



Roger Jaensch MP

House of Assembly

Date: 7 May 2014

Electorate: Braddon

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Inaugural) - Madam Speaker, I join my parliamentary colleagues in congratulating you on your election as Speaker and I congratulate all members, newly elected and returned, on their election successes.

I congratulate and thank Will Hodgman and Jeremy Rockliff for their resounding win and for their patience with me as I made my decision to stand some months ago. I thank the Liberal Party for endorsing me as a candidate. I also thank my Braddon colleagues for their support in our Braddon Liberal Team campaign; I ask members here and guests look out for this BLT. You are going to be hearing a lot about it - the Braddon Liberal team. They have named a sandwich after us, so look out for more of that.

I also recognise fellow-Braddonite, Bryan Green, on his re-election and his accession to the position of Leader of the Labor Party.

In my career I have worked with and for elected members of all levels of government. I consider it a great privilege to join your ranks today and I do so with new respect for all people who put themselves forward for the scrutiny and judgment of their fellow citizens.

I thank all the residents of Braddon who helped me and voted for me in the recent election. I am particularly grateful because none of these people knew me at all before October 2000 when I arrived from Western Australia as the first CEO and chairman of the Cradle Coast Authority, the position from which I resigned six months ago when I was selected to run for Braddon. As a newcomer, I am deeply honoured that real Tasmanians have elected me to represent them in their parliament. Among them there are people who had never voted Liberal before, some who had never voted at all and so many whose lives are very different from mine with greater hardships than I have ever known. I take very seriously the responsibility of representing these people. I will not let them down.

Having arrived here in my late twenties, I have come to the realisation that I will not live long enough to ever be considered a local Tasmanian. Over

recent years I have begun to have feelings that are new to me and which I hope may be the beginnings of becoming truly Tasmanian.

Mr Hidding - Tell us more about that.

Members laughing.

Mr JAENSCH - I will. I am becoming suspicious of newcomers. I wince when they talk about how they did things back where they came from. I reserve my judgment and encourage them to reserve theirs until they have been here at least through the seasons. I watch to see if they develop a real affection for this place and its people and its ways, as I have, or if they are just here for a job or for a time. I have started to give people directions and refer to places in terms of landmarks that are not there any more. I told people to go past where the church used to be and turn left where the big tree burnt down. We still go shopping at Sam's in Wynyard, which has been West End and then IGA in the time since we have come here.

There is another phenomenon that I detect sometimes in Tasmanians, which I think I am beginning to understand as well. It is a feeling of intense pride and loyalty to the place where they live, combined with regret, frustration or anger that it cannot deliver all that they want or need. I met this phenomenon daily when I was doorknocking in my electorate - people who love Tasmania fiercely but hate the fact that they are out of work or cannot get their operation, or that their kids have left to find a job and may not come back, or that it costs so much to get here or to set up their small business. It is the anguish of the dyed-in-the-wool football supporter whose club is on a losing streak, but it is far more serious than that. It is more like unrequited love - a tension between what can be and what is.

This may sound a bit dramatic, but it is real and important in my electorate and it was a factor in the recent election, I am sure. It is the reason I chose 'Braddon can be Better' as my campaign slogan, because it is true. I am here because I agree with the people of Braddon. I cannot believe that a place with so much going for it can perform so poorly on so many measures for so long. I am here because people in my electorate love where they live and want it to be better, and they wanted to make someone responsible for making it happen. I am happy to share that responsibility.

To this end I enthusiastically support the policy platforms built by my longer serving colleagues before and during the election. I congratulate our Premier and ministers for their early swift action to bring about needed structural change in areas like the extension of regional high schools to year 12, the call for new proposals for tourism projects in national parks and World Heritage areas, and new directions for the business objectives of TT-Line. I

also acknowledge Clint Walker, who is in the House today, for his efforts to secure that result on TT-Line.

I am also looking beyond these solutions to some of the longer-term issues that I think we have the opportunity, capacity and expectation to address. Some of these involve challenging the way we think of Tasmania as a state compared to other states, and how it is managed internally. I and others I have spoken to believe we must confront the reality of our circumstances of a small self-governing island population, the size of Gippsland and greater Geelong combined, with a similar economic profile, that bears the burden of maintaining a whole hospital system, schools, police, parliament and the full range of other essential government services that in other jurisdictions are supported by millions of taxpayers. We may have a smaller population to service but many of the fixed costs of running these statewide systems are similar to those of larger states without the economies of scale to offset them. I believe we must continually be open to new ideas about different ways of providing these services that are more in proportion with our capacity to pay for them and that guarantee Tasmanians a better standard of services, including in our options unique and innovative state and Federal funding arrangements and partnerships with other states.

At another level, Tasmania's state ownership of so many of its essential assets and utilities presents to us opportunities that might not exist in other states. Our state-owned energy, water, ports, rail and shipping enterprises operate under statutory and business structures that require them to deliver returns on the assets they control and conduct their business at arm's length from government. These same entities, however, together account for significant costs of doing business in Tasmania that are entirely within government control. Just as our government is committed to change its instruction to the TT-Line so as to generate a better economic benefit for Tasmania as a whole, so we should be open to innovation in the way we use our other government-owned entities to make Tasmania a more competitive place to do business.

