



Elise Archer MP

House of Assembly

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Electorate: Denison

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### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

**Ms ARCHER** (Denison - Inaugural) - Mr Speaker, this is the first, and no doubt, last time I will be afforded the privilege of no interjections, something that I was certainly not accustomed to in my former elected role on Hobart City Council.

I would firstly like to place on record my sincere thanks to all the staff at Parliament House for being so welcoming in recent weeks since I was elected to this House. I also wish to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your re-election to the position of Speaker of the House and I also wish to congratulate all members who have been re-elected and particularly those who are newly elected.

I can finally and now formally thank everyone who assisted with or contributed to my election campaign. These people, both within and outside the party, have become some of my closest friends and supporters over the last six years of campaigning. I would particularly like to acknowledge Michaela, Roger, Mike, Trent, James, Graham and Chris - members of the Liberal Party and the Young Liberals. In addition, I would like to generally thank all my friends and colleagues and the business support I have received during my time as an alderman on Hobart City Council and during my election campaign.

I must, however, single out Dale Archer, my campaign manager who is also my husband of almost 10 years. He has been incredibly supportive of my long-held ambition to help and represent others in the community both in an elected and a non-elected capacity. He understands what motivates me and how determined I can be regarding issues that concern me. Political life can take an immense toll on those around us, particularly our loved ones, who can at times feel the impact of unwanted attention themselves. This is always regrettable, particularly when it is unwarranted, factually incorrect, mischievous or even Machiavellian. However, I am fortunate that my husband is incredibly supportive and a continual source of love and strength. Having served in a public role himself as State President of the Liberal Party in Tasmania for three years, and one year prior to that as honorary State Treasurer, he knows only too well the sometimes less

positive aspects of public life. Fortunately there are more positive opportunities that public life presents.

I have met some wonderful people in the last few years, and for that I am truly grateful; however, if our family members are no longer serving in a public role, then I severely question whether they should be the subject of public interest, particularly when it concerns factually incorrect and uncorroborated allegations made for political opportunism. I also wish to acknowledge my mother, Shirley Nylander, who is also here today and who previously worked at Parliament House as a personal assistant to a number of ministers when I was in primary school. It may come as some surprise to those sitting opposite me in this Chamber that my mother actually worked for the other side.

*Members laughing.*

**Mr SPEAKER** - I was here, I can attest to that.

**Ms ARCHER** - You were, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** - It is no surprise to me at all.

**Ms ARCHER** - In fact, walking into 10 Murray Street the week after I was elected to get some much needed IT assistance caused many childhood memories of meeting my mother at her workplace after school finished, to resurface. My mother has always been supportive of my goals and ambitions. She made significant sacrifices to ensure that I had the opportunity she never had to complete my higher and tertiary education. She has always been there for me during the highs and lows, the victories and defeats, and especially lending a considerable hand during my election campaigns.

Indeed, she is now one of my biggest supporters and shares many of the same values, particularly after her time managing, owning and operating a number of small businesses, including one of the local watering holes, Knopwood's Retreat. I had a very interesting and what I regard as quite an exciting upbringing in my teens during the years my parents owned and operated Knopwood's. I met some colourful characters from all walks of life, some of whom are now very well known international artists who will remain nameless, and it may come as no surprise to some here that other regulars included many politicians, who will also remain nameless!

*Members laughing.*

**Mr SPEAKER** - I can't remember.

**Ms ARCHER** - It was in those earlier years that my sense of service and caring for others first developed. Back then, my family, consisting of two sisters and one brother, was also very close, and it disappoints me today that I have only half of my family here. I am fortunate to have had a number of positive role models, both professionally and personally. My mother and older brother, Dr Paul Nylander, are hardworking, honest and incredibly ethical people. Although my brother's significant academic and professional achievements deterred my early ambitions to study medicine on the basis that I could not possibly follow in his rather large footsteps, his high ethics and achievements taught me that if you study and work hard you will, or at least should, succeed. It is this high work and professional ethic that I both admire and will always try to emulate.

