

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON ED DERMER (North Metropolitan) [2.01 pm]: I must say that I am very pleased to speak in support of the motion moved by Hon Liz Behjat, by way of which we express our loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and I would also like to thank His Excellency the Governor for his speech. His Excellency represents Her Majesty in Western Australia. I think they both do a very fine job in their allotted roles. In my assessment, the roles of the sovereign and of the Governor of Western Australia are both integral to our Westminster system. When I look around the world, although I am aware of the imperfections in the Westminster system I do not believe that there is a better system on offer. We are very blessed to have inherited it. Entailed in our system is government by peaceful persuasion. Traditions such as the distance of two sword lengths between the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House is a reminder of the importance of peaceful persuasion, and, most importantly of all through the democratic system, our system of government is one that occurs with public consent. Without public consent in government terrible trouble will follow, and people do not actually live as free people without public consent in their government.

I enjoy the official opening of Parliament; I enjoy the rituals associated with it. They may appear quaint but those rituals have a very important role in acting as historical reminders. Remembering the mistakes of previous generations makes us less likely to repeat them. Each of these rituals in the official opening of Parliament, and in many of the rituals that we observe daily, are based on past problems. It is interesting to look at the evolution of the Westminster system whereby past problems often—eventually always, I think—led to an adaptation, and over the centuries that circumstance or problem arising for which an adaptation has been found led to the quality of the Westminster system that we enjoy. Rituals that remind us of past problems help us avoid future problems.

I am particularly fascinated by the role of the Usher of the Black Rod, and I think our incumbent performs with a particular style and appropriate gravitas in what she does. I am hoping that, with the President's assessment of my behaviour, I will be invited to the official opening of Parliament in four years' time. If that happens, I will be on the horns of a dilemma because I really enjoy watching the procedure here in the senior chamber where the Governor comes in and delivers his speech, but I would be fascinated to watch the activities of the Usher of the Black Rod outside the Legislative Assembly chamber. I think that is a very important ritual. It reminds us of a time when the Crown in government and the Parliament were not getting on well and Charles I endeavoured to arrest members of the House of Commons. A terrible civil war followed and a period of military dictatorship followed the execution of Charles I. It is very important that we remember this, but actually watching our Usher go through the process of bashing at the door of the Assembly and of the Assembly's reluctant loyalty, or reluctant obedience to the instructions, would be a fascinating ritual to watch. Not knowing how to be in two places at once, if the President is kind enough to invite me in four years' time, I do not know whether I would rather be watching in here or probably—because I have not seen it before—hanging around outside the Assembly. I do not like being associated with hanging outside the junior chamber, but I will make the effort on a special occasion because I want to see the Usher of the Black Rod from the senior chamber in action with that ritual.

I expect this to be my last extended contribution to debate in this place. I expect to hear the call during question time this afternoon and next Tuesday —

The PRESIDENT: I might notice it!

Hon ED DERMER: I would be disappointed if the President said, “No, Ed, you've had your last say and you're not going to get a question”. I will seek the President's attention then, but other than that, my plan is for this to be my last extended contribution. I always try to observe the short questions requirement, Mr President, so this will be my last extended contribution.

I think it is an appropriate time for me to thank the people of the North Metropolitan Region for the privilege that it has been for me to serve them. Our electoral system is complex. Members have been elected to this chamber previously as Independents, with this current proportional representation system, which I think is a fine one; but by and large we are all elected—certainly everyone in the chamber today—as team members. The team that I am very proud to be a part of is the Australian Labor Party. I would like to thank the Australian Labor Party for endorsing me on a number of occasions. I would also like to thank the Australian Labor Party for being such a great team to campaign with and to promote people's needs with. I have really enjoyed that privilege as well. I would like to thank all the party members. I worked very closely with three particular WA Labor Party branches. I would like to thank each of the members of those branches as they are today and each of the members who have been members in the past and contributed to that strength. I would like to mention the branches of

Marangaroo–Darch, Kingsway and Ballajura. There are others as well but I have promised Hon Giz Watson that I will not go beyond three o'clock, so I will be a little constrained in that.

