



Speech by

**PAUL LUCAS MLA**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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Hansard 13 April 2000

**LIBERAL PARTY PERFORMANCE, BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL ELECTION**

**Mr LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (10.22 a.m.): Recently a lot of attention has been focused on the performance of the Liberal Party. That is understandable, due to its disastrous performance in both the Brisbane City Council election, in which it won eight wards out of 26, and the Townsville election, in which it won zero out of 10. At a State level, who could forget the Liberals' worst by-election results in 50 years in Bundamba and Woodridge?

What has the National Party done about this? Has it supported its coalition partners through these tough times in the interests of conservative voters? No. The National Party has been cynically exploiting the Liberals' predicament and seeking to deny the Liberal Party the democratic right to field candidates in seats to which it has fair claim.

The member for Nerang, Ray Connor, encouraged Liberal mayoral candidate from the Gold Coast, Joan McDermott, to further her ambitions in Surfers Paradise, only to be met with abuse from the Leader of the Opposition. This is in a region of Queensland in which every Federal seat is held by the Liberal Party and in which both the State seats of Surfers Paradise and Southport have previously been held by Liberal members. Those in the National Party do not even support their coalition colleagues.

West of Brisbane and on the Darling Downs, the Federal seats of Groom and Blair are held by the Liberals. Again we see a concerted effort by Ken Croke, Rob Borbidge and the Nationals to stop the Liberals running in Lockyer and Cunningham, despite the coalition agreement allowing it. Lockyer is a traditional Liberal seat, held by Sir Gordon Chalk for many years.

I can understand why the Liberals, with their paltry Brisbane base, want to run in these seats. They hold Federal seats based in Cairns, Townsville, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast, but still they buckle down to National Party claims of a divine right to run for them at the State level. Honourable members should remember what happened when the Nationals tried to bully the Liberals out of contesting Groom. They won the seat with Bill Taylor and they have won it again since with Ian Macfarlane.

What I know gall most Liberals are claims of National Party pre-eminence. At the 1998 State election the Liberals received 16.1% of the primary vote, while the Nationals received 15.2%. What has happened since then? The latest Newspoll shows that support for the Liberals is up 10% to 26%—still a joke—while support for the Nationals is down to 13%. The Nationals have half the Liberals' support but will not let them run for any seats. The fact is that the Nationals are the duds. They will not support their coalition mates. Liberal Party supporters throughout Queensland do not have the right to have a say in their electorates.

Time expired.

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