



# Full Day Hansard Transcript (Legislative Assembly, 11 May 2011, Corrected Copy)

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Wednesday, 11 May 2011.

## GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

### Fourth Day's Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [6.17 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Mr Deputy-Speaker, I congratulate you on your election as the Deputy-Speaker. We look forward to your distinguished service to the House and to the people of New South Wales. It is a privilege to address the House this evening. It is a sincere honour to be elected to the oldest Parliament in the country and the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales. It is equally an honour to be the elected representative for Fairfield. Life's journey is characterised by the people you meet and the family you are part of. People are shaped and formed by their experiences throughout life, and I need to thank many people for shaping and moulding me into the person I am today.

My life has been an experience of two halves. The first is to have grown up in the inner-western suburbs of Sydney with my parents and siblings; the second is to have been tertiary educated and to work, live and raise a family in the outer-western Sydney suburbs. I am always a westie and proud of it. I begin by acknowledging the people who assisted the Fairfield Labor Party campaign. My campaign director, Adrian Boothman, is a former student of Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield. His tireless efforts, constant support and advice were and remain invaluable. The Fairfield campaign benefitted from the assistance of many loyal local Labor Party branch members who put an enormous effort into achieving our Labor victory. A special thanks to the core volunteer group for their early starts in the sun and the rain throughout the electorate: Maria Boothman, Riccardo Tognini, Noel Rigney-Johnson, Johnson Hillaney, Emmanuel Sebastiao and Oscar Ramirez to mention some. Those branch members typified the Labor way by rolling up their sleeves and putting in the hard yards.

Since my endorsement by the Australian Labor Party in November 2010, the campaign team included Councillor Frank Carbone of Fairfield City Council, Tan Kien Ly, Rocco Leonello and Ian McNamarra. Those people were incredibly dedicated, spending hundreds of hours on the Fairfield campaign. I am compelled to thank the former Government Ministers and local members of Parliament who assisted during the campaign. Their endorsement was and is greatly appreciated. They were welcomed to Fairfield, and I thank John Robertson, Linda Burney, Barbara Perry, Frank Terenzini, Tony Kelly, Eric Roozendaal, Nick Lalich, Ninos Khoshaba and especially the wonderful and gracious and sincerely respected former Premier Kristina Keneally for their efforts. Kristina Keneally was an inspiration during the campaign. She provided guidance through her words of wisdom during numerous visits to the electorate. We remain deeply indebted to her. I thank her for the confidence and unrelenting support she extended to me. Thanks go also to the hardworking and professional team in the party office including Sam Dastyari, Chris Minns, Kayla Murnain and Courtney Roche for their guidance and support.

I have been a member of the Australian Labor Party since 1993. As the oldest son of a migrant family and through my education at De La Salle College, Ashfield, my political DNA was pretty much set by my heritage. While growing up in the inner west I witnessed the work of several members of Parliament at both the State and Federal levels. My first contact was with the former State member for Drummoyne, the Hon John Murray, a former Speaker of this House. As a young boy I was amazed at the enthusiasm Mr Murray had for the constituents of Drummoyne. He was a quintessential Aussie, but with empathy for the needs of the large Italian and other migrant communities in his electorate. Mr Murray was a former teacher and inspired me to join the Labor Party and become a teacher. Not only did I witness the marvellous work of Mr Murray but there was also the work of Mr Michael Maher, the former Federal member for Lowe. Mr Maher and his family were parishioners at my local church of All Hallows in Five Dock. Both Mr Murray and Mr Maher were absolute gentlemen and a credit to our community. Mr Maher was a family man, a committed Catholic and a perfect community role model.

From a young age I was always eager to meet the Premier or the Prime Minister of the day. I recall meeting former Premiers Neville Wran and Barrie Unsworth at community events such as the annual Blessing of the Fishing Fleet during the Carnevale festivities in the 1980s. This was a special event for the fishing industry in Sydney Harbour. Local prawn trawler fishermen and deep sea fishermen would come to together to decorate their boats for the colourful parade on Sydney Harbour. This was a great occasion for the fishermen, with the Archbishop blessing the Sydney fleet for a safe and plentiful fishing season. Whilst most children at the event were busy boat hopping once the fleet had docked at Mrs Macquarie's Chair, I would sprint off my father's

trawler onto the pontoon to be the first to shake hands with the Premier and local members of Parliament. I had the political bug early in life.