I would also very much like to thank the members, officers and staff of the trade unions who are affiliated with the Australian Labor Party. Those trade unions got together in 1891 and reached the view that an important way to promote the interests of their members was to seek to have representatives elected in Parliament. We have been hard at work since 1891 with that purpose. I thank the members, officers and staff of each of the trade unions affiliated with the Australian Labor Party and also note how much I have enjoyed working with the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association of Western Australia, which is the affiliated union that I have worked most closely with over my time as a member of the Labor Party.

I talked a little before about the Westminster system and democracy, which I think is best guaranteed by the Westminster system. I have had discussions with constituents to say that my job is to come in here and vote according to their views. That is interesting when one has 300 000-odd constituents who have variations in their views! I think that is not quite right. I think we are here to deliberate and actively consider, but I will get onto that later.

If you asked me what I thought democracy was, Mr President, I would say that it was about the public will being able to achieve a peaceable change in government and Parliament. As an individual member of Parliament, I regard my role as an employee of 300 000-odd employers. I have occasionally woken up in the middle of the night concerned that they may all want my attention on the same day, but that has not happened and there are three or four more days to go, so it is unlikely. I consider myself as an employee of the 300 000-odd electors of the North Metropolitan Region in Western Australia. I believe I have a four-year reviewable contract. I have been lucky enough to have my contract reviewed successfully four times, and I have decided to not put myself forward for a fifth time, so I will never know whether I would have been re-elected. I like to think I would have been, but that is one of those historical things one can never be sure of.

I think I am engaged to think and to consider proposals to change the laws that every Western Australian must live by, and to take responsibility for those decisions. I do not believe that a member of Parliament's job is to be some sort of automatic reflector of popular opinion. The best example I can think of is the possible majority of opinion in support of capital punishment in Western Australia. I believe that the role of our state and our system is to protect people, not to kill them, so I am totally opposed to it. I would not care if the whole 300 000 told me I should do their will and support capital punishment; I would not do it, because I am not engaged to simply reflect majority opinion in my constituency. I am engaged to consider and make decisions on their behalf. I am still accountable to my electorate because if I were to put myself forward for election four years hence, they would assess my contract as their employee. It is very important. I am not impressed by arguments to say that this opinion poll says whatever, therefore I am bound to vote as my electors say, because I do not think people who are canvassed in opinion polls have the opportunity to sit in the Legislative Council, the senior chamber of the Western Australian Parliament, and deliberate and thoroughly study the proposals before us. I am not here as an automatic voting machine to be guided by popular opinion; I am here to think, consider, make decisions and be a responsible representative, rather than simply a reflective representative. I think this is very important to remember and, ultimately, we are accountable, as we should be, to the public will by way of each election. It is very important to think about our work in that way. I think that considering myself as an employee of 300 000-odd people engaged in the job to the best of my judgement and the best of my ability is a helpful way to think about my role as a member of this chamber and a helpful way to think about representative democracy in general.

I was recently with some people who saw a union demonstration march by Parliament House. The people I was with were lovely people, but they did not respond positively to the demonstration. Sometimes union demonstrations can be quite colourful and sometimes they tend to appear quite revolutionary as part of the theatre of it, as far as I am concerned. The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, which I work most closely with, does not normally present itself as revolutionary. It is probably one of the reasons I feel most comfortable working with it. It has had its moments, I am sure. In fact, I think it is very important that, as much as the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association understands the importance of employers and private enterprise and working responsibly with them in the interests of their members—I think I will call them the "Shopees", otherwise I might run out of my hour before three o'clock—there are times when they exercise industrial action, but it is not their habit. I think even the unions that like to present as being very ferocious, revolutionary and militant are probably too smart to unnecessarily take industrial action. When I listened to those people the other day I thought I should have been more forthright in saying what I felt, but it was one of those events in which we have a conversation and think more about it afterwards. I honestly believe that trade unions are essential to a civilised community. One of the things that concerns me about my colleagues opposite is the dangerous radicalism we often see in the Liberal Party when they try to stop trade unions doing their work. I think we are blessed to live in Western Australia and Australia. I have a predilection to demand proof of the

benefit of a change before I support it. I think that is quite logical when we live in a good place. I know those trade unions are very important to our community being a civilised one, so I am very concerned by radical proposals to undermine the work of unions.

