



## Michael Shane Gard

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Electorate: Braddon

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**Mr GARD** (Braddon - Inaugural) - Mr Deputy Speaker, members opposite, my friends, colleagues and, of course, members of my extended family who are present today. I will begin by saying that it is indeed an honour and a privilege to be standing here for the first time to represent the people of Braddon. It has been a long-held ambition that I am purely happy to have achieved. I could not have succeeded without the love and tireless support and understanding of my wife, Cheryl, and the loyal support of the hundreds of people who have supported me since I first sought preselection in 1992.

Naturally, as a member of the Australian Labor Party - a proud member - those many supporters include my fellow party members who live in Braddon, and to them I extend my sincere appreciation. I must also mention the efforts of the Burnie, the Devonport and the AMC sub-branches of the Maritime Union of Australia, and the members of the combined unions employed at the former Associated Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd mill in Burnie who assisted me in both my attempts to enter the Parliament. I will always remember the camaraderie and friendships made during the 'battle of Burnie' in 1992. I was proud to have stood with those dedicated and committed workers on the picket lines, and to be referred to as a union thug by the Premier or anyone else will not diminish that pride one jot. Sadly, many of those staunch unionists have moved on and I have lost contact with them, but they still remain in my fondest memories. Men and women of their kind form the lifeblood of our community, and it should never be forgotten that it was a Liberal government which turned its back on them and supported a company intent on destroying workers' rights to union representation, and a fair share of the wealth they produced. It is ironic that now the company, albeit with a new owner, has joined with its workers to fight off the unfair dumping practices of foreign manufacturers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I come to this place with a very ordinary background. I am the eldest of six boys born to my parents who began their married life at a very young age, my father was just nineteen years old and my mother not yet eighteen. My mother had five children under the age of five by the time she was 22 years old, including twins. My father was a sawmill worker in the Huon valley and lived at Franklin where I was born. Except for a couple of years in the very early 1960s we lived in a housing commission home at Warrane where I went to school. I remember well what it was like growing up as a struggling working-class family of seven, then eight, when my youngest brother was born. A big day out for us was a trip to the Bellerive beach or blackberry picking at Cambridge. We never went hungry or shoeless, but I remember that times were tough for most of our neighbours and us, and haircuts were a bit of a worry too.

We were disciplined, but never cruelly, and we were taught by our parents to respect our elders and be honest in all things. That sort of background was responsible, Mr Deputy Speaker, for making me and all my brothers the people we are today and the same is true for the vast majority of my generation. I do not pine for the old days because I remember them as tough times, but I do pine for the days when children were innocent, when they respected each other and their elders; when they could go through school knowing that at the end of their studies they would have a good job; when the police only came to your house if someone died; and when you could leave home for the day and leave your doors unlocked and it did not matter. Society has changed in some ways for the better and in others for the worse. Somewhere along the line we have, in our mad race to material wealth, abandoned those old principles and I suspect we will never get them back.

Sadly I am estranged from my mother but regardless I thank her and my father for providing the foundations of who I am. The rest of the building blocks of Mike Gard developed in my life's experiences. I have been a painter, a printer, a soldier and a miner. I have worked in a dairy, a timber store, an orchard and backstage. I have dug ditches for the council and laboured on building sites. I have been a railway ganger on the Nullarbor Plain and a cab driver in Hobart. I have been a union organiser fighting the good fight on behalf of workers. I have been unemployed and destitute, married and divorced. I have stared death in the face not once, but three times in my life and survived. My political ideology was born of all these things, and all these experiences have prepared me for anything that may come in the future, but most importantly - and I repeat, most importantly - I know what it is like to struggle. I have been where thousands of Tasmanians are right now, and I want nothing more than to be able to use my experiences and knowledge to help them through their struggles. If I can achieve this then I believe my time in this place as their representative will have been worthwhile, and that is all any of us can ask.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I come now to our economic state. Sir, Tasmania is the *Marie Celeste* of Australia's economy. This State, like the ill-fated *Marie Celeste*, is drifting without direction on a sea of uncertainty with neither a competent crew nor a qualified captain. The minority Liberal Government, with the support of their partners, the Greens, is allowing the people of Tasmania to drift into oblivion. Those Tasmanians with foresight are saying, 'Enough', and are leaving in their droves. This is particularly true of our young people. For thirteen of the past fifteen years Tasmanians have endured a Liberal government, and for what? We now have the highest unemployment rate in the country and the lowest school retention rates. We have zero bordering on negative population growth. We are the highest taxed of all States. Our education system is a shambles, as is the health system from which the Premier has slashed \$23 million just last week, and I could go on.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask what is this absolutely inept Government's remedy for this appalling state of affairs? Let us see - a raffle; that is right - a raffle. Let us have a raffle of some land in Sandy Bay, 'Retirement Row'. Let us go to Queensland and convince all those retired people living in sunshine and contentment to sell up and come to Tassie and maybe win a block of land in a raffle. If it was not so pathetic it would be laughable. Here we have a situation where Tasmanians are leaving their State in their droves, leaving in their droves, leaving in their droves and moving to Queensland

