



Paul Harriss MP

House of Assembly

Date: 8 May 2014

Electorate: Franklin

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr HARRISS (Franklin - Minister for Resources - **Inaugural**) - Mr Deputy Speaker, a few years ago it was my considerable privilege to be in the Legislative Council when at that historic time Sue Smith was elected as the first female President. Just two days ago I had the similar honour and privilege to be in this place when our current Speaker was elected as the first female Speaker of this Parliament. I congratulate Madam Speaker on that election.

I also congratulate all members who returned to this place following the general election on 15 March this year. The people of your electorates have trust and faith in your capacity to represent them for another four years.

I extend to the member for Denison, Madeleine Ogilvie; the member for Bass, Sarah Courtney; the member for Braddon, Joan Rylah; and another member for Braddon, Roger Jaensch; and the member for Lyons, Guy Barnett, my congratulations on coming to this place for the first time following the support your electorates have given you and the expectation those people have placed in each of you. Congratulations also to the member for Lyons, David Llewellyn, who after many years in the service of the people of Lyons returns following a rather short break from this place. Well done, David, and welcome.

I observe the other warhorse of Lyons, Mr Polley, may not have been quite so vigorous supporting your campaign had he again been contesting the election, so he has added to your return here. I am sure you are very grateful for that, but he might not have been so vigorous had he been wishing to return.

My observation over the years has been that people who submit themselves to be considered for election do so with the intent to contribute to the greater good of our society, and I look forward to working with you all on that shared journey. I consider it a great honour to have been elected as a member for Franklin but it is a little different after having been in the Tasmanian Parliament for 18 years, albeit in a different place, to be now delivering an inaugural speech.

I wish to say thank you to the people of the Huon electorate for the trust they placed in me to be their representative for that 18 years on which I have just spoken. That experience and privilege gave me many opportunities to interact with and advocate for so many wonderful fellow Tasmanians, sometimes a roller-coaster ride of anticipation and other times people working against the odds to pursue a dream and achieve amazing things for their community. I have a view that our people are our greatest asset and I have seen much evidence of that over the last 18 years in the Parliament and the 13 years prior to that when I was a member of the Huon Valley Council.

I will reflect for a few moments on the twinning which this Parliament has with the nation of Samoa. I mention that in order to share with you an experience I had following the 2009 tsunami which tragically took the life of Tasmanian woman Maree Blacker, who was in Samoa at the time celebrating her fiftieth birthday, after being torn from the arms of her husband, prominent racehorse trainer John Blacker, who himself suffered broken bones. Not long after the tragedy of the tsunami, a delegation of members of this Parliament - Jim Wilkinson, Jacquie Petrusma, Vanessa Goodwin and accompanied by the then Deputy Clerk Peter Bennison and myself - visited Samoa to be with the amazingly resilient people of that country and to express our gratitude for the care and support their nation extended to the families of not only Mrs Blacker but also those of the four other Australians including, tragically, three little children who died in the tsunami.

Why do I mention this experience? To share with you the inspiration I felt from a people who rise above life's difficulties and rebuild not just infrastructure but who rebuild hope, communities and a way of life, and they look forward with optimism. I have reflected often upon that experience and have aligned it to my role representing the people here in Tasmania. I have been reminded of my good fortune of living in this state for all that it offers us if we approach each day with optimism and an intent to leave the canvas more brightly painted every day by our contribution.

I wish to reflect upon my time in the Legislative Council for just a few moments. My judgment is that the Legislative Council has rigorously held governments to account over time. I am unashamedly a supporter of bicameralism, as many Tasmanians are, and I have learnt much during that time. I have had the good fortune

to participate in many committees of inquiry that have made a difference to what we aspire to and achieve in this state.

One particular experience that has stuck with me over my journey in the Legislative Council was when the former premier, Paul Lennon, brought before the Parliament the proposal to transfer Aboriginal lands to the Aboriginal people. It was a powerful moment as the Chamber broke into applause upon passage of the bill - such is the connection of the Aboriginal people to the land. I recall at that time being very challenged with not the prospect of transferring land to my people but the circumstances under which the land might be managed. The premier at the time, Mr Lennon, knew I was challenged with that and we had a very private but upfront conversation. Mr Lennon gave me his assurance on certain matters and I was prepared to support the bill. I was motivated earlier that morning as I was wrestling with my challenge about the bill. The motivation that got me going that day was to reflect on the Gettysburg Address and one small part of it: 'The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.' That motivated me to consider my position to the passage of that bill. It was a very powerful moment in the history of not just the Legislative Council but for all of us who were there, to see the emotion of my people.