Why do I think trade unions are essential to a civilised community? They bring a balance to the relationship between the employer and the employee. I suppose, ultimately, elections bring a balance between me as an employee and my 300 000-odd employers. But for more people, trade unions form a vital role in providing balance to that relationship. That balanced relationship results in incomes being higher than they would otherwise be, conditions being better than they would otherwise be and, most importantly, occupational health and safety conditions being better than they would otherwise be. People may say to me that I am overemphasising the importance of trade unions, because a minority of employees in our state are trade union members, and that is true. I also believe that even the employees in our state who are not trade union members benefit enormously from the work of the trade unions that represent other employees. The negotiations for pay and conditions conducted by trade unions on behalf of their members benefit not only their members but also other people employed in the workforce. For these reasons I think trade unions are essential to a civilised community.

I hope that the advocates of business recognise a few fundamental points. Employees are customers. Without an effective trade union movement and people's wages correspondingly being much reduced, there would be fewer customers for the businesses that operate in Western Australia. I believe that one of the reasons there is enormous trade imbalance in our world is the absence of independent trade unions in countries such as China. Independent trade unions are not allowed in China; therefore, the wages of most workers are very low; therefore, how do we compete with very low paid non-trade union supported workers working very hard in very unfair conditions in other countries? It is not possible. I would like to see an independent trade union movement active in every country so that the wages of workers throughout the world can be similarly beneficial, as they are here where there is an active trade union movement. That would have the added benefit of making manufactured goods of countries such as Australia competitive with manufactured goods in countries that today do not have independent trade unions. They would be much better countries if they did. The absence of independent trade unions in other nations contributes to the international trade imbalance. When I consider the economic and strategic consequences of that international trade imbalance, I become very anxious. I think the economic and strategic consequences of the international trade imbalance are very grave. Being an amateur student of history, I am well aware of terrible and bloody consequences that follow international trade imbalances and other causes of anxiety and instability at an international level. Of course, trade unions, like the Westminster system, are human institutions and therefore imperfect. They may be imperfect, but they are nevertheless essential for maintaining peace and wellbeing in our community.

I would like to talk about some other essentials for a civilised community. One is quality public education, and the hope that entails for everyone who receives it, to build a better life for themselves and to see that developed in their children and people close to them, including, I might say, older people who are in a position to take up educational improvement. I am looking at my colleague Hon Ljiljana Ravlich and remembering the work done when she was education minister to encourage Western Australians of whatever age or circumstance to realise that it is never too late to take up education.

Adequate social security is also linked to hope; in fact, if there were no adequate social security, what would follow is the opposite of hope, which is fear.

In respect of quality public health, one of the proudest achievements for me as a member of the Australian Labor Party is the establishment of Medicare. Can members imagine being in a situation in which their child needs urgent medical attention, so they have to decide between buying food for the week or paying the doctor's bill? My very wise wife, Sylvia, brought this one to my attention, either at a meeting or privately, and it really crystallised for me how important Medicare and public health care is if we want to have a civilised community. Obviously, it is essential to have that kind of backup to provide people with medical aid when they need it, rather than when they can afford it or have saved up money for it. Obviously, if one is saving up for their child's medical attention and it is urgent, it is going to be a pathway to disaster. Medicare, as a Labor Party achievement, is an institution that is part of our community and provides hope for Western Australians. I see quality public education, adequate social security, quality public health care with Medicare as a key part and the essential role of independent trade unions, as all the different aspects that make our society a civilised one.

Mr President, hope was the theme of my first contribution in this place; I was standing roughly about here, and my delivery was even more nervous than it is today, under the careful gaze of your predecessor, Hon Clive Griffiths! The idea of hope was the theme of my first contribution to the debate here, and after 16-plus years, you might think, "Well, Ed's stuck in the same rut because he's going back to exactly the same theme", but there have been a few diversions in the 16 years in between.

