

RETIRING MEMBERS

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Leader of the House) [7.01 pm] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to allow the member for Balcatta and the member for Bassendean to each make valedictory speeches of not more than 30 minutes.

The SPEAKER: Members, as it was a request that standing orders be suspended and there was no prior notice of this, it does need an absolute majority to succeed. Perhaps one of the reasons I am in this chair is to guarantee that there is an absolute majority. My quick head count suggests that there is. I have counted the Assembly, satisfied myself and am delighted to give the call to the member for Balcatta.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Valedictory Remarks

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta) [7.02 pm]: It has been a great privilege to serve in this house and represent my electorate. In all those years I think this might be the first time that I have actually won a suspension of standing orders motion while on this side of the house! I thank the Leader of the House for that. Of course, when you are on that side and you have got the numbers it is a different matter.

For 16 years I was certainly privileged to represent the electorate of Nollamara, which through redistributions became Balcatta, and I have been the member for Balcatta for eight years. The first redistribution took my electoral boundaries almost out to Beechboro, and they have moved west with every redistribution. Politically, that has made it a bit more difficult, but my wife, Stephanie, suggested that if we hung around a bit longer, I would end up with Rottneest in the electorate and there would be certain advantages to that—but you have got to get elected for that to actually be able to happen. I am fortunate that I have been able to not only serve in this place for that time, but also leave at a time of my own choosing. I commiserate with some members on the other side who perhaps will not get the opportunity to make a valedictory speech—I recognise your contribution and wish you well! I have certainly enjoyed working for the people in the electorate. We are incredibly privileged. As the member for Churchlands said, not only can we help people find their way through the bureaucratic system, and that is rewarding, but also so often we will have people come into our offices and reveal to their member of Parliament incredibly personal matters because they are just reaching out for help. That they will place that trust in me and other members I find very humbling and a great privilege, but there is also a responsibility to try to assist in dealing with those matters. I remember many years ago a woman came in with problems of paying school fees. She spent about an hour crying and going through a packet of tissues. She had a horrendous situation with a husband who was a Vietnam War veteran. She really wanted someone to talk to. The fact that I could listen to her and try to relieve a little bit of the angst and concern she had for her children and with the problems her husband had from the war was a role that I was privileged to be able to play. I am sure other members have also had those opportunities.

Also, as members of Parliament we have the ability to travel all around the state and across Australia as part of the work we do to see what a wonderful, great state we have and to meet people and learn of the problems, issues and challenges right across our state. In fact, I have doorknocked in many towns. I do not think I have doorknocked in Esperance. Again, there are many great experiences in doing that, whether it is in your own electorate or out working with a colleague. As a member who spoke earlier said, we can tell so many stories about doorknocking. I particularly remember the first campaign by Diana Warnock for Perth. My wife, Stephanie, was out doorknocking with me one weekend but I will not tell that story. That involved a house with big numbers and red lights, but that is another story. The incredible one I will talk about occurred late morning when I was going down one of the avenues off Beaufort Street. I knocked on the door and a woman of about my age or a bit younger came to the door in a dressing gown. I was not sure whether there was anything else, but she was in a dressing gown. I said, “Look, I’m calling on behalf of Diana Warnock; is there anything she can do to help you?” She said, “Yes; you can come and help me get the kangaroo off the bed.” I thought, “This could be compromising.” Fortunately, I could see Diana Warnock about six houses down on the other side of the street. As members know, I have a loud voice so Diana could hear me yelling for help. Di came down and with the lady of the house we went into her bedroom and there was this red kangaroo that would have stood nearly two metres tall on her bed. When we came in, it got up and jumped out into the garden, which she wanted. If all the problems we ran into were that easy to fix, it would be certainly very easy. I did not actually then report that this woman was keeping a rather large kangaroo in a small residential house in Inglewood!

Although I personally have had great satisfaction in working with people at the local level—feeling that you can really help people and seeing what you can do for people is a great reward—we of course also have a role in the Parliament with the bigger issues. When we have the privilege of forming government, there is the issue of the direction in which we can take the state. I am firmly of the belief that whichever side of the house we are on, the

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 November 2012]

p8442b-8452a

Dr Kim Hames; Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Martin Whitely

overriding attitude that members come into this place with is that of trying to make a contribution and to leave our state a better place than when they were first elected here. I think we share that. We have many things in common that we can look at. I have certainly come to the view that when you have a long-term horizon on what you are doing in decision making, you get much better outcomes. Of course, we have to survive politically, and so often that four-year electoral cycle means that we respond in ways, whether it is about law and order or whatever, that are about getting elected and not about actually dealing with the real, fundamental problems and looking to the longer term. That is something both sides are guilty of; we wax and wane between looking to the longer term and the real public good and having to survive politically. Unfortunately, sometimes we grasp at solutions or props that will help us through the political times but that may be quite counter to that long-term public good.

I came to this place really without a burning ambition to be a member of Parliament. I had been an activist in my university days with a conscientious objection. I was one of the founding members of the moratorium movement against the Vietnam War. I was always an activist, but I could see that I could actually work behind the scenes and I really fell into the opportunity of being a member of Parliament. But I think what still burns there for me, and what I think is very much the strength of this side of the house, is that we want to represent those people who do not have a voice or whose voice is simply pushed aside. We want to be able to represent the rights of those people who are trampled on because they do not have the strength to stand up for their rights to get a better wage to look after their family. The only rights those people have and the only opportunity those people have for advancement is through organised labour—that is, unions, or through the role of the Labor Party. That has been our core belief for over 100 years. The party has changed. We have not always got it right. Individuals on our side have certainly gone off the rails, and from time to time the party has lost its way. But I firmly believe that over that hundred years that light has been there on the hill, as the member for Pilbara said, and we want to return to looking after those people who, without the Labor Party, would not have representation or their interests advanced. There is not time to lay out the facts for that case, but I firmly believe that many of the major advantages we have in Australia today are more often put there by Labor governments, because they are reformist. We are a reformist party, and we see a need to be at the forefront of making those big reforms that provide real benefits to the whole community. As I said, we do not always get it right, but if members go back over our history, the record really stacks up.

