



COUNCILLOR JACK HAMPTON

SILVER ANNIVERSARY SPEECH

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, NSW

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2008

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

IT'S AN HONOUR AND A PRIVILEGE TO STAND BETWEEN MY FELLOW COUNCILLORS ---
AND BEFORE YOU---TO SAY A FEW WORDS ON THIS.....A SPECIAL OCCASION.

AT THE OUTSET LET ME PAY MY RESPECTS TO THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE
LAND UPON WHICH WE ALL STAND TODAY.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE SPOKEN IN FRONT OF SO MANY PEOPLE.

IT'S THE FIRST TIME I HAVE FELT THRILLED.....AND A LITTLE TERRIFIED..... AT
THE SAME TIME.

SO I HOPE YOU CAN FORGIVE ME IF I APPEAR.....AND SOUND.....A LITTLE NERVOUS.

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU TODAY ABOUT THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF OUR
BROTHERS AND SISTERS ACROSS NEW SOUTH WALES.

I'M A 64 YEAR OLD YUIN MAN FROM THE SOUTH COAST.

STATISTICS SUGGEST I SHOULD NOT BE HERE.

I'M SURE IT WON'T SURPRISE ANY OF YOU TO HEAR.....MOST OF THE SCHOOL
FRIENDS I GREW UP WITH HAVE NOW GONE.

I MISS THEM.

LESS THAN HALF A DOZEN OF MY CLASSMATES ARE STILL WITH ME.

MOST BEGAN PASSING ON IN THEIR THIRTIES AND FORTIES.

HEART DISEASE CLAIMED MOST.

DIABETES DID THE REST.

I GUESS THE POLITICIANS WOULD SAY.....THE GAP GOT THEM.

I THANK HEAVEN EVERYDAY.

I FIGURE THEY DON'T NEED ME UP THERE...JUST YET.

I'M ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES.

AND.....ONE OF THE UNUSUAL ONES.

**AT A TIME WHEN MANY AUSTRALIAN MEN ARE ACTIVELY THINKING ABOUT RETIRING I
WAS PERSUADED TO STAND FOR OFFICE IN THE SERVICE OF MY PEOPLE.**

I DID.....AND THE REST....AS THEY SAY.....IS HISTORY.

I NOW FIND MYSELF IN A POWERFUL POSITION.

AS A MEMBER OF THIS COUNCIL I CAN NOW MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.

WE HAVE BEEN DETERMINED FROM DAY ONE TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.

WE ARE DOING SO.

I WAS NOT SURPRISED TO LEARN WHEN I TOOK MY PLACE ON COUNCIL THAT OUR ORGANISATION SENDS OUT MORE THAN HALF A MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR....EVERY YEAR.....IN SMALL GRANTS TO OUR PEOPLE.

THOSE GRANTS HELP THEM TO PAY THE COST OF BURYING THEIR LOVED ONES.

IT WILL SURPRISE NO ONE HERE WHEN I SAY I RARELY GET FROM ONE FRIDAY TO THE NEXT WITHOUT ATTENDING A FUNERAL.....OR HEARING ABOUT ONE.

IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF OUR PEOPLE IS ONE OF COUNCIL'S TOP PRIORITIES.

WE ARE DETERMINED TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE.

EARLIER THIS YEAR WHEN COUNCIL ADOPTED ITS CORPORATE PLAN WE HAD ANOTHER SUBMISSION BEFORE US.

A NUMBER OF MY FELLOW COUNCILLORS HAVE ALREADY TOUCHED UPON IT.

IT RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMIT AT LEAST \$100 MILLION---AND POSSIBLY MORE—OF NSWALC'S OWN MONEY.....OVER AT LEAST THE NEXT TWENTY FIVE YEARS.

WE WERE ASKED TO DO SO FOR ONE REASON.

TO ENSURE THAT EVERY MAN, WOMEN AND CHILD LIVING IN MORE THAN 60 EX RESERVES AND MISSIONS ACROSS NEW SOUTH WALES COULD OBTAIN ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND RELIABLE SEWERAGE SYSTEMS.

OUR CORPORATE PLAN SEEKS TO DELIVER FOUR KEY OUTCOMES.

THE FIRST AIMS TO CLOSE THE GAP ON POVERTY AND IMPROVE HEALTH AND LIVING STANDARDS.

WE WILL DO SO BY TWO MEANS.....TIGHTLY TARGETED COMMUNITY BENEFITS SCHEME....AND EVIDENCE BASED ADVOCACY.

A COUPLE OF WEEKS AFTER TICKING OFF ON THE CORPORATE PLAN.... WE PUT IT INTO ACTION.

WE DID SO BY AGREEING TO THE INITIATIVE TO FUND THE OPERATION, MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE OF WATER AND SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

HOW COULD WE NOT?

WE SAT IN OUR BOARDROOM AND LISTENED TO STORY AFTER STORY OF THIRD WORLD CONDITIONS IN OUR OWN BACKYARD.

MY REGION IS AMONG THE LUCKIEST.

WE HAVE A NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES THAT WILL BE AFFTECED BY THIS INTATIVE.

BUT THEY ARE BY NO MEANS THE WORST.

I'M TALKING ABOUT COOMADITCHIE, ORIENT POINT, WALLAGA LAKE, AND BODALLA. ALL HAVE FREQUENT PROBLEMS WITH BLOCKED SEWERAGE PIPES AND A MODEST AMOUNT OF MONEY NEEDS TO BE SPENT ON BRINGING THEM UP TO ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS.