Gladly, I can already see the same work and study ethic coming out in the next generation in my family, particularly in my two eldest nieces, Ingrid and Olivia, at the risk of embarrassing them right now, the former of whom was not going to be able to be here today because she is studying for her first-year exams, but I notice she has appeared in the back of the Speaker's Reserve, so I thank her for making the effort to be here in the middle of her exams. Both have become outstanding young individuals due to their similarly positive role models in their parents. Unfortunately, not all our future adults have the same positive influences during their more impressionable years, which is something we should all aspire to redress.

I must also mention another positive influence, my mother-in-law. She raised three boys virtually on her own and did an outstanding job whilst also working full time. Having now retired, she still volunteers a considerable amount of her time for several local charities. I admire her dedication, selflessness and continuing contribution to society. I also admire women who worked and indeed still work, not through choice but out of necessity, and to have no family or other unpaid or paid support such as child care upon which to rely.

The dominant reason for my decision to firstly pursue a 17-year career in the law is my desire to help and assist others. Like many others who enter the law, I wanted to represent the vulnerable. Perhaps this is not always realistic or achievable, but it was and still is that motivation that has led me to this House to represent their interests in a much broader sense. I have already had the privilege of representing the people of Hobart as an alderman of Hobart City Council from 2007 until my resignation in April this year and, as a result, I am now able to concentrate on fully representing my constituents in the much larger electorate of Denison.

Mr Speaker, I must say that I am truly humbled by my election to the House of Assembly and feel very privileged to be in this Chamber today. I

sincerely thank the people of Denison for this opportunity to represent them. I felt it was appropriate for me to resign both my employment as a barrister and solicitor and as an alderman of Hobart City Council to fully concentrate on my electorate work and my shadow ministerial portfolios.

I also wish to acknowledge the work of the Hon. Michael Hodgman QC, the former Liberal member for Denison and, of course, former Her Majesty's shadow attorney-general, who retired at the end of the last Parliament after a career in both Federal and State politics spanning four decades. I am sure all members of this Parliament would agree that he is a truly remarkable person and advocate, and what better professional role model could a person have, indeed a lawyer have, than the ever-fearless and sometimes provocative Michael Hodgman! It is important to highlight that it was Michael Hodgman who encouraged me to first stand for Parliament in the 2006 State election, as did the now Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Will Hodgman, whom I graduated with at the University of Tasmania Law School.

I also wish to acknowledge the Hon. Sue Napier who retired at the end of the last Parliament after serving two decades in this House. She always showed dignity, respect and strength in this Chamber and was a tireless advocate for the vulnerable. I will endeavour to represent my constituents in the same selfless, caring, compassionate and committed manner, and I can only hope to emulate the length of service of both former members.

Mr Speaker, I am fortunate enough to have been surrounded by many people with high work and professional ethics. My first professional mentor helped shape my early legal career, not without differences of opinion, I might add, but he especially taught me about respect, tradition, procedure, ethics and definitely efficiency, although that is a trait which comes naturally to me and one to which I am sure my former and current colleagues will probably attest. I wish to thank David Gunson SC as an early mentor, employer and master - as was the appropriate term back then - for the opportunity to learn, in my opinion, from one of the best solicitors and barristers in Tasmania, and for his substantial influence on the early part of my professional career. It would be remiss of me not to also thank my immediate former employer, and especially the managing partner of Dobson, Mitchell and Allport, Andrew Walker, for his support over the last few years and for allowing me the flexibility of work hours in order to attend to my aldermanic duties and run my election campaigns. There was a lot of out-of-hours work to meet - or try to meet - my budget at work.

Like many others in this Chamber, I am a proud Tasmanian. My parents came to Tasmania from Western Australia some nine years before I was born. Although I am of Swedish descent, I was born in Launceston and

came to Hobart when I was five years of age, and my father worked for Australia Post. I have lived in Hobart or the greater Hobart area ever since. I did not come from a life of privilege, but one of opportunity. In fact my parents, and especially my mother, worked very hard to ensure that I had every opportunity to pursue whatever career I wanted. I have never actually wanted to live anywhere else but Tasmania. As some of my friends were leaving university to travel or work interstate or even overseas, I wanted to stay in Tasmania, not only for the lifestyle opportunities but also the professional opportunities.

