

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (16:12): Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the motion to adopt the address by the Governor when he opened this session of parliament. I also wish to congratulate the Governor on the content and delivery of his address. What can I say, but: I am back, and—

Ms Bedford interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: —exactly—to the pundits who had written me off, both on the other side of the chamber and in the media—

Ms Bedford interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: Something like that. I wish to say how pleased I am to be here against the odds. First, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate, you, Madam Speaker, on your promotion to your new position, and I wish you well in that position. Secondly, I would like to congratulate the Deputy Speaker on her promotion to her position, and I wish her well also, as well as her growing family.

I would like to congratulate the new ministers: the members for Hartley, Enfield and Playford. I think I have got that right. I wish them very productive ministerial careers. I would also like to congratulate the new members of parliament, both on my side of the house and on the other side—

Ms Bedford interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: —I will get to them in a second—of the house, and also those new members in the other place. I wish them successful parliamentary careers. I also congratulate those who have come back, like me, to continue to serve the people of South Australia. Equally, I also thank and extend my sympathies to those who did not make it back who served this parliament and their communities, in particular the former members for Morialta, Adelaide, Norwood and Mitchell. I did not always agree with the previous member for Mitchell, but he made a valuable contribution to the—

Ms Bedford: Colourful.

Mr PICCOLO: A colourful contribution, that's right. Certainly, I did not always agree but he gave it some thought, and I will miss the other three members who I had formed friendships with. I would not be here today if it was not for the people of Light who decided to elect me first in 2006 and re-elect me this time. I extend my thanks to the people of Light for trusting me once again to serve them and to represent them in this place. I hope I can do my best not to betray that trust.

While I stand here today, there are a number of people whose contributions I wish to acknowledge because, if not for their efforts, I would not be here. I seek the house's indulgence because I'm sure I will miss somebody and I will find out later, but I wish to mention some people who worked on my campaign. The reason I do that is because I want to indicate how much work a lot of people put in to get people like me elected to this place. Unlike the member for Waite—

Mr Venning: It's a full-time job.

Mr PICCOLO: It's a full-time job, that's correct. Unlike the member for Waite, who spoke about difficulties some of their candidates had in finding support, I had no such problem. I had broad support from the party to get myself re-elected here.

Mr Bignell interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: And that's right; I'll get to those in a second. In terms of the people involved in my campaign, it was obviously my campaign team, sub-branch members, members of unions, ministers and the Premier, and I would like to extend my appreciation to the ministers and Premier who made their time available to visit my electorate and show their support. A number of people were prepared to go public and write testimonials for my re-election. The interesting thing is that some of those people who put their name forward to support me publicly were paid-up members of the Liberal Party and some had been Liberal Party supporters. They were quite prepared to do that and that was one of the reasons I think I won.

I would like to thank also members from the party office. There was a whole range of people and I would like to mention some now. Some of the people who helped me on this campaign were : Tamyra Strenc, Kim Thomas-Francis, Sam Davis, Tim House, Shannon Schedlich-Day, Matt Pinnegar and his partner, Megan, Janette Nicholls, Michael Harnett, James Piekert, Dale Amtsberg, Mark Smith, Carol Putland, the Hon. Gail Gago, Chris Holmes, Vince Puopolo, Simon Davey, Johnathan Granger, Lavinia Emmett

Gray, Robert Fletcher, Paris Deane, Rhiannon Newman, Nefi Pnevmatikos, Michael Sims, and also Lesley and Jan from the ASU.

I would also like to mention a number of people who have given me a lot of support over the period of time with their valuable advice and assistance. It will become more evident later why their support has been important. I refer to people like Angela Gerace, Pat Gerace and Jared Bowen. Because public transport is such an important issue in the outer areas, their valuable support and assistance over the four years has been invaluable and I thank them for that.

In the party office, I thank Paul Marcacetti, Kyam Maher and Matt Deane. Also I am proud to acknowledge the very practical and strong support I received from the union movement: Graham Lorrain and the members of the communication branch of the CEPU, Peter Malinauskas with the SDA, Katrine Hildyard and members of the ASU, and also the very generous practical support I received from the Liquor and Hospitality Miscellaneous Workers Union. I extend my thanks and gratitude to David Di Troia, David Gray, Boyd McCrae and Paul Martin from the union without whose support I would not be here today.