and other places because of the depressing economic circumstances they face if they stay here where their kids have no future because there are no jobs, and the Government wants to use a raffle to get them back.

Is this a government that anyone can take seriously? Whilst the Premier and his ministers are swanning around all over the place at taxpayers' expense attempting to sell the State via a raffle, industries are shutting down and the jobs of increasingly desperate Tasmanians are disappearing at a rate not experienced since the Great Depression, a subject I will address in more detail shortly.

Of course the Premier's scintillating Directions statement is being peddled as a panacea for all our problems. The latest discovery on this uncharted voyage of the *Marie Celeste* is that if we sell our most valuable asset we will all be saved - that is right, flog off the HEC, the people's most valuable asset; do not worry about the job losses, do not worry about the profits going to foreign corporations, probably the French or US, do not worry about how to fund the long-term debt reduction strategies that were initiated by the last Labor Government. No, do not worry about any of these things, let us sell it and with a bit of luck and a fair breeze the *Marie Celeste* will not founder - Tasmania will not drown in a sea of despair.

For those opposite this speech may seem depressing and negative but the reality is that this Government is depressing, distressing and negative. It has absolutely nothing going for it. This Government does not care. It does not care about the elderly frail on the long hospital waiting list, it does not care about young unemployed people, it does not care about the alarming number of middle-aged unemployed family breadwinners made redundant in the name of economic rationalism and it does not care about the environment. It does not care about the increasing prevalence of crime in our communities or the increasing number of business failures in this State. Mr Deputy Speaker, it just plain does not care and the Tasmanian people know it.

Let us turn our attention to jobs. We all accept that Tasmania has the highest rate of unemployment in the country particularly amongst our young. In the 1992 State election campaign the Liberal Party went to the people with a promise of jobs, jobs, jobs and we all remember it well. Since that time the employment participation rate in Tasmania has fallen from a barely acceptable 61.8 per cent to a historically low 58 per cent and that is a tragedy. What does that say about the ability of this Government to govern Mr Deputy Speaker? In the past eighteen months alone 10 000 Tasmanians have lost their jobs because this Government has hopelessly lost its way.

To further highlight the dilemma we are in there are 50 000 Tasmanians, that is over 10 per cent of our population, living below the poverty line and that is a national disgrace. While Australia's economy is on the improve - a situation I might add that has come about as a result of the previous Federal Labor government policies - this State has continued on into an economic malaise. We have seen the closure recently of Tioxide, ACI Glass, Southern Aluminium, Stanley Tools, J and H Furniture, Sanitarium Foods, Greenville Enterprises and Citibank just to name a few.

To compound matters further the Federal Liberal government-proposed tariff cuts in the textile, clothing and footwear industry will cause further massive job losses in Tasmania and where is the Premier in all this - not even here to hear all this. Why are

he and his ministers not doing something about it? Mr Deputy Speaker, I will tell you why - they just do not have the answers. They are not leaders, they are not a shadow of a government. The Premier should be demanding an exemption for Tasmanian-based textile industries from any cuts in tariffs. The Tasmanian people, the people we all represent, have a right to no less. The dumping of foreign made coated paper in Australia threatens to wreck the industry in this country and again will place more pressure on Tasmanian jobs. Australian paper manufacturers are being forced to spend precious resources fighting the dumping of coated paper through the courts. Why is this Government not demanding that Mr Howard slap massive import duties on paper which is clearly being dumped here? In the US if this sort of thing happens it takes 21 days to stop it - 21 days in the US to stop this sort of practice. In Australia it takes up to six months.

