

David McLachlan

Councillor for Hamilton Ward



**Councillor
David**

First Speech

Tuesday 7th November 2006

Mr Chairman, it is a great privilege to be here today as the representative for Hamilton Ward. I am honoured the electors of Hamilton chose to send me to City Hall to follow in the footsteps of former Councillor Tim Nicholls, now Member for Clayfield in the State Parliament.

I would like to acknowledge friends and family in the public gallery, in particular my wife and greatest supporter Nicole and my son Joe. Thank you Mr Chairman for your indulgence in inviting them to afternoon tea. My family has tolerated my abrupt career change with understanding, good humour and helpful advice. Nicole was the mainstay in our campaign office and what we achieved in such a short space of time is a testament to her organisational skills and political intuition.

The last few weeks have been hard on my son Joe, who has suddenly, it seems to him, had to start sharing his dad with everyone else. But I'd like to thank him for slipping one of his favourite books, Captain Underpants, into a photo for one of my campaign brochures. I gather this little joke was worth several votes from bemused fellow parents.

I also acknowledge the great campaign team of Darryl Fennell and Bill O'Chee. This team rolled on seamlessly from the Clayfield campaign to the Hamilton campaign, and kept this candidate relatively stress free. I'm sure they are already at work on the Lilley campaign. The LORD MAYOR and the Liberal Council Team were there every step of the way and I thank every one of you.

I also want to pay tribute to the many volunteers who turned out on election day and during pre polling to make sure our 'let us get on with the job' positive plan message was received and understood by voters.

The Hendra East booth deserves special mention. Despite some unpleasantness there on election day, the result from that booth speaks for itself. A swing against the ALP of nearly 5.5 per cent, with a swing to the Liberal Party of nearly four per cent.

Councillor Interjecting: Well done.

Apart from giving the ALP a lesson in effective community engagement as well as in manners, what made me most proud of our booth workers at Hendra East is that they were genuine locals who could walk to that booth from their homes. They weren't bussed in from all over Brisbane like the booth workers of our opponents.

I would also like to thank my friend and mentor, the Honourable John Fahey, and if anyone here still smokes, I'll arrange for him to have a chat to you and he'll chat at length let me tell you.

Mr Chairman, I would like to make some other brief observations about the result on the 28th.

I was frankly amazed by the ALP strategy of trying to turn the Hamilton by-election into a referendum on LORD MAYOR Campbell NEWMAN. 'Send a message to Campbell NEWMAN' was their key slogan. Mr Chairman, the answer back was heard loud and clear. The voters of Hamilton and in neighbouring Wards, want Campbell NEWMAN to get on with the job free from politically inspired obstacles.

Councillor Interjecting: Hear! Hear!

I mention neighbouring Wards Mr Chairman, because there were voters from those Wards turned away disappointed they couldn't vote for a can-do candidate on the 28th. They're looking forward to that opportunity in March 2008.

Mr Chairman, I heard sitting in the public gallery last Tuesday, an attempt by the ALP to put a positive spin on the result that has led to me being here today. The gloss the ALP tried to use was a claim it won five booths. Well that was a bit of watered down semi gloss at best Mr Chairman. If it were paint it would peel and bubble on the first day of summer. The reality is that out of the voting opportunities, all the voting opportunities, the postal votes, the pre polls, the declared institutions, the electoral visitor votes and the 14 booths on election day, the ALP bested the Liberal Party at just three booths in the all important primary vote.

The fact is there was a swing against the ALP on primary votes, a swing against them in a by-election they had set up as a referendum on Campbell NEWMAN. So with the ALP machine behind her, a salaried campaign manager hand picked by Milton Dick, a big spending campaign bank rolled by Labor holdings and the trade union movement, and the by-election environment, the ALP's Ms [Herzog] could not even double the vote received by the Greens, who did no campaigning and simply turned up on the day with a few corflutes .