I have learnt much, I hope, in my participation in team sports over the years - coaching cricket, playing football - about team work. Team sports give an opportunity to develop that sense of camaraderie and team work. Much of this has helped shape my life in thinking about others, wanting to be part of a team, and also recognising that not one of us is always going to be right or be on top of our game. We always need others around us to help because at some stage in our lives we need assistance from others and the team concept, I hope, has stood me in good stead.

I have also been involved over a long time with the police and community youth clubs concept, and particularly the development of one in the Huon Valley, which is reaching out to, serving and helping young people, particularly at-risk youth, to get them back on the path when they stray whether it be during school times or in the community in general. Those clubs, including the club I am currently part of and the president, are supported by so many dedicated volunteers. Volunteers in this state, like everywhere else in Australia, add so much to the fabric of our communities and society.

I am a sixth-generation Tasmanian. I have five siblings and growing up on an apple farm at Lucaston in the Huon Valley was a great experience but neither my brother nor I had any intention of staying on the farm so when Dad came close to retiring age he sold the farm. That setting of being raised in, and having an opportunity to interact with, the rural environment I hope has taught me respect for the place we inhabit and to leave it a better place than when we start.

As part of this contribution I pay tribute to Megan Graham in the Huonville office that we have occupied for more than six years. Megan has been with me all that time and has provided very professional support, most often without my being there. The demands of being a member of parliament sometimes, and they never should overtake the opportunity and responsibility to represent the people and be in the electorate, mean inevitably we are away quite regularly. I thank Megan for all she has contributed in assisting me over that journey. I express my gratitude to John Barker, Peter McKay, Wendy Kennedy and Brent Daniels, who made sure my campaign to be elected to this place was well run and well structured. They kept me motivated and moving, and I am very grateful for their support. I will forever be grateful for the support of a lifelong friend of mine, Jimmy Bell, who just about took care of erecting every sign around the Huon and Channel areas of the electorate. Tony Mulder and Vanessa Goodwin likewise did the work on the eastern shore. I am very grateful for the assistance those people have provided. It is an arduous task; we all understand that and we need good people around us to help.

In addition to Jimmy Bell's contribution to my campaign, he was the motivating force to develop the PCYC club in the Huon and build a building which is now worth probably \$4 million and is probably the best PCYC in the state. You can understand that interacting with good people like that gives us such a great opportunity to express our gratitude for the contributions they make to our society and to our lives.

I will reflect for a moment on the amazing part of Tasmania that the Franklin electorate is. Rich in aquaculture, viticulture, fine food, agriculture, tourism, forestry, might I say, for 200 years. The general scenic beauty of the electorate being covered by a large coastline is something which can be celebrated. All our industries can co-exist. We need to be respectful for opportunities, for work to be obtained and retained by our people.

I will not go much further other than to reflect on another very significant contribution to the part of the world in which I live and which I now have the opportunity and privilege to continue representing in an expanded way. On Bruny Island, the Murrayfield Station, previously owned by the Hazell family, is now operated under the auspices of the Indigenous Land Corporation. Murrayfield Station is an iconic Tasmanian farming property on the island. It grows premium lamb and fine wool, respecting the biodiversity of Bruny Island in the larger sense, not just the farm itself, in conjunction with the Weetapooona Aboriginal Corporation, whose president, Rodney Dillon, recently contested the Legislative Council election. Bruce Michael manages the farm in a professional way. The only reason I mention it is, in one small snapshot, to highlight some of the great diversity in the electorate we

have the privilege to represent. Bruny Island often is forgotten by people who do not go there regularly, but those of us who do understand clearly the value of places like Murrayfield Station and the people who operate there because there is a youth program which feeds through Murrayfield Station. Bruce Michael and his family change lives because of their dedication to the greater good of society.

I recognise and thank my family for their contribution and support over the 18 years I have served in the Legislative Council and prior to that on the Huon Valley Council. My children Mel and Jacqueline, and Dean and Ange, and their spouses in the same order, Adam, Matt, Melinda and Daniel, and to my seven beautiful grandchildren, I am very grateful for their support during that journey. Here we go on another roller-coaster and I am assured of their support. I do not need to be assured of it; they show it, and I appreciate it. Likewise my parents, who never seek to be in the limelight or in the public eye but who quietly go about contributing to our community. I know they have always been very supportive and proud of me and the rest of their family. I appreciate their support and look forward to it in the future. I hope they will be with us for a long time yet.

I am grateful for the welcome I have received to this place and look forward to serving for a long time as part of the Hodgman Liberal Government. I express my gratitude to the Premier for the leadership which he has provided. I observed his leadership while he was in opposition. He has developed and built a united team. I was impressed with the unity of that team and am still impressed with it in its expanded role and nature now. I look forward to serving with you all and I thank you for your indulgence.

Members - Hear, hear