A few weeks ago, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Burnie Dockers, who we all know well, played Port Power my team, at West Park in Burnie. A crowd of about 5 500 people turned up to watch the game. Imagine if you will for a minute that crowd of spectators and then imagine them lined up outside the CES at 49 Cattley Street, Burnie. That is the number of people whose jobs are threatened by the continued dumping of coated foreign paper in this country.

I am aware that the Premier and my Leader, Jim Bacon, have made a joint submission to the Australian Custom Service calling for action. One can only hope that any action taken will occur sooner rather than later otherwise the effect on the people of Braddon, the Premier's own electorate, will be devastating.

I was under the impression that this Government was pro business - all I can say is they have a funny way of showing it. The evidence of the past fifteen years shows that businesses have far more to fear from conservative governments than they ever had from progressive Labor governments.

I come now to my own electorate of Braddon where the story is even worse. With an unemployment rate of 13 per cent and about three times that for youth, things could hardly get worse. These figures do not take into account the number of people moving interstate to find work. Sir, the situation in Braddon is desperate. Over the past five years this is the gloomy picture which emerges - Edgell Birdseye, Ulverstone, now known as Simplot employment cut by half and sold to a private American owner. I know, because I was there. Works Tasmania, workers sacked and marched off the sites under security. Tioxide shut down with a loss of over 280 jobs. APPM Burnie, the work force cut by half and sold off. Australian Weaving Mills at Devonport, 280 jobs seriously under threat due to proposed tariff changes. Tascot Templeton at East Devonport, 30 per cent of the 220 mill work force under threat from the same proposed tariff changes. HEC jobs under threat from the proposed part sale which will probably go to a French or US corporation, and the list goes on.

I have not even touched on the small businesses which have been affected. I talk to many business people on the North-West coast, Mr Deputy Speaker, and they tell me that many of them have suffered drops as large as 30 per cent in turnover from last year. This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

Tasmanian business confidence continues to remain at an all-time low. The latest confirmation of this is the recent ABS employment figures which show a seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate of 11 per cent and a loss of 10 000 jobs in just over twelve months, over 2 500 in the Premier's own electorate. That is 10 000 fewer people with money to spend.

Also the current Bureau of Statistics Business Expectation Survey is confirmation of Tasmania lagging behind the rest of the country. The short-term forecast for sales of goods and services for the three months ended September 1997 shows an anticipated decline of 0.7 per cent. This compares with the national forecast of an increase of 0.7 per cent. An increase. State Treasury's own forecast is for continued flat employment and increases in unemployment. These figures are a sad indictment on the State of Tasmania's economy and this Government's inaction. They translate to reduced turnover, reduced profits and ultimately reduced employment prospects for Tasmanians. While the Government continues to do nothing except downsize, cut spending and sell off our assets, Tasmania's people and its small businesses will continue to suffer.

I was talking to a Devonport-based builder recently, who incidentally has always voted Liberal. He said to me that when he voted Liberal at the last State election, he really did expect that things would get better, but he, like thousands of others, sadly have been let down. He made the interesting suggestion that one of the quickest ways, in his view, to get the economy moving again would be to introduce a State-sponsored first home buyers scheme, which he believed would kick-start the building industry. He may or may not have been right. But these are the sort of initiatives that a pro-active, pro-business, pro-people government would implement if they were serious about building a secure future for all Tasmanians.

Another businessman who employs thirteen people told me that if he ran his business like this Government runs Tasmania he would be in gaol, because you cannot operate a business if you are insolvent, and he is another Liberal Party member who has had a gutful. He may misunderstand the economies of the place, but that is what people in the street are thinking.

I could give many other examples that show the lack of confidence that business in this State has in this Liberal-Green Government, but my time is limited.

It seems to me that the Premier is punishing the people of Braddon for electing him. Not only do the people of Braddon have a totally ineffectual Federal member, but also they are doubly burdened by having an equally ineffectual quartet of State Liberal representatives, one of whom does not even live in the electorate.

Just as the paper industry is an integral part of the Burnie economy, so too is the textile industry to Devonport and surrounds. When the car industry was threatened by tariff cuts, industry and political leaders in the home States of companies in that industry successfully lobbied Federal Industry Minister, John Moore to review the decisions affecting that industry. When are our State and Federal Liberal members going to get off their hands and demand the same deal for our textile industry?