To my friends opposite, clearly there have been reforms, but to herald the goods and services tax as a reform does not wash in Western Australia—although that was supposedly a big reform. I will go back to the Menzies government, which was in power for over 20 years. I am going back in history now, and the Leader of the Opposition likes to have a go at me because I go back into those times before he was politically active. If we ask people what were the reforms then, there was one reform for which I am thankful to the Menzies government; that is, it brought in scholarships to help people move into education. My parents left school when they were very young; I do not think my dad even finished primary school. Their ambition for me was to get a trade. I would have left at the end of junior, which is now year 10, but I got a scholarship to years 11 and 12, which was an incentive to stay at school, and then I got a scholarship to go to university. It was only through those opportunities that I was able to take up education and open up my horizons. That certainly was a reform that came from the other side of politics.

I have been a proud member of four Labor governments in this place—the Dowding, Lawrence, Gallop and Carpenter governments. I was privileged to sit in cabinet for part of the Lawrence government and through the Gallop and Carpenter governments. To my colleagues now and in the past, I certainly owe a great debt of gratitude that they gave me the opportunity to participate in that level of government and to try to influence the outcomes for the people of Western Australia. However, whatever I might have done is really insignificant because it is the team that makes it happen. We have to get a majority to form the government; then we need to work as a team. Through those governments, I think we had really strong teams. We had not only good leadership, very capable and strong leadership, but also that esprit de corps and commitment to the team in which people often put themselves behind to make sure the team would win. So, whatever achievements we had there, I believe they were very much because we had not only good leadership, but also a very strong team—a team that was capable and that worked together. I see in the current Leader of the Opposition, Mark McGowan, that capacity to lead a good team. He has the qualities of a leader and he has a good team around him. I am certainly very hopeful that come the next election he will be victorious and will give an opportunity for the Labor Party to give that direction and improvement to government in Western Australia. If he is successful, and I firmly believe he will be, then we will have new members come into the Parliament. I know that Janet Pettigrew in my seat of Balcatta will be a great addition to the Parliamentary Labor Party when she is elected.

It was certainly rewarding to be a part of a government that delivered so much for the people of Western Australia. Going back to the Dowding and Lawrence governments, it was the rail line to Joondalup; and in the Gallop and Carpenter governments, it was the Mandurah rail line and the other extensions; and even going back to those days in about 1990, when the Reid Highway through Noranda and Balcatta was really needed because of

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 November 2012]

p8442b-8452a

Dr Kim Hames; Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Martin Whitely

traffic congestion. It was only a week or two ago that someone came up to me and asked whether I remembered him from a meeting in Noranda. I can remember the meeting, because there were protests about the siting of Reid Highway through Noranda. We had called a meeting with Main Roads at the local footy club, which held about 100 people, and 300 people turned up on a winter's night out in the middle of the park to discuss the alignment of Reid Highway. He had not forgotten that meeting way back over 20 years ago. I was able to get involved and to help a government deliver a really good outcome for my local electorate and for citizens in a much wider area.

I will briefly touch on a few of the achievements of the Labor government from 2001 to 2008, because I am very proud of those achievements, as someone who was part of a very good and strong team. As I said earlier, if we can make decisions for the long term, we really deliver benefits, but members on both sides of the house are under pressure to react to the politics of the moment. Saving the old-growth forests was something in perpetuity for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. When the Gallop Labor government put in place the restriction on logging in old-growth forests, it was not simply doing it by legislation or by regulation—it was a very thorough, difficult and long process. The commitment on this side of the house in government always should be—in my case I believe it has been—to look after the people involved. We started with expenditure at \$129 million but that went to over \$200 million to look after the workers—to help retrain them and to help relocate them—and to help the businesses in their transition. It was a huge undertaking and we had ministerial meeting after ministerial meeting to try to help those people. We looked after the people while we preserved our old-growth forests.

Saving the Ningaloo coast, again, went backwards and forwards, but as there was no development there, that did not have the same costs associated with it. One area that had considerable cost, and we still see the waves reverberating around the community from that, was the decision to tackle the abuse of Indigenous children and to put in place the Gordon inquiry and the follow-up from that. I can still remember the cabinet meeting in which that decision took place. Without disclosing what went on, I can reflect a little of the understanding amongst the ministers that this was a difficult issue. Government after government previously had simply swept it under the carpet, and to grasp this issue and do something about it opened up all sorts of problems. But the fact was, because of the death of Susan Taylor, and because of the reports we had of sexual abuse of young children, there was no other choice but to act. The government did act and the consequences of that are still rolling out, with arrests taking place of people who were the perpetrators of violence right across Western Australia.

