



Speech by

BILL FLYNN

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

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FIRST SPEECH

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (3.26 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, before I launch into my first speech, there are two matters for me to address. Firstly, at the risk of merely echoing the words of those before me, may I pass on my congratulations to the Speaker on his election to such a high and responsible office. Pauline Hanson's One Nation team is acutely aware of the difficult and often controversial nature of matters that face the Speaker. It is most important for his office to not only do the right thing but also be seen to do it. We feel sure that the Speaker will continue along his already demonstrated path of competence and integrity, and we wish him well in his new term of office.

At this point I am reminded of a time, about 26 years ago, when I stepped into a court witness box as a police officer for the first time. The difference now, of course, is that instead of facing one judge, I now potentially face 88. One Nation has been vilified in many ways under many guises. However, what our assailants appear to forget is that whether we do or do not make any procedural mistakes, it is not upon these which we are judged. Indeed, if this were the case, there are others in this place who I believe would have been in dire straits. We are judged upon our translation of the pain of the people, the things they really want to say but dare not say for fear of reprisal.

My first speech—for me as for hundreds of others who have entered this place before—is a matter of great importance. It will, I hope, demonstrate that I have a depth of feeling for the citizens of not only Queensland but also of our great country, Australia, in its entirety. It will also be for me a realisation of what a great honour it is to serve this state in this magnificent place.

I believe—in fact, I know—that all of those who embark upon their life of public service here do so filled with the magnitude of the task upon which they embark, driven also by the very best of intentions knowing that they are going to fix the state, the country and, with a bit of good fortune, the world to boot. Deep down we know that this is not reality; nonetheless, we sometimes move forward in the pursuit of our visions of Utopia without pausing for a moment to check our bearings, and frequently we miss the target.

I hope that I am able to express Pauline Hanson's One Nation vision of free and equal treatment for all Australians, accepting equal rights and equal responsibilities. We must recognise that our people are our most valuable resource. We must strengthen the roots of their existence by reinforcing traditional family values. Let us not be blinded by academic nonsense about how if it feels good then do it.

For too long now have we trodden the path of no values because values discriminate. Discrimination is okay. It is a valuable tool that allows society to judge between what it wants and what it does not want. To ban discrimination is a folly. Simply saying I cannot say what I am saying is discrimination. Many of the ills of society might well be solved by the simple application of discrimination, that is, society policing itself and the use of peer pressure without the need for legislation. This is so often open to misinterpretation. We tend to forget, in our haste to simplify legal terminology, that in doing so we make the law more difficult to interpret.

I feel we need our political values and principles to be shared by the people we are supposed to represent. I believe all Australians have a deep concern about education, health, unemployment, crime, rural issues, the environment and general issues created, it seems, by political correctness.

I feel that the citizens of Queensland are no different from any other Australians in their desire to shift our concerns from the rights of the accused to those of the victim, whilst recognising the undisputed right of the accused to a fair hearing. We must continue along the path highlighted by another wiser state which recently introduced legislation increasing the rights of property residents and shopkeepers in connection with the protection of life and property, essentially amending the term 'use reasonable force to defend one's property' by removing the word 'reasonable'. What is reasonable? In Queensland it devolves down to what the ordinary person in the street thinks. What it also boils down to is that if you break the law you should not expect reasonable treatment. If you do not like the treatment you receive, do not commit the crime.

In the short time allotted to me it is not possible to address the many issues that concern the large number of people who feel that we in One Nation have something to contribute to the debate in this place. However, I will be brief in covering the basics of just a few of the issues.

One Nation feels very strongly in the areas of policing and law and order. We need to place more practical emphasis upon the practice of community policing, which has been much heralded along with problem oriented policing and several other catchcries of the year. Community policing is not a new concept—it has been around since Adam was a boy—but it has been manipulated by some with interests other than the cause of justice. You cannot claim to be returning policing to the community whilst at the same time indulging in the anti-community practice of clustering police stations. That may be a cost-saving exercise but it does little if anything to foster community involvement with local police. Clustering is efficient, perhaps, but not effective.

We rely upon the judgment of those with little contact with people of recent practical experience. In the main, advisory groups seem to be made up of office workers and other inexperienced but apparently qualified persons. When we ask the opinion of police, our replies frequently come from those who stand subjected to great, unseen pressure to reply as expected. If you want to find out how an assault victim feels, ask the victim, not the doctor.

