



Hon. Dr. Vanessa Goodwin MLC

Legislative Council

Date: 3 September 2009

Electorate: Pembroke

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**Dr GOODWIN** (Pembroke - Inaugural) - Madam President, I support the bill and believe it represents an appropriate course of action in the circumstances.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the Honourable Paul Calvert; Senator Guy Barnett; Senator David Bushby; the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Will Hodgman; Her Majesty's shadow attorney-general, the Honourable Michael Hodgman; former Franklin member, John Beattie; and friends, family and fellow Liberals.

Madam President, I feel very privileged indeed to have been elected as the member for Pembroke and have thoroughly enjoyed the first few weeks in my new role. I thank you, Madam President, and all honourable members of the Legislative Council for the warm welcome that I have received. I am also extremely grateful to the staff of the Legislative Council for the wonderful support they have provided over the last few weeks.

I have appreciated the opportunity to just sit and watch proceedings in the upper House over the last week prior to giving my inaugural speech. I have been interested to observe the predominantly collegial nature of the Chamber that I believe is likely to contribute to good outcomes for the community. There is no doubt that there is a strong emphasis on accountability and review, but debate seems to be conducted in a respectful manner and interjections are often constructive or humorous in nature, rather than being demeaning or negative. I think this is to be commended and I believe that my personality, skills and experience will be well suited to this Chamber.

I would now like to mention my recent campaign, the electorate of Pembroke and some of the concerns I have for Tasmania's future. As most people know, it has taken me three attempts to finally be elected to Parliament. The fact that it has taken a good deal of effort to achieve this goal makes me appreciate it even more. My father has pointed out that I am a much wiser, more experienced and more confident person than when I first stood as a candidate in 2006. I think this experience will benefit my electorate and make me a much more effective member of parliament.

I would like to thank the previous member for Pembroke for her hard work in the community and I wish her all the best for the future. I would also like to thank the other Pembroke candidates for nominating and providing the electorate with a diverse mix of candidates to choose from.

My wonderful campaign team deserves special recognition for their efforts and I would also like to thank all the people who have supported me over the last three years, including my family and friends and members and supporters of the Liberal Party. I would like to acknowledge my parents in particular. They have always been very supportive of my career choices and achievements and I know how proud they are of me. It is lovely to see my mother here today and looking so well, considering she is recovering from a major back operation and her fifth bout of cancer. She is a very determined woman and an inspiration to me in the positive way she approaches life and tackles adversity.

The characteristics of determination and persistence appear to run in my family. One of my relatives on my mother's side is a former Federal member for Franklin and prior to that the member for Ringarooma, then a northern rural seat in the House of Assembly. Prior to

entering politics, William James McWilliams was a journalist. He later purchased the *Tasmanian News*, a Hobart evening paper of which he was manager and editor. He was appointed the first leader of the Federal Country Party when it was formed in 1920 but was replaced as leader in April 1921, no doubt because of his tendency to vote against the majority. He lost his Federal seat in 1922 but regained it in 1928 as an independent Nationalist, apparently with the quiet support of the Labor Party. In the subsequent 1929 election, with the abolition of the arbitration court at stake, he again secured his seat, this time with the active support of the Labor Party. He died suddenly on 22 October 1929 at the age of 70, hours after the declaration of the poll, after a very strenuous election campaign. He is described as a man of independent mind and political skill with considerable communication abilities. Those characteristics and his determination are admirable but the fact that he died after a strenuous election campaign is a bit scary. Obviously I will need to maintain my fitness regime to withstand the rigour of campaigning.

Turning now to my electorate, Madam President, Pembroke is predominantly suburban and the issues that emerged during the campaign are consistent with that profile. Two of the main issues raised during doorknocking are highly localised. The first issue relates to safety concerns about the Mornington roundabout and the second issue concerns changes to the eastern shore bus timetable, which has disadvantaged many people, particularly elderly residents. Both issues affect a significant number of people on a daily basis and I intend to pursue those issues with vigour. Several constituents have raised housing issues, both during and since the election, and it is obvious there is a desperate need for more houses, more crisis accommodation and significant upgrading of existing properties. In my view, adequate housing is fundamental to an individual's social, psychological and economic welfare and it should be a key priority area for any government. I am heartened by the level of State and Federal investment in housing, but this investment needs to quickly translate into actual houses for people to live in.

Traffic congestion on the eastern shore continues to be a problem, particularly at peak times, and I would like to see the State Government in partnership with the Clarence Council explore options to relieve congestion - for example, linking Flagstaff Gully road to the East Derwent Highway. I would also like to see increased use of the waterways and more affordable and accessible public transport.

