



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Wednesday, 27 October 2010

VOTING SYSTEM

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (5.54 pm): From the New Testament story of the Apostle Paul, a conversion on the road to Damascus refers to an abrupt about-face on a serious issue of religion, politics or philosophy. When a single dramatic event causes a person to be suddenly aligned with something they were previously strongly opposed to, it is described as a conversion on the road to Damascus. For the Premier and the Bligh Labor government, that abrupt about-face, that dramatic event, that fundamental change, that single moment in relation to Queensland Labor support for full preferential voting instead of optional preferential voting was Thursday, 9 September 2010 when the *Australian* newspaper published the latest Newspoll for Queensland. The poll showed primary vote support for Labor had plummeted to 29 per cent while primary vote support for the LNP had increased to 44 per cent, the Greens were at 14 per cent and votes for the Independents and other parties were at 13 per cent. The Newspoll showed a two-party preferred result of 43 per cent for Labor and 57 per cent for the LNP.

Never in the history of Newspoll—which published its first Queensland state voting intention poll in 1985—had Labor's primary vote fallen below 30 per cent. Indeed, the lowest it had ever been recorded at prior to the September 2010 figure of 29 per cent was in September 2008, exactly 12 months after the member for South Brisbane had been sworn in as the Premier of Queensland, when Labor's primary vote was down to 38 per cent—a full nine per cent higher than the September 2010 result of 29 per cent. So the current Premier holds the record for leading Labor to its lowest Newspoll primary vote results since Newspoll commenced publishing results for Queensland state voting intentions. Before that you have to go all the way back to December 1986 and December 1987 to find a primary vote result for Labor below 40 per cent. In December 1986 and 1987 Labor was attracting a level of primary vote support of 39 per cent.

The report of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, established out of a recommendation of the Fitzgerald inquiry, which Labor at the time treated like its New Testament, was tabled in this parliament on 8 November 1990. It recommended the adoption of optional preferential voting in Queensland. The Parliamentary Electoral and Administrative Review Committee tabled its report on 26 February 1991, supporting the recommendation of the commission's report to introduce optional preferential voting at state elections in Queensland. Finally, the Goss Labor government introduced the Electoral Bill on 29 April 1992 which implemented optional preferential voting in Queensland and it has been employed at Queensland state elections since 1992.

The member for Murrumba was a minister in that government, and the member for Rockhampton and the member for Sunnybank were government members, having been elected in 1989. Yet they sit here now ready and willing to abandon more of their principles to cling to political power. Those members of the Bligh government who sat in this place during the years of the Beattie Labor government—too numerous to mention—were all part of and beneficiaries of the relentless 'just vote 1' campaign that was promoted by Labor when it suited its own political circumstances.

The pretence that the Premier has advanced in favour of jettisoning optional preferential voting in favour of full preferential voting is the increase in the informal vote at the recent federal election held in August this year, when the informal vote in Queensland was 5.45 per cent. If this was such a disaster, why didn't the Beattie Labor government rush to implement full preferential voting after the 2004 federal

election, when the informal vote in Queensland was 5.16 per cent—only 0.29 of a per cent less than the 2010 federal informal vote in Queensland? The fact of the matter is that at the 2004, 2007 and 2010 federal elections Queensland had an informal vote below the national informal vote. In the most recent federal election—which has supposedly caused the Bligh Labor government so much concern—both South Australia at 5.46 per cent and the Northern Territory at 6.19 per cent recorded informal votes higher than that of Queensland, and both South Australia and the Northern Territory have full preferential voting at their respective state and territory elections.

Just to prove that the 2010 result was not a fluke, at the 2007 election South Australia and the Northern Territory and Western Australia all had rates of informal voting that were higher than Queensland. Like South Australia and the Northern Territory, Western Australia has full preferential voting. The Premier's argument is completely baseless, it is dishonest and it proves nothing but that she has contempt for the people of Queensland. This conversion on the road to Damascus by the Premier and the Bligh Labor government is not proof that the Labor Party is a disciple of democracy but that Newspoll is its god.