



House of Assembly

Extract from Hansard

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Address in Reply

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (17:33): I would like to firstly congratulate and thank the Governor, Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, for his wonderful speech opening this session of parliament, and congratulate him on the extension to his term as Governor. I also congratulate him and his wife for the fine execution of their duties in the office of Governor.

The Governor's speech is, according to members of the opposition and our Premier, a break in tradition. For some reason, the opposition see that as a negative thing. I think it is an appropriate change because, whilst the opposition have considered it inappropriate, it is an opportunity for this new government to outline its vision and values for the balance of this term and beyond.

What is the vision, and what are these values? The Governor has identified the following seven primary areas of focus for action. The list is not exclusive and does not diminish in any way those areas which are not mentioned; rather it identifies those areas that can be leveraged to maximise the benefit to the community.

I would like to go on to some of these key areas. As to the clean, green food industry, the importance of food production is recognised by this government, and our recent moves for protection zones is an example of us recognising the importance of primary production in this state. The state government's legislation to introduce a small business commissioner is also very important, because one of the industry codes of practice which will come under this act would be one for the farming sector.

It is also interesting to note that the small business commissioner legislation and also the code which will come from it—which came from the farm machinery inquiry by the Economic and Finance Committee of parliament—were two initiatives opposed by the Liberal Party. As we can see, their rhetoric does not match their actions.

The mining boom will benefit this state in two ways. Firstly, there will be the royalties and, secondly, the service industries and employment—apart from the direct employment—that will create. My electorate is one of those which will benefit. The employment lands in my area are set to grow enormously as a result of the mining

industry, and many companies are already manufacturing goods and services for the mining sector.

In relation to advanced manufacturing, the government is prepared to invest in manufacturing, in particular in the north and north-western suburbs of this state—and my electorate will benefit from that. The government is prepared to give an undertaking which is both mature and strategic in the response to the challenges facing General-Motors Holden's, and not only General-Motors Holden's but also those other companies and small businesses in the area that provide products and services for General-Motors.

Contrast that with the responses—and I do say the 'responses'—from the Liberal Party. It is very difficult to know what its response is because there are so many of them. It is appropriate at this point to highlight a developing theme in the opposition's responses or actions on a range of areas. While it is appropriate for an opposition to hold a government to account, it is not appropriate for an opposition to do it in a way which undermines our state. This opposition has no shame at the collateral damage from its actions. I will explain why. It does not care about the damage it does to the economy or the community in its endeavour to attack the government. This is no clearer than in the example of a lack of bipartisanship in ensuring support for the manufacturing in this state.

There are more examples. In the two focus areas of safe and active neighbourhoods and early childhood,

the Liberals' attack on volunteering and schools is unforgiveable. I will explain why. In their attempt to make a cheap (but inaccurate) political point, the Liberal Party has undermined both volunteers and schools. The Liberal Party issued a statement this week which stated that parents on school councils now risk their home. While pretending to support greater local school autonomy and greater parental involvement, the Liberal Party's statement seeks to scare both parents and volunteers from actively participating in their school communities.

So the Liberal Party does not care about the collateral damage from their actions. Another example is the recent surfing festival—excuse me if I do not have the right name for it—on Kangaroo Island. Their actions there have been so opportunistic that even their own member, the member for Finniss, had to rebuke his own side today in his speech in this place. When you look through what he said, it is quite clear that it was quite a veiled attack on his own members who have attacked the government's investment in this event. It is quite unusual for a member to attack their own side, so one has to grasp how bad this opposition is.

What is the collateral damage here, and this is a theme which is quite clear through the whole response by this opposition? They do not care about the collateral damage they are doing to both the economy and to the community. The collateral damage is to tourism and small business on the Fleurieu Peninsula and KI, and closer to my own home.

While the government is working to make living more affordable in my own electorate by improving public transport, and in particular the town of Gawler, what have the Liberals done? Over the last few months they have issued a number of statements attacking the new public transport system to the extent that they seek to undermine it. This service has in its first six months made 20,000 passenger trips, yet they call it 'not viable', they call it 'unnecessary', etc.

Why would the Liberal Party attack a new service? Why would they not encourage people to use it? Why would they actually issue statements attacking it? When you look through the paperwork and the Liberal Party's policy for public transport in my town of Gawler at the last election, their response for public transport was to introduce a community bus. That was the extent of it. One line in a document about public transport was that the Liberal Party will investigate a community bus. That was their response to a growing community of 20,000 people.

Embarrassed by that lack of policy response, what do they do? They attack our initiative, which is a full metro public transport service for the town—the first in the town's history. What do they do? They try to undermine it, again. They have no shame in the collateral damage they seek to impose on both the economy and on the community. When you carefully read those media statements put out by the local Liberals, and more recently the member for Bragg in her role as opposition spokesperson for transport, it is quite clear that a

reasonable conclusion to reach from their statements put together is that, if they win government in 2014, they will axe it.

They will axe the new transport service to the town, one which has taken heavy lobbying from the community to get going. They will axe the service when it is most needed, when the town is growing, and they do it without shame. There is no pretence of trying to make sure it works well, no pretence of trying to get people to use it and actively support it, encourage it and promote it. What do they do? They criticise it, undermine it and they do not care about the collateral damage.

What are they trying to do, in effect? They are trying to undermine the \$2.6 billion investment by this government in public transport—the biggest investment in public transport for many a decade. As I have shown, this opposition will say anything, do anything and damage anything (the economy and the community) to get their message across, and why would an opposition do that? As I said, it is legitimate for an opposition to hold a government to account. It is not legitimate for an opposition to undermine the state in trying to do that.

Simply, the Liberal opposition has no policy responses to the various challenges facing this state. One just has to listen to question time and the nature of their questions. One has to listen to their addresses in reply, especially the Address in Reply by the leader and the lack of policy response. The Governor's speech outlines a

vision for this state, which I said was appropriate.

It is interesting to note that, while the Governor outlined a vision for this state through his speech, the member for Norwood earlier today criticised the speech because it did not look at the past, there was not enough of the past in his speech. While the Governor's speech focused on the future, as it should, the Liberal Party is focused on the past. In closing, I just would like to say that this government is quite rightly focused on the future and not the past, because when you look at the past all you find is a Liberal opposition.

TIME EXPIRED