

**Wednesday 17 June 1998**  
**Legislative Council**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - I will call the honourable member for Macquarie and I will remind honourable members that the custom and practice of this House is that on the honourable member's first speech he is heard in silence and without interjection. The honourable member for Macquarie.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

**Mr ANDERSON** (Macquarie - Inaugural) - Mr President, I would like to thank you and the members of the Chamber for the warm introduction I have received in this House. With the help and guidance I am receiving from my new colleagues I have every confidence of being able to forge a close working relationship with all the members, which will greatly assist me in representing the people of Macquarie.

I would like to congratulate the members for Buckingham and South Esk on their wins. I would also like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mr George Shaw, and wish him well in retirement. Mr Shaw became an institution in Macquarie because for over 30 years he and his wife, Joyce, dedicated themselves to working on behalf of the people they represented. It is a record of tireless and dedicated services that sets a benchmark for all politicians to follow.

Mr President, in my first speech I would like to thank my wife, Cynthia, my daughters, Amanda and Learnda, for their work, their dedication and trust in me before and during the campaign. We are a very close family and my venture into politics has been very much a family affair. I would also like to thank my campaign manager, Mr Max Burr, for his efforts and also his wise advice. There were also many others who helped me but too numerous to name, however I would like to express my thanks to all the people who have helped me into this House. I give my assurance to all of them that I am now dedicated to working to the very best of my ability to represent the people of Macquarie and trying to improve opportunities for everyone in Tasmania. I would also like to reinforce that I am totally independent, I have no connections or association with any political party or political group. I intend to exercise my own judgment and independence which will be based on commonsense and aimed at the best result for the Tasmanian people.

The motion moved by the honourable member for Emu Bay is one of extreme importance for Tasmania. It expresses the determination of this Chamber to cooperate with the Government to bring about new economic activities which in turn will create jobs and opportunities for Tasmania. I am sure we are all very conscious of the depressed economic conditions in the State, and the loss of morale and confidence being felt by people everywhere.

In recent times we have witnessed the closure of major plants, such as Coats Patons, Tioxide, and now the imminent closure of the pulpmill at Burnie. These are large employers of labour and attract prominent headlines, but there have been many other closures of small businesses and reduction in the work force that have not captured media attention. However, the cumulative effect is devastating to the economy of the State, and the living conditions, the morale and the future opportunities for people throughout Tasmania.

I want to use my role to turn these circumstances around. I want our kids to feel they have a future in Tasmania and to plan their lives on the basis that their careers and work opportunities are secure in this State. I do not want our kids leaving for mainland States because there is no work in Tasmania. I want middle-aged and older people to feel secure in the circumstances that prevail here.

Mr President, we must learn lessons from mistakes made in the past. The prospect of magnesite mining and downstream magnesium processing is the best news this State has had for some time. Magnesium metal is very much sought after throughout the world, and prospects for new trade opportunities and new industrial activities are extremely good. The estimated capital cost of the project is more than \$700 million for a magnesite mine and metal processing facilities, producing 90 000 tonnes of magnesium per annum. The lightweight properties and suitability for castings, being magnesium, is the key to reducing overweight vehicles. This in turn has the effect of reducing fuel emissions which is a positive move towards our environment.

We must not waste this opportunity as we did with the Wesley Vale project. Wesley Vale gave us the opportunity to have a state-of-the-art pulpmill that would have provided downstream processing for our timber products, but a noisy and irrational environmental movement, coupled with political opportunism by the Federal Labor Government, prevented that project from going ahead. Now we are seeing an old and outdated pulpmill at Burnie closing down with pulp to be imported from overseas. All our timber resources are exported for processing. Such madness cannot continue. This time we cannot allow the environmental movement to override the desperate needs of the Tasmanian people. We need jobs and we need them urgently.

Almost one-third of Tasmania is locked up by some form of land protection through legislation; that is more than enough to protect the heritage and wilderness values of this State. The rest of our land areas must now be made available for development and job creation and, Mr President, I support the timber industry; it is in the area where I live. I am a foundation member of the Forest Protection Society in the Liffey-Bracknell area; it is a renewable resource and I am very proud of it. It is the future of Tasmania also.

During the election campaign, I was constantly made aware of the levels of youth unemployment and the social problems that flow from unoccupied and frustrated young people: the disregard of law and order by young people, the disrespect shown to others in the community and increasing use of violence by youngsters. The increasing use of drugs and the alarming rate of youth suicide all point to a generation of young people who are frustrated and lack hope for the future. I believe we now have an obligation to give the youth of our State some hope for the future and a belief that our generation is capable of planning our affairs in a way that will give them confidence and a sense of wellbeing.

I believe Tasmania has a huge potential resource and we have a well educated and resourceful population but we cannot allow the potential of this State to be undermined by a noisy minority whose agenda does not appear to be aimed at the best interests of the Tasmanian people. If we at the political level allow ourselves to be again misled by political opportunism, we will deserve all the condemnation that can be heaped on us by the youth of this State. Magnesite mining must be protected.

Mr President, I am delighted to take my place in this Chamber and I trust that, with the help of yourself and all my colleagues, I will be able to make a positive contribution to the people of Macquarie and to the future of Tasmania. Mr President, I support this motion.

**Members** - Hear, hear.