



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 30 March 2011

O'FARRELL TO APPOINT FIRST FEMALE SPEAKER

NSW will have its first female speaker with the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government to nominate the Member for South Coast Shelley Hancock for the role, Premier Barry O'Farrell announced today.

A former teacher and mother of three, Mrs Hancock's nomination was confirmed at the joint NSW Liberals & Nationals Party room meeting today.

"Shelley Hancock is an ideal choice as Speaker. Shelley has represented the South Coast since 2003 and has a strong grasp of the parliamentary system," Mr O'Farrell said.

"I want the NSW Parliament to be run professionally and sensibly and Shelley is the ideal choice for the role," he said.

"No one wants to stop the robust debate that has seen the NSW Parliament labelled the bear pit, but we also need to ensure we are proud of the way the Parliament is run and I have no doubt Shelley will do that.

"She has earned enormous respect in the Parliament over the last eight years and I have no doubt she will put her own stamp on the way it is run."

Mrs Hancock said she was excited at the prospect of being the Speaker of the Parliament.

"It is a huge honour and without a doubt the highlight of my career," she said.

"I know people think it is a daunting task but I think the standards have improved significantly in the last four years and I intend to build on that. I want to make sure the people of NSW are proud of their Parliament and that is a role I take very seriously."

Mr O'Farrell praised the work of Richard Torbay who was the Speaker of the previous Parliament.

"I think he is the best Speaker I have seen in my 16 years in the Parliament," Mr O'Farrell said.

"However, I think the appointment of Shelley Hancock will give the role even greater standing. She is not only a successful MP but she is former teacher and mother of three children so she will bring a whole new dimension to the role of Speaker," Mr O'Farrell said.