Wacka, Bridget and Barry -- to follow Ron's example and take up the fight for the causes we believe in.

I come into the Nationals Party room not as your typical Nationals Party Senator. I am not a farmer, I am not a small businessman. I am an economist who has spent most of my time working for the Productivity Commission.

We are lucky to have an organisation like the Productivity Commission. There are a very few independent organisations in the world that are set up by governments to criticise governments. In my time there, Gary Banks led the organisation with consummate skill, and it is great to see him here tonight. My first boss, Ian Gibbs, is also here, and I am sure he will return to me a copy of this first speech later with lots of corrections and red ink all over it.

It is an unusual path to travel from the Productivity Commission to the Nationals party. The predecessor bodies of the Commission fought famous battles against a great leader of the Country Party, John McEwen.

But those battles about protectionism are well and truly behind us. John McEwen's underlying principles and values are what we should remember today.

What drove John McEwen was not a desire to impose higher tariffs but to protect the wealth producing industries of our nation.

Once again our wealth producing industries need support. Our agricultural, mining, manufacturing and tourism industries face high taxes, over-regulation and, most of all, a complacency that they will keep producing wealth regardless of what we do in this place.

While I was at the Productivity Commission, I was constantly reminded of how important it is to get the costs of business down. Australia spent 30 years removing tariffs to reduce business costs, we deregulated financial markets to reduce business costs and we reformed our energy sector to reduce business costs.

It is now often forgotten how successful that was. From

1990 to the mid-2000s, electricity costs fell by 27 per cent in real terms for businesses.

For the past decade we have adopted the opposite approach. We imposed a carbon tax and a renewable energy target that increased business costs and we have unwound many of the improvements in industrial relations that provided a way to link greater productivity to higher wages.

We have gone from having some of the cheapest power prices in the world, to now be above average. Just 7 years ago businesses in Australia paid less than 10 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity.² Today many pay above 20 cents per kilowatt-hour. In the United States, their prices remain where ours were just a few years ago.

We have very similar resources to the United States, abundant supplies of coal and gas, but we give up our natural advantage in wealth and job creation if we turn our back on them.

I want to put on record my admiration and support for our fossil fuel industry and the thousands of jobs it supports – including my brother's. Fossil fuels have made more contribution than almost any other product or invention towards humanity's long ascent from lives that were nasty, brutish and short to ones of comparative luxury and leisure.

The only form of energy that I want to promote is cheap energy, because we have a choice, we can have either cheap energy or we will get cheap wages.

To get cheaper energy we need to rediscover that the whole point of providing infrastructure is for the users of infrastructure not the owners. We have made a mistake to put profits ahead of lower prices for the end consumers, businesses and families.

We need a new National Productivity Agenda to bring down the costs of doing business, to boost productivity and to create good, well-paying jobs. Higher productivity is the only viable way to lift the standard of living over the long term.

Mr President, while I am an economist, our national debate has been driven too much by economists. There is lots of truth in Adam Smith just as there is in Aristotle,



Our family at time of the speech - we had two more later!



With Barnaby and Bossie at the Ekka

Aquinas, Hobbes, Rousseau and Rawls. Just because something doesn't have a price does not mean it has no value.

In the Nationals party we believe that small is beautiful. Small farms and small businesses allow more Australians to have a stake in their country, smaller towns provide greater community spirit and the smallest social unit of society, the family, is the most important one for us all. As Aristotle noted "the nature of every thing is best seen in his smallest portions."

A fundamental mistake of National Competition Policy was the view that you only needed "potential" competition, of a few big firms, to deliver the benefits of "actual" competition from many small firms.

The lived experience of potential competition has not delivered the goods. Farmers struggle to achieve a return on assets of more than 2 per cent, while our major supermarkets and banks make returns of more than 10 per cent. It is not right that the people that produce our food make returns so much lower than the people who sell our food.