Fortunately my theory at the time proved correct in that I could gain immense experience practising law in Tasmania in a period of five years as opposed to perhaps the interstate equivalent of approximately 20 years. After I had already acted as junior counsel on three major Supreme Court trials in my first five years, my interstate colleagues were still drafting lists of documents for discovery, which is definitely not a very exciting or challenging task, believe me.

Tasmania still has similar opportunities for many of our school, vocational and university graduates. However, we should never lose sight of the priority, being job creation, for these students to have a job to go to. To achieve this we need a stable business environment, sound business practices and sustainable economic development and growth. We must exploit opportunities for growth and thereby provide incentives to our youth to stay in Tasmania. However, with its smaller economy, lower average wage rates and reported poorer productivity performance, I recognise that Tasmania is vulnerable in this regard.

My current shadow ministerial portfolios cover the areas of community development, consumer protection and planning; these areas are relevant to both my profession and my past experiences. Community development, amongst other things, covers our ageing population, women, Aboriginal issues, multiculturalism and social inclusion. There is no doubt that Tasmania is by far a richer place because of our cultural diversity. More than 70 nationalities call Tasmania home. The University of Tasmania hosts more than 3 000 international students and each year our State welcomes humanitarian entrants or refugees from countries around the world.

I believe we have a proud reputation of welcoming migrants, refugees and international students to Tasmania. Our migrants, refugees and international students contribute to our society in so many ways, from introducing us to their own cultures and adding flavour and variety to our way of life, to bringing their skills and experiences to Tasmania. I also acknowledge that a multicultural society is not without its struggles. For migrants and refugees, moving to a new country can be very challenging. They might find our

culture different, find work or school difficult, and even have trouble with our language or our Australian sayings. Aside from the language barriers, there are other challenges, particularly for refugees, in terms of accessing affordable housing and employment and discrimination is often faced at that time. Indeed, I am also acutely aware that we have challenges in all of these areas for all Tasmanians.

Sadly, migrants, refugees and international students also face racist slurs. Tasmania as a whole must face up to the scourge of racism in our society. For 17 years I practised in the areas of antidiscrimination and employment law and I am aware that recently the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner conducted a survey on increasing racism and inciting hatred towards international students, migrants and refugees in Tasmania. It is of great shame to me, and no doubt to many others in this State, that this survey found that verbal abuse, physical assault and discrimination is rife in Tasmania, especially on our streets and in our public places. I strongly support a public campaign to stamp out racism in Tasmania and I believe that such a campaign should begin in our schools. In fact our children, who are our adults of tomorrow, need to know that discrimination in any form is unlawful. Our children need to know that racial intolerance and indeed any form of discrimination, whether it be on the grounds of age, gender, disability or particular areas of activity, is not legal in this country and will not be tolerated, so that they too can impart that knowledge to their own children.

I strongly believe in creating a Tasmania where people have rights and respect, regardless of their gender, age, abilities or disabilities, religious beliefs or nationality. As the shadow minister for community development and also member for Denison, I am gaining a further appreciation for the richness of diversity and experience we have here in Tasmania. Australia was built by migrants and the Australian culture is effectively a hybrid of the experiences and values that were brought here by those who left their homes to make a new life. I believe it must take a great deal of courage and perseverance to establish yourself and your family in a community that is geographically and culturally disparate to the one left behind, particularly when the community you move to is not always as welcoming as it should be.

In recent weeks, the media has been awash with stories of racially motivated violence and persecution. I believe for us to begin tackling this issue we should be reminding Tasmanians of the enormous contribution our migrants have made to our State. We must send a clear, consistent message that violence or persecution will not be tolerated in any circumstances. Members of parliament and other community leaders must be unequivocal about this



message and we should take every opportunity to celebrate our cultural diversity in order to be truly socially inclusive.

Similarly, from personal and professional experience, bullying in any form is simply unacceptable. It is unacceptable in the workplace and it is even more unacceptable at school, particularly if nothing is done about it. No child or, indeed, adult should suffer to the extent that they feel like taking their own life or, worse still, actually carry out such action because of someone else's misguided and ignorant belief that this sort of behaviour is acceptable.

