



House of Assembly

**Address In Reply
Wednesday 21st May 2014**

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption (resumed on motion).

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light – Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety) (15:48):

Thank you, Deputy Speaker, and I thank you for this opportunity as part of the Address in Reply. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge that we live, work and learn on the traditional lands of the Kurna people.

Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your election to your office, and I have no doubt that you will do the role justice.

I would like to commence my Address in Reply by thanking and congratulating the Governor, Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, for his speech in opening the first session of the 53rd parliament.

As usual, the Governor spoke with great eloquence about issues that are at the heart of responsible government. The Governor covered a broad range of issues in his speech and it was very heartening that at the centre of the matters he raised was the importance of ensuring that we continue to aim to be a prosperous, fair and just society where every person can live in dignity and be treated with dignity.

The Address in Reply gives new members in this place an opportunity to establish who they are, and what they seek to achieve during their time in parliament through their first speeches. I would like to congratulate the new members for Elder, Kurna, Reynell, Torrens, Napier and Lee and look forward to working alongside them to serve our community.

I would also like to acknowledge the enormous contributions made by the former members for Hartley, Bright, Elder, Kurna, Reynell, Torrens, Napier and Lee.

Congratulations also go to the Hon. Tung Ngo, in the other place, and I acknowledge the contribution made by the Hon. Carmel Zollo who is the first Italian-born minister in this parliament.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the new members for Schubert, Bright, Mitchell, Hartley and Mount Gambier, and the Hon. Andrew McLachlan in the other place.

I wish the new ministers, namely the members for Lee, Port Adelaide, Ramsay and Frome, great success in their new roles.

Additionally, I look forward to developing a constructive working relationship with my two shadows, the members for Stuart and Morphett.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to wish the member for Fisher a speedy recovery.

For returning members, the Address in Reply gives us the opportunity to reflect upon our experiences to date and, in particular, what we have learnt, what we would do differently if we had our time again, and, more importantly, where we would go from here.

Firstly, I would like to thank the people of Light who have bestowed upon me the privilege and honour to represent them for a third time in this parliament. Given where I started my life, this honour cannot be overstated.

I am sure that as my parents nursed me on the *Roma* as we sailed to Australia from Italy in 1963, they would not have dreamt that their son would not only be a member of parliament but also a minister in the state government of South Australia.

My success in life is a testament to the courage and hard work of my parents Raffaele and Maria Piccolo. It is with a great sense of personal sadness that my dad was not alive

to see me firstly elected as mayor of my town in 2000, and then to this place in 2006.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the caucus for again nominating me to the ministry. My election to this place is a result of the combined efforts of many people and organisations who believed I was worthy of their support. I would like to take a few moments to thank the people who made my election possible.

I would firstly like to thank my campaign committee ably led by Mr Ben Rillo, who worked extremely hard to ensure that we ran a credible campaign so that the electorate was aware of the government's achievements, values and vision for the future.

The campaign team was supported by an army of volunteers who made phone calls, knocked on doors, stuffed envelopes, handed out how-to-vote cards, put up corflutes and took them down again, amongst many other tasks.

These volunteers did a magnificent job in supporting the campaign.

While all my volunteers were important to the success of the campaign, I would like to particularly acknowledge those who had no connection with either the ALP or the trade union movement.

Their involvement made it a truly community-based effort.

For the first time I had a number of young people who volunteered in my campaign, and I would like to thank them and hope they continue to be involved in local community action. I will certainly be happy to work with them to address the issues of concern to them and their peers.

I would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by many community members who publicly endorsed me for re-election, especially those who generally have Liberal political leanings.

I would also like to thank my staff both in my electorate and ministerial offices who volunteered all their private time to work on my campaign. Their efforts cannot be overstated as they had to do their day-to-day work and then work on my campaign after hours and on numerous weekends.

I would also like to thank those people who donated to the party. Whether it was five dollars or more, their contribution made it possible to produce the products which helped us inform the community about the Labor government's good record in Light and the vision for the future.

