



Speech by

ELISA ROBERTS

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

Hansard 14 October 2003

INDEPENDENTS

Miss ELISA ROBERTS (Gympie—Ind) (10.38 p.m.): As a member of parliament, I see my role as being the voice of the people who make up my electorate. I believe as an Independent I am in the enviable position of not being bound to a party and party policies which may or may not be in conflict with the general view of the electorate. Whilst I am not able to make the most of the support which comes from belonging to a party, particularly a major party, I am able to put the needs and desires of the people of my electorate both first and foremost.

It is unfortunate that current political processes have diminished the ability of the general public to have any real input into government policy making. I am confident that, since I was elected, the government has been made more aware of the requirements of the people of my electorate than ever before. As a result, this government has taken on those concerns in certain instances—that is, the employment of more senior medical staff at the Gympie Hospital and the reintroduction of some procedures such as thyroidectomies, just to name a few.

To do this adequately and fairly I need to know how people feel and think about the issues which concern them. Recently I initiated a random poll which was undertaken by a group of extremely dedicated volunteers. I thank them profusely for all the hard work they put in to ensure that I was able to gauge the views of my electorate.

Amongst the issues covered in the survey was that of the recently implemented ambulance levy. Some 69 per cent of Gympie voters are opposed to the power being cut off as a result of the non-payment of the levy. Some 94 per cent believe that the state government should reduce its spending on leisure activities by 25 per cent until all hospital waiting lists are reduced to less than two years. Some 92 per cent of the voters surveyed believe landowners should be adequately compensated for loss of rights.

These are just a few examples of questions which were put to my constituents. Whilst we hope to become more efficient at carrying out similar types of surveys, I see this as a tangible and proactive step forward in regard to true democracy for the people of my electorate. The reality is that no politician can please every single person within their electorate, but if the majority of residents can be listened to and acknowledged in the policy making process then we can move closer to truly representing those who employed us to the honourable positions that we hold.