My father, Rosario Zangari, was born on 30 April 1946 in the town of Lingua Santa Marina on the island of Salina north of Sicily. Dad migrated to Australia as a 21-year-old on 24 September 1967 and his story has been an inspiration for me to achieve. He arrived in Sydney without any family support and as the sole member of his family to migrate to Australia. Although my father could not speak Australia's native language, it did not take long before he learned to read, write and speak English. His determination to make the most of life's opportunities got him through the early days. Like many migrants, he began to work in factories trying to find his feet. It was not long before he began to work in his much-beloved profession of fishing. Over the years he tried many different fishing methods in Sydney and on the New South Wales Central Coast. My father had an expression that summed up his values and beliefs:

If you want something you have to work hard for it, it's not going to fall out of the sky.

Those simple but powerful words constituted the values I have worked with my entire life. Those words helped my father achieve in his professional fishing life in Australia and has been my yardstick in life. My mother, Domenica Ilacqua, was born on 18 June 1948 on the island of Lipari north of Sicily. Her story is far more involved with a greater deal of detail and family complexity. My late maternal grandfather, Pietro Ilacqua, was a fisherman from Spadafora in Sicily. Life was not easy for him. He was not literate in his native Italian tongue, but his gift in life was fishing. This skill and passion had been handed down from generation to generation in the Ilacqua family. Pietro migrated to Australia in 1948. He commenced working in the fishing industry on the New South Wales coast. My grandmother provided for her children back in Sicily while her husband saved up to reunite the family. The family reunion occurred on 28 August 1952 with the arrival of my grandmother, Anna, her son, Francesco, and daughters Giuseppina, Anna, Gina and my mother, Domenica. There was joy, years later, with the birth of Nina, the youngest daughter.

My grandmother was privileged enough to have had a primary school education, and often wrote poetry and recited it to her family. She taught my grandfather how to write his name. The difficulties my grandparents had with literacy in Australia meant that during my childhood they encouraged me and my siblings to study and work hard. My grandparents and parents taught me that a hard day's labour is an honourable thing. They wanted me to be able to take advantage of opportunities in life not available to them. My parents married on 27 June 1970. They were always there for my siblings and me when we were children. While dad was working long hours fishing, mum was there helping with whatever was needed. She could always be counted on. The Australian education my mother received meant I had a parent who was well versed in English. We both possess a passion for the Balmain Tigers, now the Wests Tigers. We have shared many memories together over the game that we grew up following and supporting.

Life is about taking the best bits from those who have nurtured you throughout your journey. I acknowledge all my uncles, aunts and cousins for their guidance and care. My interest in politics began from a young age. When political conversations between family members occurred, I would sneak in and listen. The "bear pit" already existed at home during family gatherings. My education at De La Salle College, Ashfield, contributed to the development of a strong sense of social conscience. The charisma of St John the Baptist De La Salle, the Patron Saint of Educators, has been with me ever since. Whilst at De La Salle, I made lifelong friends from mentor teachers: Mr Michael Lewis, Mr Bernie McGuckin and Mr Joe Evans. Those teachers inspired me to take up the vocation of teaching and hence the passion for the Industrial Technology and Religious Education classes I have provided. I believe teachers make a difference.

Growing up in the inner west was memorable. There were family and friends giving me words of encouragement and support. Thank you to my brothers, Peter and Giuseppe, and my sister, Caterina, for sharing the great times. Like most Aussie kids we enjoyed our backyard and the games played, and we were lucky to have the holidays we spent fishing with our father on Sydney Harbour. I sincerely thank John and Adriana Murphy for their support and help over the years. As neighbours they were an extension to the family and excellent supporters. John Murphy was the secretary of the Abbotsford Branch of the Australian Labor Party and was instrumental in me becoming a member of the Labor Party. I was proud to witness John's political career evolve as a local councillor on Drummoyne council followed by his election to Federal Parliament as the representative for Lowe and now Reid.

My tertiary studies at the Australian Catholic University [ACU], Castle Hill, began my relationship with Western Sydney. It was at the ACU that I met a true Fairfield girl, Melissa Pellegrino. She was an aspiring mathematics and science teacher, born and raised in the heart of the electorate I now proudly represent. Melissa became a friend, my wife and the mother of our four children. I am very grateful to her and to both sides of her family, the Pellegrino and Favalaro families, in particular Melissa's parents, Franco and Giovanna Pellegrino. As local business people, they lived the migrant success story, running hairdressing salons while raising and educating Daniela, Melissa and Anthony. They are proud locals of the electorate. Working in western Sydney was the highlight of my teaching career. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

All the schools I taught in were in western Sydney and mostly in the local government areas of Holroyd, Fairfield and Parramatta, which I now represent. The school communities of Parramatta Marist High, Westmead, Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, St Pauls

Catholic College, Greystanes, and Freeman Catholic College, Bonnyrigg Heights, gave me the privilege of educating young men and women. The cultural diversity of each school community broadened my understanding of the values and benefits of tolerance, and the acceptance of differences. Every cultural group enriches our communities; diversity has proven to be the strengthener of communities in all of my experiences.

