



***AUSTRALASIAN STUDY OF  
PARLIAMENT GROUP  
(Queensland Chapter)***

**POST-ELECTION WASH-UP PANEL: WHAT WENT  
RIGHT? WHAT WENT WRONG? WHAT WENT  
MISSING?**

**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2015**

**Brisbane**

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**Ms CRAWFORD:** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Mary Crawford and I am on the committee of the ASPG. My duty tonight is to welcome you to the QUT for what is a very special event. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where the QUT now stands. We pay respect to our elders—past, present and emerging—and acknowledge the important role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the QUT community.

**Dr WEEKS:** Thank you, Mary. Welcome, everybody. I am so pleased you have turned up on this day, a particularly auspicious day being the opening of parliament. My name is Donna Weeks. I am the Chair of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group (Queensland Chapter). It is my very great pleasure to welcome you all here and our panellists tonight for a most exciting, interesting run-down and examination of the election. Normally our group presents a panel prior to the election, but like most of us I guess we were caught a little on the hop with the election being called when it was so we have this postelection analysis. We have a wonderful group of people here who will do that. Fortunately for you, I am not chairing it. We have a proper chair joining us tonight.

It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the ASPG, to welcome our chair, Jessica van Vonderen. Many of you know Jessica; she hardly needs an introduction at all. She is on ABC TV. I was saying earlier that my TV blew up back in the days when Rod Young was still the ABC newsreader. I have not had a TV for that long. In fact, it blew up on the night that Cheryl Kernot was going to be on TV, just after she left. It was a great political night. Everything I do is related to politics.

Jess will chair. I have a few notes about Jess that I think are well worth sharing, because I did not know some things about Jess. As we know, she reads the 7 pm news on the ABC. She started out in radio in 1999. Radio is my favourite medium for politics. After being in Toowoomba she went to Bundaberg, reporting, she says here, on countless sugarcane, turtle and rum stories. I think she got the best deal on the rum stories there. After moving to Brisbane, she covered state politics for several years and hosted the much lamented *Stateline* and 7.30 Queensland programs which, even though I do not have a TV, I would like to have back for their importance.

She has also completed a couple of reporting stints at ABC Canberra's Parliament House bureau. Queensland is her home, as it is for a lot of us as well. She has covered five state elections so she knows this very well and relishes the role that the media plays in the democratic process. I must say that is very much a part of what the ASPG likes to do as well. For those of you for whom this is your first event, the ASPG is a group of people who like politics, parliament and the democratic process. We think it is a very important group. It is a mix of people; it is not just boring academics like me who spend our spare time on Twitter. We have parliamentarians, members of political parties, students, members of the media and all sorts of people. We are very much across the spectrum of parliament and we welcome the involvement of everybody.

For me, from my teaching perspective, I find parliament really important. I find the parliamentary process a really important part of our day-to-day living. Like most kids who grew up in Queensland, I came up to Parliament House on a year 7 trip from the Gold Coast. If I tell you the year it will give it away. Our local member was a fellow called Sir Bruce Small. You may remember him. I still remember—and it is a long time ago—sitting in the public gallery with Sir Bruce Small. I was sitting at the end of that group of grade 7 primary students from Broadbeach State School, and I think I have been intrigued by the process ever since. I would never have imagined that I would be teaching politics today. Indeed, I have the very great privilege to welcome you all here and welcome our panel.

There is one more thing I have to say before we get underway: we are running an auction. You may have seen our online political cartoon auction. At one of our events last year we had *Courier-Mail* cartoonist Sean Leahy come along and give us a terrific talk. He drew some caricatures for us of some of his favourite people. We have them at the moment in an online auction. We have some details about that around the place. We also have some samples. You might recognise this one. We thought we would be fair and have a former Premier from the other side up here as well. There are seven of them. These have the added

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advantage that I was the live easel for the night because we did not have anyone else. We have the details on the sheet around the back, and everyone is welcome to make a bid for those. What we would like to do with the funds raised from the auction is have a prize for the best student politics essay from Queensland or something along those lines. We really want to support and encourage students to engage with the political process. So any funds from the auction will go to setting that up.

I have just been reminded to ask you to please turn your phones to silent. This meeting is being recorded tonight and Hansard will produce a transcript, as is the normal process with all our ASPG meetings. I welcome Jess to the chair.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Thank you for coming on the first day of the new parliament. I think it is really fortuitous that we have this discussion tonight about how the election panned out on a day when we can physically see for the first time on the floor of the parliament exactly the way Queenslanders voted. I will introduce the members of our panel first of all. We have Rob Katter from Katter's Australian Party; Brad Henderson from the LNP; Amy Remeikis, *Brisbane Times* state political reporter, who I suspect may still be filing stories from today, as is the life of a journo in the 24-hour news cycle; Anthony Chisholm, ALP's campaign director; and Dr Lorann Downer, UQ academic and Vote Compass collaborator.

I thought we might start with the winners. The way this is going to operate is each one of our panel members will give us an overview from their perspective about how the campaign went down from their side of things. Then we are going to have a discussion and then we will open it up to questions from the floor. I would like to introduce Anthony Chisholm. Mr Chisholm was born in Brisbane. He has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in politics and industrial relations from Griffith University. Anthony joined the ALP in 1995. He has worked on over 20 campaigns at federal, state and local government levels. He has worked for Kevin Rudd and Wayne Swan, and he was elected as state secretary of the ALP in 2008 until November last year. The Senate may be the next step in his political career. To give us his assessment of the 2015 election campaign, please welcome Anthony Chisholm.

**Mr CHISHOLM:** If there are any branch members here, they get a vote in that ballot. I also want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we gather. Thanks, everyone, for this opportunity. It is much better to be here after a win. I would particularly like to thank Annastacia for organising parliament today, just to remind people if they are in any doubt about who won. I sympathise with Brad, whom I have gotten to know over the last couple of years. Being the Labor Party secretary over the last eight years, I do know what it is like to work for unpopular leaders. To explain just how unpopular Campbell Newman was at the last election, we did not bother targeting Tony Abbott because Campbell Newman was more unpopular. That just shows you how much on the nose he was.

I would like to start by going back to day 1 or 2 after the last election campaign. I do not think anyone can really imagine how tough it was for Annastacia the first few days after the last election. On the second day, on that Monday, she headed off to Ipswich—to the Ipswich Civic Centre, I think—with six other colleagues and sat down to talk about becoming the opposition in Queensland. She then had to confront the press gallery who—no offence to Jess and Amy—can be quite tough and started to plot a Labor recovery in Queensland. She then fronted up to parliament about a month later where Labor had seven members versus, at that stage—before a few losses and defections—78. That is unbelievably tough. I remember Peter Beattie used to say being opposition leader is the toughest job in politics. Imagine being opposition leader with just six colleagues. Think about what Annastacia has achieved in less than three years. Just to be an effective opposition, which they were, would have been a fantastic achievement. They held them to account in parliament. They performed in the media. They campaigned across the state. Just doing that was a significant achievement, but to go on and win the election I think is unbelievable and a full testament to Annastacia and her team. I just wanted to be very clear from the start.

I think the result that we saw on 31 January started being written really early after the last election campaign. I think Annastacia acknowledged that the previous Labor government got it wrong on asset sales and she started to build credibility in the community as a result. I think we saw the LNP government make very significant early mistakes. The first one I would identify is appointing Peter Costello to do the Commission of Audit. I think as soon as they did that the public saw what was coming their way and that was going to be a political document. It was not going to be an independent assessment of the state's finances. I think then using that very cynically to trash a lot of promises that they had made and make cuts really entrenched community opposition as a result. I think very early in the term the LNP had started to write what we saw coming at the last election campaign.

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One of the umbrella words that we used, particularly for the last 12 months, was arrogance. No matter what the issue was, it all fitted under the umbrella of arrogance. Whether it was people who lost their jobs, whether it was community groups who had cuts, whether it was people who were very uncomfortable with the winding back of integrity and accountability measures, it all came down to that word 'arrogance'. I think arrogance encapsulated it very well because for those people who were concerned that they had such a massive majority in parliament—and, to be honest, it is not a lot of Queenslanders but there is a number of them out there—for those who were offended by the cuts and job losses, all of that came under the word 'arrogance'. It was a theme that we used constantly. It was the umbrella that drove the disenchantment towards the Newman government.

A few significant things that I do not think have had the attention since the election but I think were absolutely vital is, one, the by-election results that happened last year. From our point of view, they were a great opportunity for us to basically road-test our campaign. We had really done a significant job rebuilding the party after the last election loss. The relationship between the union movement and the party had really broken down and we set about rebuilding that.

The Redcliffe by-election came along at a perfect time for us to road-test that in the campaign and, obviously, the 17 per cent swing was absolutely fantastic. It also proved to us that the campaign team that we were building was capable of getting a good result. The added benefit of Redcliffe was obviously getting Yvette D'Ath elected to parliament, who has gone on to become Attorney-General and who I think will be a really good spokesperson for the Labor Party in that regard.

The other thing out of Redcliffe, which did not get attention and we did not want to highlight it, was the preference flows that we were getting from the Greens, and there was an Independent who ran in Redcliffe as well who had a bit of Palmer support. So we were able to look at that compared to the 2012 election result and be confident that, come the 2015 election, we were always going to do significantly better in terms of a preference flow, which therefore made the two-party preferred results that you get through Galaxy and Newspoll that the *Courier-Mail* and the *Australian* run—we knew that they were going to be one to two points out come election day if we could maintain that strong preference vote.