For Tasmania to remain an attractive place in which to work and live, for the young and the ageing, community participation must be at the forefront. We must develop and maintain affordable housing initiatives and effective and accessible passenger transport, and promote health and wellbeing, community safety and opportunities for economic development. I believe that working more closely with local government to enhance services in these and other areas, truly partnering to make advances at the grassroots level, could achieve better outcomes for Tasmania. We do not need to reinvent the wheel and duplicate what is already happening in local communities and local government, but we do need to identify the gaps in service delivery and tackle them. Knowing what local councils and communities are already doing, consulting and genuinely partnering with them to enhance those services, could help free up the resources of government to tackle the bigger problems of access to health, education, housing and transport for all Tasmanians.

We must also listen to the needs and desires of small business and assist them where possible because they are the engine room of our economy. I am acutely aware that there is often unnecessary delay and impediments to business and development caused by the administration of 38 different planning schemes by 29 local councils across Tasmania. As shadow minister for planning, I would like to see the Liberal policy of a simplified and uniform residential planning code actually come to fruition in Tasmania. Additionally, we must also implement regional planning initiatives for better outcomes, not only in terms of planning assessments but also in the areas of population growth, affordable housing, transport and infrastructure. We need to develop a State coastal policy which includes a response to the burgeoning climate change challenges and a policy which provides leadership to local government in this regard.

As a former board member of a not-for-profit community transport organisation, I will always have an interest in community and passenger transport, and, in particular, alternative passenger transport, which featured as a significant issue in my election campaign. In Denison we have an

under-utilised transport corridor from the northern suburbs to Hobart in terms of rail transport, as well as an under-utilised Derwent River. It is my desire to see appropriate and proper feasibility studies completed to ensure these assets are used to create a number of integrated alternative passenger transport options.

Also critically important to my election, I believe, was work on local issues after hearing about concerns from people on their doorstep when doorknocking or at public or community meetings. As elected representatives we must always consider what is important to our constituents. After all, it is their interests we should always aim to represent. Their issues are very close to home, as they were in my election campaign, whether it be funding for a local soccer club, a community hall, a school-crossing-guard issue, disability and pram access to a pedestrian overpass, or a feasibility study for passenger rail.

Another area of interest to me is the arts, having had a keen interest when I was at school and then serving in a professional and voluntary capacity on some boards. These extra-curricula activities have provided some balance from the often heavy workload of an intense legal practice, not only in the areas of workplace relations and antidiscrimination law, as I said before, but also in personal injury cases, often dealing with people who have sustained severe injuries in the workplace or as a result of a motor vehicle accident. It is an immense responsibility to be entrusted with acting on behalf of someone who has sustained a life-altering disability and who is relying on you to negotiate a reasonable figure for their damages claim, particularly if they have little or no residual earning capacity.

Out of all the personal injuries cases I have dealt with over 17 years, acting for a party who has contracted mesothelioma or asbestosis has been an overwhelming responsibility. I have also acted for people who have sustained acquired brain injuries, paraplegia and quadriplegia and I therefore know the often severe and devastating impact a motor vehicle or work accident can have not only on someone's life but their family's as well. Perhaps even more difficult and onerous are fatal accident cases, particularly when acting for infant plaintiffs who have lost both parents. In my early career, I also practised in criminal law but crime does not pay, as they say. People often forget that a legal practice is also a business and taking on criminal cases alone does not unfortunately pay a legal firm's bills.

I expanded my practice to civil litigation and even further afield into workplace relations and antidiscrimination when it became apparent that many people injured at work are also often faced with unfair or unlawful termination of their employment. Therefore, although this work was often stressful and demanding, it was also very rewarding.



In conjunction with my work as an alderman, this did not leave much time for anything else. However, community service work and the pro bono part of my legal practice, acting for charitable and community organisations, was how I wished to spend some of my 'spare' time.

Key features of my election campaign and what motivated me to stand for Parliament was the overarching principle of ensuring transparency and accountability in government decision-making and due process. We must ensure that essential services which affect the cost of living, such as electricity and water and sewerage, remain affordable for all Tasmanians. Other key features of my campaign included investigating the economic and practical viability of alternative urban public transport options; maintaining high quality road infrastructure, with road safety being the absolute priority; delivering better health results with shorter hospital waiting lists; keeping people well and out of hospital; providing more services closer to home; spending the health dollar better, and ensuring a fairer Tasmania. We must also lift education standards and provide better support to teachers and students.