I am not talking about false hope; we need to provide Western Australians with realistic hope for a better future. We want a realistic expectation for a better future for ourselves, our children and all the people who we share our lives with and have come to know and love and have affection for. Hope is essential to the wellbeing of Western Australians; hope is equally essential for keeping the peace in Western Australia. The violence and other forms of disrespect that we see from time to time are very closely linked to a lack of hope in the perpetrators, as displayed in their unfortunate behaviour. Providing realistic hope is a key to providing a peaceful existence for us. The idea of hope is a common thread for each of the aspects of a civilised society that I have been talking about: independent trade unions, public education, public health and social security. All of those have the common thread of hope, and they are four reasons why I am a member of the Australian Labor Party; there are others, but by and large they are the main ones. They are the four reasons why I think we provide hope, civilisation and a peaceful way of doing things in our community.

I am attracted to an old slogan that I saw on a badge once, which said, “Unity of Labor is the hope of the world”, and I think that is true, otherwise I would not be here. I have done my best today to explain it, and I hope that my colleagues across the chamber will give due consideration to my thoughts. I imagine that my colleagues on this side of the chamber are here for largely the same reasons that I am. Often, though, the Labor Party is unfairly criticised by the suggestion that our unity is somehow uniformity. They are two very, very different concepts. We are united, but very different. Anyone in this chamber who has eyes to see and ears to hear could look over here and see that we are far from uniform; the same eyes and ears will also tell you that we are united. They are very different concepts, and it is very important to understand the difference.

This is my last week of more than 16 years in Parliament. I was mildly terrified when someone told me that I was the third longest-serving member in the house; I thought about the records set by my esteemed colleagues Hon Norman Moore and Hon Barry House and I thought, “No, no, no; I won’t be inclined to try to match them”, particularly when Hon Norman Moore responded to being congratulated by the then Leader of the House on 25 years in Parliament by making reference to entering the second half of his parliamentary career! I was looking forward to coming back as a former member to watch you in your fiftieth year, Hon Norman Moore, but unless you decide to make a comeback, that is probably unlikely to happen!

This is my last week of 16 years and five months, roughly. I think it was Christmas Eve of 1996 when I had the pleasure of meeting Malcolm Peacock and his colleagues and being sworn in in the Clerk’s chamber. I think that making an objective self-assessment of my own work in the last week of 16 and a half years would be a bit silly; I probably should have made those assessments a bit earlier on! That is just as well, because for me to make an objective self-assessment of my own work would be not only silly but also impossible. What can I say about the work that I have tried to do? The most obvious thing that I can say is that I hope that my work has contributed to the wellbeing and hopefulness of a number of Western Australians. I hope that is the case; I cannot be certain, but I hope it is the case. What I can be certain of is saying that whatever I have been able to achieve would not have been possible without the support of my family and my colleagues who work with me in my electorate office in Balcatta.

Meeting my wife, Sylvia, is the great good fortune of my life. Sylvia has been untiring in her support, her advice and, probably above all, patience over decades of my political activity, including earlier times as a volunteer and, for the last 26 or 27 years, in a professional capacity. I am blessed to have an elder son in Alex; we very carefully called him Alexander, but he prefers Alex, so he gets the last say on these things! Alex is very thoughtful in his consideration of public matters. He sharpens my wit, if that is possible, with challenging debates around the dining room table, and that is really good. I am not saying it is impossible because I am already so sharp—I am saying, how much can you sharpen the blunt, Hon Linda Savage! I appreciate Alex’s support with how-to-vote cards and his attendance at many, many, many Labor Party meetings. Pride is not the type of instinct that I look for, but I could not help it the day that I listened to Alexander stand up at the Marangaroo–Darch branch meeting and put the case of his opposition to general retail trading on Sundays. That was easy for me to listen to, because I entirely agreed with him, and I think I am allowed to say that now! If I had my way, I would also abolish Saturday afternoon trading and encourage people to go to WAFL matches, but that is me! Alexander may have had an element of self-interest, because he is a member of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees’ Association of WA and a happy employee at Camera House. When I heard him put that case so well at that most excellent of Labor Party branches, I was very pleased and proud of him.