The area of industrial relations was one that I certainly enjoyed, but it was a very heavy load. For some nine years, I was in either opposition or government, the shadow minister or minister responsible for industrial relations. As the member for Pilbara referred to, it was a time in this place when we had extraordinary scenes, which were probably very unparliamentary in great part, but it was seen as a real battle over whether the government was going to look after working people or whether working people would just become a tool of production who would be treated as items that could be bought and sold. That might be overdramatising it, but I actually met people in my electorate who came to me and said that their wages had been cut by \$50 a week and they were asking how they would feed their kids and pay for them to go to school. The imposition of workplace agreements became a race to the bottom, in which people who were on contracts would lose those contracts because someone else would contract at a lower rate because the Liberal government had pushed wages down using workplace agreements. It was a very long, hard fight to try to stop that, and we were unsuccessful. It was the first time that I was thrown out of this place. A special guillotine motion was brought in and I would not stop speaking. I kept speaking until I was thrown out of this place.

I had the more challenging task of then crafting the solution to that problem when we came to government. That gave me the opportunity to meet with people from business, lawyers representing both sides, and unions. It was a great challenge, because we were always about trying to find the middle ground. There were many times when unionists abused me and tried to stand me up, but we knew we had to take the middle ground. Then I had people on the employers' side threatening to take me to the High Court.

We had a clear vision of where we were going, which was to make sure that we had decent basic minimum standards for working people; we recognised the rights of businesses and the need for businesses to be profitable so that they could employ people. Out of that, one of my proudest moments was to see through direct changes that I made as minister. Through the system that I set up, we increased the state minimum wage by \$100 a week—some 30 per cent—in only four years. Shortly after that—not through this, but through growth in the state's economy—unemployment figures were under three per cent just after we left government. We managed it in a way that not only respected the rights of both sides, but also gave a minimum set of standards to workers in Western Australia.

Another issue that I believe the Gallop and Carpenter governments really took up is climate change. Unfortunately, that seems to have disappeared. The Minister for Environment only recently gave a statement

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 November 2012]

p8442b-8452a

Dr Kim Hames; Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Martin Whitely

here on the drying climate in the south west of Western Australia. It is recognised internationally that we are one of the climate change hot spots. We have seen a huge reduction in the average annual rainfall compared with the long-term rainfall over 100 years. The actual impact is far greater than that, because there is less recharge in our groundwater with even less run-off because we get more evaporation and do not capture the water. The Gallop government moved to put in place Australia's first major desalination plant. I was Minister Assisting the Minister for Water Resources at that stage, so after cabinet made the decision—the Premier led that—I had the job of doing the technical work and signing off on the contracting arrangements to build the seawater desalination plant in Kwinana. That plant has basically become the model, as we will end up with three of them now.

We also recognise the importance of the Gnangara mound. Depending on which figures we use, 60 per cent to 70 per cent of Perth's water comes from the Gnangara mound, but it is not sustainable. We spent \$6 million to develop the science to know how to look after that water and use it sustainably. Unfortunately, under the current government it has sat gathering dust. Unfortunately, the real urgency of dealing with the water problems is simply gone. That will be one of the big challenges for an incoming McGowan Labor government. How will we deal with this? It is not going to get any better; it is a major problem.

The water utilities legislation has been put through by this government, but that was fully drafted when we lost government in 2008. The bigger issue is the water resource legislation. There is no use waiting for a disaster when people are fighting over water before we say that we need new rules. We urgently need the new rules for a catchment area where the need for water is contested, as we have seen occur in the Murray–Darling over the past five, six or seven years. We need the legislation in place now to deal with the totally changing circumstances. Again, that is another challenge that an incoming McGowan Labor government will have to take up.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Members! Members, I believe it is customary to hear the member in silence.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: There are so many projects I could go through, such as the Perth–Bunbury highway. The former Labor governments opened 60 new schools in eight years and had 25 new ones either underway or for which the money had been committed. We built 19 new police stations and obtained commonwealth funding for another three, which have now been built under this government. It was a huge program involving the funding for and planning of Fiona Stanley Hospital, planning a major stadium, and putting money in the budget, which the Barnett government took out. There was a whole program of huge works right across the state, but it was done with very prudent and strict financial management. My colleague the member for Belmont, Eric Ripper, has to be applauded for the incredible work he did to get the budget back in shape. It was a mess when we came in. In 2001 the state was technically in recession; the economy shrunk by over one per cent. The new government had to come in and fulfil its promises and the existing expectations and commitments. I certainly enjoyed the opportunity to work with the member for Belmont, the then Premiers, and usually Jim McGinty, whom some referred to as the gang of four. We had to look at the major financial considerations and decisions and we formed eight budgets. Sometimes we had to meet on Sunday mornings. It was a very heavy schedule. We went through the accounts of each department to make sure that we were getting good value for money. Out of that we ended up with record-low state debt of \$3.6 billion. Unfortunately, that is now a distant memory.

In those first five years of the Gallop government we had revenue growth of 53 per cent, which was very good. In the current government's first five years, taking the current budget to the end, there has been only about 32 per cent revenue growth. That is what the government is predicting. Under those five years of Labor, the revenue growth was a bit under 34 per cent, which was 20 percentage points lower than revenue, whereas under the Barnett government the expenditure is over 50 per cent, which is nearly 27 percentage points higher than revenue growth. We have a problem. If we are increasing the expenditure way above our revenue growth, our debt will blow out, and that is what we have seen.