Whilst our penalties must allow for some discretion in their application, we must nonetheless ensure that when a penalty of 10 years is passed, 10 years is served. That is truth in sentencing. Good behaviour might be rewarded with special privileges rather than early release. We do not want bitter in one end, and bitter out the other.

Whilst we accept the need to be vigilant for cases of abuse, we must be careful that we do not spare the rod to spoil the child. I know that many here would abhor the use of any physical force during the application of discipline, particularly when applied to children. However, physical discipline can and has been applied with love and justice without crossing the line that borders abuse. I consider that line similar to that which presently divides reasonable and unreasonable force when used in conjunction with self-defence. Not all violence is bad. At the end of the day, if parents are to be held responsible for their children's actions, then they must have the means at their disposal quite literally to enforce their will. Parents or primary care givers—and I refer to persons in school authority—must have true authority returned to them.

Regarding health issues, we feel that the emphasis should be on self-reliance. One Nation would support stronger moves towards user pays where this is practical. At the same time, we acknowledge the necessity for a safety net for the security of those less fortunate. We must never lose sight of the fact that health care does not stop on the outskirts of Brisbane. Strong incentives must be offered to health workers to move out to the bush to ensure the provision of equal standards of health care in rural areas. We believe that nursing training should be returned to hospitals, ensuring that qualified members of the profession do not hit the bedside armed with their degrees and good intentions but no patient contact experience.

Hospitals are better run along community lines, with close scrutiny on the word 'community'. We have an enormous bureaucracy in hospitals and in health generally where, indirectly, in some cases health decisions are made by lay people—not bad people but lay people nonetheless. Administrative and support staff can almost out reach medical staff.

Aged health care is a matter of particular concern. The Chinese, and Asians in general, revere their elderly. We tend to treat them as inconvenient and would rather house them in retirement villages or nursing homes than dare upset the daily balance of our social lives. I rather fancy that this is replicated to some extent in the provision of care, whether in the community or within the institutions of hospitals—the same applies. Aged health care requires particular skills that few of us possess. Specialist skills cost money which we find difficult to allocate in the appropriate areas.

To further the aims of self-reliance, One Nation fosters the hope that, where appropriate, funding might be increased for community programs such as Meals on Wheels, home help, community transport, community development, respite care and therapy, and many others. I have had the privilege to serve in some of those community organisations in the Beaudesert area in the past three years. With government support and a very liberal dose of volunteer services, it would considerably ease the

eventual burden on taxpayers if those services were encouraged to flourish. A problem in this area is that, even when taking into account the duty of care, we must ensure that we do not encumber volunteers with too many regulations and too much red tape, rendering volunteer tasks so difficult that we end up with no services at all.

Small business is the major employer and it is dying. Why? I believe that to a large degree the responsibility lies with our overwhelming affair with big business, particularly multinational companies that swallow up ordinary people in ordinary small businesses, taking the lion's share of their profits overseas. Do federal and state governments really believe that we govern? The reality is that money talks and the multinational companies have more of it than we do.

One Nation quite obviously acknowledges the need for international trade, but we must offer primary advantages to our own or we have no right to be here. Monopolies, it seems, are loosely watched, and by fair means or foul the big boys run the show. We must protect Australian businesses offering incentives for the development of new ideas and technology instead of forcing companies to go offshore. We glibly talk of buying Australian, but in reality it is hard to do so.

We think that a way of supporting small business and solving at least part of the unemployment problem might be to encourage the hiring of youth as apprentices with large government subsidies of perhaps 75 per cent in the first year, 50 per cent in year 2, reducing to 25 per cent in year 3. We need to look at long-term job prospects—not merely the juggling of figures, particularly on a seasonal basis, and the creation of much vaunted training courses, which in reality do not translate into jobs at the end; they just take people off the dole queue. Although it places additional burdens upon business, at this point I must acknowledge the efforts of government and the unions in achieving full-time status for people who would otherwise have been badly treated as contractors.

Education has been exploited by fad educationalists. There has been far too much government interference in an education system that has served us very well thus far. We seem to tinker with what works. I say: if it works, don't fix it. There are far too many courses at tertiary level of doubtful value—provided, to a large extent, at taxpayers' expense—and these contribute little to society.

We must also recognise that learning starts at home. Children should understand basics before starting school. Incentives might be offered, wherever possible—and, of course, there are always exceptions to the rule—for a parent or a primary care giver to stay at home during the formative years before school, assisting to create the strong foundations necessary to a child's future education. With further reference to our children, I have no doubt whatsoever that again, whilst there are always exceptions to every rule, our children are spending an unacceptable amount of time in alternative care, which in many cases is at taxpayers' expense through government subsidy. If you have children, as a general rule you should pay for them. We have children in care for sometimes 65 hours a week. Why have them?