Teaching enabled me to become involved in sporting curriculum and social justice organisations, and I had the honour of meeting many capable and effective teachers in both government and non-government schools, each committed to the cause of good quality teaching and student education. Through Higher School Certificate marking for Vocational Education and Training Construction, I witnessed the dedication of teachers across all systems of education. Sport forms part of the essential character of Australians. That is one of the reasons it is important to all of us. My time as a volunteer in the New South Wales Combined Catholic Colleges Soccer Committee enabled me to develop this appreciation.

On the social justice front, I supported many organisations during my time as a teacher. I was deeply moved by my experience as a St Vincent de Paul Vinnies Van volunteer at the Merrylands branch, which services the needs of the homeless in Parramatta and Penrith. Volunteering with senior boys and teachers from St Pauls taught us some of the realities of life about the harsh poverty and homelessness that exists right under our noses. It is through these experiences I came to value the opportunities most of us have taken for granted. These experiences will provide me with the moral compass necessary to be effective and compassionate in public life. Standing in this Chamber as the member for Fairfield I encourage the children of the electorate to consider the vocation of teaching. Teachers make the difference. Teachers not only instruct; they prepare students for their adult life. Well-grounded teachers provide students with a chance to succeed in life.

The electorate of Fairfield covers 30 square kilometres and takes in the local government areas of Holroyd, Fairfield and Bankstown. The cultural mix showcases multiculturalism in this country. If you were to take a walk in any of the shopping areas in the Fairfield electorate you would find a taste from every corner of the globe. The electorate supports and encourages the notion of "having a go". Migrants have welcomed the opportunities our country has bestowed upon them, thus choosing Fairfield to settle and raise a family. Fairfield is colourful and never dull. The people are proud and make real contributions to improving our local communities in many different ways. Children grow up with neighbours from many cultures. This provides them with the opportunity to understand and experience different cultures, and gives them the courage and reason to be tolerant and comfortable with diversity.

Fairfield has wide open spaces, parks and bike tracks, giving residents the chance to enjoy the great outdoors. Religious freedom is evident, with churches, mosques, temples and other places of worship all within a stone's throw of each other. Interfaith dialogue happens daily between constituents. Not only does Fairfield have one of the largest mixes of cultures in this country, it has many older Australians who have lived there for generations. From my chats with them I have taken away many great stories about how the electorate used to be and the colourful characters that made it what it is today. No matter where you come from, Fairfield has much to offer. This is why I am proud to be the representative of a place that lives and breathes the true essence of multiculturalism.

I acknowledge those members who have served the electorate well over the past 58 years: former Deputy Premier Jack Ferguson, former Wran Government Ministers Eric Bedford and Janice Crosio, Geoff Irwin and, most recently, the Hon. Joseph Tripodi. Each member has uniquely given to Fairfield in a very special way. As history writes, each member for Fairfield has come from the Australian Labor Party. It speaks volumes that during this election the electorate continued the tradition of having a Labor representative in State Parliament. Fairfield and Labor go hand in hand. The migrant roots deeply reflect the ideals and principles of the Labor Party—fairness and equality for all. I will continue this tradition and give the people of Fairfield my best. They have given me the greatest honour any man or woman can have.

The member for Fairfield from 1995 to 2011 was the Hon. Joseph Tripodi. Everything Joe did was a genuine reflection of Fairfield. He is a larger-than-life figure who was an able and talented advocate for the community he was raised in and genuinely loves. During my time campaigning I met many locals disappointed with Joe's announcement of retirement. Many constituents pointed out many of his achievements as a local member. Joe was a talented community leader who possessed an incredible grasp of public policy and held a strong commitment to reform. I wish Joe, Maria and Angelica well in his retirement from public life.

Stepping into the Fairfield shoes has been a big task. I thank my electorate staff for their support during the first few weeks since being elected. Stella Patane and Nancy Dalleore have made the transition into the electorate office a smooth one. As the representative of Fairfield, I will fight to ensure that the Government does not neglect the needs of Fairfield. The Government must honour its election promises to the final degree. The past six months have been very disruptive to the daily routine at home, especially for my children. I thank Tahlia, Christian, Lorida and Nicola for their patience, love and understanding during the campaign. Thanks kids; daddy loves you very much.

There is one final person who has lived this experience with me from the day I joined the Labor Party and began to help on various campaigns over the past 18 years, that is my wife, Melissa. She is the foundation of my success and a true believer. I share this

role with her as she has provided me with the chance to succeed and never failed in her undying love. Melissa is an amazing wife and mum. I am glad to have her in my life. Honey, I love you. In conclusion, I thank the members for listening to my first address to this House and I look forward to working for the people of Fairfield.