Recent media attention has focused on crime and antisocial behaviour in public places, particularly in Hobart. This comes at a time when it remains essential to also focus our attention on maximising opportunities for Hobart and its surrounding suburbs. This includes maintaining access to the waterfront, maintaining the working port of Hobart and identifying tourism opportunities. I believe strongly in the unique character of Hobart and its surrounding suburbs so that its liveability, which makes it such a wonderful place in which to work and live, can be enhanced by a blend of sensitive development and improved public infrastructure and facilities.

In particular, I strongly believe that there needs to be a comprehensive and cooperative approach between the State and local government. As an alderman of the Hobart City Council, I found the grass roots contact with people and local businesses a great aspect of that role and I do not think of myself as being Hobart-centric because of it. Indeed, my experience is to the contrary. I, like many others, have been increasingly concerned at the breakdown in ethics, accountability and transparency in government and I will do everything possible to restore the people's trust in their elected representatives.

Mr Speaker, we must have a fair, transparent and accountable government that is responsive to community needs. I believe that with my background and professional experience I can make a strong contribution to this Parliament. I also want to see a long-term commitment to affordable housing together with a consultative homelessness strategy and models of

youth housing to reconnect young people with education, training and work opportunities.

In developing strategies affecting our youth, we must look at a range of young Tasmanians including those from urban and rural communities, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and various socioeconomic groups. Looking at youth target groups such as young carers, young parents, young people with mental health illness and young people living with a disability will further enhance such strategies. It is desirable to have direct investment in the health and wellbeing of young people through food security, physical activities and harm minimisation to ensure a robust youth work force which in turn means a strong Tasmanian economy.

These are all big challenges that face this State and indeed all members of parliament, but being a member of parliament also means helping people to achieve their own goals. The Liberal objective is to establish and maintain a society in which individuals can develop in their own way, always subject to the rights of others. As a Liberal, to me equality means equality before the law and equality of opportunity, both of which are also fundamental human rights. As a female who has encountered some discrimination at times, whether it was intentional or not, I particularly want to ensure that all individuals are given equal opportunity to develop their own talents and to pursue their own aspirations.

For such a society to function there must be freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion, equality before the law and equality of opportunity. These are the hallmarks of a healthy democracy which calls on self-reliance, respect for individual moral and spiritual values, and for the development of a concept of service. In moulding these qualities, I also believe the role of the family is vital. I am proud of the fact that Liberal values aim to create a society in which individual economic freedom exists. As a Liberal, I recognise that free enterprise is the crucial factor in achieving economic progress, and acknowledge the importance of effective competition in preventing the growth of monopoly power and as the incentive to creativity and productivity.

I recognise the right of the Government to intervene to ensure effective economic development, to preserve and conserve the environment and its resources, to stimulate competition and to achieve equity whenever such intervention clearly is shown to be necessary. Individuals should have the right to pursue their own talents, to apply their initiative and creative skills, and to work in areas of their choice, but I also recognise the need to provide adequate social services to help those who cannot support themselves and to maintain vital health and education standards. In the provision of social

services we must always seek to maintain the dignity of the individual. It is this general philosophy that first drew me towards a career in the law and now as a Liberal member of parliament.

In closing, Mr Speaker, I was looking through some quotes from Margaret Thatcher - as all alpha females perhaps do from time to time -

*Members laughing.*

**Ms ARCHER** - Whether you agree with her politics or not, most can admire her sheer determination, strength and true grit in an era of politics dominated by men. I am sure a Thatcher quote my husband would select for me would be, 'I am extraordinarily patient provided I get my own way in the end', but I think my former employer may just select, 'I've got a woman's ability to stick to a job and get on with it when everyone else walks off and leaves it. If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman'.

**Mr Hidding** - Aha!

*Members laughing.*

**Ms ARCHER** - But I would have to prefer, 'I do not know anyone who has got to the top without hard work. That is the recipe. It will not always get you to the top, but should get you pretty near'.

**Members** - Hear, hear.