Over all that time I really have only one major disappointment—that is, losing the Indigenous affairs portfolio. There are people in this place who know more about that area than I do and who feel very deeply about it. However, all of us have an understanding of the huge disparity that exists between Aboriginal people and white people in this state. Whether it is health, the age to which people live, education or employment, there is a disparity that is really a disgrace to the state, and we know that. We also know that there are lots of people out there doing really good things. The solution is known; people know what has to happen. The view that I have formed is that the major problem in dealing with Indigenous issues is government—Labor or Liberal. In my view, to get good results for those people, who are good people doing good things, we need the leadership that coordinates and drives it to make it happen. In any bureaucracy—it is true in ours—there is huge inertia. Infighting and self-interest gets in the way of delivering the real outcomes. What happens? We change our Minister for Indigenous Affairs as often as we change our socks. We do not have continuity. A new minister

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 November 2012]

p8442b-8452a

Dr Kim Hames; Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Martin Whitely

comes in with the best of intentions. He is there for a short time, just gets on top of it and starts to make progress, and the minister is changed again. It is the same with our directors general. We do not have the continuity at the government administrative level to pick up the good things that are happening out there and spread them wider, to make sure that the resources go where they are needed and to drive policy development in a concerted way. That is my personal view. That is my great disappointment in the 24 years that I have spent in this place and nearly eight years as a minister.

It has certainly been a great honour to be part of a government that delivered so much to the people of Western Australia. Others may disagree with that, but I certainly firmly believe that. I have had the opportunity to visit those remote communities that now have police stations and hear about the improvements that have taken place because we established law and order that simply did not exist before.

It has been a great journey and I have been honoured to share it with my colleagues here and also on the other side. It would not have been possible without a lot of people who gave me their personal support. There are so many who have helped me that I will mention only those people who have worked alongside me over those 20 years. Otherwise, I would have to do a Ted Cunningham and mention 500 names! There is no time for that. I thank Wally and Anne May, who were involved in the area locally when I first started to get involved in politics. They are still there. They still come and help. I thank Kath Girando; she has sold more raffle tickets than anyone else in the whole of Australia. She is always there helping out and being a great support. I thank Vic Radis, who is a great leader in the Macedonian community, and his wife, Elena. They have always been a great support; they came to me with their local community issues and made sure I got involved. I thank Connie Sideris, who has made a huge contribution to the local community through the Ethnic Communities Council of WA and other things. I thank Tom and Mary Delios, who have turned out for 20-odd years whenever we have had functions or simply to help.

I thank the Greek Orthodox St Andrew's Grammar in the electorate of the member for Nollamara. I was privileged to be there at the start of it when it was just sand, and I recognise the huge effort by Atha and Helen Limmios and Tony Missikos, who put a huge effort into getting that going and who gave me very good connections at that time into the Greek community. I regret that time does not allow me to mention many, many more names of wonderful people who worked with and for me over those 24 years.

To my ministerial staff, I am most indebted across those nearly eight years, particularly Susan Barrera and John Whitelaw, who were my chiefs of staff through that period. I am indebted to my office staff. Lida Feist has worked for me since before I was elected on a voluntary and part-time basis, and is so reliable and so dedicated—thank you, Lida. I have had many part-time employees through that time, but Ken McCallum has been with me for some time, and he is very dedicated and supportive, and a great help for someone who is not so tech savvy. Again, thank you to Ken. Ann Roberts has been at my electorate office for 20 years with the great support of her husband, Geoff, and what they do is just unbelievable. They can be relied on totally. Ann has a wonderful manner with people. My only trouble with Ann is that she serves people so well that I think some people think she is the member, because she does it so well. She is always there giving me 110 per cent—thank you to Ann and Geoff.

To my family, where do I start? They have just been a rock. They have given me so much support through all of this. My youngest, Andrew, was born during my first campaign. I think that has ensured that he will never go into politics! He is great. Carl has a bit more interest in politics. He obviously thinks about these things, and it is great to have discussions with Carl. My oldest, Simon, again, I do not think is that keen on politics. He has certainly come up because he and his wife, Hope, have given us a wonderful grandson in Harrison, and that is great. Even at a function recently, they were there doing the washing and wiping up for hours and hours. They come in and they give me that support, and I really thank you.

What can I say for Stephanie? Stephanie was really hopeful—I think I will have my arm broken if I do it—that there will be no more quiz nights that she has to do the marking at! We have done quiz nights for 25 years for the Labor Party and for community groups, and Stephanie is always there doing the marking to ensure that it runs right and pointing out to me when I get it wrong. She gives me feedback. She listens to talkback radio and brings me down to earth. When I come in, I think I know what is happening, and Steph says, “That was not what was on the radio.” So, I get that broader picture of what people are actually hearing out there. Thank you for your love and support, Stephanie. I do not know what I would have done without it and I really appreciate it.

To the members of Parliament here, thank you for the working relations I have developed on both sides of the house. To all staff of the Parliament, I cannot name them, but they do a fantastic job in supporting us all. I can only wish all the members in this place the best in the important work they do. Do not forget that whether we are good or bad governments or good or bad oppositions, without us as an opposition, we would not have a government, and if we do not have a government, we only have to look at what has happened in some other

countries—they really fall apart. Our job is so important, and all the best to all of you who will continue that work after the election.

[Applause.]

MR M.P. WHITELY (Bassendean) [7.33 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker, can I seek an extension? I would like another 12 years; I have changed my mind!

I will begin by thanking people before I get onto one of my rants and lose all track of time. The person I have to thank first and foremost is my electoral officer of 11 years, Linda Gordon, who now works for the member for Warnbro. She is a truly remarkable individual and a truly remarkable human being who has extended such a generosity of spirit and competence to the people of Roleystone and the people of Bassendean. You made my job incredibly easy, Linda. Thank you for all you have done. Paul is very lucky to have inherited you.