The other encouraging sign after Redcliffe was, despite the result, nothing changed from an LNP government point of view. Campbell Newman went back to his normal ways. Jarrod Bleijie probably went worse. He must have been seen Redcliffe and thought, 'Oh, well, we're going okay.' So he kept going in terms of his arrogant behaviour and then we came to Stafford. Again, that was a good opportunity for us to road-test a campaign—some of the learnings that we had had out of Redcliffe. We also had the voter ID laws that came in for Stafford as well. So it gave us a dry run of that for the election campaign. Again, there was a 19 per cent swing. I just wanted to acknowledge again Dr Anthony Lynham, who at this stage 12 months ago was not even a party member. He joined the party, got preselected, ran in a by-election and now he is in cabinet. So he has had a pretty good 12 months. The result in Stafford showed that we had not gone backwards after Redcliffe; we had enhanced. I think that Chris Davis really did significant damage in Stafford and also the Brisbane area. That rekindled itself during the campaign when he ran TV ads as well.

The interesting thing out of Stafford is that there was a different reaction from the Redcliffe one, where Campbell Newman got up and he brought in Operation Boring. I was always quite bemused by Operation Boring. On one level I could understand it in that he was quite unpopular by that point in time and they wanted to try to rehabilitate him and keep him out of the media a bit. But one thing that I was always surprised at is that it is hard to be Operation Boring during a 26-day election campaign. You cannot do a press conference every day, you cannot do only two a week; you have to be out there every day. So from my point of view I was not that perturbed by it. I think it is also dangerous when you announce your tactical strategy to the media. Then the public pick up on it and the media and then you build some cynicism around it. I could understand why the LNP was trying it, but I always thought that it would come undone during the election campaign—that it would take Queenslanders about only five days to remember why they did not like him. For me, that did not quite work but I could see what they were trying to do in terms of the campaign.

The other thing with the statewide polling—just to jump around a bit—is that it is similar to 1998, where One Nation was on the scene and through stages of last year Palmer was on 10 per cent to 20 per cent in some of these seats. He was doing quite well. We always knew that the statewide polling was quite inaccurate. We also knew that the swing in Central and North Queensland was much larger than it was in

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Brisbane, the Brisbane city area and the southern suburbs. We always knew that if we could maintain that strong swing in North Queensland that we would pick up significant seats there. We knew that the more traditional Labor areas were coming back strongly. When I say 'traditional Labor areas', I am meaning Ipswich and Logan. So for us it was really coming down to a focus on the inner-city seats where the swing was smaller, but we also knew that we did not need as big a swing to win those back, because it was smaller against us in 2012. But with those outer suburban seats 20 minutes to half an hour away from the city: so on the south side, Algester, Mansfield, Springwood; on the north side, Pine Rivers, Ferny Grove, Murrumba, Morayfield—and I think John Mickel, who is here, would probably back me up in this—we had coffee in about October and I think they were exactly the seats that I ran through in terms of the ones that I thought would decide a good result for Labor versus a tough result. So that did not change from our point of view in terms of our focus.

What we did after the Stafford by-election is really switch our focus to the state campaign. Everything from then was focused on that. I got freed up from my other duties. So I got to focus just on being campaign director. We really devised a simple strategy and it was probably the simplest strategy for a campaign that I have ever been involved with. Basically, phase 1, was to remind people about the past. You can never take it for granted that Queenslanders are going to remember the damage that they did in that first year. So whether that was about cuts, whether it was about job losses, whether it was about integrity and accountability, we had to remind people about that through the first stage of the campaign. Our TV advertising did that, which was quite subtle. It just reminded people about job losses, the fights with doctors et cetera. Then what you will notice from that first week of the campaign is that Annastacia did not make significant policy announcements; they were focused on where the LNP had made a cut, Annastacia's announcement was on restoring that cut. So even from a positive sense in terms of Annastacia talking about something that we were going to do, it was focused on something that the LNP had done in terms of damaging the community. So you started to see a real contrast building between what we were announcing versus what they were doing. It enabled Annastacia to be more positive rather than being negative, which is obviously a delicate balancing act.

The second stage was what is at stake in this election campaign. There needs to be something on the line at this election campaign. Obviously, from our point of view that was asset sales, which played a significant role, particularly during the last two weeks of the campaign. But we also had—and partly this is thanks to Abbott—that reminder about cuts and if they win the election they will go back to their arrogant ways, or they will cut even further. So that is where the feds played a helpful role in that regard.

We always knew that we were going to harness a protest vote, but you also have to remember that, by the time of election day, across the state Annastacia was the preferred Premier. So, yes, we did harness a protest vote but we also have to know that Queenslanders were sizing her up as the alternative Premier and voting that way accordingly.

The union campaign was highly effective. It was probably the most effective union campaign from a money point of view that we have probably ever seen in Australia. With Your Rights at Work in 2007, the unions spent a lot of money. This time, there were not significant sums spent but I think strategically it was a really vital campaign and one that we should rightly be proud of.

Ashgrove was one that was a real balancing act for us in terms of managing. We knew that the people of Ashgrove did not want another circus from what they saw in 2012. I probably underestimated the amount of focus that the media would want to put on Ashgrove, particularly in that first week of the campaign. The journos were going really bananas about, 'Where's Kate?' 'Why can't we interview Kate?' For us it was a really disciplined effort there. Kate would still do media, because she is a good media performer, but not distract from the central message. You will notice that Annastacia had probably an opportunity every second day to get into the 'will he or won't he?' in Ashgrove, but she never got into that. We always said, 'Ashgrove will be like the rest of Queensland. If you want to send him a message, you need to do that in Ashgrove.' So we were really disciplined in terms of how we handled Ashgrove compared to the last campaign.

In terms of surprises, there were no significant surprises. With the January election, we always thought he was a chance to call it early—probably not January 31 but even Brad might have been surprised by January 31 at some stage of the campaign. We were not really perturbed by that. When you are in opposition, the government is always going to be more ready. We were ready enough. Obviously, it did not impact us in terms of the result. I thought that there was a real surprise in the contrast between Annastacia

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and Campbell Newman during the campaign where Anastacia, for her first campaign, was very comfortable being out with punters, talking to people. Some of her best images were playing cricket or at the Cowboys Leagues Club up in Townsville, whereas with Campbell Newman he was either with LNP politicians or LNP people in blue shirts. I think that showed a real contrast during the campaign between Anastacia, who was enjoying herself and was quite comfortable with the community, versus Campbell Newman, who was just surrounded by LNP people the whole time. I think Campbell Newman's performance, particularly in the last eight days, was a significant factor in the end result as well where, particularly in those outer suburban streets, the LNP primarily really dropped in those areas over those last eight days.

In terms of lessons, it is obvious: do not breach faith with the electorate. I think there are danger signs for Tony Abbott. He has followed that same path of Newman—the Commission of Audit, broken promises et cetera. You can really see the similarities between what the LNP government did here in Queensland compared to what you have seen federally. One interesting thing, which is not really political, is the rise of digital social media. I have always been a bit of a sceptic about how important it is during a campaign. When I say 'important' I never really saw it as deciding votes. I think it was sort of preaching to your supporters to get them active, to get them out there, to get them helping. But with the changes that you can see by the demographic targeting through social media, it is becoming a real factor in terms of targeting undecided voters. You can do it geographically, you can do it through age demographics as well. So it is an increasing spend in terms of campaign budget that goes on social media.

Just to finish on the hallmarks of the Anastacia Palaszczuk government, I think importantly you will see stability. I think you will see consensus building. That will be a real focus for Anastacia and her ministers. There will be a real respect for parliament and democracy and I think Queenslanders will welcome that. Integrity and accountability will be a real pillar. It is a real personal drive for Anastacia to ensure that she delivers on those promises but also runs a government that holds true to those as well. I think there will be a focus on jobs and the economy. I think that is going to be a real test, but an important one for them to deliver. I think that Anastacia and her team will be united and that you will see a real stable government that will focus on delivering for working Queenslanders. That will be their priority.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Thank you, Anthony. Thank you for being so comprehensive. We might get Peter Wellington down here and maybe give him a bit of practice at keeping everyone to time before question time kicks in! I would like to invite Brad Henderson from the LNP to give us his assessment. Brad was born and raised in regional Queensland. He graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Science from the University of Queensland in 1994. Since joining the party in 1992, he has been federal director of the Nationals. He has run state and federal campaigns as well as by-election campaigns. He has also been policy and media adviser to Rob Borbidge and Mike Horan. Way back when before politics started, he was also a jackaroo. Brad Henderson is now state director of the LNP in Queensland. Let us hear what went right and what went wrong for the LNP.

**Mr HENDERSON:** Thank you, Jess, and thank you, Donna, for the invitation to come and share some thoughts with you and have a discussion. Ladies and gentlemen, we have been invited to comment tonight on what the big surprises were in the 2015 state election, what were the lessons to be learned and what will be the hallmarks of the coming term. To start with the surprise issue, many might have been surprised by the result on 31 January, but it was always a prospect. That is why we were warning of the hung parliament through the campaign. But to understand that you really need to go back to 2012, because the genesis of this result in 2015 was in the outcome of the 2012 election, where there was an unprecedented result driven by a massive repudiation of the Bligh Labor government. But almost immediately in our research, which was reinforced over the course of the term, a very significant majority of Queenslanders thought that there needed to be a greater parliamentary opposition to the LNP and that was right across the spectrum. There was an inherent view that Queensland, with a unicameral parliament, is better served with a closer balance in the numbers. That sentiment, together with very unrealistically high win expectations for the LNP among the public, among the commentators and perhaps too many of our own, really plagued the LNP's term in office and our campaign.