Our competition laws are too focused on protecting against monopoly power but just as economically ruinous can be too much buying power or monopsony. It is probably a bigger issue for our economy given our relatively small size, highly concentrated markets and distance from potential overseas buyers. Apple growers in Stanthorpe rely heavily on the major supermarkets, sugar growers generally only have one mill to sell to and grain growers, despite selling all around the world, have limited means to transport that grain efficiently to market.

Yet Australia's seminal legal textbook on competition laws does not mention the word monopsony, or any concept relating to buying power, once. This is not a criticism of the authors; they are simply reflecting the state of our laws and jurisprudence.

Too low prices can be just as detrimental as too high prices because they lead to lower supply and reduce incentives to invest in new technologies. To protect small businesses we need stronger competition laws like an effects test, low-cost arbitration processes and stronger penalties for dominant businesses that do the wrong thing.

Mr President, we should encourage as many Australians as possible to own property. Owning property gives you both individual freedom and a collective stake in the defence of the nation and its rights.

One of the greatest days of my life was the day my wife and I got the keys to our first home. We enjoyed pizza on the floor of our home with no furniture on our first night. We were monarchs in a room of our own, with rights that none could dispute.

But home ownership is becoming increasingly out of reach for my generation.

Unreasonable restrictions on land release are part of the reason but these are largely state issues. At the Federal level we make it harder for young people by forcing them to put 9.5 per cent of their income into a savings account they may not be able to access until they are 65.

I wanted to own a home when I was 25 not 65. Why make people save for retirement before they can own their own home? We should free up the rules around superannuation so that young people can use their income and their savings to buy their first home.

Property rights generally are under attack in Australia. The state should have the right to promote and protect public health, safety, welfare and morals but governments across Australia are abusing this right.

Farmers have had their rights to clear land taken from them, fisherman have had their right to fish restricted, local councils are enforcing draconian restrictions on what can be done in self-defined "green" zones and land owners have more ability to keep their mother-in-law off their property than a mining company. (By the way, "Hi Joan", thanks for coming down!).

In all of these cases, the government is not acquiring property from landowners but the government is regulating its use to such an extent that it is effectively taken from private hands.

Under our constitution, property owners only have compensation rights for the "acquisition of property" not for the "taking" of it by means of Regulation 5.

Our constitution differs from the Fifth Amendment to the US Constitution in this regard. 6 American courts have developed a detailed case law on "regulatory takings" that define when government decisions amount to a taking and therefore trigger a compensation claim.

The private individual should not pay for the public good. If the public seeks greater protections then it should be willing to pay just compensation for them. We should look at providing the same protections as in the United States either through constitutional change or an Act of Parliament.

Mr President, property rights are important because they help protect the basic unit of our society, the family. Property delivers security and permanence and that encourages people to make the biggest investment decision of their lives, the decision to have children.

I support a tax system that recognises the family. Family tax benefits are not welfare; they are due recognition that families face higher, unavoidable costs and therefore deserve taxation relief.

But not all families are treated equally under our tax system. Two Australian households, that earn the same amount of joint household income, can pay vastly different amounts of tax.

Take a household of two children where both parents work full time and each earn \$60,000 per year. Their total household income is \$120,000 and they pay about \$24,000 per year in tax.

Compare that to a household, also with two children, where only one parent works and earns \$120,000 per year. They have the same household income, yet this household pays about \$34,000 in tax -- \$10,000 more per year than the double income household.⁷ Putting it another way, a double income family could potentially earn up to \$215,000 a year before they pay the same average tax rate as a single income family on just \$120,000 per year.

This is unfair. People with similar ways and means should pay similar amounts of tax.

Other countries, including the United States, Germany and France allow parents to split income for tax purposes. The Canadian Government has promised to introduce income splitting once their budget has returned to surplus. We too should have a goal of correcting the injustice for single income families when our budget returns to surplus under a Coalition government.

The great reform efforts in industrial relations over the past 200 years were all aimed at reducing the time we spend at work. It is a backward step that we now try to maximise the number of people in work. For most of us what we achieve in the home will far outweigh our achievements at work.

