



Jacquie Petrusma MP

House of Assembly

Date: 10 June 2010

Electorate: Franklin

Address-in-Reply

Ms PETRUSMA (Franklin - Inaugural) - In speaking on the Address-in-Reply, I extend my congratulations to all members of the House of Assembly on their election on 20 March. I would sincerely also like to thank the people of Franklin. I am deeply honoured and humbled to be given the opportunity to represent the people of Franklin in this Parliament. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly and I intend to prove to my electorate that I am worthy of their support and their trust.

I know we all think our electorates are the best, but every day that I walk along Roches Beach I have to say that I think Franklin is the best!

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms PETRUSMA - As a resident of the eastern shore of Franklin, I am acutely aware of the issues that matter to voters on that side of the river. From campaigning and speaking to constituents since the election I am also very aware of the issues that concern the western shore, including the Channel area, Kingborough and the Huon Valley - issues such as roads, forestry, infrastructure, employment, education and health. Therefore I commit from the outset to being a hardworking member for all of the electorate of Franklin. Being a genuine listener as well as understanding the concerns and aspirations of my community is my promise.

While we all face challenges campaigning in that peculiar way that only Tasmanians would understand in our close-knit community, my greatest issue during the campaign - and this is absolutely no reflection on the esteemed previous member of parliament who actually happens to be here this afternoon - was convincing people that, even though my surname was Petrusma, I was not Hank Petrusma's wife or his daughter and that the only real estate that I have ever sold was my own home.

Members laughing.

Ms PETRUSMA - In fact the first 21 years of my life were spent growing up in Launceston where I attended Glen Dhu Primary School, Kings Meadows High School and Launceston Community College. My late father,

Barry Harper, was a Tasmanian State Cricket selector for many years as well as a football player and coach. Riverside Cricket Club has their clubrooms named after him, while Perth Football Club and Old Scotch Football Club play annually for the Barry Harper Cup. While I can claim only to have played football and cricket in the backyard, which I must say can be terrifying when you are a young child standing there holding a cricket bat and your father has the ability to bowl at what seems like a million miles an hour, football and cricket have both featured strongly in my life. So I was very pleased when my Leader asked me to be the shadow minister for sport and recreation.

During the campaign I had the pleasure of meeting many young future leaders with a vision of what Tasmanians can do. One that particularly impressed me was Ben Waterworth from Edge Radio. Ben is the driving force behind an innovative bid for Hobart to win the 2020 Olympic Games, a bid that has already achieved international notice. As Ben himself has stated, even if this very optimistic bid is not ultimately successful it is a fantastic way to promote Hobart on the international stage. As the shadow minister for sport and recreation, I give them my full support for the bid as well.

Members laughing.

Ms PETRUSMA - As a registered nurse I am passionate about fitness, sport and recreation. My goal is that no matter what the weather I have 40 minutes of outdoor exercise every day. Every Sunday afternoon our family head out for a walk to explore Tasmania's beautiful scenery. Every Saturday morning is spent cheering on my son and daughter as they play soccer during winter or cricket in summer. So I am passionate about children having the means to participate in sport outside of school. However, with almost 72 per cent of Tasmanians over the age of 15 currently not achieving the nationally recommended minimum physical exercise goals, thus contributing to our obesity rates and chronic health issues, I am passionate about examining ways to increase participation in daily exercise as well as sport.

As a registered nurse I want to see Tasmania as the place where people have access to a good health system with reduced waiting lists. I understand from first-hand experience the issues facing rural health provision in areas such as the Huon Valley. This came from working on King Island where it seemed that as soon as I stepped off the plane word got around the island that I was a registered nurse. I was soon working at the mine as the first aid security officer with not one but two ambulances to drive - one above ground and the other below ground. I was also doing the school immunisations, conducting the child health clinics, running the surgery two mornings a week while being on call at the District Hospital - all at the age of 22.

I also worked as a registered nurse for a few years in paediatrics, both at my training hospital - the Launceston General Hospital - and at the North West Regional Hospital. It was during this time that I witnessed first-hand the issues of child abuse as well as children and adolescents with mental health issues and nowhere appropriate to go. One image I have never forgotten was when I went to place a mercury thermometer under the arm of a young child who started screaming because she thought I was about to burn her with a cigarette. Another is of a child huddling and shaking in terror because he feared that I was going to whip him with a stethoscope that I held in my hand. These images are forever etched in my mind, thus I take my new responsibility as the shadow minister for children very seriously.