As a reforming government, the Newman government did spend political capital on turning the state's finances around and fixing the problems that it inherited. But as a new government the Newman government also had its fair share of missteps and distractions. Massive progress was made in just a few short years in bringing government spending back to sustainable levels and in restoring front-line services.

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So when Labor came back to office a few weeks ago it inherited an administration which is living within its means and providing more front-line services and infrastructure to more Queenslanders more efficiently.

As the government's first term ran down, so too did the LNP's primary vote, to a low, in our research across the 30 seats we were tracking, of just 36 per cent between April and June last year. It was even worse in some of the published opinion polls that were around at that time. Some voters were unhappy with what we were doing, but more were unhappy with how we were doing it.

Some changes were made and a lot of the hard decisions had been taken earlier. We saw a steady recovery over the last six months of 2014 and into the start of the election campaign to a point where we started to campaign on par with Labor. Each was on about 40 per cent of the vote.

The LNP took an economic plan to the election. We sought a mandate to reduce the state's debt and to give the government further capacity to provide the services that Queenslanders want and the job creating infrastructure that Queensland as a growing state needs. Our opponents were many. They were galvanised together. They ran a very effective and coordinated campaign to cultivate the protest vote and to urge voters to put the LNP last.

In the final days of the campaign LNP win expectations surged further while win expectations for Labor dropped even lower. There was a very high level of what we call the soft vote, the undecided vote, and most preference swung Labor's way as voters felt free to send the LNP a protest message without consequences. But there were consequences. The LNP, despite winning the statewide primary vote by a clear margin of more than 100,000 votes and finishing first in 51 seats, still lost the election. The electorate sent us a clear message. We have heard that message. The LNP now has a new leadership team and is rebuilding as a constructive opposition and an alternative government.

As to surprises, from my perspective there was really only one. Who could not be surprised by the knighting of Prince Philip on the Australia Day long weekend?

In terms of lessons, firstly, it is certainly the case—it has been accelerating over the last few years—that the political dynamic has changed. The electorate is more volatile than ever and the number of what are often called rusted on supporters of the two major parties are not what they were. So where once the rule of thumb was that each of the major parties had some 40-odd per cent of the primary vote and they fought it out for the majority of the balance, the split of those groups now is much more evenly poised.

Secondly, it is not enough to be a competent government and good economic managers anymore. Thirdly, the reform task is more difficult for governments now—there is no doubt about that—even though the challenges are perhaps becoming more pressing than ever before, and particularly on the economic front. Fourthly, the continuing trivialisation of the political process and the focus on personality politics and process stories continues to diminish what should really be a contest of ideas and policy. That is to the public's great frustration we find. Fifthly—and this one is for Labor—having a plan to win government but not having a plan for government will ultimately cost them and, I fear, the state very dearly.

That really leads me to the final area I have been asked to comment on, which is my expectations for hallmarks of the coming parliamentary term. For the minority Labor government we are already seeing—and I think we will continue to see—a government that is making it up as it goes along. We will see special interests rewarded. Labor has a lot of election supporters to recognise. Because they have no economic plan, I fear we are going to see economic progress slow and the front-line service delivery gains of the last term wind back. I worry that there is going to be a real struggle with unemployment. If the coalition wins this Saturday's New South Wales election I worry that we are going to see a flight of investment over the border.

For the LNP, Queenslanders are going to see a more constructive opposition holding the government to account. They will see a different style of alternative government—one that has all the competence that people have come to expect from the LNP, but a more consultative and engaging approach than they may have been used to from conservative governments previously.

To conclude, while much of the postelection commentary is really centred on the government's shortcomings and the Premier personally, I actually think that history will remember Campbell Newman and his LNP team as a government that tackled problems rather than ran away from them, a government that made hard decisions and had the fortitude to see them through despite what might be happening in the opinion polls and a government that planned and aspired to make Queenslanders even better. But, we cannot get away from the fact that the people of Queensland have spoken very clearly. There are serious lessons as to why the LNP is now in opposition. We are carefully listening and learning from those.

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Labor has its own challenges after forming government with just 37 per cent of the primary vote and now without an economic plan or policies to address the Queensland community's priorities. The LNP will be holding the new government to account and working hard to earn the trust and support of more Queenslanders ahead of the next election, whenever that may be given the parlous numbers in the parliament.

Finally, thank you again for the opportunity to talk with you this evening. I look forward to the panel discussion.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Thank you, Brad. Next I will invite Rob Katter to speak to us. He is the Katter's Australian Party leader and member for Mount Isa. Rob has lived and worked in the north-west since 2001. He worked in the property valuation industry for 16 years following his studies at university and a two-year stint working in the mines. Rob served on the Mount Isa City Council. He is a keen sports enthusiast. I did not know—this night is proving very informative to me as well—that he performed in the 2014 Opera Queensland performance of *La Boheme*. Katter's Australian Party went from holding three seats in the parliament to two after the January election. Joining us fresh from parliament this afternoon, please welcome Rob Katter.

**Mr KATTER:** Thank you very much for having me here tonight. The major parties might have had a multimillion dollar campaign—and I think Clive Palmer spent \$15 million or \$20 million in the last federal election campaign—but we probably had about \$100,000 for the last campaign. I am not going to add a lot of value. We did not have the luxury of the major parties. We made the decision as a party that we would focus on five seats that we thought we could perhaps win and narrow the interests that we wanted to represent to try to consolidate a vote in one area. That really cuts to the heart of what I do want to talk about.

My comment on the election is that there is growing disenchantment in what the political system is delivering to people as individuals. I think that is why you see these violent swings of the pendulum. It is easy to rip votes off people as Clive Palmer did. There is growing disenchantment and you can capitalise on that. That is what I would like to talk about.

In terms of the electorate of Mount Isa there was a headline in the *Townsville Bulletin* about selling the income-producing port and rail line to build a second sports stadium. That would be a great drain on the people of the Townsville and Mount Isa electorates. The port and railway was built for the mine in Mount Isa. It was a pretty easy sell for me. That was manna from heaven for me personally in my electorate. I will not have much comment on the statewide campaigns. I cannot add any value to what has been offered by Anthony and Brad earlier.

I believe there is a void left by the majors—and I am not saying a vast void. Undeniably, there is a vast array of diverse interests in this state. It is a strong assertion that there is an inability for the two major parties to capture those well. If you do not capture those well people are going to be disenchanting because sooner or later you are going to disappoint them and they will look to park their vote. I believe it has developed this binary approach to politics where you vote against the person who is there because you do not like them because they failed on something. So you will take whoever is lining up next. If you do not have \$5 million or \$10 million for a campaign to get on TV, like Clive Palmer does, it is very hard for an Independent or a minor party to break into that space.

We are left with two parties trying to represent a diverse range of views, which is enormously hard. Imagine the LNP which had 74 mouths to feed in the party room. You have some bloke out in the bush trying to fight for issues against the Liberal people in the city who have a completely different set of values. You try to have cohesion knowing that people will vote against their will on things. We are constantly seeing people in the party voting against issues or voting for issues they should not be.

My role is to highlight that and put private member's bills into the parliament and call people out on that. I think it is a failure. I think there is a real failure of the political system to deliver for some interest groups. They might be great but I think they are left behind in the process. I think there is low tolerance in the party system to address the concerns of interest groups.

I would probably say some of my views are ultraconservative and some of them are probably ultra left wing. I respect the right of the Greens, the Democrats or anyone else to have a say. I advocate a multiparty system. I respect their right to be in the parliament just as much as my own.



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I do believe the two-party dominated system is antiquated. I am told that there is a growing trend away from that in similar political systems globally. I think people are starting to recognise that it does not deliver for people on an individual basis. I believe that we are becoming a minority.

People want something they can vote for. If you are a farmer in Western Queensland you want someone who resonates with your values. I am going to pick on the LNP because I have only served on the crossbenches under the LNP government. There was a scenario with the fair milk mark bill that we introduced into the parliament as a private member's bill. It effectively called for a labelling system. It had the support of the Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation. We had dairy farmers saying, 'We are all going broke. The industry is dying. This is the first positive news we have had since deregulation. It is not going to save a lot of us, but it is the first positive thing we have had.' I think it is a pretty good endorsement to have the Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation supporting you.

I heard members of parliament from dairy farming electorates speaking against this bill. It would have resulted in virtually no cost to the government. There was no argument there. You have people from dairy farming electorates who have dairy farmers coming to them saying, 'We desperately need this' speaking against the bill and voting against it. I challenge anyway to tell me how that is not a failure in the political system to deliver for people. You have a bill in parliament that is nearly nil cost to the government or the taxpayer so why not put it through? You have people from dairy farming electorates whose value system I think would have aligned with the virtues of this bill voting against it. How can that not be seen as a failure of the political system?

I have another example—and again I have to pick on the previous government. We did not have any resources in the last parliament. We had to be creative in the way we acted. We photocopied a LNP bill from 2010 calling for an ethanol mandate. We literally photocopied it and dropped it back at the bills office in our name and reintroduced the bill into the parliament. It never made it through parliament. It was recommended by the committee system that it not be passed. The same issue had been introduced three times—in 2002, 2008 and 2010. There had been three bills on an ethanol mandate in parliament. It was effectively voted down by the last government. Again, it is a failure in the political system to deliver something that is needed.