My wife and I made a decision that she would stay home and look after our children while they are young. Even so, she feels the modern pressure to enter paid work because otherwise you are not "contributing".

That view is rubbish. Whatever I achieve in my professional career, including in this place, won't matter a jot compared to the achievements and legacy of my wife. When we are 64, enjoying a bottle of wine, what we will reflect on is our children, and God willing our grandchildren.

My wife will have a greater impact on that outcome because I spend too much time at work.

My son came home from school the other day with one of those posters of himself with his picture on it, and questions about what he likes and doesn't like. He said his favourite thing to do was to "tackle Daddy". Henry, I hope that I find the time in this job so that you can keep tackling me enough. And, Andrea if you want to tackle me from time to time ... that's ok too!

Mr President, you would be aware of the hardships we Senators must face. Unlike our colleagues in the other place we must wait up to 10 months before taking our seats in Parliament.

But it is not all bad. I used some of my time to spend a few weeks working in a stock camp in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

I went there to learn about cattle but I came away learning more about people. I learnt about the young



With the stockcamp at Miranda Downs

Australians that get off their backsides and work hard in a place thousands of kilometres from their friends and family for very little money. I want to thank Brendan Menegazzo, Tony McCormack, John O'Kane, Tom and Tanya Arnold and Tess Cox for making this happen.

I hope that in my time here I can make decisions that do not make their lives any more difficult, because we want people to follow them and go to the frontiers of our nation, work hard and build something better.

I want to make it easier for them to get to town on a Friday night on better roads. I want to let them pay tax that reflects the level of public services provided 100 kilometres from Normanton - which isn't very much. I want to let them enjoy the simple pleasures of living that life, which include fishing, rum and coke, pigging and, for some, cigarettes, without putting up taxes every year, or regulating every little risky enjoyment in life.

Mr President, I am proud to have been elected as the 10th Liberal National Party Senator and the 52nd Nationals or Country Party Senator. I have been a member of both the Liberal and Nationals parties separately. In Queensland, we are a stronger unit for combining the great principles and people of these parties.

I want to thank all the members of the LNP for the work they did to help me be here. I am always humbled to see so many people work for free to give me a well-paying job. Because getting elected to the Senate is a team effort, I also want to pay tribute to Ian Macdonald, James McGrath, David Goodwin, Theresa Craig and Amanda Stoker my running mates.

Many have travelled down to be here tonight but I want to particularly thank Bruce McIver, Brad Henderson and their hard working executive and office team.

I pray to God that He can help me meet the expectations I have set here. I pray that I can contribute to the Senate in ways that respect and build on its great legacy.

I pray that I can work with a government that returns Australia to the path of balanced budgets, returns Australia to a path where opportunity and security increases every year and most of all a place where all Australians find their own independence and freedom to live the lives they want to lead.

I look forward to working with every one of you for the benefit of all Queenslanders and all Australians.

Thank you and God bless.



FAMILY FIRST

My job as a Senator is important but my most important job is as a father and husband

It is no exaggeration that I would not be able to do the job as Senator for Queensland without the support of my beautiful wife Andrea.

When I started in the Senate we had three young children and we have had two more while I have been a Senator. At the times when I have had to look after 5 kids on my own, I am invariably desperate to return to my job as a Senator after a few days for a break!

This experience has always led me to fight for a better deal for stay at home parents. Our current tax system is biased against parents making a decision for one of them to stay home and look after their own children.

Let's take two families both with two children.

One is a double-income family on \$150,000 a year with one parent earning \$100,000 a year and the other \$50,000 a year. They pay, under our tax system, \$32,000 in tax and they would receive, around \$7,000 in childcare subsidies. So their net tax bill comes in at \$25,000.

The other is a single-income family also on \$150,000 a year but just earned by one parent. Their tax bill will be \$43,000 a year.