At the local level I would like mention amongst others Kym, Heather and Miranda Thoday, Carmel and Steven Rossier, some colleagues from interstate, Steven Pratt and Jinane Bouassi who came across to support us. Thanks also to my staff, Megan, Cassie and Cheyne; and some members of parliament from interstate, Don Nardella and Danielle Green, who have supported me over the four years and, more recently, during the election. I thank Nick Champion, the local federal member, and his staff who, after working eight hours or more in the office, often helped me on weekends and nights. That was Andrew Anson, Jess Nitschke, Wendy Gee and Rob Klose.

Whilst a lot of my own sub-branch members helped on election days, these other members either helped doorknock or stuff thousands of envelopes. I think there were actually tens of thousands of envelopes. I would like to pay tribute to Mary Coffey, Maurice O'Reilly, Patricia Fabian. I also had my nephew and nieces helping me out stuffing envelopes to make sure we got the message out. Thanks to my nephew and niece Domenic and Maria and my sisters Antonietta and Lisa. We also had people like Barry Neylon and his son putting up posters. I would also like to thank a local business person, Brad Skuse, who has been a great supporter. Brad is a franchisee and is looking forward to the franchise law reform which hopefully will hit this parliament some time this year.

Whilst these people have helped me, I am ultimately responsible for any errors or omissions in my campaigning. I do not wish to lay any blame on those people, so anything I did wrong in my campaign is mine to own. I thank the local media who gave me a reasonable run in the election campaign and who have been generally quite supportive and fair in my four years here.

Thank you to the Lucas family. The Lucas family are farmers at Reeves Plains and they staffed my Roseworthy booth, which is a country booth, all day for me. The Lucas family are quite unique in that they have never voted Labor in their life, and they are quite clear about that. I think his grandparents would probably be turning in their grave if they knew that their grandson actually voted Labor. However, on this occasion they were so annoyed with the behaviour of the Liberal Party that they were prepared to support me quite publicly. Not only did they support me, but they went out there and campaigned for me. So I would like to thank the Lucas family for being brave enough to do that.

I also thank the Virgara family of Angle Vale—a very successful migrant story—for their support.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: Good wines as well. Thanks to my campaign manager, Manuel Chrisan, who had a very difficult task. By day he had to work for one of the toughest ministers, minister Conlon, and by night and on weekends he had to work for me. He certainly got the pointy end of the pineapple. So I would like to thank Manuel for his endless hours and travelling to my electorate to support me. Manuel also used to work for me.

I also thank my two sons, Raffaele and Stefan, who have to put up with me when I go home in less than my best mood sometimes after a long day here or out there and who have been great supporters of mine. They certainly add purpose to this job.

My greatest thanks go to my late father and my mother. I cannot say enough about my parents, who made many sacrifices to migrate to this country. For those people who are not migrants, you really cannot understand the migrant experience. To leave your country, to leave your parents and brothers and sisters behind, to come to a country, in my case, where the language and culture is different is very difficult. My mother, who did not attend school at all, had no idea what Australia was like. She had no

conception of the country. To come here and be successful enough to build a home, find work, raise children and send them to university is an enormous achievement. In their own way, migrants are pioneers of this country, and I am indebted—

Mr Pengilly: All our families were migrants.

Mr PICCOLO: You are quite right, but when we have discussions about pioneers we tend to limit our pioneering discussions to the 1850s or 1860s. I think there are pioneers in the 1950s and 1960s as well; they are just different pioneers. So I would like to acknowledge the contribution my parents have made to my success. I would also like to thank John Quirke and Nick Bolkus. They are very good at providing advice on strategy and their support has been invaluable to my re-election.

I would like to reflect on the priorities I set for myself as an MP between 2006 and 2010. Hopefully these things I have done contributed to my re-election in 2010. I unashamedly made public transport a campaign issue. It is no secret that it is an important issue for my community. I was prepared to campaign on it because we have a good record, a good story and some great commitments in this area. I was able to deliver the dial-a-ride to Gawler, which was extended. We now have the biggest investment in rail infrastructure in the history of this state. I am proud that this will benefit my community. Although the minister can take credit for it, I am proud we have achieved that.