I also thank my second-longest serving electoral officer—on again, off again—Dr Ann Jones, who is an amazing woman and a remarkable researcher with a great intellect. Both Linda and Ann have this amazing quality, which would preclude them from this place: they have massive ability and absolutely no ego. They are incredible people, and I thank them so much for their service.

I turn to my current staff. Patrick has done a great job. Patrick is actually a tree hugger from the Greens. He is temporarily on loan to us. He is a great man who has done marvellous work in the two times that he has served me; thank you so much for your service. Steve is up there as well; he is an IT genius. I thank you so much for your work, Steve. I also thank Lynn, who is not here today. I also thank my former staff members Simon, Bryn, Genevieve and even Frank—I think it is the night to forgive Frank, frankly! I thank all those who have given me service over the years. It has been a helluva journey and I thank you so much.

I will do the emotional bits first. I want to thank my family, and the first person I want to thank is my mother, who is up in the public gallery tonight. Mum is the other half of the Roleystone team. Mum, we got a 12.1 per cent swing between us, which was fairly substantial. I must say that mum was not always the most overconfident of backers. When I rang her at about 7.30 on election night when it was absolutely, patently clear that Roleystone was the first seat in the sack, mum said, “Are you sure, Martin? Are you sure, Martin?” There was absolutely no confidence expressed. I think my mother was actually going to ring the Western Australian Electoral Commission and call for a recount! That was not unprecedented. When my TEE results arrived back in 1976 and I did quite well in English, my mother actually wanted me to ring the Secondary Education Authority to see whether it had not got it wrong, because perhaps they had over-marked me! Mum, you are a tremendous asset and thank you for all you have done.

To my sister Jenny, who has been a tremendous help and support, I really appreciate you. Even to my Auntie Judy, whose sympathies lie on that side of the chamber, as the member for Bateman would well know, but who has rolled out every election day to support me, I thank her for her efforts. To Melinda, Shane and Patrick, who are not here tonight as they are in Dublin, and I will see them in Barcelona next Sunday when I take a well-earned rest for a month—at my expense, I might add, Premier, so do not get excited!—I look forward to seeing them. They are remarkable people. They are my rock; they have given me sanity when sometimes this place has seemed particularly insane.

Next, I want to thank those within Labor who got me here and who kept me here, which was at times a very difficult task. From the time of the 2001 preselection process—a preselection process that I won 132 to 130, so I just got to be the candidate for Roleystone—I want to thank Dean Summers who was a mentor at the time and he is a tremendous individual. He is a big loss to Western Australian Labor. I also want to thank the member for Cockburn, who was a bit of a mentor for me at the time and helped support me. I also want to thank Alannah MacTiernan, who, I think it is probably now safe to say, ratted on the centre and voted for me and got me over the line. I especially want to thank the coordinator of the centre. I do not know who it was—actually I do, but I will not mention it because it is too embarrassing!—who prepared a centre how-to-vote card in the preselection. It had two candidates—Tom Hoyer for the centre candidate and Martin Whitely for the left candidate. The how-to-vote card said “Tom Hoyer 1; Martin Whitely 1”! That is bad enough, but eight members of the centre actually followed the ticket. I won by two votes, so we can see how improbable it was that I would have got in. We won Roleystone with the second biggest swing in the state, only exceeded by the member for Albany, who achieved a 15.8 per cent swing. What a tremendous ornament to the Parliament he has been, and keep going—long may you be here. It is true to say that I did not stop smiling for the first six months after I got elected; I was just so happy and overjoyed. Basically, it was a wonderful time. I enjoyed that first six months and the first two years blissfully unaware of the future that lay ahead of me, when, savagely, the Western Australian Electoral Commission savaged my electoral boundaries and cut Roleystone into five different pieces so it completely disappeared on 10 May 2003. I remember on that morning I was asked by Alannah MacTiernan, who was Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, to represent her at a meeting with 300 angry school bus contractors who

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 November 2012]

p8442b-8452a

Dr Kim Hames; Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Martin Whitely

were looking for contracts in perpetuity. There were about five or six Libs and National Party members there and they were promising the contracts in perpetuity, despite the fact that it could not be done under state supply legislation. We had promised 20-year or 25-year contracts, which seemed fairly generous, and these people were baying for blood. I was the sole government representative in front of an angry mob of 300 school bus drivers, just having had my electorate slashed that very morning. Talk about contracts in perpetuity; I was not feeling terribly sympathetic. I got up, gave them a mouthful and I was actually that close to inviting all 300 of them outside into the car park to sort out our differences! It is fair to say that from that moment on I experienced that old truth in politics: if you want a friend, buy a dog. Whilst I had brought something to the table for the Labor Party, having won an unwinnable seat off the Liberal Party—I was everybody's pal—suddenly I was another hungry mouth to feed and one thing led to another. I was somewhat shell-shocked.

I have to thank a number of people who actually did a great service to me in prolonging my career: Ruth Webber and Alistair Jones; I also have to thank Geoff Gallop; Mark Latham, because I knew his wife, Janine, from when she was about 10; and also Anthony Albanese, which might surprise a few people. They all had a hand in my surviving the 2005 preselection round. The process was particularly difficult for me, because I had become non-factional at that stage. I had done that because my own faction at the time wanted me to knock off Paul Andrews, who happened to be my best mate in politics. I said, "I wouldn't do it," and I did not do it. It took a few people a few goes to actually believe that that was going to be true. I thought I had ended my political career, but ironically, in not doing it, because the whole thing went to national intervention, Paul's mob were in charge and I actually got looked after. If I had done what I was told, I would have been a one-termer who tried to knock off his best mate and that would have been my legacy in politics. It did not seem like a very smart strategy at the time, but it seems to have paid off. Maybe I was just ahead of the game. I really want to thank Ruth Webber. Ruth went in to bat for me when others did not, and it cost her big time; it cost her a second term in the Senate. I personally will always be incredibly grateful to her.