The difference between those two families is nearly \$18,000 in net tax per year. They have exactly the same household income, the same number of kids, but yet pay a different amount of tax a year that could buy a small car.

This is grossly unfair and it ultimately distorts the decisions

parents make about their children and the raising of their children, because it is a very costly choice to look after your own children. It should not be like this.

One of the first major pieces of work I did as a Senator was to make a submission to Tony Abbott's white paper process on the future of Australia's tax system. I proposed that we should introduce a form of income splitting between parents for the first time.

My proposal was to allow one parent to transfer \$18,200 to the other for tax purposes. This would give all families the same tax free threshold of \$36,400. Unfortunately, when Malcolm Turnbull replaced Tony Abbott, he ended the tax white paper process.

I am reincarting the proposal though. I have got new costings done. And since then we have put billions of dollars to more child care subsidies. It is about time we support the hardest working workers in our country, the Mums and Dads that look after kids!

Balancing taxing and parenting

Submission to Rethink — Australian Government Tax Discussion Paper

June 2015

Senator
Matthew
Canavan



My submission to Tony Abbott's tax white paper process



Addressing a LNG Conference in Japan in September 2019

TO WELL AND TRULY SERVE

The greatest honour of my time as a Senator was to serve as the Minister for Resources and Northern Australia.

Both sides of this portfolio were key wealth producers for Australia. The resources sector accounts for more than half of our nation's exports and more than half of our exports are shipped from ports in Northern Australia.

Most importantly, this wealth helps support good, high wage jobs for everyday Australian families. To create these jobs, we must maintain public support for the agriculture and resources sectors. I saw as a key objective as a Minister to support the wealth generating industries of Australia, which I did by regularly highlighting their contribution in speeches, in media and through articles.

Over my time as Minister, the favourability towards the resources industry improved. This was so successful that support for the resources industry has become a prerequisite for any political party wanting to win majority support at an election. As Labor's own review into the 2019 Federal election said:

Labor's ambiguous language on Adani, combined with some anti-coal rhetoric and the Coalition's campaign associating Labor with the Greens in voters' minds, devastated its support in the coal mining communities of regional Queensland and the Hunter Valley ... Labor should recognise coal mining will be an Australian industry into the foreseeable future ...

Winning the 2019 election has helped get the Adani project over the line, opening up the first new coal basin in Australia for 50 years.

Maintaining political support for resources is necessary to attract investment but it won't be sufficient. It takes too long to approve mining projects in Australia. A Productivity Commission review that I commissioned found that the average

time to receive approval has increased to over 1000 days.

That is why I oversaw the first Resources Statement made since the 1990s. The Resources 2030 plan was put together with the assistance of the former Queensland Resources Minister, Andrew Cripps. The statement laid out plans to attract investment over the long term.

It has led to Australia's first Critical Minerals strategy which seeks to increase rare earths production in Australia so that western countries are not reliant on China for a mineral that is used in almost every modern invention from mobile phones to Joint Strike Fighters. The Australian company Lynas recently won a contract with the US Department of Defence thanks to this agenda.

We also need to ensure that Australia's resources are used to develop Australian jobs in downstream industries. That is why I oversaw the introduction of export controls so that Australian gas is offered to Australian users first. Attracting investment is essential to the development of Northern Australia too. With responsibility for delivering Australia's first white paper for



The 2019 campaign forced Labor to support Adani



Finally, a dam gets built!



