

LIBERAL PARTY

Statement

HON DAN CADDY (North Metropolitan) [8.57 pm]: I thought a lot about whether I would get up tonight and talk about this because I do not like to get up and have a shot at the opposition for no reason, but this is too good. On the weekend after we last sat, I was reading through my local newspaper, and I happened upon an article by Ben Dickinson. The article was ostensibly about the referendum and the voting patterns across the western suburbs that this paper services. The western suburbs were formerly known as the Liberal Party heartland, but we call it the western suburbs now. One particular quote caught my eye, a quote from a current president of a local branch of the Liberal Party, and he is incidentally a former state president of the Liberal Party. We on this side of the house often point out the issues to our opponents. For example, we talk about the lack of women in the Liberal Party, although I see that they have managed to get one more this week and that is impressive. We point to the inordinate amount of control that one particular individual holds over their party, and we talk often about and point out the paternalistic tendencies of the leadership of the party. I will not expand on this, but if members want me to, I am happy —

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: I am happy to table the transcripts of “The Clan” if the member wants me to table them.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: We could go all —

The PRESIDENT: Order! Through the chair, please. Hon Dan Caddy.

Hon DAN CADDY: Thank you, President. I could go all day with that particular member.

What became clear to me on that fine Saturday morning while I was sitting there enjoying my coffee and reading my local newspaper was that this type of thinking is entrenched in the Liberal Party and its leadership. I accept something that Hon Neil Thomson said—that is, he is a very senior member of the Liberal Party. I am talking about his age; that is true. But this is still a problem at the branch level of the party. The article, headed “Shenton Park tops the Yes poll”, talked about Shenton Park getting the highest yes vote in the metropolitan area. I give a lot of credit to my colleague Dr Katrina Stratton for that; she worked very hard on it. I am also happy to recognise Kate Chaney, because we were on the same side of that battle. The article then talked about Dalkeith, which had a 55 per cent no vote. I want to read the quote from the president of the Liberal Party’s Dalkeith branch.

Hon Kate Doust: Is that Bill Hassell?

Hon DAN CADDY: No, it is not Bill Hassell. He said —

“The doctors’ wives tend to think they’re as smart as their husbands.

That was one of his quotes. It continued —

“The hardworking housewives in Dalkeith, and there are plenty of them, they’re just normal—they can see through it.”

I found the first comment about doctors’ wives abhorrent. If Liberal members want to change the culture in their party, they need to speak to their branch members, and they need to not have people like this running the branches. This is its rank and file. The Liberal Party has a long, long way to go.

By way of an epilogue, while enjoying a creation from my local barista, I had two conversations with friends of mine, both of whom are long-term residents of the area that this branch of the Liberal Party purports to represent. By coincidence, both of them are doctors. They also had one more thing in common—they are both women. The Liberal Party has a long way to go if those are the comments coming from its rank and file.

Statement

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [9.01 pm]: I will be very brief in speaking in reply to the contribution just given by Hon Dan Caddy. Hon Dan Caddy will know—I will put this delicately—the advanced years of the gentleman to whom that quote is ascribed. I distance myself, and the Liberal Party distances itself, entirely from those remarks. However, I take exception to the desperate advantage that has been sought in the member’s contribution this evening. Of all the things one could speak about in terms of the dire situation of our health system and the strain it is under, the one contribution even tangentially related to health and doctors was the contribution that the honourable member has just given. That contribution speaks to base political opportunism. It was a cheap distraction from the issues facing the government. I know the member, I respect the member and I like the member. There was a hesitation at the commencement of his remarks. Sometimes, he should trust his gut instinct.