We are also unique in that local government in Tasmania is still truly local compared to most other states. It is a core Liberal Party belief that decision-making powers should be decentralised and that local decisions should be made locally wherever they can. This approach echoes current thinking in community development and place-based approaches to preventive health, literacy and education retention, all areas where Tasmania has massive challenges to confront. I believe that if we did not have the representative, consultative and administrative capacities that councils currently offer their local communities, we would need to create something very much like them to do the same job.

On this basis I believe we should not waste time and money in protracted debates about the size and number of councils in Tasmania but rather discuss what they can contribute to meeting our bigger community development and state growth challenges at grassroots level where people live. This, combined with increased sharing of resource and service delivery across councils where scale economies exist, is a far more meaningful approach to local government reform than the simple game of numbers proposed by some.

I am proud to represent a region that makes and grows things. I am tired of economic commentary that classifies regional economies like ours that are dependent on resources and primary industries and manufacturing as somehow unsophisticated, vulnerable and ultimately doomed. I agree that most of the jobs our children and grandchildren will have will be different from those we know now. I accept that knowledge and technology-based industries are more nimble and less exposed to commodity and currency fluctuations than resourced-based industries, but sooner or later we all have to eat. Our food has to come from somewhere and we want it to be safe, environmentally benign, to look good and be nutritious.

Our latitude, landscapes and climate are some of the most productive and most suited to intensive agriculture in Australia. Various climate change projections for Tasmania highlight that our relative advantage as a cool-climate growing region will continue to improve as other areas experience greater climate variability and extremes. It makes sense for us to plan to continue to grow food and fibre into the future and to ensure that we have the means to do it sustainably and competitively. We are incredibly fortunate to have a Braddon farmer, Jeremy Rockliff, in the Primary Industries portfolio to lead this effort.

Furthermore, much of the new investment and growth in this sector in our region is taking very new and exciting forms. Robotic dairies, controlled environment berry and flower production and new approaches to modified atmosphere of packaging and fresh food preservation are shaping entirely new value chains through our traditional industries.

Our manufacturing firms are not immune from global trends and competition driven on costs of production and labour. Companies like Caterpillar Underground Mining are continually driving costs and waste out of their own operations and their supplier networks to keep their Tasmanian operations competitive in a global market. Some work has been lost to lower-cost countries, but the local suppliers who have specialised their operations and adopted modern, lean, advanced manufacturing principles are keeping work in Tasmania because they can compete on quality and other factors that the lower-cost operators cannot match. To me, our challenge is

not how to get out of our traditional industries but how to make them new again, and businesses born and based in Braddon are doing that as we speak.

I believe that we, as a state, should be doing what Caterpillar is doing as a company, to continuously drive waste and inefficiency out of those parts of the manufacturing and agri-food cost structure that are controlled or are able to be influenced by government, and it has started. I understand that these are the very issues that will be addressed through the Government's regulation reduction initiatives, the establishment of the department of state growth and the appointment of a coordinator-general.

The single highest priority issue raised with me by Braddon's growers and makers is the resolution of more fair and efficient Bass Strait freight arrangements and restoration of international shipping services, on which statements have already been made earlier today. In particular, our exporting manufacturers seek fairer treatment of northbound freight destined to be exported which is currently not covered by the Bass Strait Freight Equalisation Scheme which effectively creates a disincentive for export businesses to operate from Tasmania. I look forward to representing Braddon's businesses on these issues at every opportunity.

Tasmania is not like other states; it is a unique island needing its own approaches to public administration, economic and community development. I am proud to live here and to have been accepted by Tasmanians and entrusted with a role in this Parliament. I am proud to represent a region that still makes and grows things and has led the way in the evolution of the role of local government; that is home to so many resources that are increasingly rare and valuable in the world and that has demanded and chosen change to build a better future for itself.

The ideas and opinions I have presented here are not policy proposals but a reflection of my experience of my region of Tasmania and views I have gathered from many people in my time here. They are not the only ideas I hope to progress in my time in this role - I have hardly mentioned tourism or health promotion or the Tarkine - but they show the way I want to think about the challenges before us, the types of discussions I believe we need to have and the decisions that people elected all of us to make.

In closing, I thank all the people who have encouraged and mentored me and been my inspiration to enter politics, whether they know it or not. One of them is in the House today. I will not list all their names but I would like to pay particular respect to one who I will not be able to thank in person, the late Darryl Gerrity.

I thank all my friends, their friends and contacts who helped to raise my profile as a candidate in all corners of Braddon, with special thanks to Nigel Searle, Alf Mott, Richard Bovill and Mike Buckby. I thank my parents, Merv and Vauna, who travelled from Victoria to be here today. They gave me the tools and the opportunities to follow my interests and abilities without directing what they should be. I hope they see this as a good use of those gifts for which I will be forever grateful.

To my wife, Steph, who with me put our family's life on hold and our livelihood on the line and her own professional opportunities on the backburner again while we made this leap, thank you for sharing this journey with me. I could not and would not do it without you by my side. To my children, Lexie, Reuben and Charlotte, who sacrificed a whole week of school to be here, you have missed many holidays and weekends with me over the last six months. Thank you for being so patient while I talked with all those people. We will go fishing again soon.

Memories of my two grandfathers also visit me at a time like this and I hope they would approve if they could see and hear me today. One of them I could imagine raising a cold glass of beer and proposing a toast to good health, the other quietly reminding me to remember my upbringing. I will always remember and value my upbringing but also my new home of Braddon and the people who put me here to serve them.

Members - Hear, hear