On the subject of Green issues, that deliberately ambiguous ‘Voting Green, Vote Herzog’ election day message was staggering, given the ALP candidate was nowhere to be seen at community greening initiatives in the last few weeks, like assisting the community to plant 260 trees around the Hamilton State School, a project undertaken by the school’s neighbours with some help from the LORD MAYOR, the Member for Clayfield and myself.

When it comes to practical measures for the environment, the ALP is nowhere to be seen. Mr Chairman, there is another very important point to make about this result. It is clear that there are concerns in my Ward about some aspects of the Airport Link project now being undertaken by the State Labor Government. I share the concerns of residents of Alma Road in Clayfield for example, about the selected site for a ventilation facility in their street. I fear the engineers have chosen the easiest solution for them, but one with an unacceptable impact on residents. I’ve already made clear my concerns to the LORD MAYOR and I will continue to argue for a better outcome.

Mr Chairman, the greatest joy for me in this campaign has been the chance to meet people in one of the most socially diverse Wards in Brisbane. Yes there are successful people living in mansions with river views, but there are also plenty of people who are working hard and struggling to make ends meet. I met with people like the wife of a part time horse trainer with a small stable. Her husband works in the mines every second week to keep alive his passion for the horses, but is concerned about the future of an industry the State Labor Government no longer regards as important enough to warrant a Ministerial Portfolio.

On this Melbourne Cup Day it is appropriate to point out that the racing industry is one of the great institutions and employers in Hamilton Ward and I hope to be able to speak up on its behalf whenever possible. I also note today the Woolloowin jockey Jimmy Byrne had a great race today.

Councillors Interjecting:Hear! Hear!

Mr Chairman, I was pleased that one of the first calls I received to congratulate me was from a Pinkenba resident.

The Pinkenba community has genuine concerns about the pace of change. I welcome the investment and job creation of businesses moving into the area but they need to be mindful of the people who have always lived in the area and will continue to be their neighbours.

Hamilton Ward is generating a significant proportion of the economic development and wealth for the Brisbane region. Roads in particular are being inundated with growing traffic numbers.

Airport Link is one of the near term solutions but it is not the total answer to those concerned about rat running in their streets and constant traffic now in once quiet suburban roads. Traffic management of the vehicle movements generated from within our area as well as dealing with the traffic moving through it was the issue most often raised with me during the campaign, and I commit to making action a priority.

Mr Chairman, assisting residents to deal with the pace and scope of change is one of my key priorities as Councillor for Hamilton Ward. It is the case that where some people see opportunity others see threat, to their lifestyles and for what they want for their children. It is understandable for concerns to be raised about the prospect for change.

The ALP has a simplistic response. Stop it happening. That was it's campaign slogan on the 28th. Stop was the message on all that plastic wrap. But most people realise that simply saying stop won't take away the pressure. It's a head in the sand response. What the ALP never seems to realise is that the change it wants to stop is the result of prosperity. The ALP is at best suspicious and generally hostile to prosperity.

I believe it is our job as elected representatives to not simply say stop but to listen to the concerns, seek out answers, propose solutions and to reach a balance of all interests.

Mr Chairman, I want to do everything I can to improve the attractiveness of public transport for those living in Hamilton, and in particular to look at better use of the river as a transport corridor. I want to encourage bike use wherever possible and in particular I will be moving quickly for an examination of the feasibility of improving Kingsford Smith Drive as a bike route into the city.

I'll keep a strong focus on improving our parks to cater for the growing numbers of people choosing to make their homes in the Hamilton Ward. The former Councillor for Hamilton has set a high bench mark and I intend to keep up his track record of delivery.

Mr Chairman, as I said at the outset, I am honoured to represent such a significant area of Brisbane and I intend to repay the faith shown in me in spades. I look forward to meeting with the hardworking Council officers in the field at the earliest opportunity, and I thank those who have already been at work on my behalf to get me established in the Ward Office and to be comfortable in the surrounds here.

Finally, to the residents of Hamilton Ward, the commitment and hard work I put into the campaign will not diminish now I have been elected. That effort was just a down payment on the work I will put in to further improve our Ward as a great place in which to live and work.