



Speech by

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LIBERAL PARTY PRESELECTION

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (12.06 p.m.): Under the old preselection rules of the Liberal Party, voting was easy: people simply looked up the arrival times of the overseas flights, allowed overseas visitors and voters time to clear customs, picked them up in a bus, there was a bit of driving time to a smoke-filled hall in the western suburbs, and the process started. In fact, it was often so streamlined that the Liberals were able to announce the results even before a vote had been cast.

Under the new rules, it is a bit trickier, but the rorts still persist. I refer to the Moggill preselection. The Moggill preselection will start at 8.30 a.m. on Saturday, 12 April this year. It will be held in the rural setting of the Karana Downs Golf Club. The venue and the timing of the preselection were determined by the Liberal Party chairman of the Ryan FEC. According to a copy of the FEC minutes that I have managed to obtain, the chairman is a Mr Galt. This would be unexceptional if not for the fact that Mr Galt is also a candidate for the preselection. So the Liberal Party candidate for preselection chose not only the timing but also the venue of the preselection to suit him and his supporters.

This is an ongoing theme for that great Liberal Party philosophy of individualism. It rivals the rort of the federal member for Fisher who, without warning, announced the time and date of a preselection that he was going to hold the next day. This was done to forestall any challengers.

These actions are clearly against the spirit of the new legislation that calls for transparency in the preselection process. A candidate for the preselection has a conflict of interest if he determines the time and the place of where the preselection is held. I call upon the State Electoral Commission to have a close look at this preselection in Moggill, given the extensive rorting that has been the low-water mark of Liberal Party politics in the western suburbs.

What about the impact of this on the rank and file members of the Liberal Party? In the Ryan preselection, they had to put up with the shameless ethnic branch stacking—the fly in, fly out preselection rorts where the only one who benefited was Qantas, which was given increased access to the road to profitability. But what about those faithful ladies who have manned the cake stalls and information booths in Ryan for years? If they want to get to Karana Downs in time to vote at 8.30 a.m., all the way out there on the Saturday morning, I fear they will have to catch a 5 p.m. bus on the Friday evening! In some more unfortunate circumstances, they might even have to camp out overnight just to secure a vote. I call on the lord mayor of Brisbane to come to the rescue of these otherwise disenfranchised Liberal Party stalwarts and put on a special bus on the Saturday morning that will arrive in time for them to vote for the Liberal Party candidate of their choice in Moggill.

But even if Mr Galt is not successful in using this device, then the fall-back for unsuccessful candidates is, as I have said to this House before, the performance agreement that all candidates for the Liberal Party have to sign. In a couple of months, the Liberal Party state executive will come along with a shonky piece of research and put down a candidate who does not belong to the faction of the ruling clique. We would think that the performance of Mr Galt already makes him unavailable to be a Liberal Party candidate, because there is a provision in this agreement that excludes a candidate if they bring the party into disrepute. Choosing the time and venue of your own preselection when you are a candidate should qualify you for disqualification.

Mr Robertson: I thought members who brought the Liberal Party into disrepute were nominated for the Senate!

Mr MICKEL: I could not dare comment on that. I see that as a low attack on my good friend Senator George Brandis. I heard the member for Caloundra interrupting me just before. She would not sign one of these in a fit, and that is why, reluctantly, she is leaving us at the next election.