



Speech by

Hon. Liddy Clark

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Hansard Thursday, 20 May 2004

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Hon. E.A. CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy) (11.49 a.m.): I would like to pay my respects to the traditional owners of this land where we gather in this extraordinarily magnificent building and the elders, past and present. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the great honour the voters of the electorate of Clayfield have bestowed on me in returning me as their elected representative for this, the 51st Parliament of Queensland. I am proud to accept this honour and will work tirelessly to represent all members of this diverse electorate. In such a marginal seat I am acutely aware that my representation must reflect the needs of all voters from all walks of life. I have always and will always continue to respect the diversity of my electorate and represent all without fear or favour.

In accepting the ministry for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, I have been doubly honoured and I state here, proudly and publicly, that I will work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Queensland to achieve positive outcomes in rural, remote and urban communities. I do not state this lightly and I know that the road ahead will be difficult and challenging. But as I have learned in the past few months, that road also has a lot of hope and there are many people of goodwill working towards the common goals of self-determination, empowerment of indigenous communities and celebration of the unique cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

My second term did not begin as I had imagined it would. Some in this House have enjoyed my distress and revelled in the media-fed madness that has taken away from the real issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Mr Speaker, there have been times when I have questioned what I am doing here, but let me assure you and the rest of the House that I am here to stay. My friends and supporters have never let me lose track of the big picture, have never doubted my integrity and have not let me wallow in self-pity. Every member of this House knows the journey here depends on the support and goodwill of many volunteers, party members, family and friends. I would like to pay tribute to the band of hardworking, dedicated and selfless people who supported and worked on my campaign. They know who they are and I thank them with all my heart.

My campaign director extraordinaire, Mr Stephen Keim, Denise and their family have always stood by my side and led the charge to victory. To my dear, dear friend Jeffrey, who arrived from Sydney to manage much of the campaign and gave so much more and to Bernard, my soul mate, my partner, my rock, thank you. To my family: mum, dad, Kay, Stephen and their families, thank you—oh, and cousin Kev. To Jane and Lana, my electorate staff during the campaign, I have no adequate words to thank them for their contribution. By working full time running the electorate office, fronting up to volunteer at street stalls, doorknocking, letterboxing, manning polling booths, coordinating volunteers and fundraising, I am indebted to them and their families for the time and support and friendship that they gave me so freely. To Cathy and Jack for their unyielding support, I thank them. Cathy now fronts the Clayfield electorate office, ably assisted by the fabulous Emma. I know that my constituents are safe in their hands.

Two very special people who provided much inspiration for this campaign were Joe and Marion Zago. Joe and Marion lived in Allen St, Hamilton, for many years and were tireless workers in many election campaigns. They are true Labor believers. I thank them for their love and support and their

inspiration that made us all work a little bit harder. To the lovely Clair and our hardworking Bernie, I say thank you. Pat and Veronica, who are always reliable and who are always there when needed, for their wisdom and experience I say thank you. It was fabulous to have Bernice around. To the whole team, we ran a fantastic race and I could not have got here without each and every one of them. But elections do not just happen. The work done by the returning officers and the ECQ is phenomenal. I would like to pay tribute to Mr Col Mifflin and his staff, the returning officer for the Clayfield electorate for many years, who has served as a fair and impartial officer with great integrity.

The Clayfield electorate is full of amazing people and I have been honoured to spend time with many of them. The spirit of my electorate is perhaps best embodied by the many and varied community groups and organisations who work tirelessly to benefit others. I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the work of these groups and organisations. They are too numerous to name individually, but as an example there is the Nundah Community Support Group, which manages the Nundah Community Centre, the Nundah Community Legal Service and the Northside Alliance Against Domestic Violence. They list among their objectives to contribute to the relief of poverty, sickness and other misfortune and to the promotion of the wellbeing of individuals, groups or communities who are disadvantaged and vulnerable either socially, physically, intellectually or emotionally. What more can I say? There is also the Woolloowin Community Centre, which is in its 21st year of operation. It is active in meeting the increasing needs of the community, is creative in stretching limited resources and is ably led by committed staff and volunteers. The Pinkenba Community Association, which is the evolution of BRATS, is continuing to represent the issues and concerns of one of the electorate's most special areas. We will fight the building of the detention centre. I love you Pinkenba!

Many welfare organisations also make a huge contribution to the residents in the electorate of Clayfield—and all of our electorates. Most struggle with limited resources and all of us in this House know the importance of advocating for those groups and supporting their efforts to provide relevant and timely services to those most in need. One of the unique programs in my electorate is the Alina Families Program, which is affiliated with Anglicare. The Alina Families Program works alongside families where one or both parents describe themselves as being slower at learning or as having difficulty understanding things straightaway. In recognising that these families can face many barriers in their lives, Alina staff work closely with them for as long as the family wants to address these barriers. I am totally in awe of the work of the Community Living Association and the Nundah Working Co-op, whose constituency are people with learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities. The work that they achieve is phenomenal. They are leaders in social tendering, and I acknowledge the Department of Transport and Main Roads for affording the co-op a contract. These sorts of partnerships are vital in moving forward and understanding the need for people to move from welfare to sustainable employment. I look forward to continued partnerships with government. Community and welfare workers are often the unsung heroes in our electorates and I salute them.