I am blessed with two sons. My other son, Cameron, is my enthusiastic and constant companion through so much of my life, and not least my political work. I reckon I am very, very lucky, because that very patient lady in my life, Sylvia, is probably more understanding of me wanting to spend the time when I am not involved professionally at football and even cricket matches because our son Cameron and her father, Manfred, similarly enjoy those activities, so that is probably to my advantage. Cameron is the most energetic of campaigners. Any honest person involved in politics professionally would have to stop and think before they answered the question: are you looking forward to that election coming up very soon? Cameron is. Cameron loves elections;

he loves campaigning, he loves handing out how-to-vote cards, and he loves dropping letters and pamphlets in letterboxes. Between elections he has to satisfy his political appetite in other fields. When we have branch meetings or other party forums, Cameron enjoys making a contribution. I recollect giving my state parliamentary report to a meeting of the Marangaroo–Darch branch some years ago and Cameron, quite out of the blue, said that it was time for his report. Cameron then gave a detailed precis of Robert Ray’s examination of Labor’s structure and electoral prospects. We all learnt from it. Listening to Cameron’s precis was more time-efficient than reading the whole of the Robert Ray report. I must say that I have enormous respect for Robert Ray. If I believed in reincarnation, I would believe that Robert Ray was a reincarnation of Louis XIV in terms of him being a consummate and capable politician, but that is an argument for a different day. He wrote this report and Cameron analysed it and gave a precis of it to a meeting of the Marangaroo–Darch branch. The sort of pride I felt when Alexander argued the case for people doing things other than shopping on their weekends, I similarly felt when Cameron gave the precis of Robert Ray’s report. I think Robert Ray would have been pleased to have received the precis, but he was not there. He might have been a bit jealous of someone being able to more concisely put his main points, as Cameron had done.

The other important role for Cameron politically is as my personal media monitor. Members who have been here awhile might remember that in early 2005 I had a brush with cancer, which I am very lucky to have survived, and not only survived, but managed to survive with only surgery being required and without needing chemo and all that type of thing. I had a day in August 2008 when I was driving and I very safely used an excellent hands-free mobile telephone to take the opportunity to contact home to say that the most recent blood tests were very good. Cameron answered the phone. Cameron did not want to talk about blood tests; I think he knew I was pretty okay without hearing about the blood tests. He told me that the Premier, Hon Alan Carpenter, had been to visit His Excellency the Governor to call an election. This was August. I think it was unprecedented, or there had not been an election at that time of the year since 1913 or something, so I made a mistake and ventured to suggest that Cameron may have misunderstood what he had heard. This was a mistake. I said to Cameron on this excellent hands-free and very safe mobile phone while I was driving, “Cameron, I think what you heard was some journalist—and we all know what they are like—speculating about the Premier going to visit the Governor.” Cameron said, “No, dad. The Premier has been to the Governor to call the election.” I said no. Anyway, I looked at the clock in the car and saw that it was getting close to the hour, so I told Cam that I would hang up and ring him back in a minute. I got the ABC news a few minutes later. I am glad Cameron could not see my red face, because I was alone in the car. I rang him and said, “Cameron, you were absolutely correct; I was absolutely incorrect.” I promised Cameron that I would never again doubt his political advice. That is one incident, but there have been many when the first time I have heard of something has been through Cameron monitoring the media. His favourite media institution is the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and he has a bit of an aspiration to one day be something of a Kerry O’Brien. I hope it comes true. He is my media monitoring service, so I am very lucky.