With Michelle at the Rookwood weir

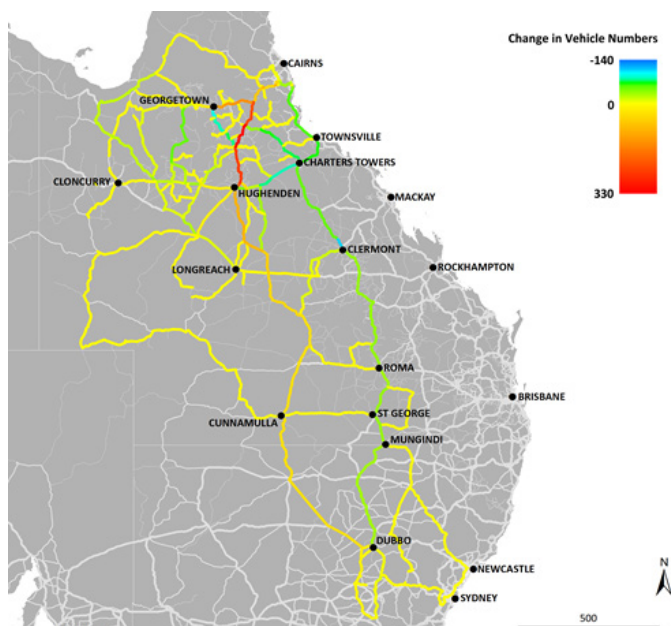
the development of Northern Australia, I fought hard to deliver significant investments to the north.

Over \$2 billion has been committed to northern roads under this agenda. This includes the sealing of the Hann Highway, the first inland route from Cairns to Melbourne, and the Outback way, which will be just the third sealed route across Australia.

The Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility got off to a slow start, but after some changes to its mandate, it has now made \$2.8 billion of loans, including over \$1 billion in North Queensland.

I left the portfolio in good shape, and Keith Pitt has continued to be a champion of resources and Northern Australia.

Our wealth producing industries remain under unprecedented attack, however. And while I am no longer the Minister for these areas, I still take up the task of fighting to defend the good jobs that our country can provide.



The CSIRO's TRANSIT tool helped secure funding for Beef Roads

In 2011, Michelle Landry, Ken O'Dowd, Barnaby Joyce and I visited the banks of the Fitzroy River near Gogango, west of Rockhampton. We were there as part of a Liberal-National tour of potential dam sites around Australia. We got bogged on the banks of the Fitzroy but we (eventually) left with a commitment to get the Rookwood weir built.

It took us over 10 years of hard work and frustration but finally at 4am on 27 December 2023 the Rookwood weir was full to the brim. And it hasn't stopped spilling for over 6 months!

There were many naysayers over the years. The Labor party for years said it would be a waste of money and there wasn't the demand for the water in the region. We pushed on and after years of campaigning we got the support of the then LNP Government to invest \$130 million in the project.

It took a few more years to get the Queensland Government on board. We rallied on the banks of the Fitzroy and finally, we got there. It was another example of how our party members and supporters helped us get things over the line.

The water in the weir backs up an amazing 60 kilometres opening up a huge amount of country for agricultural production. Over 300,000 of macadamia trees are now being planted using the water from the weir. There is a strong chance a new macadamia processing facility will be built in Rockhampton soon. Dams create wealth!



Hundreds turned out to rally for the Rookwood weir



Celebrating the 2019 election victory with Michelle Landry and my children Edward and Elizabeth

FIGHTING TO WIN

The 2019 election proved that we win when we fight on a platform defending our principles and values

I got to our after party late in 2019. As the owner of a big trailer, I had to spend the hours after voting had closed packing up booths around Rockhampton. I had the radio on but was only getting tidbits of information - Tony Abbott had lost, there was no easy win for Shorten, etc.

At some point, one of our scrutineers sent me through the count from the Lakes Creek booth. We were winning the primary vote easily. I knew then that if we were winning the meatworks area of Lakes Creek, Michelle Landry would make history and win Capricornia three times in a row.

When I finally made it to the after party, someone rushed up to me and exclaimed “we have won.” And I said somewhat tiredly, “I know, I know we have won Capricornia.” He replied, “No we are going to win the election.”

At first I could not believe it. As the victory became clear, I tweeted “How good is Queensland!” ... and that was before the Scott Morrison’s victory speech!

But I could have said, “How good is the LNP!” It was the LNP team that had masterminded a campaign that delivered a two party preferred swing in Queensland over ten times greater than that in the rest of the country. In Central Queensland the LNP vote surged to over 60 per cent, from below 50 per cent 10 years earlier.