By 2008 the game had changed a little bit. I was not quite the babe in the woods. It is fair to say that I walked around dumbstruck in the 2005 preselection round, but by 2008 I had learnt a few political survival skills. I was vulnerable for two reasons: I had refused to join a faction and, worse than that, I had been a very active member of the Labor reform forum—some, accurately I suppose, would describe it as "Alannah's anti-faction faction"—along with the member for Pilbara. One thing about the Labor reform forum is that we had a lot of energy, a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of powerful arguments, but we were missing that magic ingredient: state executive votes. Asking those with power to use their votes to reduce their power is not always the most effective strategy.

During that 2008 election round, I had one powerful ally, somebody I have to thank enormously for the last four years—that is, Premier Alan Carpenter. Alan backed me. In fact he rang me on a Monday night and said, "Martin, I don't know why you are so unpopular, but everyone seems to be wanting to knock you off." I said, "What are you going to do, Premier?" He said, "I am going to look after you. I think you are worth saving." Knowing how politics is, I thought, "You beauty. I've got something in the bank here that needs to be traded on." I rolled up to Parliament the next day. There had been about a week's break between sittings. The media were camped out at all the entrances and all the hubbub was about who was going to be preselected and who was going to be rolled. I thought that I would go in the south entrance and be asked about my preselection and would say, "The Premier is backing me. End of story." I walked in the south entrance. The media were all camped out there and they did not ask me anything. I thought, "Oh, God, this is not good enough." So I went down to my office and I stewed for a moment because I thought this was my best ammunition—"Get it out there early. Lock it away early before other deals get done." I walked back out the south entrance and around to the north entrance, and there were media camped out there. I walked through there. I was expecting them to ask me, but they did not ask me. I thought, "Bugger this." I walked into my parliamentary office and thought, "God, I have to get this out there, because if I do not do it today, something will change and I will be history." I walked out the north entrance and I walked around to the front entrance, and Rebecca Carmody bailed me up and said, "Martin, we've heard your preselection is under threat." I said, "Why would you think that, Rebecca? The Premier has backed me. It is a done deal. I can't understand why you would think that." That night the Premier was on television backing me, and it was all squared away. I learnt a few little survival instincts along the way.

In 2012 the battlelines started to be drawn again and I could see some others on the other side were starting to salivate. A few early missiles were fired off in my direction. My hackles got up and I was starting to get punchy again and ready to go again. I think by this stage I probably would have been a little harder to kill, because I hope to think that I have built a bit of a reputation for doing the odd thing, but one day I was just sitting quietly in my electoral office and it dawned on me that I did not really want it. One of the reasons I was fighting was because they were trying to take it off me. I made the decision; it was a difficult choice, but it was my choice and I am absolutely certain it was the right choice. I want to make it absolutely clear so there is absolutely no ambiguity about this: I do endorse the candidate for Bassendean. Dave Kelly, I think, is a very capable individual. I have had problems with Dave and I have had problems with the amount of power that Dave holds

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 November 2012]

p8442b-8452a

Dr Kim Hames; Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Martin Whitely

within the party, and those problems remain. I do think the leaders of the major unions have far too much power in the party and we need to dissolve that power amongst the hands of ordinary rank-and-file unionists and make our party more inclusive, but I have absolutely no problem with Dave Kelly's ability. I think he is a hard worker and he will be a great advocate for the people of Bassendean, as he has been for the members of United Voice. But I do not back away from my calls for reform of Labor's rules to disperse power. I think that Labor has to be the party of big ideas and not the party that carves it all up because of state executive votes. We have to promote the culture of competition and merit, and fight the culture of cronyism and compliance. My loyalty has been tested with the Labor Party and there have been moments when I have actually thought I might join the crossbenches, but I have always come back to one basic principle, and that is what good the Labor Party has done for others over its long history. You also dance with the one that brung you. And you guys brung me, and that is why I have stayed.

Next year I will be contesting Senate preselection for the Labor Party. I intend to nominate. I would love to win; I think I would make a good senator, but I do not expect to win, frankly; I expect to lose. I am nominating so as to be a catalyst for change. There is a conventional pessimism amongst Labor that Joe Bullock has the numbers. My problem with Dave Kelly was always the power he has, not the person. I am not going to go into things that I have discussed previously, but my problem with Joe Bullock is the power and the person. The prevailing attitude is that Bullock has the numbers, and nobody likes it, but nothing can be done about it. I challenge Labor to do better. If that proves to be true, if we cannot do better than that, then I am afraid that is me; I am shot with the Labor Party. I am offering myself for preselection but I would be very happy if Labor picks a ticket that is based on merit, talent and ability. If that happens, and it does not include me, I am very happy to be the booth captain at Mukinbudin at the 2013 federal election.

I think there are some great lessons that Labor can learn here from what has happened in New South Wales. I think the problems that are endemic in New South Wales are far deeper than anything that I can touch upon here, but they did preselect Bob Carr and look what it did to Labor's credibility. Members can imagine what would happen if we had senators like Geoff Gallop or Alannah MacTiernan and what it would do to the credibility of the Western Australian Labor Party.

