



Speech by

Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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VOTING SYSTEM

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (6.05 pm): At the outset I say that tonight what this is all about has been revealed. The Queensland public has been through 18 years of experimental voting systems and we have found out tonight, revealed by the member for Murrumba, that this has been a trial period. If we can add anything tonight, it would be that this has been one of the longest trial systems I have seen in Queensland.

The hypocrisy of this long-term Labor government is outstanding. Can members on this side of the House remember the *Integrity and accountability in Queensland* green paper? Yes, they can, I am sure. Its overview states—

A civil society depends on public trust in its democratic institutions. Good governance is a prerequisite of good government. A critical issue in good governance is ensuring the integrity of the key participants.

I submit that key participants in this experiment would be the government and, of course, the opposition. This motion goes to the heart of integrity and accountability and we have seen a lack of these from this lazy, out-of-touch, toxic Labor government. In 2009 we saw a Premier who would say anything to get back into power. Now, in 2010, we see a Premier who will do anything to get back into power.

Given the recent federal election results in Queensland and the current polling trend, Labor is trying to change the rules and the game and sneak back into office on the back of a Green preferences deal at the next election. The voting method for state elections in Queensland was changed in 1992 by none other than the Labor government. Why? Because it saw political opportunity in doing so. I can hear them in caucus now: ‘Folks, it’s not looking too good this next election, so let’s change the voting system to our benefit.’

A study of the history of recent state elections indicates the success of the ‘Just Vote 1’ strategy employed by Peter Beattie at the various elections. At the last federal election in August this year, the LNP recorded a two-party preferred swing to it of some 5.58 per cent. The final statistics on the two-party preferred vote were: the LNP, 55.14 per cent; Labor, 44.86 per cent. On the primary vote, the LNP received 47.42 per cent across Queensland as opposed to the Labor Party, which received just 33.58 per cent. Do members know what I put it down to? The unpopularity and disapproval rating of the Premier who sits on the other side of the House. It is because of that disapproval rating that we are now having this debate. I can imagine the scene in caucus. I know that the Premier does not have many supporters on the government side, apart from possibly the member for Everton. I can imagine the Premier standing up in caucus and saying, ‘Look, I know you want to get rid of me. Attorney-General Dick, I know you want the job, but I am going to pull a rabbit out of a hat. Do you know what it is? We are going to change the voting system. So then we can get members such as the member for Everton just over the line on a dodgy preference deal with the Greens.’

Of the 197,000 Queenslanders who voted for the Greens at the federal election, 75 per cent of those preferences went to Labor. This was a significant factor in Labor reaching its tally of 44.86 per cent—

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Is it any wonder that we are having this debate? A report in today’s *Courier-Mail* states—

The Premier yesterday revealed she had asked Attorney-General Cameron Dick to assess whether confusion over different voting systems was driving a growing number of informal votes.

Those opposite are looking at this because they are worried. I will tell members who is worried. The members for Chatsworth, Everton, Broadwater, Cook, Barron River, Toowoomba North, Whitsunday, Southport, Townsville, Springwood, Cairns, Mansfield, Ferny Grove, Pine Rivers, Kallangur, Mount Ommaney, Burleigh, Pumicestone, Mount Coot-tha and Redcliffe would be teetering just on the edge. Some 19 to 20 seats would change hands on the basis of figures taken with a mandatory preferential system. It would be far worse for the Labor Party with the optional preferential voting system. It is no wonder they are toying with this idea.

The opposition's motion is for bipartisan support. If we are fundamentally changing a voting system and pattern in Queensland, why not do it democratically and with the support of the government and the opposition? That is all this approach is saying. It is saying, 'We are happy to talk to you about it, but let us do it for the sake of democracy with a bipartisan approach.' The Premier says, 'Rig the elections—it is not rigged when you are just changing the system.' That is exactly what those opposite are doing here. They are going to change the system to help them at the ballot box. The Attorney-General says that they change their position on bills to suit their agenda. That is precisely what the government is doing here.

(Time expired)