BUT IF YOU LOOK ELSEWHERE THE SITUATION IS MUCH WORSE.

THE DRINKING WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES IN THOSE COMMUNITIES DO NOT MEET THE BASIC STANDARDS EXPECTED BY THE WIDER AUSTRALIAN POPULATION.

THE PROVISION OF SAFE AND EFFECTIVE DRINKING WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES WITHIN THOSE COMMUNITIES IS PARAMOUNT TO PROTECTING THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF THOSE LIVING THERE.

THE FLOW OF EFFLUENT INTO HOMES IS NOT UNCOMMON.

TAKE BELLBROOK ON THE MID NORTH COAST FOR INSTANCE.

IT IS HOME TO ABOUT 150 PEOPLE.

IT STRUGGLES WITH AGENING INFRASTRUCTURE AND HAS REGULARLY RECORDED NON-COMPLIANT TEST RESULTS WHICH DETECT THE PRESENCE OF E-COLI IN DRINKING WATER WHICH INDICATES FAECAL CONTAMINATION.

TOOMELAH, IN THE FAR NORTH WEST, IS IN A SIMILAR SITUATION.

IT IS HOME TO A SIMILAR NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND SOURCES ITS WATER FROM A NEARBY BORE.

IT HAS NO DRINKING WATER TREATMENT AND E-COLI HAS BEEN DETECTED IN THE PAST.

THE QUANTITY OF WATER SUPPLY IS UNRELIABLE AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS FILL BUCKETS, DRUMS AND SINKS TO STORE WATER IN ANTICIPATION OF SUPPLY SHORTAGES.

SEWERAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY HAS ALSO BEEN PROBLEMATIC WITH PUMP STATION BREAKDOWNS, OVERFLOWS AND TREATMENT POND ISSUES.

THESE PROBLEMS ARE SOLELY DUE TO THE BREAKDOWN OF INFRASTRUCTURE DUE TO LACK OF OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE WORK.

I COULD GO ON BUT I'M SURE YOU GET THE PICTURE.

LAND AND PROPERTIES OWNED BY MORE THAN 50 LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR INCLUSION IN THE PROGRAM.

MOST, IF NOT ALL, HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CONSULTED AS PART OF A MAJOR SURVEY ON WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

NEW SOUTH WALES AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES HAVE PROVIDED SUPPORT, ADVICE SERVICES AND CAPITAL UPGRADES PROGRAMS TO ASSIST MANY OF THESE LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS TO IMPROVE SERVICES.

BUT PROBLEMS CONTINUE TO OCCUR BECAUSE EXISTING CAPITAL UPGRADES DO NOT SUPPORT THE VITAL ONGOING OPERATION, MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING OF THESE SYSTEMS.

MANY LALCS ARE UNABLE TO GENERATE SUFFICIENT INCOME TO FINANCE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WITHIN THEIR BOUNDARIES BECAUSE OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE.

ANOTHER MAJOR PROBLEM IS POVERTY.

OVERCROWDING AND CULTURAL OBLIGATIONS ALSO PLAY THEIR PART.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME ATTEMPTS IN THE PAST IN SOME COMMUNITIES TO TRAIN AND EMPLOY COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE BUT FUNDS EVENTUALLY DRIED UP.

LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS THEN FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO FIND WAGES TO MAINTAIN THEM.

THIS WILL BE ADDRESSED UNDER THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN NSWALC AND THE GOVERNMENT.

THE NEW PROGRAM WILL INCLUDE ONGOING EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND SUPPORT OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY SKILLS TO DO THIS WORK.

A RECURRENT FUNDING PROGRAM WILL BE ESTABLISHED.

IT WILL BE DELIVERED UNDER INDIVIDUAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS AND LOCAL WATER UTILITIES AND/OR SERVICE PROVIDERS.

MY FELLOW COUNCILLORS AND I AGREED TO THIS INITIATIVE WITHOUT HESITATION.

WE COULD HAVE TAKEN THE EASY OPTION.

WE COULD HAVE SAID NO

WE COULD HAVE SAID THESE LANDS WERE TRANSFERRED INTO THE CONTROL OF THE COMMUNITIES IN 1983.

THIS WAS DONE UNDER THE GUISE OF LAND RIGHTS WITHOUT ANY CONSIDERATION OF THE RESOURCES REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THEM.

WE COULD HAVE SAID THIS IS CLEARLY A GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY AND THIS WAS MORE COST SHIFTING ONTO OUR LIMITED RESOURCES.

WE COULD NOT.

WE WOULD HAVE BEEN TURNING OUR BACKS TO THE PEOPLE WHO PUT US HERE.

WE TOOK THE RIGHT OPTION.

WE WANTED TO MAKE OUR CORPORATE PLAN A LIVING... BREATHING....DOCUMENT.

THIS INITIATIVE PUT IMMEDIATE LIFE AND BREATH INTO IT.

NONE OF THIS COULD HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT THE ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS ACT.

IT HAS ALLOWED US TO JOIN WITH THIS GOVERNMENT TO HELP OUR PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES.

IT WILL GIVE EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD IN THOSE COMMUNITIES THE CHANCE OF A MUCH BETTER LIFE THAN MOST OF MY FORMER CLASSMATES.

THANK YOU.