Both parties are negligent on the ethanol mandate, but I make the point that there is a catalogue of examples of where things are failing. You can say there is competition in the party room with these ideas and they just do not bring it out into the public arena, but in my short time in parliament there are clear examples that there is very little tolerance for expressing a difference of opinion—for example, Dr Chris Davis and the other four members that left. People are constantly unhappy being made to vote against things they do not believe in. They want to be in parliament and they are probably very effective members of parliament and good members of their local community, but they are not allowed the latitude to vote on things that are very important to them.

Another way to highlight that is the issue of uranium mining. It is abhorrent to a lot of people in Brisbane, but I would be surprised if there is not 95-plus per cent support for it in the town of Mount Isa. Everyone sees the value of their house tied to uranium mining in Mount Isa. We had a minister for mines in a former Labor government—Tony McGrady—followed by Betty Kiernan, who were both forced to oppose uranium mining. Tony is now an avid supporter of the industry. A lot of people say that is just how it goes: 'I was made by my party to vote against uranium mining even though it meant a lot to the community.' That is the cost of being in the party system. That begs the question: where is the threshold? At what point do you say, 'These things are too big a burden or the cost of that is too great for the benefit that I get from being in the party system or being in government'? When does it defeat the purpose of being there in the first place?

An interesting comment was made by a friend of mine at home. I said that it was pretty tough down there in parliament and one of the major devices used is bullying, for want of a better word: 'You will not get re-endorsed if you do not come to the party on this. If you cross the floor on that, you will be fighting for endorsement come the next election'—in whatever form it comes. He said, 'Wouldn't it be interesting if they outlawed bullying in the parliament because then we would be competing a lot more on the merits of the issue?' I think that cuts to another point that is thrown around a lot now in federal parliament, and that is that perhaps there is some merit in the criticism of the Senate. They say, 'What a mess the Senate is in and isn't it terrible?' I ask: what is the opposite of that? Does that mean a majority government is terrific, when you have security and there is no competition of ideas? That was my response to the media when

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they said people want to have certainty and that they had certainty. I said, 'You had certainty with the Newman LNP government. Clearly that was not satisfactory to the Queensland public. There is your certainty there.' I welcome uncertainty.

I think the interesting point to make is that, if you are producing results or outcomes from uncertainty—let's say hypothetically we had four parties in parliament and we had to get the ethanol bill through by talking to two or three separate parties. If that were the case then come next parliament you have a better chance of that legislation remaining in place and being sustainable, whereas with the May Day weekend and issues like that, the LNP come in and change it and then in the next parliament Labor come in and change everything back again, or they have the ability to do that. So I think uncertainty creates the ability to deliver more sustainable outcomes because the legislation has gone through the rigour of debate and it is less likely to be turned over because it was voted in on its merits in the end. I think that would be a great outcome.

Yes, you will not be forcing legislation through as fast presumably, but I welcome a bit more competition and what people say would say is uncertainty. I think that creates opportunity. Life is uncertain. Business is uncertain. It just means you have to work harder and if you want to sell something to the people and to the parliament it has to be done on its merits. I am sure there are a lot of good people in the parliament who would love the opportunity to vote for things on their merits, but we are bogged down in this two-party system at the moment.

I would like to leave you with one thought for the future. Obviously I have an agenda but from my conversations with the new government—and this was also approach of the last government—there is an obsession with debt and fiscal balance when there is a real need for positive industry growth and jobs growth out there. My comment to the Treasurer and to the Premier any time I get to talk to them is: 'I don't think at the end of three years people will be happy if you have arrested debt. I think they would be a lot happier if you go out there and say you are going to build some industry-building infrastructure.' And I make the distinction that I do not mean sports stadiums or social infrastructure; we cannot afford that now.

It is my assertion that I think there is a strong desire and thirst out there for debt that is offset by good industry-building infrastructure that makes the state wealthy and creates jobs. I say that because of some of the comments I got in the media in relation to the hung parliament when people were saying, 'Good on you, Rob.' I thought I was saying inflammatory things to people living in Brisbane. But I think there is dying need out there. We are not as worried about the debt; we are worried about industry and jobs, and industry and jobs will come from government spending on asset-building infrastructure. I think that is the pathway forward.

I would say there is no hope for Labor if they are just going to try to save their way out of problems. There is a lot to be said for being fiscally responsible, as Brad was saying. There is a lot of virtue in that but not in sitting on your hands and not doing anything. I think we need to be in sync with the business cycle which is in decline. Government needs to spend more money if they have any chance of getting re-elected.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Dr Lorann Downer has been involved with politics from multiple angles over the past two decades. She worked as a political reporter in Queensland, including for ABC Radio, and then as a director of the Government Media Unit for Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh. She also worked as a communications consultant. Lorann's PhD thesis analysed the political branding strategies in the ALP in the 2007 and 2010 federal elections. Lorann is currently lecturing in Queensland politics at UQ and is working on a book.

**Dr DOWNER:** Thanks, Jessica, and thank you to the ASPG for the opportunity to be here. I am going to tell a story tonight about political leadership in the 2015 election campaign by bringing together three strands—a bit of history about political leadership in Queensland, some data from the Vote Compass project and a perspective from political marketing, but first to the history.

Queensland, as I am sure many of you know, has a long tradition of strong authoritarian and populist leaders. This pattern of 'Premier presidents' evolved to deal with the frontier-like conditions and the shifting political allegiances which prevailed in colonial times and also to hold together a geographically large state with pronounced regional differences. This pattern held in a state which became characterised by cultural isolation, low levels of education, a unicameral parliament and a political culture more accepting of authoritarian leaders than other states. So over the past century we have had leaders like Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Wayne Goss, Peter Beattie and Campbell Newman.

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Premier Newman fit perfectly into this Queensland tradition. He traded on the can-do image that he had cultivated from the time that he ran for Lord Mayor in Brisbane in 2004. He seemed to revel in the tough decisions and he certainly provoked a lot of confrontations with various interest groups, and he loved the word 'strong'. He offered strong team, strong choices, strong policies—sometimes to the point of media ridicule during the campaign. And then for good measure he became a 'poor king' populist, throwing around a lot of money in the campaign, especially in his own electorate of Ashgrove, which was offered more than \$18 million in promises.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the poll. The voters turned against the strong man, and data from the Vote Compass project helps tell part of this story. I am sure many people here are aware of Vote Compass but, for those who are not, it was an online survey which ran in conjunction with the election campaign and which asked questions that related to party policy and leadership. The questions were based on research and advice provided by a panel, which included UQ academics including me and my colleagues here, Chris Salisbury and Simon Kelly. The survey was hosted on the ABC and was taken by around 150,000 people prior to the election on 31 January.

One of the Vote Compass questions asked about the competence of the major party leaders. In the graphic that you can see on the screen on the left with the green columns, you can see the results across all of those who took the survey. Annastacia Palaszczuk was just ahead of Campbell Newman at 4.2 out of 10, compared to 4.1 out of 10—so no real difference. But it is unusual for an opposition leader to be seen as equally incompetent as an incumbent Premier, especially one who has traded on his reputation as a leader to get things done.

If you look at the graphic on the right with the multi-coloured columns, you can see the breakdown across self-identified supporters of different parties. So LNP supporters in blue scored Newman at 7.3 out of 10 for competence, while the Labor supporters in red scored Palaszczuk at 6.5 out of 10, which is a big difference. But now look at the scores for each leader from supporters of other parties. Palaszczuk scored better than every group except Katter's Australian party voters where she just trailed Newman. She even got 2.2 from LNP supporters. So overall I would say this is a good result for Palaszczuk on competence.

Another Vote Compass question related to trust. It asked people how much trust they had in each major party leader. You can see the results there on the screen in the graphic with the green columns on the left, and that is for voters as a whole. Palaszczuk here was well ahead of Newman—4.4 out of 10, compared to 3.2. If you look at the graphic with the multi-coloured columns on the right, you can see the breakdown across self-identified supporters of different parties. What is interesting here is the support that the leaders get from their own parties: Palaszczuk's in red on 6.9 out of 10 is higher than Newman's in blue on 6.5. In the support that they get from parties other than their own, Palaszczuk scores quite well with Greens voters on 5.1 and also reasonably well with Palmer voters on 3.5 and Katter voters on 3.1. But Newman's scores are much lower amongst supporters of all parties other than his own. The highest he gets is 2.2 from Katter and other voters. So this is a very good result for Palaszczuk.

On election day as we know, the 'Premier president' Campbell Newman was beaten by the low-key Labor leader. So what happened to the Queensland tradition of a strong leader? I suggest part of the answer might come from a political marketing perspective. Political marketing argues that a politician must have both functional and emotional appeal. Functional means the practical or the tangible, and functional appeal includes things like being seen as competent in government, securing physical safety of citizens and delivering on promised concepts. Emotional refers to the symbolic or the intangible, and emotional appeal might include things like being seen as trustworthy, approachable and authentic.

Both functional and emotional are important in politics because people in a political market respond as they do in a commercial market—that is, they respond emotionally or subconsciously first and then look for a rational, conscious explanation second. In addition to that, people can develop deep emotional connections to political products and political brands just as they can with commercial products and brands. So I say that the mistake Newman made in the 2015 campaign, and arguably throughout his term in government, was that he was functional only. He was the strong, authoritarian, populist 'Premier president'.