We achieved that result because we fought the election on our home ground. We had the guts to back an Indian company who wanted to invest in Australia to create jobs. Our platform was controversial but it served as a lightning rod to make the election about jobs, about our support for developing our country and it put the Labor party on the backfoot.

The lesson is that we must be willing to fight for our principles and values even when, and sometimes especially when, they are controversial. Without any controversy, we would not have had Bob Brown. Without any controversy Labor would have got away with making the election about wages or their so-called “big end of town.”

I have always tried to have the courage to back our beliefs. In doing so I have helped build support for the LNP in Central Queensland with my colleagues Michelle



Newly elected Colin Boyce MP on election night

Landry, Ken O’Dowd, George Christensen, and now, Colin Boyce and Andrew Willcox.

I fought for income splitting, I fought against environmental activists and I have backed coal, live exports, sugar, dams, traditional marriage and the right to life.

The lesson is that we must be willing to fight for our principles and values even when, and sometimes especially when, they are controversial.

We should not be afraid of these political battles because the global realignment of politics is moving in our direction providing we have the confidence to stand behind our principles.

All around the world left wing political movements are moving away from their base of working class support and becoming parties of the educated elite. While they might win applause among the mainstream media they struggle to win the votes among the masses of everyday people.

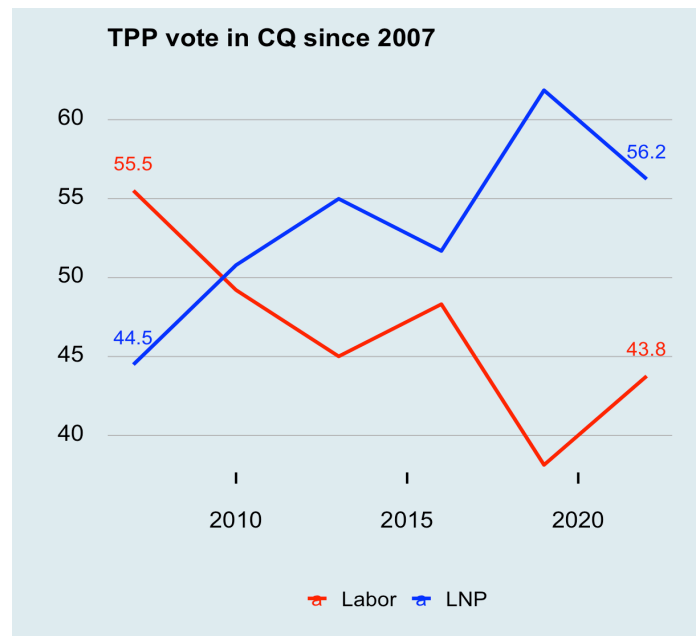
Everyday Australians want a job, they want to see Australia build dams and power stations and they want to see our country re-industrialise in response to rising China aggression.

By default we have become the natural party of the worker. This gives us a once in a generation opportunity to build a powerful coalition of small business people, workers and families who have a common cause in defending our nation and continuing to ensure that we deliver on the lucky country’s promise of a relaxed and comfortable family life for all who are willing to work hard.