Mr Hidding - Hear, hear.

Ms PETRUSMA - I am passionate about ensuring that, if our children are going to be cared for in out-of-home care, they have the best care available. All of us in this House today need to ask ourselves: would we allow our own children to be cared for in that environment, because that should be the litmus test. If we do not honestly believe that the system truly places the safety and wellbeing of the child first, to the extent that we would be happy for our own children to be placed in foster care if something unforeseen happened to us, then we need to fix the underlying issues and not try to cover them up.

These children do not just need love, care, warmth and shelter. As well the damage caused by sexual, physical and emotional abuse must be addressed. I want to see support for families readily available when they first seek help. Early intervention must be adequately funded and supported, with increased resourcing of our sexual health, sexual assault and adolescent mental health services, and an environment where children in care are listened to and their issues, concerns and complaints acted on.

Likewise, I am also passionate about breaking the cycle of juvenile offending by implementing measures to establish an effective youth justice system aimed at providing interventions and rehabilitation to reduce offending. Thus, programs such as TOOL, on the Eastern Shore, which deliver good outcomes for young people at risk, need to be funded and continued.

In 1994 I was completing a Bachelor of Commerce degree and went to work in medical sales. I became the national sales manager in a global company, so I gained a very good understanding of how big business works and contributes to our economy. I have also owned my own business, therefore I have direct experience about the challenges and issues faced by small business owners. Because I want to ensure Tasmanians continue to live in

one of the very best democracies in the world, I am passionate about ensuring that Tasmania has a competitive and vibrant economy, in an environment where their business can not only survive but also thrive, as well as advancing renewable energy generation and water infrastructure.

I have also studied three years towards a Bachelor of Education degree and became a Nursing Board of Tasmania nurse preceptor. I fervently believe that Tasmanians must receive a high quality education with more support for students and teachers. As well, pathway planning in our schools is absolutely essential to ensure that no student drops out of school, so as to better guarantee a skilled work force for our future and the future of the next generation.

Since 2004 I specialised in aged care, including the opening and co-ordinating of a new residential aged care facility. I have also worked for the Federal Government in the Department of Health and Ageing. This gave me a passion about addressing issues such as bed-block, elder abuse and strategies to manage Tasmania's demographic time bomb. Tasmania's demographic is ageing faster than any other State or Territory, and our baby boomers are starting to retire, with a major upswing to occur in 2012. At the same time, our over-15s entering the job market are severely declining. We have a huge gap. We will also soon have more people aged over 65 than children zero to 14 years, and one-third of Tasmanians aged over 65 will not be residing in a major urban centre. We also have a large percentage of our health professionals retiring, with generation Y leaving this State in droves. In fact, the loss of young people from Tasmania is exacerbating this demographic shift, putting us on an even more worrying economic footing. We need to bring generation Y back home to Tasmania and keep them here, especially in rural areas in my electorate, such as the Huon Valley. We need to make Tasmania a magnet to attract and retain young innovative and creative people to grow our population and productivity.

I believe we must seek opportunities for our economy to expand significantly and quickly, with better returns from our government businesses, and restore our investment in export facilitation, protect and create jobs in our tourism industry and drought-proof Tasmania. In my electorate of Franklin, the viability of private enterprise, especially in agriculture, forestry and aquaculture, must be ensured.

One thing I learned from my own experience in running a small business and working in aged care is that both areas are swamped by bureaucratic red tape. It is often a hidden cost to business and we must work to make Tasmania the easiest place in which to do business, as well as to decrease the administrative burden on service providers, especially in the human services sector.

I have also experienced first-hand for years the standard of roads in Franklin, the lack of overtaking lanes, the icy and unsafe road conditions, and the verges and lines of sight blocked through overgrowth. That is why I was proud that the Liberal Party made a significant commitment to upgrading roads in the Franklin electorate during the election campaign. I will be fighting to ensure that my electorate does not continue to be neglected in terms of State road funding. From having witnessed first-hand the carnage on our roads I am also passionate about strategies to change driver behaviour, especially in our youth.