I would also like to acknowledge the support I received from a broad range of trade unions, in particular the Transport Workers Union, the SDA and the CEPU.

At the state level, SA Unions pitched in to make sure the interests of working people were at

the front and centre of the campaign.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution to the campaign by local members of the ANMF, ASU, United Voice, RTBU, SDA, TWU, amongst many others.

The Light electorate as it is currently constituted, would ordinarily be a seat the Liberal Party could count on as one of theirs. It is because the Labor Party has been able to garner support from across the community that it is now for the third time in Labor hands.

I would like to acknowledge the support I have received from local farmers, small business owners and those involved in the broad range of community-based organisations.

Campaigning can sometimes be a daunting affair so I would like to pay tribute to the other candidates and their campaigns in the Light electorate.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the unqualified love and support I continue to receive from my family, and in particular my two sons, Raffaele and Stefan. Their counsel helps me stay true to my beliefs and values, and close to my community's aspirations.

Members on this side are here today not only because we have a proud record and vision for the future but also because we ran a superior campaign that was extremely well executed.

For our overall success, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by the Premier (the member for Cheltenham) and the state Labor campaign team led by State Secretary Reggie Martin. The Premier can be very proud of the result we achieved given the political environment in which the campaign was fought. His decision to release our broad policies and vision early in the campaign was the right one, as it provided a sound foundation upon which to fight the rest of the campaign.

I now wish to make some comments about the issues which I believe are important to my community and which I will seek to address in this term.

I will continue to lobby to have the South-Eastern link road built – a key element of the Gawler East development – as part of the answer to addressing traffic management issues within the core parts of the Town of Gawler. It is unfortunate this road and infrastructure issue would have been treated differently under the policies now adopted by the state government when dealing with urban development. This new approach ensures that infrastructure issues are addressed prior to any DPA being authorised.

These policies are helping to inform the implementation of the 30-year plan. The 30-year plan is based on some key principles: it identifies areas that could be investigated for urban

development should they be required.

The plan has attempted to stop the continuous speculation by developers to promote development in areas of benefit to them rather than the community at large.

The plan sets out some clear targets of where development should occur. At least 70 per cent should be infill, and no more than 30 per cent should be greenfields or fringe development, and to allow some township growth where the critical mass is an issue.

This is a clear and responsible policy, as infill comes at a lower cost to the taxpayer over time, and protects valuable farmland needed for food production.

It is with these principles in mind that I have supported the rezoning of the Angle Vale township and the areas of Munno Para West and Downs. The signing of infrastructure agreements between the many small landowners, the City of Playford and the state government will ensure that sustainable communities are developed, and in many cases, the new developments will help create opportunities to resolve any existing problems within the locality, like stormwater management in the Angle Vale township.

Equally, it is for these same reasons that I have supported a modest expansion of the Roseworthy township, and not the 100,000-

person mega city promoted by the Liberal Party and some developers who have been identified in the media.

I am encouraged by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure's recent comments that he will focus on the electrification of the Gawler Line now that the other electrification projects have been completed. While the initial project will only extend to Salisbury, I have no doubt that only a Labor government has the commitment and capacity to deliver it to Gawler, given the federal Liberal's policy not to fund public transport.

During this term, additional public transport services will be extended to Angle Vale, and I will continue to monitor the Gawler metro service to explore how patronage can be improved. Improving traffic flows around the core parts of the town of Gawler involves three key strategies; improving the flow of existing roads and the ongoing implementation of the Main North Road Management Plan developed by DPTI is certainly achieving this.

Secondly, the construction of new roads in the right localities and alignment will also move traffic more quickly around the town, and the South-East link road is certainly a key project. Thirdly, but not necessarily last, improving public transport, including cycling and other opportunities.

The introduction of buses to Gawler, and linking them to key railways stations, will assist in moving both around the town and

to other areas via rail, and will also help curb the growth of vehicular traffic.

Doorknocking can be a very instructive process. Walking the streets of your electorate gives you the opportunity to gain valuable insights into your company. You can tell those communities that have a strong spirit and those who, for whatever reason, are socially isolated.

