

Speech Given to Earlwood Business Council on Monday, 8th September 2008

I'd like to thank the Earlwood Business Chamber of Commerce for their invitation tonight. I'd also like to acknowledge the traditional owners on whose land we meet.

My name is Linda Eisler. I'm standing as the lead east ward candidate and mayoral candidate for the Greens. It's my pleasure to be with you tonight to outline the policies the Greens have to provide real support to the local businesses that are the lifeblood of our community.

I grew up in a business household. It was based in Revesby and Punchbowl for over 30 years.

I grew up spending hours at the weekend and during holidays at first playing and then later learning the business. Our evening meals were punctuated with discussions of what the business needed.

So I know that good business requires more than good luck. It requires hard work and knowing your customers. Thus the business sector plays a very important role in assisting Council to know the needs of its community. You are often one of the first ports of call for expressions of discontent and for knowing where the community is heading.

I don't intend to promise to deliver the impossible. I do promise to work towards creating a pleasant, harmonious and economically and environmentally sustainable environment. We support good development.

I would like to just stop here for a moment and discuss the concept of sustainable development . My postgraduate degree at Uni NSW was in Environmental Sustainability.

Sustainable development is part of the second wave of modern environmentalism. The first wave environmentalists of the 60's and 70's emphasised industry, western culture, economic growth and technology for our environmental problems. The sustainable development environmentalist rose in

the late 80's gained much broader support and involved governments, business people and economists. It has succeeded where the first wave did not because it accommodates economic growth, business interests and the free market.

The most commonly used definition of sustainable development is: sustainable development equals development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

I believe that all of us have the same vision. Good business people want their businesses lasting for generations to come. They want a quality of lifestyle for their families. The Greens feel exactly the same. The Greens, since their inception, has been evaluating research and proposing ideas that when first put forward were sometimes thought extreme or even ridiculous. However, if you listen to radio and television programs now you'll hear that what we were warning, proposing, recommending is now mainstream.

I am not proclaiming that we got everything right. But considering where the mainstream was and where they are now compared to The Greens, I think I can say we were definitely on the right track. The major parties can no longer afford to ignore what we've been saying for decades. If you look at policies that are being adopted at every level of government you see Greens' Policy being adopted.

Instead of joining the family business I became a teacher, because, like my father, I valued my independence. I wanted to find my own career and I had a love of imparting knowledge. I wanted to make a difference in people's lives. To help improve the quality of children's lives. I believed, and still do, in education making that difference. What I discovered in the education game was that to be a good educator you first had to be a good listener. You need to know your student's entire level before you can begin to design an educational program.

I think the same goes for being a good Councillor. You need to hear what the community wants and believes before you can start to introduce change. The community has to be onside otherwise your project will fail. The Local Business

Community will be one of my first ports of call. I am encouraging you to be a conduit for the community. I propose that there should be regular Council forums with business to discuss the latest issues. Council should also begin an environmental program for business, focussed on finding ways business can decrease waste and energy use. A yearly awards night for the best performers would see prizes and a banner for their shop/business. Business wants to do its bit for the environment.

As a Green I am interested in issues like container deposits, the health of the Cook's River, an attractive living space, recycling water, coping with Global Warming at a local level.

I want to see our townships and riverside brimming with families and individuals who want to spend their leisure time in their community. To do that it must be a clean, attractive environment that has activities to offer the mix in our community. East Ward is changing and business will want to take advantage of those changes. Shopping strips beat shopping malls because they are nearly always better served by public transport. Everybody drives to Roselands whereas people often walk up to their local strip and meet their neighbours. I know I do. The local shopping strips are crucial to social capital. Let's get council encouraging small is beautiful. Shop locally.

I would be happy, if that's what local business wants, to follow Marrickville council's Mainstreet program where local shopping strip businesses chip in some extra money through rates and Council matches it and then a committee of local shops assisted by council decides how to spend the money. For instance a person can be employed to promote each strip, there can be extra lighting, entertainment, business directories, giveaways, local strip newsletters.

I do not see that these issues are in conflict with any business council. I think what the Greens were saying twenty years ago is now being seen to have been a correct assessment of where we need to be heading. There is no need for Business or the Greens to be at loggerheads. We live in the same world and want the same thing, a healthy planet in which to live. A healthy environment reflects a healthy community. It is our duty to work together to implement what changes

are possible. The old reduce, reuse, recycle moto is a great place to start. But I believe together we can go much further than that.

I look forward to working with you.