Public transport is also a major issue across the Franklin electorate. Bus services to and from Hobart, especially on weekends, are an electorate-wide concern. Living 25 minutes from Hobart, I understand how frustrating and time-consuming it is to run your child back and forth into Hobart due to lack of services. Metro's changes to bus services on the Eastern Shore have also severely impacted the seniors who live in the area. There is a lack of bus services in areas where the seniors need them, as well as a lack of bus stops. As one Eastern Shore, 93-year old 'recycled teenager' as she calls herself, told me, 'How can seniors be told to use more public transport if there are no appropriate services available?'. I wonder if the decision-makers have any idea of the impact that changing a bus route or removing a bus stop would have on an elderly person who can no longer drive or has to carry their weekly shopping bags uphill. Sadly, the evidence is not encouraging.

A strong belief of mine in everything is to do to others what you would have them do to do. Tasmania needs strong, thriving communities in all socioeconomic areas to protect our lifestyle. Due to my own life experience of being a teenager in a single-parent household, being divorced and a single parent myself, relying on the pension whilst attending university, I personally know how tough it is to live on the pension and to be both mum and dad. On the other hand, being married to my wonderful husband, Tim, and having three children together in a close-knit, loving family environment, I am very committed to policies that strengthen and support families and sole parents, address multi-generational unemployment and tackle social disadvantage.

From doing school breakfast clubs in low socioeconomic locations, being on the State Council of Prison Fellowship, doing volunteer work in our prisons and participating in various outreach programs over the years, I remain committed to policies that address drug and alcohol abuse and reduce recidivism.

Due to my life experience, during the campaign I especially enjoyed doorknocking and speaking to people living in areas such as Risdon Vale, Rokeby, Warrane and Clarendon Vale because I understood the challenges

that many of my constituents face in growing up in a single-parent household on limited incomes. A distinct advantage I had over other candidates was having extensive knowledge of most diseases, illnesses and medications that people love to talk to you about when you doorknock -

Members laughing.

Ms PETRUSMA - especially when they find out that I am a registered nurse.

From speaking to constituents in these areas, I am passionate that the rising costs of living and the struggle to make ends meet in Tasmania cannot be ignored, especially in regard to power, water and sewerage prices. Too many families I talked to were under incredible financial stress, with the increases in the prices of these utilities becoming untenable.

So many constituents during the campaign were also experiencing housing stress by needing simple modifications to their homes due to having a disability, or their homes were falling into disrepair. From having one child requiring speech pathology for many years, as well as another who needed daily physiotherapy when they growing up due to low muscle tone, I also have some insight into the issues and costs faced by parents or carers looking after someone with a disability. Thus, becoming shadow minister for human services was a challenge that I welcome. I will be championing self-managed models for people with disabilities, more respite options, as well as an effective community equipment scheme.

Mr Speaker, I would now like to pay tribute to our neighbourhood community centres throughout the State. They are the lifeblood of our most disadvantaged communities. During the campaign I met the most amazing dedicated coordinators of neighbourhood centres, such as Ann Harrison, Leanne Doherty, Rebekah Ervin, Anthony Stoyles, Linda Cockburn and Simon Paul. Their enthusiasm and commitment to make a difference is truly inspiring. I am therefore committed to helping them gain the increase in recurrent funding they need.

Growing up, especially when mum was a sole parent, we did not live the high life. My mum made my jeans and I wore one of her dresses to my leavers' dinner. I was 12 when we had our first family excursion to Hobart. I will never forget my first view of Hobart - it was so huge. I was 17 before I made my next trip to Hobart. Now I am up and down that Midland Highway like a yoyo. Mum is able to make the journey to Hobart whenever she likes now, so times have definitely changed.

Thus, to even contemplate that I might one day become a member of parliament just never entered my mind. I was content to become a registered nurse and at the age of 21 be married happily ever after. However the great thing about life is its twists and turns. Life may not have turned out the way I originally planned but I would not change it for anything in the world. It is through my life experiences that I became passionate about wanting to make a difference and to run for parliament.

Two years ago I read *Enid Lyons - Leading Lady to a Nation*, a book that further inspired me. Dame Enid was an extraordinary Tasmanian woman who was not only a mother of 12 but a prime minister's wife, the first woman member of the House of Representatives and the first woman in a Federal cabinet. She was also radio broadcaster, newspaper columnist and author of three books. I thought to myself, 'If she can do it with 12 children, then I could do it with four'.