In contrast, Palaszczuk offered emotion as well as functionality. Her chief functional offering was her commitment that Labor would not sell assets. Her emotional offerings included presenting as approachable, consultative and authentic. For that we need only look to the last week of the campaign when she relaxed into the role of opposition leader and as the campaigning opposition leader and we saw some great images of her playing barefoot cricket on Australia Day and leading an old style town hall meeting with supporters.

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All of that was an emotional offering. In summary then, I would suggest that contemporary Queensland political leaders need to be able to meld both the functional and the emotional to present as attractive offerings to voters.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Thanks, Lorann. Finally, we have Amy Remeikis. She is a journalist with more than 10 years experience across all mediums who moved to online and Fairfax's *Brisbane Times* in 2011. She has covered state politics for two years and was enough of a bugbear in the former government's side that Campbell Newman saw fit to make mention of her in his concession speech.

**Ms REMEIKIS:** It is true and I am still living it down. My mum said that the other day that her therapist asked why her daughter was mentioned in the Premier's final speech. She could not really give an answer for that because she hates politics. Jess, feel free to cut me off whenever.

Surprises from the electoral campaign: it was my first campaign and that probably gave me a bit of an advantage because I was coming at everything fresh. I had been covering the parliament for those two years. I had seen what had happened. In terms of campaigning and how that all worked, everything was new. There was no jadedness or cynicism in the way I was approaching it. I think that the day that pretty much declared the election result, or at least the result in Ashgrove, was Australia Day. That was the day that came after a horrid weekend for the LNP campaign. Campbell Newman had linked Labor donations and bikie gangs and then told journalists to google the evidence. He said that he did not need to provide any, that it was up to Labor to prove him wrong. We had that, which basically took over that entire weekend, which followed a lot of questions that came on the back of linking election promises in particular electorates to that MP winning. So it was not a case of the LNP winning government; if you wanted your sports field, your stadium, your swimming pool or your shade cloth for your school, you had to vote in that particular LNP MP, which was called out by many of our readers as electoral bribery.

It was a pretty bad weekend and then we had Australia Day, which was obviously an attempt to recalibrate the election campaign. Campbell Newman would only answer questions with answers on his strong plan, jobs and the economy. That included questions about Prince Philip; it included questions about Australia Day as a whole; it included questions about how much money he was spending on Ashgrove; and it included a question on the weather: strong plan, jobs and the economy. So we had that press conference, which I think probably should be studied in terms of how you can lose control of the media and how for the first time in my history in the gallery every single reporter who was there ran exactly the same story. Brad can fill us in more, but I am sure the strategy was that by only giving us a particular grab, we would only be able to run what he was saying. Instead, we all ran the questions that were being asked and the Premier's answer. We basically gave the public a transcript and let them make up their own mind. So that did not go so well.

Then we had the Australia Day barbecue with LNP supporters, which was hijacked by the Wilderness Society in a protest. So you saw an angry Premier arguing with a protester. Then in juxtaposition you had Anastacia Palaszczuk laughing and playing cricket barefoot in the park. There was no recovery from that. It was too short an election campaign. Everybody just went, 'Okay, this is a personality game.' As much as I think politicians hate that, they also have parties that run entire election campaigns on the personality of their leaders. So you cannot point out particular strengths and qualities in your leader and run a can-do campaign and then say, 'No, this isn't actually about personality; this is about what we're doing.' It is about both, but no-one is going to ignore the personality aspect of it. That was the biggest surprise of the election campaign, how such a carefully structured, planned campaign was sort of derailed by the personality of the leader.

If we want to go back to where I believe—and several of my colleagues believe—everything went wrong and from where it was very, very hard to recover, if no return, was the last sitting of parliament in 2013 when the PCCC was sacked in the very late hours of the night. I have never seen a reaction to a story about parliamentary business like that before. We had people reading that all through the night as we were filing updates as it was going on and on and on. The next morning I was tired and a bit delirious and thought, 'Oh well, people will probably be over it. It's a parliamentary committee. What do people know about parliamentary committees? They're not going to particularly care.' But people cared and people remembered.

I do not think that this election result was so much a referendum on asset sales. The LNP did win the majority of the first preference vote. If you are going to go on first preferences, there was a big chunk of people out there who said, 'Okay, we understand what you want to do and we agree with it.' They think that

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massive protest vote that swept through the electorate came from the snowballing effect of all the decisions that had gone before. The moment that the PCCC was sacked in the way that they were—because there was an investigation and the government did not seem to like the way that it was going so they sacked the committee and then put their own member in charge of that committee to give them the deciding vote in any future decisions. I think that was the moment when voters said, ‘We cannot trust you.’ The moment that you lose trust, you lose the electorate.

So moving forward, the entire parliament seems to want to rebuild Queensland’s trust. There seems to be a feeling of goodwill at the moment, of people wanting to actually be conciliatory, to consult. Everyone is a little bit afraid to attack the other or make comparisons to what the last government was like. That, of course, is going to have to change; that is politics. We will have question time. It is also going to be flung. At the moment there really does seem to be a sense that everybody needs to actually get back to the business of governing in Queensland. That is not necessarily a reformist agenda where we need to do absolutely everything at once, but an agenda where they talk to the people of Queensland, they find out what they want to do and they move forward with that. There are going to be disagreements; it would not be politics if there were not. But in terms of what Robbie was talking about with bills being cast off out of hand because they were not coming from the government, we are not going to see that. We have one house in Queensland. Having a government that only has the support to govern by one member is probably the best outcome that we can have at this point. We are going to have to consult; we are going to have to listen and we are going to have to argue the points of why our legislation needs to be passed. Honestly, after the last six years of government, this parliament that we have now is the one that Queensland needs.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Thanks, Amy. It feels like there are a lot of things in there that Brad may like to respond to, just from the nature of the campaign, the way it rolled out. I guess you sort of alluded to it a little bit when you said that there was ‘a high expectation of winning and perhaps too many of our own had that same expectation’. Was there arrogance and hubris in the LNP?

**Mr HENDERSON:** You will all remember that, as soon as the election was declared in 2012, the commentators were writing that they were good for two or three times; Labor would take years to recover. I think there was generally a talking down of the prospects of electoral change. I always think it is really dangerous to take the electorate for granted. A lot of the commentary around that time did that. To be fair, to be critical of ourselves, a number of our own probably fell into that trap as well. The electorate will level you up quick smart, and they showed that over the course of the three years. The electorate is much more unforgiving than it used to be. To take that electoral support for granted is at your folly.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Amy mentioned Australia Day. Was that the perfect storm, or was there a day that you sort of put up your hands and went, ‘Oh, that’s it for us’?

**Mr HENDERSON:** I never throw up my hands. It was not a great—

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Or toss a chair across the room—I do not know.

**Mr HENDERSON:** I have had better Australia Day weekends; I will put it that way. We lost a lot of momentum over that weekend and that was at a critical stage coming into that final week of what was a shortened week given the public holiday on the Monday and the fact that the electronic media blackout kicks in on the Wednesday. So the TV advertising and the radio advertising all has to come off air and then you are wholly and solely relying on your earned media. We did lose momentum over that weekend and that was problematic. We gathered it up again on the Tuesday with a bringing forward of our costings and a reframing around what was our central message around our economic plan. We had some really good numbers on the Tuesday and Wednesday night. But, of course, once the advertising stopped and when expectations started to surge again in the last couple of days, we had another attack on us from Tony Fitzgerald. The expectations for Labor at the same time slid even lower. They were low to start with and they slid even lower, and that just unleashed the protest vote. In our own postelection work we found that about seven per cent of voters across these 30 seats that we were tracking said that they would change their vote if they knew that the current result was going to be the case, but of course you cannot wind back the clock. We have to accept the verdict of the voters.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** I was interested in what Lorann said about the presidential style of campaigns and the big personalities that we have had in the past. Why do you think Annastacia Palaszczuk was not the central focus? Why do you think Labor did not go down the path of just highlighting their leader in particular this time?

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**Dr DOWNER:** I think that Labor highlighted the leader in a different way. I think what we saw from Palaszczuk during the three years was a low-key but constant relationship marketing, and Anthony can speak to this more than me. I am aware that Palaszczuk spent a lot of time visiting regional seats multiple times. So, for example she went to Cairns and Townsville in particular multiple times during the course of the three years and did a lot of local events and local media, and the payoff was there on election day: those seats came back to the Labor Party. I think, in fact, the leader was a focal point but just in a very different way and a way that suited her personal style and a way that also suited a contrast to Newman.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** It is incredible, though, how there can be just one enduring image. A few people have mentioned the playing cricket barefoot on Australia Day, that that is the takeaway image of the campaign, something so simple. It is not a policy idea. How can it be so easy like that? Are voters fickle?

**Dr DOWNER:** No, I do not think voters are necessarily fickle, but we live in an age of image. That image captured everything about Palaszczuk and everything about Newman. What it captured about Palaszczuk was her authenticity, the fact she is quite down to earth, approachable and a bit spontaneous. It was a really nice contrast to Newman, who was criticised in the media—and including by Amy at one point—for running a fairly stage managed campaign, not meeting so many people.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Campaigns are stage managed, though, aren't they, Amy? Your day is plotted out minute to minute. There is not a lot of scope for spontaneity.