One of the biggest challenges in new large urban developments is the fostering of a sense of belonging or community spirit.

Regrettably, I found this challenge in some parts of my electorate, and in one case, a resident who attended one of my street corner meetings raised the very issue with me. I intend to continue to work with civic-minded community people, local councils and other community institutions to develop strategies to help foster community spirit in various communities.

This loss of community is an important issue which we as a society need to address, as it has important implications for maintaining a civil society – that is, a fair and just community. I wish to elaborate upon this a little bit later.

As Minister for Disabilities, I look forward to continue working with my department and the disability sector to improve the quality of life for those living with a disability, their families and carers. Increasing work opportunities, access to justice, and protecting from harm

and abuse those living with a disability are key priorities for me, as is the full rollout of the NDIS, as originally planned and agreed to between the states and the federal Labor government.

In my other portfolios, generally grouped under the community safety banner, namely the police, correctional services, emergency services and road safety, I look forward to working with my new agencies and non-government stakeholders to deliver the best possible programs that we as a community can afford to keep our community safe.

Both paid and volunteer workers do a great job in keeping our community safe, but like all aspects of service delivery in the government sector, we need to be bold and be prepared to explore new and innovative ways to deliver services in a difficult budgetary environment, which has been made significantly more difficult with the recent federal Liberal government budget.

I look forward to working towards this challenge alongside the community safety sector.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the staff in the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion, whom I had the pleasure of working with in my first term as minister. I learnt a great deal as minister for social housing, communities and social inclusion, youth and volunteers.

I would also like to thank those individuals, members of peak organisations and community groups whom I had the privilege of working with. Collectively, they and the various government agencies undertake very important work in ensuring that all members of our communities get a fair go.

A little earlier I stated that the Address in Reply gives returning members the opportunity to reflect upon our experiences to date, in particular what we have learnt and what we would do differently if we had the time again, and, more importantly, where we go from here. In addition, I identify the loss of community as an important issue which we as a society need to address, as it has important implications for maintaining a civil society.

In my Australia Day address to my local community, I stated in part the following:

The relationship of community is suffering from the lack of attention and neglect. While individual social rights are important, they cannot be at the expense of community. While individual economic rights are the foundation of our economy, they cannot be allowed to undermine community. Communities thrive when we all make a contribution to them. Humans are social beings, so individuals thrive when we have healthy communities. Children thrive in healthy families and families thrive in healthy communities. Community flourishes in an economic and socially inclusive and just society – so we must find ways to ensure that all

Australians feel that they belong, and can derive benefits from, and meet contribution to, community.

...[W]hile we enjoy the fruits of our rights and freedoms, let us also remember our responsibilities towards our communities. For those values we share and hold dear as Australians are nurtured by that relationship called community.

It is because I believe in these things that I am a member of the Australian Labor Party.

It is because of these core values that I hold that I believe in the importance of electing Labor governments.

I support moves by the national Labor leader, Bill Shorten, to reposition the party so it can continue to form a majority government. While the reforms he is proposing are helpful, I do not believe they will encourage sufficient members of the Labor diaspora to return to the fold.

The recent results in the WA Senate elections sound an ominous warning that a serious rethink is required if Labor is to continue to be a major player at the national level.

The biggest challenge facing the ALP nationally, I believe, is not a change to the rules but the need for a coherent ideology or philosophy that reflects our social democratic history.

The increasing influence of social liberalism and neo-liberalism

within the Labor Party is sending an unclear and mixed message to the electorate and is alienating both traditional working class supporters who identify as part of the trade union movement and those in the community who simply see Labor as protecting the interests of those less powerful in our society, whether they be farmers, small business people, independent tradespeople, pensioners or the young.

At a Gawler ANZAC Day football game, I had the opportunity to talk with a local retired businessperson who has been in the building trade most of his life. Through this discussion he told me that he was once the president of the Gawler sub-branch of the Labor Party, but he is no longer a member.