This wonderful book also gave me the historical background of the Liberal Party, leading me to research the Liberal Party history, values, philosophy and platform. I passionately believe that liberalism is the political philosophy best able to ensure the security and prosperity of Australia and I am very proud to be standing here today as a Liberal member for Franklin.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to express my gratitude to my Leader, Will Hodgman, my fellow Liberal members of parliament and all those in the Liberal Party who have enabled me to become a member of parliament. The Liberal Party has a strong team of people with great capacity, commitment and a new vision for Tasmania. We are focused on what is important, whilst being results-driven. We will be honest, accountable and can be trusted to make the right decisions for the right reasons, whilst being more open to the people we serve. We will work to ensure the Government is accountable to the community and we will hold the Government to its pledges to introduce a strict new code of conduct for government members and their staff.

As a passionate values-based member, I am proud to be part of Will Hodgman's team fighting to deliver leadership, vision and stability for Tasmania. The fact that the Liberal Party is a broad church shows that a Hodgman Liberal government would be for all Tasmanians.

As all members in this House would know, a successful campaign requires a huge team effort. I wish to thank all my supporters who gave generously and spent countless hours doorknocking and letterboxing, attending early morning meetings, putting up signs and the million and one things that go into running a successful campaign.

I cannot mention everyone who has given their encouragement and support but there are some people I particularly want to mention and thank. Helen and Paul Samootin, Edyth Langham OAM, John Beattie, Sharon and Marc Smith, Andrew Bennett, Christine and Lance Bergman, Paula and Phil Simpson, Susan and Stuart Dolbey, Nick Overton, Andrew Sypkes, Cynthia Taafe, Gino and Maria Papiccio, Stuart MacFarlane, Andrew Evans, Brett Galbraith, Jason Faulkner, Brett Whiteley, Lance Pitt, Victor Hartmann, Roger McGinniss, my pastors Karen and Matt Sharples and my other parents Siebrand and Jan Petrusma, whose assistance before, during and since the campaign have helped me to be standing where I am today.

Also a special thanks to my mum, Pam Harper. My mum is incredible. She is the most selfless, self-sacrificing person I have ever known and I feel so fortunate to be her daughter. As a single mum she worked nightshifts to ensure that we did not go without, even though she always did. She also left us in no doubt that if we worked hard, we could make it. All of her children had jobs by the age of 15 and it is a real credit to her that all four of us went to university and have had very successful careers.

Mr Gutwein - Hear, hear.

Ms PETRUSMA - My grandparents, Nell and Stan Crocker, were also a major stabilising force in my life. Their love and strong commitment to each other and their 64 years of marriage before pop passed away showed me that a wonderful, loving, long-lasting marriage is possible. When times were tough growing up they and their farm at Deloraine were my sanctuary.

My children Lauryn, Luke, Ellie and Joe give me the inspiration for fighting for a better Tasmania for them and their children's future. All were very involved in the campaign, with Lauryn, after she completes her two masters degrees, now wanting to get involved in politics. I treasure every time my nine-year-old son Luke and I walk along the beach talking about political affairs. My four-year-old son Joe chanting, 'Vote 1 Jacquie Petrusma for Franklin' was gorgeous. As well, my six-year-old daughter Ellie, after being filmed by ABC throwing a cream pie into my face not once but six times in a row for Youth Week and watching herself in action that night on the TV, declared that she too wanted to be a politician so as to get on TV. I told her that maybe she should just become an actress instead!

Most importantly, I wish to extend my love, appreciation and thanks to my husband, Tim Petrusma, who is not only my number-one supporter but was also my campaign manager and still is chief domestic engineer. You can definitely not be a politician if you do not have your spouse's 100 per cent unconditional support and I am so grateful to him for giving me this opportunity and being my partner in this journey together. Thanks, honey.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I am very proud to be standing here today. With my experiences in life, health, business and our ageing population, I will be working hard to ensure that Tasmania's economic, social and cultural future is secure. Furthermore, I also offer my commitment and loyalty to this, the forty-seventh Parliament, the Liberal Party, to the people of Franklin and to our magnificent State, Tasmania. Honesty, integrity and keeping my word will be my values. I thank the House.

Members - Hear, hear.