**Ms REMEIKIS:** No, there is not a lot of scope for spontaneity, and that is the nature of campaigns, especially from what I have read. Historically, as campaigns have moved on, it is all about that balance between risk management. If we go into the shopping centre and we meet the protester among the 200 fawning fans, what is that going to mean for us and balancing that sort of thing. I think the difference between the campaign—and I split my time between them—was that while Labor—and I suppose this was the ground work that Labor had done. They seemed to take a leaf out of Wayne Goss's book with that grassroots campaigning during the term of government. They were a lot more comfortable walking around people and a lot more approachable because there was not a huge thing of security and there was not a huge thing of MPs behind them. They did not have that. They had a candidate, they had a leader. They could walk into a shopping centre. They could meet the planned person who was a member from down the road who had come in to say, 'Oh my God! You saved my baby!', or whatever it happened to be. Then they would also meet all of the real people who would come along and just say, 'Hey, how are you going?'

Then we had on the LNP side the first time that we went to meet people was on the Gold Coast and it was in a cafe where media advisers were handing us the names of people sitting down at the tables before the Premier had sat down at the table. So there were real people in that cafe—or people who were not planted—but we did not get to see a lot of the interaction between the Premier and the people in that cafe. I think that was the difference. From a media perspective, Anastacia Palaszczuk playing cricket barefoot in the park could have been a disaster, because she missed the catches. It just slipped through her hand and it was like, 'Oops-a-daisy.' That is TV gold in terms of 'Opposition leader misses the catch, drops the ball'. That did not happen, because we had on the other side the LNP saying 'jobs', 'strong plan' and 'economy' to every single question. So it was just such a different campaign on both sides. You could trace what was happening. One was relaxed; one was not so relaxed. In this age of new media, that was absolutely coming through to the public.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Did you agonise over that, Anthony, when the catch was dropped or you knew that it did not matter?

**Mr CHISHOLM:** The only point that I would make is that that was in Springwood, which is Mick de Brenni's seat, and he never made the ministry. So that is the story.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Robbie, how do you get your message across as a minor party during a campaign? As you said, you do not have the same amount of funds. You did target only a specific number of seats. Do you just accept that that is the way it is, or do you find that frustrating?

**Mr KATTER:** Yes, both. I find it very frustrating and then you accept that that is the way it is. It probably makes you a bit bitter, because I could be in a room and a cattle grazier would be saying, 'This is where the government's failing on this, this and this' but then I will ask from another point of view, really. There is not a lot of political capital in chasing that vote, but it is something that I believe in, the industry that believe in, and where I see the government has failed. I will find myself arguing with the grazier, who is taking the side of the government, but I am taking the side of his issues and his industry, where to me it

is a clear failure by the government. I think they would probably accept that. I think people have been seeing this two-party system for so long that they do not see us as a viable option. Fair enough. We have not been road-tested. But what I would say is give me and my other candidates the resources of government for 12 months or six months to form some policies and I think I will come out flying and delivering more sophisticated measures. But how you get there, I do not know.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Are you wedded to any particular side of the parliament for this next term or could your vote go any way on any piece of legislation?

**Mr KATTER:** No. This is a third party for a reason. Obviously, there is a strong inclination if I am doing something to make their life a lot easier, but having the resources or the way it is at the moment, we exist as a separate party for a reason. We want to give someone perhaps a reason for voting for us, rather than being just a quasi or just a subset of existing parties. I say that with the greatest respect for the other parties. They have a right to be there and have those constituencies to represent. In some areas I am sure they can do a good job of that, but I believe that there are some gaps in the system. I think there are definitely some very disenfranchised groups—and a lot of people in rural industries, small business. A lot of people feel disenfranchised and they see a lot of the things that are taken up in parliament that is completely irrelevant to the things that are important to them. They see that they are failed by the major parties on many issues.

Unfortunately, probably a lot of the people we chase the votes off are doing so because they think they have money, large finances. Trying to raise money off people who are in trouble already perpetuates the problem from our end. How you fight that I do not know. Clive Palmer is a rich man. He has claimed that himself. You can make your judgement on how accurate that is, but that TV then bought him four senators. I guess you have to be honest and say that he was probably one of the highest profile lower house candidates in the federal election and he only just scraped across the line with all that money, because it is pretty hard to win a lower house seat if you are not a major party unless you have a very high-profile candidate with a lot of money behind you. You can win senators, because you only have to get 14 per cent, but getting that lower house seat is very, very hard.

So where is the future for us? I do not know. I think the future is core value, No. 1—and I would love to invite the major parties to adopt this as their own—but the core-value principle is the person and then with the party who elected me and when the party votes is on electorate first to the point where it does not contradict the other principles. You have to have some reason to come together as a party, otherwise there is no point to it. But you must have the right to vote in the interests of your electorate first. I think the more we can perpetuate that and see more people, you could do away with the KAP if there was a system in there that the major parties allowed their people to vote one way in the interests of their electorate where it really matters. I have not seen one person cross the floor in the last three years and I am sure there was some cynicism there by the comments that ensued.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Before I throw out for any questions, you mentioned the future. Can I cast forward to 2018. Has the campaign already begun? The numbers are so tight in the House. The 2018 election could go either way. Do you have to consider every day as a day in the campaign?

**Mr HENDERSON:** I think that is absolutely the case when the numbers are so tight. One of the things that should be acknowledged, too—and I think it is a product of the breakdown in the numbers in the last term—is that I think the media and a lot of commentators had a very low expectation of Labor possibly winning themselves. So there was very little scrutiny of Labor and its policy positions over the course of the last term and even with Anastacia Palaszczuk. We have a situation now where we have a Premier and a new government that people hope will be a good government, but we really do not know. Most Queenslanders do not know what they stand for, what they are going to do. I just invite the audience to make a comparison with the current New South Wales election, where there is a fully fledged debate and an examination of the respective policy positions of Labor and the coalition around the issue of poles and wires. So there is going to be, I expect now, given the state of the numbers, that there will be a lot more scrutiny on both sides. So every day is going to count.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Do you accept that, Anthony?

**Mr CHISHOLM:** No, I would not. I think one of the key differences there is Peter Wellington. The people in this room will know the role that he played with Peter Beattie from 1998 to 2001 and Peter himself says how a really reliable person he was but also a person with integrity. I think that Peter Wellington will be a good influence on this government.

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There is a history of state governments winning minority government and then going on in the next election and getting a good result. Peter Beattie did that from 1998 to 2001. Mike Rann did it in South Australia. Steve Bracks did it in Victoria. Bob Carr did it in New South Wales. So I am certainly not pessimistic about the chances of this government. I think also that Annastacia Palaszczuk's understated nature, I think, is going to suit the times. I think that Queenslanders will really warm to her. She has Queenslanders at heart. I think they see that every day and I think that that is really what Queenslanders are looking for as she goes on.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Any questions?

**Mr LOW:** I have been a member of the ALP and I just seen evidence as I call it of what Anthony 'Tony' Chisholm has done since I first met him when I joined the party in August 2006. Tony was then an organiser and I liked what he said about it being the people's party. From my perspective, I have seen the Campbell Newman-led Liberal National Party government in Queensland completely detaching itself from the people. It wanted to talk about infrastructure, it wanted to talk about asset sales, but it did not want to hear the people's needs. My own candidate in Morayfield in opposition, Mark Ryan, went out doorknocking. So he knew what the people's needs were. If that was an Anthony Chisholm campaign manager's decision, it was a beauty, because that is a swing and a shift that led to a victory for the ALP on Saturday, 31 January 2015. That is this year and that is not in the recent past, Tony. We can build on this.

**Ms CRAWFORD:** My comment is to Brad in terms of the whole question of protest. I have to tell you that I live in Alice Street and walk past Parliament House every day. I would have to say that, from the first day of parliament, there was not a night that went by that we did not have a group of protesters outside. It started with the gay boys and girls over marriage equality and night, after night, after night. We had lawyers, doctors, Indian chiefs, firemen, ambos, P&Cs, Aboriginal people, straight people, gay people, green people, red people. Every day there was a group out there. Your comments now about protest and questioning about protest or what you were doing terms of political life, did you not take notice of them or did you see those as a fringe, because they were very diverse groups over the three years? It is very peaceful now, thank goodness. Keep it that way, Tony. But I cannot believe that people who are involved in politics were not aware of this constant shifting of groups in terms of policy decisions.

**Mr HENDERSON:** Absolutely. It is impossible not to be aware, particularly as the groups galvanised. Reform is never easy, particularly for those who might be impacted as a result of that reform. That was the source of some of it. In my address I touched about how certain decisions were made. I think there was a general awareness in the community that government could not go on living beyond its means, that there needed to be a winding back to have government live within its means, but there were those in the community who did not agree with the manner in which we made those changes. So absolutely, we were cognisant of that, just as you were living across the road at parliament. I would have to say that lightening the load and everything that this Premier and government did was in their belief of creating a better Queensland.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Did anyone at any point, though, say to Campbell Newman or to the leadership team, 'We think that you're doing this too quickly, perhaps too aggressively. You need to change what you were doing'? Or did they just have free rein to go ahead as they saw fit?

**Mr HENDERSON:** A lot of their hardest decisions were taken very early in the term, particularly in that first budget—in the first couple of years. The third year came, particularly the second six months, and it was dubbed this Operation Boring. But really a lot of the hard work had been done. A lot of the heavy lifting had been done and we were starting to see the green shoots of recovery starting to come through. So we can reflect now, 'Did we try to do too much too quickly?' Perhaps. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but there was a real motivation among the government to really try to turn the state around as quickly as we possibly could.

Unemployment remains a real issue in Queensland. Queensland is a growing state and there was a strong belief within the party and the government that we needed to do as much as we possibly could to create the jobs and the economic opportunity to take the state forward and to allow Queenslanders to be able to get access to the very best services possible and have the infrastructure to support the growth of the state so that we do not wind up like Sydney—choked up and so on—and so that the regions of the state get the infrastructure they need and are entitled to as well.