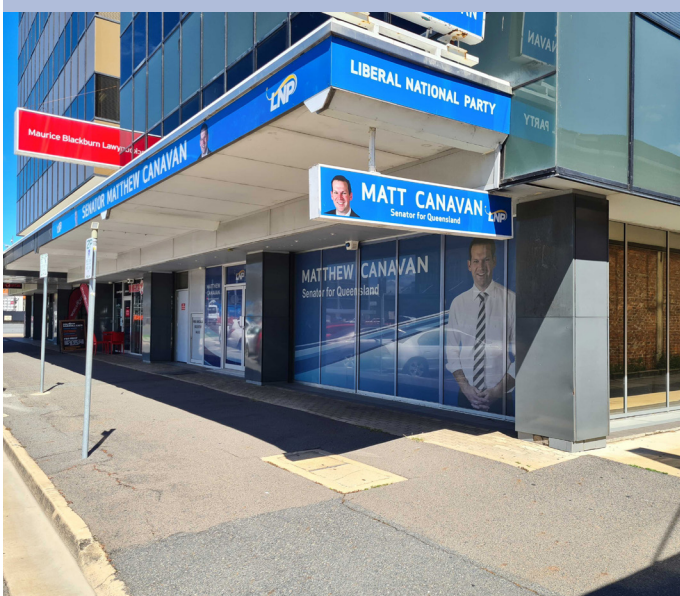
This was confirmed in 2022 where while we came off the heights of the Adani surge in 2019, we maintained all of our CQ seats comfortably. This was despite having to get elected two new candidates in Colin Boyce and Andrew Willcox. They have both made a great start and give great hope that we can keep CQ blue.

The lessons of our past victories will help us meet these. We must fight for our values.

I commit to continuing to work hard as your representative to defend our values in the cause of creating jobs, supporting families and defending our nation from outside attack and interference.



Putting CQ on the map



When I was elected to the Senate in 2013 I lived in Toowoomba with my wife and three kids. By the time I entered the Senate in mid 2014, however, Barry O’Sullivan had become a Senator in Toowoomba.

So I moved to CQ with my family and put my office in Rockhampton. We love CQ and have had our fifth child (and first daughter!) there.

It has been successful on the political front too. I am the first Senator to be based in Rockhampton for more than 25 years. With Michelle Landry, Ken O’Dowd, George Christensen, Colin Boyce and Andrew Willcox we have taken the fight up to Labor and forced them to historic losses. If we can lock Labor out of CQ, it makes it hard for them to win. While Labor won in 2022 it was by a margin of just one seat.

We need more Senators based in the regions. More than 80 per cent of Australia’s Senators are based in capital cities. But the LNP buck that trend with half of our Senators based outside Brisbane. We should have that across the country!

BACKSEAT DRIVER

After voluntarily ending my Ministerial career over a failed leadership challenge, I took up a position on the backbench and kept fighting for our principles



Just a month after I resigned as a Minister in early 2020, the world was thrown into lockdowns and border closures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At first I supported the response. It was only going to be two weeks to flatten the curve! Over time though I became increasingly concerned at the enormous costs of COVID measures relative to their benefits.

By August 2021, I wrote in the *Australian Financial Review* about the unjustifiable costs of lockdowns. Based on modelling by the Burnet Institute, I calculated that the cost of the Sydney “delta” lockdowns were \$330 million per saved life. We had let things get way out of whack.

By the end of 2021, I crossed the floor to oppose vaccine mandates. *The Courier Mail* claimed at the time that I was “out of touch with the majority of Australians.” In hindsight, we have been vindicated. Forcing people out of work to take the vaccine was a step too far.

I have now introduced a Bill for a Commission of Inquiry into the COVID-19 response. The Prime Minister has denied us the inquiry needed to make sure we do not make the same mistakes again.

Being on the backbench allowed me to make these unpopular but necessary arguments even when they run contrary to the prevailing narrative.

I have used this freedom to push for many other things consistent with our Liberal and Nationals values.

In the middle of the pandemic, the then Health Minister decided to ban the importation of vapes. I had never vaped but I was contacted by lots of desperate, mainly young adults, who feared being pushed back to smoking while they were in lockdown. I organised with 28 Coalition Members and Senators to write to Greg Hunt against the ban. We got over 80,000 signatures on a petition within three days.

The ban was overturned and now the Coalition has a more sensible policy to regulate vapes just like we do cigarettes. We should instead put resources into keeping vapes away from children.