Another issue that concerned many Pembroke electors is the proposed Lauderdale Quay development at Ralphs Bay. As a Liberal I am very much pro-development, particularly when a new development promises to create ongoing employment opportunities for Tasmania. I believe, however, that a development must be environmentally responsible, meet a demonstrated need or market and have obvious economic and social benefits to the community. I remain personally unconvinced that the development proposed for Ralphs Bay satisfies these criteria and I know that many people have similar doubts about the project. I do believe however that the RPDC's independent assessment process of the project has been entirely appropriate.

Madam President, a recurrent theme throughout the Pembroke electorate, and I believe throughout Tasmania as a whole, is the desire for good government. There is a lot of cynicism and distrust of politicians and perhaps this is not surprising, given some of the recent events in Tasmanian politics. It is imperative that we restore trust in government decisions. I believe that an integrity commission with a strong emphasis on promoting ethical behaviour and the prevention of misconduct is vital to help restore community confidence.

I also believe that we need a government that is fair and transparent and focused on the best interests of Tasmania rather than short-term political goals. We need strong leadership, vision and planning to meet the challenges ahead. I firmly believe that the election of a Liberal government in March 2010 is absolutely essential to ensure that Tasmania achieves its potential.

I know that by tradition inaugural speeches avoid being too partisan but I hope that the Council will understand when I particularly acknowledge my friend and colleague, the Leader

of the Opposition Mr Will Hodgman, whose personal support for me and my election was energetic and much appreciated.

The global financial crisis has, of course, placed enormous strain on the State's finances and people have already lost jobs in both the private and public sectors. University graduates will also find it more difficult to secure employment in their chosen field and even more of them will leave the State than already do.

Something that would be an enormous boost to our State's economy is the reform of two regressive taxes - land tax and payroll tax. Tasmania has been independently assessed as having the second-highest land tax burden of all States and it needs to be reformed to make Tasmania more business-friendly. I strongly support the policies of my party to address this issue. We need to do everything that we can to nurture our economy and make Tasmania more competitive and attractive to business investors. That will help keep jobs here. Even before the global financial crisis, however, Tasmania was a State facing many challenges due to its level of socioeconomic disadvantage. The Social Inclusion Unit's consultation paper on a social inclusion strategy for Tasmania states the following:

'Tasmania's deprivation and social exclusion relative to other States and Territories has been well documented. Tasmania has higher levels of welfare dependency, a higher proportion of households with low economic resources, lower literacy levels and lower school retention rates than a number of other Australian States and Territories. Another recent study has shown that children living in Tasmania along with children in Queensland, the Northern Territory and, to some extent, South Australia are more likely to be living in areas with a higher risk of social exclusion compared to children living in other States and Territories. The study attributes this to higher rates of unemployed, sole parent families and families with low levels of education. This indicates that cycles of intergenerational disadvantage exist in Tasmania.'

Madam President, this is a very sobering assessment. In my view Tasmania cannot prosper as it should until we address this high level of disadvantage and break the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependence and low educational attainment.

To this end I fully support the concept of early intervention through early childhood education programs and the provision of support and advice to parents. I do, however, feel that more resources are needed to support children with special needs and indeed gifted children.

As members may know, my professional qualifications are in law and criminology and my most recent research project has involved examining intergenerational crime in Tasmania. This research has highlighted the strong link between child protection involvement and subsequent involvement in crime so I also support the reforms to the child protection system, particularly the focus on providing family support at an early stage to try to prevent child protection involvement and also the focus on assertive outreach to try to engage hard-to-reach families.

I will be watching with interest the performance of the new Gateway Services in reducing the number of children referred to the child protection system.

In addition to early intervention programs for children and families there also needs to be a comprehensive suite of programs and services for young people at risk and for those who have entered the criminal justice system.

I was fortunate enough to have been involved in the development and implementation of the U-Turn program that has turned around the lives of many young people. The TOOL program on the Eastern Shore is also delivering good outcomes for young people at risk.

Like the honourable member for Elwick, I am disappointed at the closure of Chance on Main, a successful program working with young offenders and youth at risk in the Glenorchy

area. Other successful programs have closed over the last few years also due to a lack of ongoing funding, such as the Changes Your Choice program run by the Salvation Army.

Unfortunately most grants programs, which are available to fund crime prevention programs, do not offer recurrent funding and it is an ongoing battle to ensure that successful pilot projects are able to continue. This does not seem to be a very effective way to build crime prevention capacity. The young people who participate in these programs are the ones who suffer the most when the programs abruptly cease due to lack of ongoing funding. Any gains they have made during their participation in the programs may well be lost, particularly when there is no capacity for other programs or services to continue this work.

Madam President, I would like to especially recognise the work of neighbourhood centres in building community capacity and providing support to individuals and families. In particular, I would like to commend the work of Ann Harrison, Leanne Doherty and Simon Paul.