**QUESTIONER:** I was just wondering what challenges, assuming Lawrence Springborg stays the course until 2018, the LNP are going to face taking a leader who has already been rejected multiple times



by the electorate. Given the adage is 'third time lucky', not fourth time lucky, he will probably be setting a Guinness world record when it comes to the opportunity to actually be elected at that kind of stage. To me it just seems he is such an easy target. I wondered how you would address those issues going forward.

**Mr HENDERSON:** I expect the commentators and most in the community will have a particular view. Lawrence, incidentally, at the age of 47 is now the father of the House. That is how much political change we have had in the last couple of terms of parliament and that is really significant. That bears out the volatility in the electorate these days. Lawrence has all the energy that a fellow in his 40s has, so that suits me too, but also he has the benefit of terrific parliamentary experience and I think that is going to be particularly important in a hung parliament environment. There have been plenty of leaders who have fallen short on previous occasions and then gone on to be very, very successful leaders—no less than John Howard, the former Prime Minister, for example.

**Prof. SCOTT:** I have two very short questions. The question is really one raised by John Black in an interesting article in the *Australian* when he said, 'Why didn't Labor win more easily?' He made the point that the Beattie middle-class Labor voters have not come back. I do not know whether you would agree with that as an analysis of why it was so close but I would be interested in your view on that. The second question is for Anthony and it is a question of why you said 'Vote one' rather than 'Put Liberals last', which is what they are doing in New South Wales. The trade union movement campaigned on 'Put the Liberals last' or 'Put the LNP last'. Why did you not pursue that option up here as well?

**Mr HENDERSON:** To answer the question to me about the middle class, the working mums and dads were the key demographic in this last election and they remain so. These are the people who are worried about their jobs and their mortgages and being able to get the services that their family needs, being able to move around their communities as they would like. I think the analysis that you refer to is reasonably accurate. Certainly we have had a good look at the Labor vote in our postelection survey and one of the interesting things we have discovered—which sort of further bears out the fact that this was a protest vote—is that of the 37 per cent Labor primary vote about a third of that in our work was simply voting Labor as a means to an end, either to send us a message or to stop asset leasing or to get rid of Campbell Newman or whatever. So I think that is hardly a vote of confidence in the Labor brand. The Labor Party still has a lot of work to do to win back what is its historically traditional base.

**Mr CHISHOLM:** Look, I completely disagree with John Black. I do not think his analysis is worth a pinch of shit and I would not bother reading it ever again. In terms of winning back voters, yes, we are in minority government so we understand that at the next election we want to do better. The one thing I would say though, and we have mentioned Springwood before in terms of the cricket, is that we won Springwood which, in 1998 when Beattie formed minority government, I think Springwood was one of the last ones for us to get across the line in. So the fact that we actually won seats like Springwood, Pine Rivers, Morayfield, Kallangur, to me that is classic middle Queensland, the same as in regional Queensland and some of those we won quite strongly. So I would really disagree with that analysis. Yes, we acknowledge that at the next election we are going to have to do better but I think we can and I think the result proves that.

**QUESTIONER:** There was a second question.

**Mr CHISHOLM:** Pretty simple, as a matter of principle, as the Labor Party campaign director, I do not think you can do anything other than advocate people vote Labor. It is very simple from our point of view. I know the New South Wales guys are doing the same thing, but the unions down there are running 'Put the LNP last' because it is harder for the unions to get out there and advocate a vote for one particular political party over the other but it is easy for them to say 'Put the LNP last'.

**QUESTIONER:** I am an Aboriginal elder from out at Morayfield-Caboolture area. Brad, I would like to tell you straight out that I believe Campbell Newman disempowered our member out there because he would just follow what the Premier said. It did not make any difference: he was just like a sheep; he just followed. If he said, 'Do this,' then that is what happened. When we asked him for help or with things like this, it was a waste of time. We could go to Mark Ryan. He was a far better person; he got off his butt and did something for us. But the non-consultative approach that your government had only approached the big business, the big people; they did not come down to the community level, which is where Annastacia, Jackie Trad and Leeanne Enoch would actually talk to the elders to find out what the community wanted and needed. I think Katter will turn around and say that he talks to the elders too to find out what the Indigenous community wants. It is very simple—we just want equal things with regards to health, housing and social justice. When you look at *Closing the gap*, it is an absolute disgrace that with our health issues

and things like that we are a Third World country living in such a prosperous thing as Australia. It is a disgrace on any government. When I go along and say you had Campbell Newman as this dictator who was sitting up top who did not want to talk to the people down below. He did not consult with the Aboriginal people. He was only hobnobbing. He would come and visit and that was only if you got an invitation you were lucky.

That is just me being on my soapbox. I am going to get off it now because the question I am more interested in is the polling. Before the election, your polls and things like this had the LNP winning. I think, Tony, you would say that as well—that going along Anastacia was not doing very well at all. Yet on the Saturday the polls had said it was a swing around. Were you surprised at how the polls were swinging?

**Mr HENDERSON:** No, not at all. I referenced in my report that the vote was very soft; there was a big soft vote. In our work, it was about a 20 per cent figure right through the campaign until as late as the final Wednesday, and in the seats we were looking at it got down to about 15 per cent and then it just stuck through to election day and about nine or 10 per cent made their mind up on the day as they walked into the booth or in the booth itself. So it bears out what I am saying about how fluid or how volatile the electorate is.

We had a lead in primary vote terms on Labor as we finished the last year, 2014, but as soon as the election was called the primary vote gap closed right up. So Labor increased and we dropped back, and then it was basically an arm wrestle over the course of the campaign. We obviously needed to perform well over the course of the campaign and finish well. Anthony referenced his findings that our vote slipped away in a lot of these seats in those final eight days, and I would agree with that. We saw the same thing in our own. We slipped on that Australia Day long weekend, we regathered very well on Tuesday and Wednesday and then slipped away again on those last couple of days. And it was particularly on the back of those expectations—surging for us, dropping for Labor.

**Mr CHISHOLM:** There was always going to be a double-digit swing at the election. I suppose the key thing to look at was whether that was going to fall in the right seats for us. As I sort of went through at the start, we knew that we needed a small swing in the inner city so we could afford for it to be eight per cent in places like Brisbane Central, Mount Coot-tha and Bulimba—those areas. But we knew the key ones in that outer metro—Pine Rivers, Murrumba, Morayfield, those ones that I have talked through—were the ones where we needed that double-figure swing. It was only really in those last eight days that those ones had the Liberal primary drop significantly that we became more confident. Until then, those ones out there were really fifty-fifty propositions. It was only in the last eight days that we became more confident that we were a chance of picking those ones up, on the back of already knowing we were getting good swings in regional Queensland.

**Dr REYNOLDS:** I am the honorary research fellow of the Queensland parliament and I have done some number crunching which I thought might be of use as a background. This is the first election where the exhaustion rates have actually been reversed. In every election since optional preferential voting, the exhaustion rates have risen steadily. In this election, they have been reversed. In no seat was the exhaustion rate over 50 per cent and in most seats the votes in play varied between 60 and 80 per cent, so the exhaustion rates fell to 40 to 20 per cent and in some seats even lower.

The primary swing to the ALP was lower in all seats than its reversals in 2012. This of course has been said that Labor did not win the primary vote. I would then go on to say that that is totally irrelevant—totally irrelevant. There was a large Katter vote which was free in provincial and northern seats where Katter did not contest in 2015. Bobby Katter's party was polling in some seats almost 20 per cent—certainly between 10 and 15 per cent. By not contesting, that vote was free, it was kind of in the pool, and therefore was up for grabs. This was PUP's first appearance in a state poll and it polled strongly in provincial and outer urban seats, especially where Katter had left the seats uncontested.

And here is the clincher. I looked at the seats which Labor gained at this election which it had lost in 2012 but retook in 2015, and here the preference distributions are extraordinary. Labor gained 78.8 per cent of Green preferences in these seats; the LNP, 15. For the PUP preferences in these seats which Labor gained, 62.8 per cent went Labor, and 30 per cent went to the LNP. That is extraordinary. You would hardly think that the ALP and PUP voters would be ideologically aligned—perhaps they are not. For all other voters, Labor got 54.5 per cent of other preferences; the LNP, 30.6. I think that tells it.

**Mr CHISHOLM:** The point for me is correct. We sort of called it the Newman effect. So those people who were not voting for Labor but wanted to get rid of Campbell Newman or send Campbell Newman a

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message, they knew what they had to do and that is why if you look at those by-elections the exhaustion rate was always lower, the preference vote was always stronger. So, yes, we were not surprised by that and Brad no doubt would not have been either in terms of what was coming.

**Mr HENDERSON:** No, we were not either. You would have seen it in many of your booths. While we were advocating a vote for the LNP, we had Labor, Greens, PUP, WWF, GetUp and the unions all advocating a vote to put the LNP last. So in effect it was the combined resources of up to five, six or seven different groups against one voice. Paul's analysis is probably spot on. He has drawn on the numbers and we have found the same thing. It was an effective move to sort of corral what has previously been a splintering of the vote with optional preferential voting.

There is just a point I would make about the KAP vote. Our results in 2012 looked better than they actually were and that is because of the scale of the KAP vote because a lot of the disenchanted Labor voters in 2012 went to Katter and then exhausted. So we won with lesser swings in the central and northern parts of the state than we did in the south-east of the state. What we found too was that the feeling against the Bligh government was more pronounced in the southern part of the state than in fact the north.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Did you do any research at any point on changing the leader? We have seen a bit of that in politics in recent times. It is not unprecedented.