Mr Deputy Speaker, if the two companies in Devonport have to close or even downsize their operations, the impact will be devastating for the people of Devonport. There are approximately 500 families who depend directly on these two companies for their livelihood. There are also the small businesses and contractors who derive a living from providing goods and services to them. That is \$13 million per annum just in wages lost to the Devonport economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to briefly talk about the Government's proposed part sale of the HEC, which I, and many others in the community, believe will eventually become a total sell-off. Having realised that after five years, his promise of 'jobs, jobs, jobs' has only resulted in fewer jobs, the Government invented a new slogan for the 1996 election campaign and that slogan was 'sell, sell, sell'. The difference this time is that they kept it secret. They now claim a mandate to sell our public assets. I remember during the campaign in 1995, I put out flyers warning that the Liberals in government would sell the HEC. Their response was that I was scaremongering, and that it would not be sold. Their recent actions prove that I was right and that they, the Liberals, cannot be trusted.

The Premier in his Directions statement talks about the need to reduce State debt, and to achieve this we must sell the Hydro. But before this is mentioned in the statement, a number of carrots are dangled before our eyes. For example, one of the initiatives the Premier proposes is to provide enough computers in schools for every student to have one - along those lines. Mr Deputy Speaker, this is an initiative that I support wholeheartedly. But, there is an unrevealed downside to this excellent proposal. That is, what happens when three years down the track, the hardware starts to break down or becomes redundant, and the software becomes irrelevant and out-dated? How will upgrades of this massive infrastructure investment be financed? And we all know that the software is what costs money with computers. The answer has to be that it cannot possibly be maintained at the cutting edge. What our kids in schools will end up with is 20 000 or so doorstops or 10 000 sets of bookends that glow in the dark.

The same scenario can be applied to any other project that might be funded out of the HEC sale and the same question must be asked. Mr Deputy Speaker, where will the continued funding come from to maintain these new projects? I suspect that in the absence of income-generating public assets, taxes will have to rise. In other words, the long-suffering Tasmanian taxpayer, who is already the highest taxed in the country, will be prevailed upon to subsidise the export of profits to whichever foreign corporation bought whatever part of the HEC the Government ended up selling.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on this issue, as on no other, the people are implacably opposed; just as implacably opposed as we in the Labor Party are. This Government is hopelessly out of touch with its electorate and cannot even convince many hard-nosed business people, some of whom I have spoken to in our community, of the supposed value to our State of selling this important income-generating and this historically important public asset.

I want now to address the serious issue of crime in our communities. It seems that lately every time I pick up one of our newspapers, the headlines contain grim news of another violent burglary which the media label in a sensationalist manner 'home

invasion'. In fact there have been two such attacks in Braddon in the past week. When is the Government going to do something about this problem? It is a disgrace that people no longer feel safe in their own homes. What are we coming to as a society when governments can stand by while elderly people are bashed in their homes; when businesses can be burgled and robbed; and when thugs and petty criminals can openly brag to their victims - and this is what happens - I have seen it happen, that the police cannot touch them.

It is Labor Party policy that when in government we will immediately increase police numbers to 1 100. Mr Deputy Speaker, if the Government wanted to get serious about the increasing incidence of crime, I am sure my colleagues would not mind if they pinched that policy and immediately put more police on the streets, particularly to target property crime and aggravated burglary.

I noted with some amusement that included in the Budget this year is provision for the establishment of a police call centre. Would this be like a Telstra call centre or the HEC call centre? Will people need to press 1 for murder, 2 for a robbery, 3 for a home invasion? Would they then get put in a queue while they watch their front door being bashed in by a baseball bat or shotgun-toting criminal ready to do them in? 'Sorry, all our operators are busy at the moment. However, your call has been placed in a queue. Thank you for calling Tasmania Police.'

*Members laughing.*

**Mr GARD** - Mr Deputy Speaker, the community's fear of becoming a victim to crime is no longer based on perceptions. It is firmly rooted in reality and the people are demanding action. They are rightly asking, 'Will I be next?' The Government must act as a matter of urgency and not just knee-jerk 'hang 'em high' reactive policies. The causes of crime must also be addressed as well, and urgently.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to return for a moment to issues which relate to the future of our children. Our children are our greatest assets. Everything we do should be for our children, be it the provision of schools, health care or safe roads. Education is absolutely the most important thing we can provide for our children. I remember a time many moons ago when Tasmanian schools and our education system generally were the envy of other States. Sadly this is not now the case and it is not a reflection on those dedicated teachers who give their all in sometimes difficult circumstances to provide guidance and a decent level of education to those we entrust into their care. If one takes the time to listen to the kids themselves, you discover a sense of hopelessness among them. They have real fears that on leaving school there will be no productive place in society for them and when our children lose hope, Mr Deputy Speaker, they lose interest and when they lose interest, our teachers lose motivation to teach at the cutting edge.