The dial-a-ride will be extended to Angle Vale by 1 July, which I campaigned for with my new colleague. On 1 July next year buses will be operating in Gawler—not some mickey mouse service, but an integrated service which will be designed and implemented in conjunction with councils and the community. Public transport is a major issue which this government has delivered on. That is also very important in terms of infrastructure. This government has done a number of things in terms of public infrastructure, in conjunction with the federal government—obviously the Northern Expressway and a number of other road and road safety improvements.

I was also involved in improving the message about men's health, about which I spoke a little earlier today and which I will talk about a little further in a few weeks' time as we approach International Men's Health Week. It is an area which has been neglected for many decades and unfortunately has been bogged down in ideology, but its time has come. I confess that when I first raised it in my inaugural speech four years ago, a few of my colleagues questioned why I did. It was obviously an unpopular political issue at the time, but in the intervening four years we have been able to discuss it openly. We now understand the context of why men's health is important because men are fathers, brothers and sons. In that context, physically and mentally healthy men have healthy families around them, which is important. So I was prepared to do that.

I also campaigned, for just over three years now, for the reform of franchise law, which is also an issue which will have its day very shortly. I see my colleague across there who sat on the committee when we had that inquiry. It is one of those issues which this house and this parliament has to act on. I have had discussions with the minister and I am confident that, in the life of this parliament, we will have some state-based franchise law reform; not to compete with, but to complement national laws.

Clearly the existing laws do not provide enough protection to the mum and dad investors in franchises. Every week I get an email or a letter from a franchisee around the country about the way they have been treated so badly. In this country you can invest up to \$500,000 in a franchise yet you have less protection than if you invested \$20 on the sharemarket. The sharemarket for some reason is regulated—quite appropriately because people invest their livelihoods—but it is no different to a franchise. The time has come for us to reform franchises.

During my four years I also campaigned for farmers' rights. For some reason our colleagues on the other side decided to abandon this area. They opposed the inquiry because they thought it was too trivial, was not important or did not exist. The message from the farmers was that they got it wrong. The fact that the farmers in my electorate were prepared to back me above the Liberal Party is testament to that.

Other issues of which you would be aware are the growth issues facing my community, and by that I mean the electorate is planning for high growth. Playford council, Gawler and Light are three key areas which are going to undergo some major growth.

Gawler East, one of the first areas, has thrown up quite a few challenges, and I think the issues that residents have raised about infrastructure, particularly around traffic and traffic management, are relevant and need to be addressed. I will continue to work with them to deliver a good outcome.

This morning the member for Finnis made some comments about local government. Both he and I have a background in local government. He indicated that he realised when he came here—and he can correct me if I am wrong—how relatively unimportant local government is, or words to that effect. What I would say is that local government is probably the most important sphere of government, because it is a sphere of government which impacts on people's lives day to day more than any other sphere, whether it is here or there. Most members here would get complaints about local government; in fact, probably most of the complaints you get are about local government. That indicates how important—

Mr PENGILLY: I rise on a point of order. I heard what the member had to say, and I believe that I have been misrepresented. I never in any way, shape or form this morning in my speech if you care to source it, indicated that local government was not required or words to the effect that the member used. I would ask him to withdraw that comment.

Members interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: Yes; he can make a personal explanation, Madam Speaker.

Members interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: I don't want to hear it again. I heard it this morning; I don't want to hear it again.

The SPEAKER: I am not sure that I would have taken it that he was casting aspersions on you, but I think perhaps afterwards if you want to make a personal explanation that might be the way to handle it. I would ask the member not to digress from what he is saying.

Mr PICCOLO: In terms of local government, I spent quite a few of my first few years around the issue of local government accountability. Also, I belong to the Economic and Finance Committee, which is an interest that I understand the member for Enfield also has in terms of accountability. I think that that work needs to continue.

In my first four years, I got involved in promoting the Playford Alive project, which is probably the biggest investment in the northern suburbs in many generations where this government will, over a period of 10 to 15 years, invest a billion dollars to support that community and the things that will flow from a community.

I spent quite a few of my first few years involved in a lot of consumer rights and citizen rights issues, which I will continue to do in this current term.

Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: That's what you said last time!

Mr Goldsworthy: We'll get you next time.

Mr PICCOLO: You will have to wait and see. At least I won my seat the first time and the second time; it was not a hand-me-down, member for Kavel.

Mr Pengilly: John Olsen didn't hand him his seat.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PICCOLO: It's a safe Liberal seat. I actually won a seat from your party, and I won it again even though you are so—

An honourable member: Mean.

