



Speech by

Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard Wednesday, 23 May 2007

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (6.24 pm): I have listened to this debate tonight and the thing that struck me most about it is the utter hysteria, the utter confusion—

Mr Johnson: You go out there and tell those people what their future will be.

Ms NOLAN:—and the utter division between the Liberal and National parties.

Mr Johnson: They'll give you hysteria!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have already warned the member for Gregory. Under standing order 253, I now ask you to withdraw immediately from the chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member withdrew from the chamber.

Ms NOLAN: This debate is absolutely characterised by the utter hysteria and confusion of the National Party, the utter division between the Liberals, who have nothing to say, and the Nationals, and the utterly bereft nature of that side's intellectual position.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Can I indicate from the chair, and members of the opposition may not like me saying this, that it seems to me that every time a woman in this House—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Seeney: That is offensive.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am indicating to you that I would ask you to pay some respect to the member for Ipswich. I call the member for Ipswich.

Miss SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I personally find that offensive. I had Labor members interjecting on me before.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the member for Ipswich, and I stick with the claims that I just made.

Mr Seeney: They're outrageous. They're outrageous. They're absolutely outrageous.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Can I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his statements which are offensive to me as the chair. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I withdraw my statements. I ask you to withdraw the statements you made about me because I find them offensive. On behalf of the opposition, I find your claims utterly offensive, utterly wrong, and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Sit down please. I have asked you to withdraw and you have withdrawn. I call the member for Ipswich.

Ms NOLAN: The National Party tonight has given us two different positions. First, the Leader of the Opposition and his shadow minister have said, 'We're not opposed to amalgamations per se.' Like the

LGAQ, they say they acknowledge the need for reform including amalgamation in local government in Queensland. Further, however, we have heard the Leader of the Opposition arguing that this process is a profound attack on democracy which will lead to the destruction of regional Queensland, declining property prices and, as far as I can tell, the whole physical area of Noosa is going to disappear.

The opposition cannot have this both ways. The problem is that it has not even stepped up to the starting point. The National Party cannot even decide if it agrees that amalgamation is necessary or if it does not want it to happen at all. How can we have a debate when the National Party cannot even decide where it is at the beginning? The National Party has two different positions on whether or not amalgamation should happen at all. Beyond that we have heard a mountain of hysteria and ineptitude from that side of the House.

Similarly, we have heard a contradiction on this point. Yesterday we were told that local government councillors and mayors are not politicians; they are community minded representatives. But in half an hour we are going to be in here arguing on a private member's bill, which I will not go into in too much detail, but which maintains the right for local government politicians to take the next step to state politics. So these people who are not politicians should be able to change levels of government. Again, it is a fundamental contradiction in the position of the other side.

Mr HOBBS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is referring to a bill before the House and she should not be able to debate it.

Mr SPEAKER: I take the point of order. I would ask the member for Ipswich to steer clear of the bill before the House.

Ms NOLAN: I am already on to my next point, Mr Speaker. Similarly we have heard from those opposite that we have effectively got—and this is most offensive—blood on our hands and that people in outback Queensland will commit suicide. When people have rung up upset, those opposite have not calmed them down but have irresponsibly revved them up and played on their fears. That is what those opposite do.

Time expired.