Schools become like cattleyards. Poke them, prod them, feed them the basics and move them on to make room for the next lot. For a community to prosper, there must exist hope and sadly hope is a commodity in short supply among our young people at the moment. Mr Deputy Speaker the recent ignorant, negative statements about the public school system made by Federal Minister Amanda Vanstone only serve to reinforce that feeling among our children. If we fail our children we have no future.

While it is a good thing to provide parents and children choice in education it should not be at the expense of learning the basics. Many business people I have spoken to during the past ten years have had one constant theme among them. That is that, the schools are not teaching children the things that are universally useful to industry and commerce. I agree that we should not regulate curricula to the point where we stifle creativity; however, we should, as parents and prospective employers, demand that at least our children can construct and spell a grammatically correct sentence, that they can calculate figures, that they can speak in a polite and literate manner and that they learn to respect each other. Listening to young people these days leaves the distinct impression that these basic building blocks of schooling have been long lost in the education system, much to the dismay of those who would employ them.

The really sad part is that the kids do not recognise this failing in themselves. Business and education must work cooperatively to make sure that when our children leave school as young adults they are as well prepared to enter productive adulthood as possible. It is a long way to the twenty-third century and common use of psychokinesis, if such a thing is ever possible. We just cannot wiggle our noses to make things happen. Our children, our grandchildren and we still have to use our hands and our minds to get things done, and for this we need a good education.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is an obscenity that school funding has got to the point that schools are now responsible for their own budgets. The focus has moved away from providing a first-class education to ensuring budgetary compliance. I know personally of schools that are unable to utilise some of their facilities because of budgetary constraints. Where the choice is one of keeping the property in good repair or providing much-needed educational tools often the schools cannot provide both, therefore depriving students of a complete educational environment.

I have also been made aware recently that teachers in some remote areas are forced to live in substandard accommodation, and I mean substandard - you would not put a dog in them, there are those dogs again - because the funds which would otherwise be utilised to upgrade accommodation are needed to provide the necessities of education for the kids at the particular school. Is it any wonder teaching morale is so low? This penny-pinching Government is depriving our children and those who are responsible for giving them an education of the right to a secure future. It is economic rationalism gone mad.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to make brief mention of a very serious problem that exists and is well-known to exist within the State health system. Over the past five years I have lost count of the number of people I have spoken to who have had to endure long hospital waiting lists; people who need new knees and hips and who suffer pain and inconvenience because of the delays. I know of one woman whose life was so affected by her ailment that she not only could not work at particular times but could not get out of bed to perform basic ablutions. This woman was allocated three different dates by her local hospital for the necessary procedure and each time it was cancelled. As of two months ago she was still waiting, with her latest allocated date set down for October. I wish her luck. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this Government's so-called reform of the health system is not working and is failing the basic needs of the community.



On other matters of health, I want to pay tribute to a man who has spent the past thirty years or more fighting for a cause he passionately believes in. I speak of my old friend, Jack Crawford, and some of you might know him, sometimes affectionately known as 'Fluoride Jack'. Jack is now in his 80s, 83 or 84, still living at home and still writing letters to the editor about the evils of fluoride in drinking water. Jack is a man of great principle and lives for the day when politicians of all persuasions finally reject the concept of enforced medication.

There is ample evidence that fluoride in water is harmful to human health. The evidence has been in the public domain since the 1950s, despite all efforts by the pedlars of this rotten chemical and their political apologists. It has only been very recently that the tobacco industry has finally accepted that smoking causes cancer and other debilitating diseases in humans. The evidence proving the negative effects of ingesting fluoride has been around a lot longer, but without the support of that part of the medical profession dealing in dentistry, those opposed to fluoride have remained the silenced majority. If only dentists were as active in their opposition to fluoride as medical doctors were and are to tobacco, then we would have been drinking healthy water decades ago.