Mr PICCOLO: I put that aside. I made an observation that if the Liberals could not bump me off at this election they would never win government. Well, I was proven right. We are here. I am back here, and the government is back here.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: You have four years to plan ahead; you are quite right. In terms of the agenda ahead, I would like to indicate the things I would like to do in the next four years to support my community. First of all I would like to continue with my program of community engagement. One of the things I can be very proud of was the extensive community engagement program I had with my community. I think that is one of the reasons why I was awarded with re-election, and I will continue that. In fact, I have already started my program, and I have met with some communities already.

The second thing I would like to continue with in this period and see to finalisation is the reform of franchise laws in this state. Also, I would like to continue to work for consumer rights for farmers. I am working closely with the South Australian Farmers Federation to deliver good outcomes for farmers because, apart from being important in terms of agricultural products, they are small business, and in some ways small businesses are no different from an ordinary consumer when they are dealing with big companies. Small businesses are often as powerless to deal with a big company as is an ordinary consumer with a manufacturer. So, I am quite happy and proud to be working with farmers to improve their rights.

One thing that the member for Finniss said that I agree with is that in this state there has to be some structural reform of local government. While there are some good examples, they are ad hoc and isolated. The time has come to have a relook at the structure of local government in this state. As I said, through my work as a local MP, clearly some things are not quite right, and that needs to be looked at. I foreshadow that in the next four years I will, hopefully, get involved in some work looking at local government.

Many of the complaints that I get as an MP also deal with administrative decisions made by government agencies, both state and local. Often, when people make accusations of inappropriate or corrupt behaviour it is due either to a decision that is not communicated properly or because there is no means of having decisions reviewed. One of the things that I would like to get involved in during this term of government is looking at the process of having administrative decisions of government, both state and local, reviewed more independently than they are at the moment.

The other thing I will obviously be involved in is making sure that the government delivers on the promises it made at election time for my electorate. There are two major promises: one is in relation to the delivery of public transport services to Gawler and Hewett, the Peachey Belt in Munno Para West, which I will ensure will happen; and, secondly, the extension of Dial-a-Ride to Angle Vale, amongst other places.

I hope to put more effort into improving road safety. I note that the minister today outlined the government's bold agenda for road safety. For whatever reason, and the member for Schubert would support me, our region has unfortunately witnessed the deaths of many young people. There are measures that we need to look at to make sure that we keep the road toll as low as possible.

One thing that I had to deal with in my first term that I will have to deal with in my second term is managing growth in the area. The objective is to ensure that, first, I can manage that growth happens in a way that does not have a negative impact on existing communities, and, secondly, that the infrastructure keeps up with community expectations. I will be working with the relevant ministers, councils and residents to make sure that happens.

One of the issues that I wish to address is the imbalance of power between telecommunications companies and residents. While I appreciate that the laws dealing with telecommunication companies have to be reasonable in the sense that we all like that technology they deliver, often a high price has to be paid by some local communities. I do not think the balance in the development plan for telecommunication towers for the state is quite right at the moment. I still see examples—and I have seen one recently in my own electorate—where Telstra still, quite arrogantly—that might be the right word—

Mr Pengilly: Aggressively.

Mr PICCOLO: Aggressively. I accept that; it is a good term. Telstra still tends to say that they will do this because they can even though there are residents who are prepared to work with them to find reasonable locations for their towers. I have the example in my community of Hillier, where residents were quite prepared to work. They found a suitable alternative site. It was not a case of NIMBY, but rather of this location rather than that location. Telstra basically said that they had spent enough money, that they did not have to, that they would not, and that they could put it where they want to. I think that imbalance of power has to be addressed.

The new member for Little Para mentioned community capacity, and that is one thing that I would like to do more work on in my next term. Supporting communities to support themselves is extremely important. I can do work with not only churches but also other community groups to support my community to build capacity for them to stand up and be heard.

I stand here today as a very proud member of the Labor Party. I am very proud of my colleagues on this side of the house who have been elected here, and I look forward to working with them, and, hopefully,

having a good working relationship with those members on the other side over the next four years to deliver to South Australia. With those comments, I support the address of the Governor.

[Sitting extended beyond 17:00 on motion of Hon. J.J. Snelling]

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Flinders, one of my neighbours, a new member, and I would ask that in the usual tradition his speech be heard in silence.