Rural matters are a huge issue, but it is clear that whatever we are doing, it is either not enough, or it is wrong, or both. We cannot eat information technology and we cannot solve our problems by relying upon imports. We must encourage a strong comeback in the rural sector by, in some cases, regulation, or, in the case of the dairy industry, perhaps re-regulation, in order to achieve a viable balance between country and city. Water supply, transport and communication problems threaten the very fabric of our rural communities. The very idea that people should be taxed for collecting water from the sky makes one think that sometime in the not-too-distant future the bean counters might apply some user pays formula to the very air we breathe. Cities cannot absorb all the rural fall-out. We must help now.

I believe that farmers do recognise the need for conservation, but in this regard we have used a sledgehammer to crack a nut when we impose such fierce restrictions on the use of freehold land via the much-hated Vegetation Management Act. They do not want to degrade their land through mismanagement, and most would understand that farming methods change with time. We must help the farmers, not whip them.

When I originally asked for how long I was permitted to speak the first time, I was somewhat concerned with the reply. Of course, 20 minutes would never be enough to address the ills of the state. Perhaps I might start to wind up by saying that One Nation is driven, in my opinion, by honest, if not old-fashioned, values. These values have not lost their worth simply through the passage of time. We ask to be regarded as patriots, even if most in this place would not agree with how we demonstrate that.

I take this opportunity to thank a number of people who have helped in my campaign. To the volunteer workers who manned the booths, folded and delivered flyers I say thankyou, and most especially to Lynn and Harold Schultz. I arrived on their doorstep quite unknown, and they extended the hand of help and friendship to me. To the volunteer workers manning the phones, I say thankyou: your patience was a winner. To Pauline Hanson, I say: I thank you, Pauline. I am happy to share the tasks ahead.

Like most here, I would not have had the energy or even perhaps the will to continue to the end without the support of my darling wife of almost three decades, Maggie, who encouraged my ambition to serve the public beyond the Police Service, which I now hope to do even in some small way in this place. To Maggie I extend my thanks and again pledge my unwavering love. From the bottom of my heart I thank the people of Lockyer, who had sufficient faith in One Nation to return another member. I will try my best not to let you down.

I cannot pass on this opportunity to thank some government members, particularly the honourable member for Stafford, Mr Terry Sullivan, and the staff of this place, who have unstintingly helped new members from whichever party as well as the new Independents to settle in.

My life in the service has prepared me well with a fervent desire to further the course of justice. It gave me some insight into judging character and the ability to engage people with the will to confide and ask for help. Despite some disagreements with the modern face of policing, I will miss the life of assisting people at the coalface and making decisions on the spot which are cheerfully criticised months later with the benefit of hindsight. My son decided to ignore the grumbling complaints of his father, graduating from the New South Wales Police Academy just a few short months ago. I am very proud of his decision to continue serving the cause of justice. Despite my misgivings about child care, my daughter nonetheless has achieved her ambition and is about to qualify in that area. I congratulate her on persevering when, like her father, qualifications did not come easily.

The Queensland Police Service is chock full of young, eager people champing at the bit to take over from the previous generation. For as long as they are here, the service and, ultimately, the public will be in caring hands. May I take this opportunity of congratulating the present officer in charge of the Beaudesert Police Station, Sergeant Bill Sheehan, on his outstanding achievements in moulding a team of young officers who have been responsible for one of the best clear-up rates in south-east Queensland and, to boot, has earned not only the respect of his officers but also—and this is the jewel in his crown—the respect of the residents of the Beaudesert division.

Finally, I need to say that when I was a boy patriotism was something to be proud of, not something to be whispered about and despised. The internationalists would have us believe that there is something vaguely racist about national pride and that we must look to the bigger picture and not be isolationist. Let us be proud that we really have a great people of all races and religions. Let us look to our own backyard, ensuring that this is where we want our children and grandchildren to grow up. Let us once more teach our youth that it is good to be proud of our nation and to believe that it is better than anywhere else in the world, not on racial grounds but because we have the ability to recreate our once great way of life, which we will defend against all comers. We must look to our families. We must look to our work. We must look to our flag. We must face the people and say, 'We love the world, but this is our nation—One Nation.'