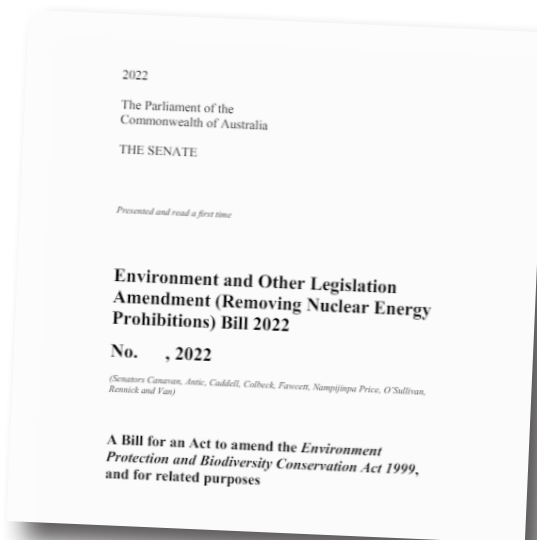
With my Nationals colleagues, I have introduced a bill to remove Australia’s outdated and out of step ban on nuclear energy. This Bill received the largest number of Senators to support the nuclear ban’s removal since its introduction in 1998.

The Coalition now supports nuclear energy and I hope that a re-elected LNP government can remove the ban in the Senate.

I have continued to fight for the rights of the unborn. I introduced a Bill, originally developed by George Christensen, that would require babies born alive following a termination procedure to receive medical care, just like any other human being. This Bill led to the first Senate hearing on abortion for many years.

Since the 2022 election, the LNP has been without a Senator for the ACT, and I, as a former ACT resident, have taken up a kind of shadow role. I introduced a Bill to force an inquiry into the ACT Government’s outrageous decision to forcibly takeover a Catholic hospital without even negotiating a price for its acquisition.

I hope to have many more years in the Senate fighting for our principles and values and for Queensland.



A Bill to remove Australia’s outdated ban on nuclear energy



ROCKY RALLIES

When the Government cut funding to the Rocky Ring Road, Rockhampton fought back and won

In late 2022, just after the election, Central Queensland was shocked when Labor announced that it would halt work on the Rockhampton Ring Road.

This much needed upgrade to the Bruce Highway had been in the works for a decade. It was to be the biggest road project in regional Queensland. Over 2000 trucks go through Rockhampton every day, past 4 schools making the current road a safety hazard.

Before the election, Anthony Albanese had called the project a “certainty”. Some CQ businesses had been asked to ramp up in preparation for works to start within months. When the project was put on hold, these businesses were left in the lurch and thousands of dollars out of pocket.

The CQ community channelled its anger into a plan to get the decision reversed. With enormous help from the local community, within a week posters, stickers and shirts had been ordered. And, within two weeks a community rally was held, attended by over 500 concerned locals.

After the rally a convoy left Rockhampton to travel the 2000 kilometres to Canberra. It was a great privilege to join the convoy and give CQ a voice in Parliament.

In Canberra, the convoy met with Ministers, MPs and Senators from all political parties. They got a great reception from all. On the way home the convoy went to the Queensland Parliament with the same message.

Our efforts had an immediate impact. Within months, the Queensland Premier extracted an agreement to get early works on the project going.

It took another year of fighting but finally the Federal and State Government announced extra funding to get the road started and completed in early 2024. Once again the people power of CQ won!





A team effort

Over my 10 years in the Senate, I have been supported by wonderful staff.

I have been very lucky to have a committed and small team in my electorate office in Rockhampton. My diary manager, Jenon, has been with me since from almost day one. Jill, the office manager, and Tracy have been with me for more than 5 years. Kerrod my media adviser has been in Rocky for 3 years and we have just welcomed our newest staff member, Sebastian.

My team have always been dedicated to helping the people of Central Queensland first and that has been a core reason for our political success here.

I had a much larger staff while a Minister, led by the experienced and able James Martin. Over those years we built a motivated team to seeing the development of Australia's resources for the benefit of the nation. This team played a key role in combating those opposed to Adani and hence helped deliver the 2019 election victory.

I could not have achieved half of what I have done without my staff and I am forever thankful to them.



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