I have read the minutes of the American Dental Association agenda at the annual conference of 1955 where much of that agenda was taken up with inventing ways to coerce local authorities in the US to add fluoride compounds to drinking water. Even then, the negative effects were known and here we are 40 plus years later, still captive to the huge influence and power of the multinational corporations, while our people are slowly being poisoned by the junk - that is all it is, it is junk. I expect that my dentist will get stuck into me and there will be a flood of criticism from the dental fraternity. All I can say is before they do they should be aware that I have read the scientific evidence, every word of it that I can find, I have read the case studies of victims of fluoride poisoning that has accumulated in the bones of our bodies, I have read of the duplicity of those professionals who have sold out their medical integrity over the past forty years in order to perpetuate the lie that taking away a person's right to choice of medication is good for them.

I salute Jack Crawford for having the courage to pit himself against the combined might of the chemical companies, compliant governments and the dental fraternity, a man who was dedicated enough to research the subject so comprehensively that no supporter of fluoride, whether they be dentists or industry representatives, has ever had the courage to publicly debate the issue with him for fear of being shown to be wrong - not one of them. Instead they resort to ridicule and personal attacks to support their fallacious arguments. Jack will probably go to his grave never knowing whether his half a lifetime campaign against fluoride will ever have its intended effect. If the rest of us live long enough, I for one will take great delight in saying sometime in the hopefully not too distant future, 'Well, Jack warned us but we ignored him'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, continuing on with health, advanced coronary-care facilities, oncology services, renal services and many other specialist services do not exist on the north-west coast. The excuse is always that we cannot afford them. On behalf of the people of the west and north-west coasts I ask, why not. Why not? The north-west coast has the same population as that which exists in Hobart and Launceston. Why is it that oncology patients must endure the discomfort and tiring trip - we are talking

about cancer patients here, for people who do not know what oncology means - to Launceston for treatment? Why is it that renal patients have to be so remote from the services they require, and why is it that people requiring these services must suffer the additional burden of being away from their families and loved ones in their time of greatest need? Again it comes down to economic rationalism. It has gone mad.

We pay our taxes for these services, and we pay the same taxes as you in Hobart and you in Launceston who have ready access to these life-preserving services. Why is one-third of our population, those living on the north-west and west coasts, denied the right to ready access to specialist health services? It is a question many people ask themselves, and they have every right to question the motives of a government which displays such an uncaring attitude to these issues. The news that the Budget contains cuts of \$23 million from health services is cold comfort to those I represent.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with your indulgence I will conclude with a little about myself. I was recently interviewed for a profile in a Tasmanian daily, and during that interview the journalist asked me what I hoped to achieve as a member of Parliament. I responded that it was a very difficult question to answer without sounding like a typical politician or sounding trite. After some thought I said to him that whatever I do as a representative of my electorate, and for however long I serve them, I hope that people feel I have done my best and in the process treated them fairly. I made the point that all we aspire to as a community is a fair go. Giving a fair go to elderly people whose only desire is to get a new hip or a knee so they can get about and enjoy their twilight years; giving a fair go to business so they can prosper and employ people; giving a fair go to people unable to fend for themselves and who need extended care or support in unemployment; giving a fair go to people in the bush who need special consideration in tough times; and giving a fair go to the community in providing decent levels of police protection against rising crime. That is what I aspire to, Mr Deputy Speaker. I look forward with great excitement to being a part of a government, a Labor government, which is committed to a sense of a fair go and equity and shows that commitment through the policies that form our manifesto, policies that are the result of exhaustive consultation with the community. Mr Deputy Speaker, a fair go is all any of us want, and it seems to me and many in the community that this Government is totally devoid of any sense of a fair go for the people.

I will conclude by saying this, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I direct this final thought to those members opposite and particularly the Premier: I do not just challenge you to call an early election. I dare you to call one. Call an election any time and give the people a chance to judge you. The sooner the better for all of us, and I do not care that I am only a new member; if I lose my seat that is bad luck, I do not care. Otherwise we might as well anchor the Goodyear blimp at the mouth of the Mersey River and paint the following words on it for the entire world to see: 'Lasciate ogno speranza voi ch'entrate'. For those who cannot understand my mangled Latin, translated it means 'Abandon hope all ye who enter here'.

**Members - Hear, hear.**