All of this will be resolved after 9 March, which is something that I requested. I am sure that had the usual influence that my requests do. However, I am glad that the party has heeded that advice. All will be resolved after 9 March. I am really looking forward to supporting the great state Labor team that we have here. We have a great leader in Mark McGowan. He is a great leader who I think can go on and become a great Premier. We have some real depth of experience, a real mix of experience and new talent. I will not name people but there is some excellent talent coming to the Parliament. We have a very talented branch of preselected candidates. I think there are some reasons that I will not go into why we actually managed to pick such a good crew. Well done, and I look forward to their success in March.

I especially want to wish luck to the class of 2001—those who took a seat off a conservative. I was one of those. My seat obviously disappeared in a redistribution round, but I particularly refer to people such as the member for Albany, the member for Collie–Preston, the member for Mandurah, the member for Joondalup and the member for Mindarie. It is amazing that they have managed to stay here so long. Well done, and long may it continue.

To all members of this place, I want to make a few comments. I want to talk about what a unique opportunity this is. It is not the opportunity to just get here and have 15 minutes of fame; it is actually the opportunity to drive change, and it is so exciting. As well as an opportunity, it is actually a responsibility.

I want to finish up by talking about some of the changes that I have been able to help and, in some cases, to drive. Before I do, I want to make this qualifier: if my time here in this chamber and in politics has taught me one thing, it is that this is not a place for false modesty. I say that in prelude to my next comments; I can promise you, I am not about to deliver false modesty!

Unquestionably, I am recognised for my attention deficit hyperactivity disorder advocacy, particularly the change I made in Western Australia, which I will talk about later. But I want to claim a few other successes, some of which may be contested by others. The first success I want to claim is the reform of the committee system. The member for Kalgoorlie acknowledged, when we made the announcement, that it was my idea to have opposition chairs of committees. I spotted that opportunity after the last state election, and I negotiated with the members for Alfred Cove and Kalgoorlie and set up those changes. The member for Kalgoorlie gave me some credit for that, which I am thankful for.

I also want to claim some credit for the voluntary student unionism response that Labor instigated in government; in fact, I have to share the credit, because it was Paul Andrews and I who were sitting around chewing the fat in the office we shared—I think this was when we were talking, after Southern River had been sorted out! Paul and I came up with the model that was actually integrated in 2004 or 2005, from memory.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 November 2012]

p8442b-8452a

Dr Kim Hames; Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Martin Whitely

I also wanted to say I had a role in the government's response to the outcomes-based education debacle when we started to turn that around. I had been meeting with Greg Williams from People Lobbying Against Teaching Outcomes, who, I thought, was a fantastic and passionate educator who had some very real concerns. I had about half a dozen meetings with Greg in my lounge room over a number of months as we tried to nut out the problems and steer a pathway forward. Alan Carpenter actually worked with me and discussed some of those issues and took on board some of the very real concerns that Greg Williams had.

I will not talk about this in great detail, but I thought what was happening to the men at Whitby Falls at the time was appalling. To those who were members of the caucus at the time I would say no matter whatever power somebody has within caucus or within the Labor Party, when they are doing the wrong thing it is your duty to stand them up. I stood up a particular individual—no prizes for guessing who—on that issue, and those men were not, at 48 years of age, cast into old people's homes, for want of a better description. I also had a leading role in the Education and Health Standing Committee that was the instigator or catalyst for the response to the child health problem—I thank the Deputy Premier for acknowledging that—that led to an increase in speech therapy services.

Linda, Anne, Patrick, Soman and others have all helped out on the whole multitude of electoral issues that people brought into our office, and they can take credit for the work done on those.

I have some unfinished business I would like the Parliament to consider. On the issue of organ donation, I did introduce some legislation to this Parliament, and the Minister for Health has said he supports the legislation in principle but can achieve the same thing through regulation. He has told me on a number of occasions that he will be regulating to bring into effect the outcomes of that legislation. Unfortunately, it has not happened yet—I notice he has left the chamber—but I hope he uses the remaining time to do that.

I also brought in some legislation about the removal of the damage to reputation provisions that can see people made involuntary patients; again, that did not get support. I was hopeful at one stage that the National Party was going to support me—it was making some noises in that regard—but it fell in line with its coalition buddies. But I do understand that legislation that will not be decided by this Parliament will have the same effect, and I will be watching that closely when I leave the Parliament.

Another issue is that of prescription drug abuse, a huge issue which is largely the responsibility of the federal government, but there is a role for state government as well. I leave that as unfinished business.

The last piece of unfinished business I want to talk about is the family of Claire Murray. That family has been through the wringer, and they suffered some outrageous criticisms during the time of Claire's illness and even after her death. They have been left with a significant debt, and without telling the whole story now—one day the whole story will come out—to those who are in the know, just wipe that debt. That family has been through a hell of a lot and deserves to have that debt written off.

Of course, it would not be a speech by the member for Bassendean or the former member for Roleystone if I did not talk about ADHD. I guess the obvious question is: why did I concentrate on that particular issue so much? There were two reasons. Firstly, because I could, and it mattered and no-one else was going to do it; and, secondly, I actually managed, by a fortuitous series of events, to end up in a safe seat with no promotional prospects, so I had lots of time and I could do something constructive. I am glad I had that time because it allowed me to really turn my mind to that important issue. I am proud of what we managed to achieve there, and it is a unique story in Western Australia. Western Australia is the world's only child drugging hot spot to have seen a massive decline in child prescribing rates. There has been about a 50 per cent decline in child prescribing rates between 2002–2003 and 2010. Allied to that, there has been a 51 per cent decline in the rate of amphetamine abuse in teenagers. I think there is a nexus there, which is that if we stop giving kids amphetamine—guess what? They stop abusing them. I do not think it is much more complex than that.

