



Speech by

Simon Finn

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

Hansard Thursday, 20 August 2009

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (6.02 pm): It is a privilege to stand in this parliament as a re-elected member to speak in reply to the Governor's address. Whilst it is now five months since the election earlier this year, I take this opportunity to place on the record the importance I place in the responsibility vested on me as a community representative. When I was first elected in 2004, the cohort entering the parliament in that year included the 1,000th person to be elected to this Assembly. There are not many Queenslanders who have the honour of representing their communities in this place.

The March election was fought on a battleground of who the people of Queensland trusted to manage our economy through tough times. A clear choice was offered between a Premier seeking a mandate to make tough decisions in the midst of a global economic crisis or an opposition leader who denied the existence of the crisis. It was an election fought on a jobs agenda, with a clear choice between taking the tough decisions to keep the massive infrastructure program going and protecting 120,000 jobs or cutting jobs across the public sector. And it was an election where a choice was made between massive spending commitments of the Liberal National Party or Labor's responsible spending commitments in tough economic times. It was a choice between responsibility and recklessness.

Mr Dempsey: Be nice.

Mr FINN: I take that interjection from the member for Bundaberg. Every time I stand up he says, 'Be nice.' I often ask him to be nice because he is such a nice fellow and it is incumbent on him to be nice, but I do not think it works coming back at me.

The campaign in Yeerongpilly was fought primarily on the macro issues of economic management and protecting jobs. The electorate I am proud to represent is a diverse mix in a relatively small area. Whilst largely an electorate made up of working families in the inner suburbs, there is a significant industrial zone in the suburbs of Salisbury and Rocklea, as well as some of the areas of Yeronga and Yeerongpilly. With manufacturing, warehousing, the service industry and Brisbane's fruit and vegetable market, the electorate of Yeerongpilly is a jobs engine room of southern Brisbane. Protecting and creating jobs was front and centre of the deliberations of voters in the electorate.

The social mix and proximity of low- and semi-skilled workforces make training and education opportunities a critical concern for local people. There are major training organisations in the area, including the Construction Training Centre, Electro Group and Yeronga TAFE, along with state and non-state sector schools. Support for training programs for the jobs of the future and commitments to working with the federal government to roll out the national stimulus plan of Building the Education Revolution were key issues in how local residents determined their vote.

Major transport routes dissect the Yeerongpilly electorate, and the newly created electoral boundaries determined the Brisbane urban corridor as the southern boundary of the electorate. The announcement of the Rudd government to fund the upgrade of the Mains-Kessels intersection was a key aspect of the 2007 federal electoral victory of Labor in the electorate of Moreton. During the state campaign the LNP announced that it would halt the Rudd upgrade plan and local residents were faced with a choice of a state government that would work with Kevin Rudd to tackle congestion or an LNP plan to create further local traffic chaos. The record of Labor along the Brisbane urban corridor of acting to reduce

truck numbers through camera technology was recognised by local residents as delivering real congestion-busting outcomes, not just the rhetoric and fear campaigns we have become used to from local Liberal Party members and candidates.

Residents living around the Toohey Forest in Tarragindi and Moorooka have long been concerned to protect the special urban green environment they live amongst. Not only does this forest area, along with the Oxley Common, contribute to the green lung capacity across Brisbane; it is critical to the local area as it exists alongside an industrial area and contributes to the amenity of these suburbs. The promise of the LNP to open up state forest parks to trail bike riders without identifying which parks would be affected was a major concern for local people. I was pleased when the LNP were forced to rule out the Toohey Forest trail bike park following my campaign, but the fact that it was not ruled out when the plan was announced shows how out of touch they are with urban Brisbane.

On a micro level, the campaign in Yeerongpilly was a choice between a positive campaign of delivering locally and a commitment to make tough decisions to protect local jobs or the LNP campaign of scare and fear. I have spoken before in this place of the attack on the Yeronga State High School and the community scare campaign claiming the school was to be closed. This was a disgraceful campaign which had little more effect than reducing community confidence in a school that delivers a strong academic program and educates our young people well in preparation for their future careers.

It was pleasing that local residents were able to wade their way through the information bombardment of the local campaign and reject the fearmongering and personal vilification that came with the Liberal National campaign. The micro lesson of this campaign is that voters in Yeerongpilly will not be swayed by smear or lack of substance and will evaluate people striving to represent the local area on their record, their plan and their commitment to serving the community with honesty and respect.

There were several people who made my success possible, including local branch members, supporters, trade union members, friends and family. It would not have been possible to undertake the huge number of tasks required in an election campaign without the great support I received from this group of people. Five months on, I am concerned that I will not recognise some if I try to list them all, but I do particularly want to acknowledge my campaign team of Cameron, Rod, Sasha, Craig, Peter and Bronwyn, Ken, Norm, Bruce, David, Greg and Lee, and others who contributed to that campaign team. I thank Robin and Nicole, who support me so well and are very much part of my extended family. I thank Councillor Steve Griffiths, who gave me good support during the campaign. He is a highly regarded local representative within my local electorate.

I thank my family, who travelled from Melbourne and worked tirelessly on my campaign. My father letterboxed day after day after day, and my mother and sister fed that broader extended family who work for all of us on election day. I particularly acknowledge the support of two trade unions—the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division. Without the support of those trade unions it would have been difficult for me to stay grounded in my campaign.

I value and appreciate the commitment of all of those people who supported both me personally and the party generally. I genuinely seek their understanding as we make the tough decisions through this term of government to chart the course back to economic prosperity, and I seek their respect for the efforts to deliver good government to the people of Yeerongpilly and across Queensland.