I am going to keep talking about my family because I like talking about my family. The other very important member of our family is our little Maltese–Silky cross, Peppa. He has been a member of our family for the last 13 years. We are hoping that he will set some record similar to Hon Norman Moore’s by being in our family for the next 13 years as well, if we are lucky. Peppa is a good friend. I had a day when I had a draft report of the Standing Committee on Public Administration of some depth. I think the public administration committee is terrific. I enjoyed being on the committee with you when you were the chairman, Mr President. I think I was your deputy chairman for a fair bit of that. The whole idea of the public administration committee is to find the imperfections in the public administration in Western Australia and see where we can improve it. I had a very good draft report and I was going through it, reading it and annotating it. I thought, “What is the best way of doing this?” I think I had the house to myself so I stayed home in a rocking chair with a pen, Post-it notes, which my colleagues here like to refer to, for tagging the annotations, and I had my companion, Peppa, on my knee. If he was taking a sly look at this privileged document, I apologise for that! I think the probability of Peppa leaking the information he acquired by his sly looks at the draft report were probably minimal, so it was probably okay in terms of a security risk! When I read about the failings of certain officers in the public service of Western Australia, I must say I was seething. When you are seething, it is bad for your blood pressure, so it is very important when you are seething to be soothed. The best way of soothing me while reading this report was for me to pat Peppa. He thought that was the only sensible thing I was doing all day. That brings me to a very important point about the enormous value of companion animals. As they bring us great joy, they deserve great respect. If anyone wants advice about a companion animal, I have become a keen advocate of Maltese–Silky crosses, but I am sure others have a similar view. Particularly when one has a small backyard, a dog the size of the average cat is probably of the right order. We recently acquired a fish. I think Sylvia has waited for a few more girls in the family, but the fish is a boy, so his name is Lance. I have not come to the point, you will be pleased, Mr President, of consulting the fish on parliamentary matters, but if I had decided to seek a further four

years in this place and Lance lived long enough with us, as I hope he will, you never know what might have been possible!

I referred to my family as being an essential component in making my work possible. The other essential component in making my work possible has been my colleagues in my electorate office—that is, my electoral officers and research officers. My constituents and I have been very fortunate with the quality and dedication of the staff I have had in my Balcatta electorate office both in the past and the present. I was lucky to have worked for me when I first started Maurene Palmer, who had many years of experience with Hon Graham Edwards, who had a very distinguished career in this place. Maurene was always efficient and encouraging. For me, as a brand-new member, to have an electorate officer with that experience with a very accomplished long-term member of this place such as Graham Edwards, was a great advantage. We had a young fellow called Darren Klarich around that time. Darren was always good to be with, enthusiastic and full of ideas. Earlier on, and since 1998, I had two very close and good friends in my electorate office, Dr John Crouch and Mrs Jane Saunders. I will not talk at length about John Crouch because, sadly, last year I had an occasion to talk in some detail about John's life, our friendship and the contribution of his work both in our electorate office and more broadly in policy and campaign work for the Australian Labor Party, because sadly we lost John to cancer in March last year. I am aware of the impending three o'clock, Hon Giz Watson, so I have said what I have to say about John, other than to say that more than a year since John passed away, we still miss him enormously. He leaves a great gap in my life and the life of many others who had the good fortune to share their life with John. We miss his wisdom and friendship.

I am very fortunate to have still working with me Jane Saunders and Margaret Pearce. Jane started off doing relief work with me. I had the good fortune to work with Jane and John together when they were volunteering for Kim Beazley's campaigns when he was the member for Swan, and I was fortunate to be working in his office. I now have Jane Saunders and Margaret Pearce working for me. Jane comes into work at Balcatta every day from Roleystone and Margaret comes in from Lesmurdie. We get traffic reports regularly and I have had reports from Jane and Margaret that have led me to ask questions in the house about different points related to traffic. If members wondered where some of those questions came from, I have now given it away. Jane, efficiently and effectively, manages our office. Most extraordinarily, Jane also efficiently and effectively manages me. I would have to be the most difficult member of Parliament to manage in Western Australia, Australia, the world, and every jurisdiction, and Jane achieves this herculean feat. Furthermore, Jane is also very skilled in translating the script of one of the least legible members of Parliament in the world, and she regularly provides this member of Parliament—I commented earlier about having the ears to hear and the eyes to see—with very honest advice and she makes sure that I have those ears working.