At an AFL match at the recently rebuilt Adelaide Oval, a Hewett resident came up to speak with me. He was what we once called a blue-collar worker, proud to be a member of the relevant union and supporter of the Labor Party – but no more.

The first Labor member for Light and the federal seat of Wakefield was a farmer, and I was good friends with a former member of my local branch, where both she and her husband were poultry farmers.

This serves to illustrate that we were a geographically and demographically broadly based political party.

National Labor leader Bill Shorten is right when he says that the party needs to reconnect to small business and regional Australia.

I am proud to call myself a social democrat. If I wanted to be a social liberal I would have joined the Greens and if neo-liberalism was my thing, I would have joined the Liberal Party.

I disagree strongly with those in the ALP who believe that we need to be a social liberal party if we wish to survive. Those sentiments certainly do not reflect the views expressed by ordinary people in my community.

While I appreciate that, like Christianity, social democracy has many traditions, I believe a stronger emphasis on 'communitarian values' should be at the centre of a renewed Labor philosophy.

It is somewhat ironic that the ideology that underpins most of the so-called progressive policy today is the same as that used by supporters who seek to weaken the anti-discrimination laws in this country in the name of freedom of speech. Both are based on liberal ideology and support the primacy of the individual over the needs of the community or the common good.

Communitarians seek to achieve a balance between the needs of individuals and the needs of the community or the common good.

The community can be either family, a church, a trade union, or a town.

Communitarianism promotes the responsibilities that individuals have towards their community because the individual can only realise their full potential through their relationship with the community.

Many past Labor reforms have been for the common good. In fact, many trade unions in the early days established various societies and programs to support the common interest of their members and families. They were the forerunners of the non-government community sector.

Liberalism's focus on the rights of the individual can give rise to identity politics in the Australian political discourse. Identity politics is based on the premise that those who identify with a particular identity group experience the same level of hardship and discrimination and that their identity comes from their association with that group rather than the broader community.

Clearly, no group is economically and socially homogenous, and very few individuals identify with only one group in our society.

Identity politics reinforces our differences rather than what we have in common, and can weaken social cohesion in our community.

Paradoxically, those who support social liberalism fail to appreciate

how it undermines social cohesion in our community which is necessary if we are to benefit from our diversity.

Our culturally and religiously diverse community can only thrive when not only do we have mutual respect for our differences, but we also strongly acknowledge and affirm what we have in common.

It is somewhat ironic that self-styled social liberals are the first to reject the rights of those with religious views to enter the public space when dealing with political issues. A secular society does not mean that people cannot express a religious view in the public domain, but rather no religious view is sanctioned as the official state view.

A moral compass guided by religious values is no less important than those based on humanist principles. For example, in addressing the needs of a multi-faith society, there is no need to diminish the presence of Christianity in our society, but rather we need to explore ways of acknowledging the role of new faiths and beliefs in our community. It is, however, regrettable that some churches fail to enter economic debates as often as they do with social issues.

The recent federal Liberal budget, while it was a statement about the nation's economy, is premised on a neo-liberal foundation highlighting the primacy of the individual over the common good. It has a moral aspect and should be worthy of

comment by the faith-based organisations.

A number of social issues will be debated in this place over the next four years. The outcomes of those debates will be enhanced by the thoughtful and respectful expression of different views reflecting a range of values. It is my hope that genuine debate is not shut down or curtailed by language which is designed to exclude or diminish the views of others.

Values that underpin our actions are important because they influence public policy. The negative impact of social liberalism can be observed in our communities every day.

People asserting or exercising their rights at the expense of others affects the public domain and the lives of ordinary people and undermines the cohesion required for stronger and healthy communities. Having said that, advancing the rights of people is important and can be achieved through a communitarian framework.

Many social and economic changes have advanced our community, but we must ensure that in delivering reforms – whether economic or social – we do not leave people behind. For my part, in promoting an economically and socially inclusive society, I will not be forgetting the poor or those who are less powerful in our society.

End