I also want to salute the Emergency Services workers of the Clayfield electorate, the Police Service and the other Public Service officers who work so cooperatively with their elected representatives to ensure that the community is well looked after. I have been privileged to meet and work with many officers of the Queensland government and our Emergency Services during my first term in office. Their dedication to their duties and to the community makes my job easier, and I want them to know they are valued and supported. I make special reference to the Hendra police officers who walk, bike and ride the beat in the Clayfield electorate. Inspector Flanagan is a fearless leader and a man of great integrity. I thank Senior Sergeant Chris Rutherford—and said he would not leave us—for his assistance, good humour and dedication to getting the job done. I wish him well in his new posting and am delighted to welcome Senior Sergeant Tony Graham to the station. I acknowledge in the House today the presence of Minister Tony McGrady, who was the Police Minister in the last term of the government. His support of the Hendra police officers in my electorate was well noted and I thank him very much for that.

I would also like to pay tribute to the wonderful schools in my electorate. I have just spent time, as we all have, with the schools in our electorates for Anzac Day. I was with the Pinkenba, Hamilton, Hendra and Eagle Junction state schools to commemorate Anzac Day. As always, I was impressed with these great kids and their teachers, as I am with the kids and teachers of the other 12 schools in the Clayfield electorate. I am also an honorary member of the Woolloowin Recorder Band, which is a position that I hold very dear. The secondary schools in the electorate are fantastic, and I acknowledge and congratulate the principals and teaching staff at Clayfield College, St Margaret's, St Rita's, Kedron State High School and Hendra Secondary College.

Those who know me know I am a great footy fan—go the Lions—but since serving in the Clayfield electorate my eyes have been opened to a much wider sporting world and to a community that has a great passion for diverse sporting pursuits. Just outside my electorate—in fact, in the Stafford electorate—is the Kedron all-women AFL team. Go girls! They are fantastic. I am the patron and soon to be the water girl. They are fabulous. I have also become quite an accomplished lawn bowler thanks to the welcome, encouragement and support that I have had from the many bowls clubs in the electorate. But by golly it

hurts your thighs! As we all know, these clubs provide an amazing service to our community. They provide an affordable and fun sport for all ages. They are important and accessible social as well as sporting gathering points. They have also become skilled marketers, negotiators and realists in securing their futures through amalgamations, fundraisers and recruitment drives. May I take this opportunity to congratulate the Clayfield Bowls Club on their recent merger with the Pine Rivers Memorial Bowls Club. Change is never easy and I wish the merger every success.

Racing, as we all know, is an important industry in Queensland. Clayfield is home to two important racetracks and everything that goes with it. We have Doomben and Ascot as well as Albion Park Paceway. These facilities provide enormous employment opportunities in the electorate. There are hard discussions to be had and hard decisions to be made about shaping the future of this important industry. I look forward to participating in the ongoing dialogue, as always.

An issue that continues to be at the forefront for the people in Woolloowin is the old Leckie Road corridor. I want to assure the residents that I will continue my advocacy on this issue on their behalf with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

No mention of Clayfield would be complete without the arts. This is of course something I am passionate about. The arts and culture are alive and vibrant both in Clayfield and amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. I firmly believe that artistic achievement has played a crucial role in our development. It is a path to more than entertainment. It can lead to a greater understanding, a deeper fulfilment and even a confrontation of our deepest fears and prejudices. Arts, entertainment and culture can embody the spirit of celebration, and, when the time of celebration is over, arts, entertainment and culture can become a reminder of that precious time.

As well as serving my electorate, I now have the privilege of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to improve their lives and celebrate their contribution to our state. Already as minister I have travelled to many areas of this great state. I have been to the cape, to the Torres Strait, to Townsville, to Palm Island, to Mount Isa—I love the gulf region—to Toowoomba and to Zillmere, Inala and Brisbane. I have listened to and heard the views and concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote and regional areas as well as in our urban areas. I have discussed the alcohol management plans, homelessness, substance abuse and other vital issues, and I have had the honour of hearing stories about the past and viewing extraordinarily beautiful artworks and artefacts.

Mr McGrady: A hug from Janie.

Ms LIDDY CLARK: I take that interjection and I receive the hug. That is wonderful—Janie Karkadoo from Doomadgee. I am pleased now to have the opportunity to recognise the same unity and richness of spirit I find in the Clayfield electorate in the portfolio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. This is a wonderful opportunity for me and a new way forward.