Ann is the coordinator of the Risdon Vale Neighbourhood Centre, Leanne is the coordinator of the Warrane/Mornington Neighbourhood Centre and Simon is the coordinator of the Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood Centre. I have had the opportunity of getting to know all three of them over the past few years, particularly through the TOOL project, and I have the greatest admiration for the work they do and their commitment to the local community. People working in this area deserve our strong support.

I would also like to recognise the efforts of the colleagues I have worked with over the past 11 years, both within government and in the non-government sector, particularly those working in Child Protection, Youth Justice and Corrections. This is challenging work, often with little recognition and limited rewards. Such work often involves taking small steps when trying to address a complex range of issues and it needs to be realised that significant time and effort is required to achieve long-term goals. There is no silver bullet. The causes of crime are complex and involvement in crime is often interconnected with a whole range of other social issues which need to be addressed first, such as family dysfunction, lack of accommodation, drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, low educational attainment and poor social skills.

In tackling the problems we now face in relation to intergenerational welfare dependence and social exclusion, we must be extremely careful not to repeat the social policy mistakes of the past. I believe that the decision that the State Government took in the mid-1970s to create a number of broadacre public housing estates in Tasmania in comparatively isolated areas with inadequate services has led to the concentration of disadvantage over several generations and contributed to our high rate of welfare dependence and low educational attainment.

In my view, it would be foolhardy in the extreme not to learn from these lessons of the past. Simply put, we must not create any further housing developments that are likely to lead to concentration of disadvantage in new suburbs or compound the existing situation in our broadacre housing estates.

Madam President, I would now like to mention some of the people who have influenced my career to this point. I am getting close to ending - I know it must be difficult for the honourable members who are used to being able to interject - and I am really looking forward to being able to do that too, but I am nearly there.

*Members laughing.*

**Dr GOODWIN** - Madam President, one of the main mentors I have had in my working career is Sir Guy Green. I first worked for Sir Guy as his associate when he was Chief Justice. He encouraged me to pursue my interest in criminology by completing postgraduate study at the University of Cambridge. I worked for Sir Guy again as his research assistant when he became Governor. He is an extremely knowledgeable man and a very proud Tasmanian who has contributed enormously to our State.

After completing my masters degree at Cambridge and returning to Tasmania, I started working at the Police department, originally for three months - I ended up staying nearly 12 years. During that time, I was able to work on several projects of particular interest to me, completed my PhD part-time and contested three election campaigns.

To say that the Police department was a supportive employer would be an understatement. I am very grateful for these opportunities that I was given during my time with the department and have the utmost respect for the police officers and State servants who work there. I believe that the knowledge, skills, experience and networks I have gained during my time with the department will be of enormous benefit to me as the member for Pembroke.

I was fortunate to have started working in the Police department during a period when the then Commissioner Richard McCreadie drove a strong agenda focusing on crime prevention, particularly youth diversion and early intervention. He embraced initiatives such as juvenile conferencing, the U-Turn Program and the interagency support teams, all of which play an important role in diverting young people away from the criminal justice system. This is an impressive legacy which has been of significant benefit to Tasmania. Our State is extremely well served by those who work for Tasmania Police.

Two other individuals who helped shaped my career are my PhD supervisors, Professor Kate Warner and Professor Rob White. It took me six-and-a-half years, part-time, to complete my study on burglary and repeat victimisation, while I was working full-time with the Police department. The support and encouragement provided during this time by Kate and Rob was just fantastic. Interviewing 60 imprisoned burglars provided some of the most valuable insights I could ever hope to gain as a criminologist and policy maker - and probably a member of parliament as well - and I greatly appreciate the opportunity to undertake that research.

Madam President, I stood as the endorsed Liberal candidate for the Pembroke by-election. I am privileged that the electorate chose me as their representative and I intend to work hard to represent them to the best of my ability. My party's decision to endorse a candidate does not detract in any way from our support for the Legislative Council as an independent House of review. Pembroke was held by an endorsed party candidate previously, so I did not replace an independent and that is an important point.

I am a proud Tasmanian. I want to see our State advance and be innovative, socially inclusive and environmentally responsible. We must be a place where children will be equipped to achieve their full potential and where there are worthwhile jobs to keep skilled Tasmanians and their families here. Bluntly, we must stop the exodus of young Tasmanians interstate.

As someone whose career has, until now, primarily been in aspects of justice, crime prevention and the law, I am particularly keen to see Tasmania return to being a place where trust is restored in government decision-making. Without transparency and accountability, no government can be truly legitimate.

Madam President, I know I have much to learn about how this honourable Chamber operates. I am a keen learner and promise to keep my ears open to all advice. It will then be my responsibility to work out which is the good advice. I thank the Council.

**Members** - Hear, hear.