More importantly than all of that, Jane's care and commonsense has been of enormous importance to many who have visited our electorate office. That sentence does not do justice to the amount, the quality or the effectiveness of work that Jane has performed in our office to make the lives of many people tremendously better than they would otherwise have been. I cannot really talk about that sort of thing without giving away personal details, but it is just extraordinary what she is able to do and how much she has transformed and improved people's lives; she has given them more hope and a better future through the work she has done.

Margaret Pearce is always a joy to share time with but I put one caveat on that comment. Margaret has one flaw—her devotion to the Perth Demons Football Club. The only time I have not really enjoyed sharing time with Margaret is when Perth have had the temerity to beat Claremont, because Margaret does tend to rub it in. Other than that, Margaret is always uplifting and a joy to share time with. Margaret's advice and managerial work are vital to our office team, and I have seen people in very challenging and distressing circumstances benefit from Margaret's care and commonsense.

I have been lucky enough to make some terrific friends among the Parliament House staff. I will not even start with that because it is getting close to three o'clock but I just want to say to all of them, thank you. I like to consider people in here my friends as well—thank you. I was hoping to say a little word to everyone before I finished but I am starting to be concerned that that may not be possible. I hope you all achieve what you want in life and enjoy your experience here as much as I have, and I fully intend to enjoy the next three days.

I want to talk about a handbook for political success and a handbook for anyone—it should be compulsory reading—who ever hopes to lead anyone else, William Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It is an excellent read and I am tempted to start on page 1 and read right through the book. However, Hon Giz Watson might lose patience and her guests might get cross at me if I were to do that, so I will try to provide a synopsis. Perhaps I will try to do for *King Lear* what Cameron did for Robert Ray's report on the internals of the Australian Labor Party.

King Lear was a legendary figure. When Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote *The History of The Kings of Britain*, he had a collection of legends about kings for which there is very little historical record, and one of them was King Lear. King Lear, as he got on in years, decided that he liked people to tell him how good he was and how much

they loved him—a very vulnerable quality. I am reminded of Simon and Garfunkel’s wise words in *The Boxer* when they said —

All lies and jests
Still a man hears what he wants to hear
And disregards the rest

It is comforting to hear a proposition that resonates with our preconceived ideas. Our preconceived ideas are, no doubt, the accumulation of thoughts we have heard, shared and considered in the years of our life up to today. So when we hear something that resonates with what we already think, it is comforting. Our skill in this place is the art of persuasion, which can mean drawing people to have the confidence to leave behind a preconceived idea and to move on to a different point of view. I am talking about the merit of doing such; I am not claiming to be good at it.

I remember and greatly admire the day when Hon Norman Moore—the war horse of the Liberal Party—fought against the electoral reform legislation, which I thought was appalling because as a democrat I was enthusiastic to support the electoral reform legislation. However, I remember seeing him find the last clause and last constitutional variation about the Legislative Council not initiating an expense to the people of the state, and he thought he had a winner. I thought, “Norman Moore does not give up”, and I admire that, Norman. I have enjoyed our exchanges. Norman, I have a suspicion that after another four years Mrs Moore, Lee, will bring you to the front door and say, “Norman, in you go. Stop getting under my feet in the kitchen. Go and play with your friends in the Legislative Council.” That is why he will come back and finish another 15 years to make it 50 years, but that is another theory.

Let me get back to King Lear. Someone is distracting me; I have no idea who it might be. I normally look this way and that way when I say that, but I think it might be me. King Lear had three daughters. When I look down the list of characters in the play, the villain in the play is called Edmund. I am sure that has absolutely no significance whatsoever. The other interesting thing is that the wisest person in the play is described as the fool, and that is fairly poignant in itself. When members read the play, they can see how wise that particular fool was in the court of King Lear. King Lear decided, probably self-indulgently, that he wanted the comfort of hearing what he wanted to hear so that he could disregard the rest and feel comfort in that. He asked his three daughters—Cordelia the good one, and Regan and Goneril—to tell him how much they loved him. Regan and Goneril laid it on with a trowel about how magnificent he was, what a fine father he was, how much they loved them, and their devotion to him for ever and ever and the loyalty that goes with that. Cordelia, without me quoting extensively—to the tribulation of Hon Giz Watson—basically said to her father, “You are okay.” King Lear was not smart enough to understand these things as he should have. He decided to divide his realm into two and to allow the daughters who told him how much they loved him to govern half each. Before long they were treating him with total disrespect and war and violence prevailed throughout Britain. The good news was that the honest daughter, Cordelia, was able to prevail in the end and bring peace to the realm.