I have to credit Bob Kucera as the Minister for Health who was really supportive of the initiatives I put in place there. Thank God we did it while Bob was the health minister and not his successor, because I did not get the same level of cooperation there. We did amazing things there, and I am very pleased with the role I played. I thank Bob for his role in that. Another thing we did was the complex attention behaviours clinic at Murdoch that was committed to in the last term of the last Labor government and rolled out by this government.

The third thing that came out of the Western Australian story was the Raine ADHD Study, which I do not have time to discuss in detail here. But if members are interested, I am sure they can review some of my other speeches or those many long blogs I have sent them over the years. The Raine study is unique Western Australian research that has come out of the Raine study data that started in 1989. It actually shows that if ADHD kids are medicated for a long period of time, their prospects of educational achievement are much worse than if they are unmedicated. That is very significant research that resulted from the whole process that was

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 November 2012]

p8442b-8452a

Dr Kim Hames; Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Martin Whitely

driven by me and Bob Kucera when we tightened up accountability measures but also instigated a parliamentary inquiry into ADHD in 2004.

At a national level I have had an effect in that area. As to the national guidelines for ADHD, it is fair to say that the National Health and Medical Research Council delegated them to the Royal Australian College of Physicians, which delegated them to a series of people who had significant connections to the pharmaceutical industry—guess what? They came up with pro-pharmaceutical industry recommendations. Through a series of exposés—I was fortunate to have some good contacts in *The Australian* and News Limited papers, which is quite rare for a Labor member of Parliament—we managed to put some pressure on the federal government. It is to the great credit of Mark Butler that he abandoned that process and started a new process—the draft clinical practice process—which was basically a contested process. There were people who believed as I do about ADHD, and there were people on the other side of the argument. Those people got together, and bashed their heads together and came up with some sort of compromise outcome. It is not what I would like; it certainly is still, in my view, too pro-medication, but it is nonetheless a much better outcome. Mark Butler deserves credit for that.

Members would have heard me speak about this at length, and sometimes the speeches I have made have been incredibly detailed and complex on the issue. We can go into levels of complexity around the issue, such as things like the study of 938 000 children that came out of Canada that showed that children born in the last months of the school year were about 50 per cent more likely to be diagnosed and medicated for ADHD than children born in the first month of the school year, for obvious reasons—their relative levels of maturity. They were less mature, therefore they were diagnosed as being hyperactive and inattentive when really they were just younger. I could talk about the Raine study at length, but I will not. I could talk about the genetic basis studies; some of the bogus work that has been done around the genetic basis of ADHD.

I will just boil it down to this: if I had to simplify my position—is it a very simple position—ADHD is a disorder that is diagnosed from a checklist containing a whole series of behaviours such as losing toys and pencils, fidgeting in the seat, being easily distracted, being forgetful, talking too much and not playing quietly. They are all normal childhood behaviours. That is one of my issues. If I had to simplify it further, the drugs used to treat ADHD are primarily amphetamines. They are either dexamphetamine, which is an amphetamine, or Ritalin, the chemical name of which is methylphenidate, and which is classed as a near amphetamine. In the United States they use a methamphetamine, a drug called desoxyn, to treat it. What is my simple position? My simple position is this: amphetamines are not good for children. I leave you with this—this will probably be the last speech anyone makes about ADHD for quite a while—it is still an issue in Western Australia. There are still 6 000 children on ADHD drugs. Thankfully, it is 11 per cent below the national average. We have a huge hangover problem with an amphetamine-abuse culture and dexamphetamine-diversion culture among adults. Adults in Western Australia are 3.3 times more likely to be medicated to receive a pharmaceutical benefits scheme-sponsored prescription of amphetamines than people in the rest of Australia, so we have a huge hangover problem. But, thankfully, the child numbers have come down.

That story in Western Australia is a unique story and I have learnt lots of lessons. People have asked me: why are you leaving politics? I am not leaving politics. I have no intention of leaving politics. I have become interested in an area of politics that has narrowed. State parliamentary politics is a game for generalists. I have become interested in the politics of mental health. I think some of the lessons I have learnt about the patterns of behaviour that are used to promote that disorder and sell those drugs are equally applicable across other things. Bogus new disorders are being proposed. The one we need to keep our eyes on—I might gear up the member for Warnbro because he seems to be attuned to these things—is disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, which is a way to turn toddler tantrums into a mental illness. Even real mental illnesses—depression, anxiety and psychosis—that often benefit from the use of medication are being oversold to us. The benefits of the drugs are exaggerated and the risks are understated. In Australia we are on a dangerous pathway. We are following the American model where one in five adults, and I think 27 per cent of American women, are on some form of mental health drug. Mental illness is common but it ain't that common. I am going to use what skills I have learnt to try to fight that fight. Fortunately, there has been a patient fightback in recent years. There is a move towards a recovery movement, something I intend to throw all my energies behind.

I have run out of time. It is an amazing opportunity to be a member of this place. It has been a joy for most of the time; it has been a challenge at others, but it is an incredible privilege and an incredible opportunity to drive change and an obligation to drive change. For those of you who are going forward, good luck with it. Be brave and good luck to all of you. Thank you.

[Applause.]