**Mr HENDERSON:** I know the media loves to speculate around leadership change. But can I tell you that it did not work for Labor federally. The Australian people reserve their right to make their decision on the government. You tread into that territory very, very cautiously. We were always locked solid behind our leader who is elected by the party room.

**Ms REMEIKIS:** Would you have been overly sad if your leader lost but the government won?

**Mr HENDERSON:** Yes.

**Mr KATTER:** You have just jogged my memory. It got pretty hostile in the first six months of the last term, particularly towards our party. I would often yell out, 'You should be thanking us.' We delivered arguably 12 seats to the government last term. If there were more pragmatic people in that party, they would not have stripped us of resources but rather given us resources and maybe given us a concession on the fair milk mark bill or the ethanol bill, and we would have worked harder to run in more seats because of that. I think there was probably a lack of pragmatism there in the leadership of the last government. Otherwise there could have been a different outcome.

**Ms KELSHAW:** My name is Vivien Kelshaw, and this is only the second of your meetings that I have attended, so perhaps I should not speak up. I am not a party supporter of either side or group and haven't been for some time. I have had close family involvements with both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party and I find enormous faults with both of them. Any time you want to ask me what they are I will tell you. I do find that younger people are not joiners. They will not join any organisation—it does not matter what. When you try to get young people involved, they do not have time. They are busy doing what they are doing. They do not want to become part of a group of any kind. So I think you have that to deal with from whatever side of politics you are on.

I think what is important is to look at some of the phraseology and the attitudes that go on. And I am going to be frivolous now because I would like to take to task that word that you applied to Campbell Newman—'arrogant'. That word to me is applied in all facets of life to people who are confident by people who are not confident. I have had it applied to me when I have done something that other people have not been able to do, and I am sure anybody who is confident in what they do will find that it has happened to them. I think it is a non-confident person's word for a confident person, and I think we should acknowledge that when it is thrown at people.

My observation of the previous government is that I know with the Department of Health they turned around an absolutely appalling mess and put it in the most organised shape that it has been in for some time. The Department of Health has been an absolute disaster for some 15 years, a really long time. I think to do that really fast is not ever accepted by people who cannot go at that pace. Any political party that comes in and gets things done and says, 'Gee, aren't we good? We have achieved all of that,' leaves everyone behind because they are still puffing along behind you. They have not noticed what you have done because they are still gathering their puff.

While it is thrown about that the other side is being inactive, people actually quite like it. Think of the British talking about 'let's muddle through'. That is a wonderful old British phrase. They love muddling

through and they get there in their funny little way. I think the Labor Party has made enormous use out of that. The only person you would ever say was arrogant in the Labor Party would be Paul Keating and that was because he was damned efficient in what he did. Some of the others have not been quite so efficient.

One thing that I have noticed is that in the last couple of weeks all the restaurants in Brisbane are filled up now with public servants. They have not been in the restaurants for the last two or three years. This is good for the Brisbane economy, but how good is it going to be for the state? That is just food for thought.

**Mr KRIEDEMANN:** Good evening, my name is Andrew from the ASPG executive committee. I have a comment first and then a question for Anthony. I do miss Jessica from 7.30 and also *Stateline*—I wish it was back on.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Thank you.

**Mr KRIEDEMANN:** Anthony, in respect to this campaign but also previous campaigns that you have run, with regard to focus groups before the campaign and during the campaign, how important to you in crafting your campaign is the focus group output when you compare that, reflecting back to your comment before, to social media or other sources in relation to that campaign strategy?

**Mr CHISHOLM:** Could I just make one comment in regard to the previous comment. In terms of party membership, the Labor Party membership today is the highest it has been for 30 years. It often grows when you are in opposition, and we did make the most of that. But it is wrong to suggest that people will not join if you give them the opportunity, and a lot of reforms that we have undertaken in the last three years have encouraged more people to join. Whilst I have not had a good look at the demographic analysis, when I go to new member functions, a lot of those people are under 30. So it is really encouraging that we have seen some great growth in membership and younger people joining. But the challenge around paid membership is the same for every other volunteer organisation out there. At my local St Vincent de Paul's, of which I am a member, the average age would probably be 70. I noticed a story in my local *Quest* paper the other day saying the Lions Club is going to close because they do not have young people. So it is a challenge, but the Labor Party has made significant inroads in the last couple of years in regard to that.

In terms of focus groups, I often find that there is a bit of a myth out there that nothing happens without it being focus grouped. From my point of view, the campaign that we ran in 2015 was actually run on the smallest budget that we have had since 2004. So it was a really tight budget from our point of view in terms of what we were able to spend money on, and we did less focus groups than any campaign I have ever been involved with. So, from our point of view, particularly in the lead-up to the campaign we probably would not have done more than 10 to 15 groups in the last 12 months. So it was really quite sparse in terms of what we were able to achieve. During the campaign we were only able to do three a week—so we did Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights—and one of those would be in either Cairns or Townsville because they were the key regional places for us. From our point of view, it was about ensuring that we were across the mood across the state and then obviously testing messages in terms of the campaign, testing TV adverts and those types of things. So that was really the driving force.

The interesting thing about digital and social media—and I do not proclaim to be an expert in this; I know what it can achieve but there are people around who are experts—is the real-time analytics you can get from digital and social media campaigning, and that I think will drive a lot of research where I think parties will become less reliant on focus groups and more reliant on what has been received online. When you go to the *Courier-Mail*, for instance—I am sure the *Brisbane Times* is like this as well, not that I have been invited—they have on their screens in real time what stories people are looking at. I think that is probably the future. So you are getting real-time analysis about what messages people are responding to or what advertisements they like. The amount of money you are spending on digital is going up. I have not been following it that closely in the last week but it seems like every TV service has launched a Netflix or a Stan or a catch-up—I did not even know what some of them are called—and there will be opportunity to advertise on those things which three years ago we did not have, but we were all on catch-up TV programs this time. So it is a changing tool for the parties, and I think that will be increasingly relied upon.

**Ms REMEIKIS:** Can I add very quickly from a media perspective that we do not have screens telling us who is reading our stories and when because at Fairfax we like our journalists to concentrate on the story rather than how many people are reading it. We let the producers and subeditors deal with that sort of stuff. But if you ask any producer they can tell you who is reading what story, how long they spent on it, how far they read down and then what story they clicked on next. I can tell you during this election campaign

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people were reading down to 80 per cent of the story which for news is almost unprecedented. People usually read the first five paragraphs if you are lucky, maybe scan a little bit further, but people were pouring through all of these stories then going to another political story and then going to another. They could not get enough of it.

I do not think political parties really need to spend money on focus groups anymore because there are comment streams. If you need to get a touchstone of where the public is at on a particular issue or on a particular person or on a particular party, just read the comments. Do not just read one site; read all of them. If you track back from around the time the LNP did the apology and launched 'operation boring', you will see a shift in the comments that was consistent across all news sites that had it—across Fairfax, across the *Guardian*, across comments sites on the ABC and across the *Courier-Mail*. People were angry and it could be tracked all along there.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Just on that engagement issue too, Lorann, the numbers of people that took part in Vote Compass was quite extraordinary. What does that tell you about how engaged people want to be in the political process?

**Dr DOWNER:** You are right, Jess. There were some really big numbers of people who logged on to the Vote Compass survey. Around 150,000 people took the survey before the election. This is comparable when you do the calculations for state and voter size with the Victorian state election, for example. I think what that tells us is that people do want to be engaged, but they want to be engaged on their terms. So they like to be able to consider the policies or consider the leaders perhaps a bit longer than a two-second grab on the TV news or a combative interview on live radio. I think people do want to be engaged. This is after all about their governments, their futures, getting down to the tintacks of their jobs, their mortgages, their children's education and health.

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Have we got time for one more?

**Dr WEEKS:** No. I am really worried that we are going to be locked in the building and we will spend all night talking about this!

**Ms VAN VONDEREN:** Thank you very much to all of our panellists: Rob Katter, Brad Henderson, Amy Remeikis, Anthony Chisholm and Lorann Downer. I appreciate your frankness and I really look forward to seeing how the next three years of this new parliament is going to play out. I think we are in very interesting territory. Hopefully it is good for Queensland. After all, I guess that is what we all want in the end. So thanks very much.

**Dr WEEKS:** I am sorry that we did not get to all the questions. Can we all give a big round of applause to our panel. I think this is, for everyone, a really good example of what the ASPG can get into. We have a chance to get into the really meaty questions. This has been a marvellous example of getting across the issues with members from the parties, the journalists, the academics and members of the public who are interested in this. This has been a really fantastic example of what the ASPG does. We do have more functions during the year. You can grab a membership form on your way out, if you are not already a member. If you are already are a member, join twice and have twice as much fun! Thank you all again. We are sorry we went right up to time. Travel home safely and we look forward to seeing you at the next function.

Also, this would not have happened without our two wonderful staffers—our secretary, Ms Lucy Manderson, and our treasurer, Ms Danielle Cooper, who are staffers at Parliament House. They take this on on top of their work. You can imagine what it has been like to organise this while parliament is about to start. I really want to acknowledge both of you for what you have done. I also thank Dr Mary Crawford, who helped us to get this room when we were removed from Parliament House because something is going on at Parliament House! Thank you all very much.