My thesis is that if we are to bring peace to the realm—that peace or civilised community that I talked about earlier—it would be far more likely to occur if we spent more time listening to Cordelias who are brave enough to give honest, true and often critical advice, rather than the Gonerils and Regans who are prepared to lie and claim the love and affection that they do not really hold in their heart. I think I have been blessed with many Cordelias in my life; foremost who come to mind are Sylvia and Jane, whom I referred to earlier, and I would like to thank them both for all their services, but most particularly for being my Cordelias and not allowing me to be a silly old fool like King Lear.

I want to raise two more issues. I talked about the staff in Parliament House, and I did not want to be specific; but I will be a bit specific and talk about the ladies who operate the switchboard. I strongly suspect they might be quietly running the state, with some of the extra roles they take on. I am about to venture into something mathematically challenging, so I might get some help from the more mathematically astute people around the chamber. I have estimated that when I needed to find a member to bring them into the chamber or for some other reason to satisfy the requirements of the Whip—the reason I sit behind my fearless leader, Hon Sue Ellery, is that I hear her instructions and I relay them to others—the ladies who make that possible for me are the switchboard ladies. One day I had rung for the fifth time to ask where Hon John Cowdell was—I am sure I said “the honourable” and not some other form of description—the switchboard lady said to me, “Ed, have a look in the Chair.” As the Chairman of Committees, he was over there and therefore not in his place over here! But I got very exasperated at the time. Without doubt, the switchboard ladies provide that support. They do at least half of my work as the Labor Party Whip. The other person who does at least half of my work as the Labor Party Whip is Jane Saunders. Jane manages the pairs. On a Monday she would give me the program of pairs that have been allocated at that date, and I would take over. Jane had done this for weeks and weeks and weeks, and I, in a very princely fashion, decided to do the work for the most recent week. That is basically how we do it. This is where

the mathematical challenge comes in: the switchboard ladies are doing at least half my work as the Labor Party Whip and Jane is doing at least half of my work as Labor Party Whip; and if I was very clever, I would not have had to do any work at all as the Labor Party Whip! But I did manage to find some, which may suggest three halves. Mr President, if you can resolve the mathematical quandary of finding three halves in a whole, I understand why we have been electing you as President! That would be quite an achievement. I would particularly like to thank the switchboard ladies for their role, amongst all the other staff who make working in Parliament House such a delight, but I particularly wanted to thank them.

I listened with interest to our new chums in the chamber last night—Hon Dave Grills and Hon Martin Aldridge. I think the National Party is an interesting outfit. It certainly brings along candidates who are very different, one from the other. Listening to Hon Martin Aldridge, I was delighted to hear his references to Bremer Bay and Gingin. He took me back to the days when I was doing my botany degree at the University of Western Australia, when I used to run around chasing slow-moving wildflowers—the kangaroo paws, *Anigozanthos manglesii* and *humilis*, at Gingin Cemetery, and others around Bremer Bay; they were great days. It was terrific listening to that speech. I remember both of those gentlemen, and others—Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm and I think Hon Linda Savage—making a similar point. They spoke about how often political parties—I am not going to be silly enough to pretend the Labor Party is pure in this way, but we have had a recent example from the other side of the chamber—go into an election and promise the sun and the moon and the stars and are reluctant to make any reference to where they might raise the tax revenue to pay for either the sun or moon or stars, let alone all three! And then, when they get in, they say “Oops!”—or when they get re-elected, they say, “Oops! There’s even less money than we realised when we were last in government”, which was before the election. It is pretty extraordinary to be in government and to make a whole set of promises, and then when they are re-elected to try to say they did not realise how bad the books were so they could not keep their promises. All sides of politics have done this. If our colleagues in the Greens ever get large enough to get close to a treasury bench, I suspect they might do it as well. Political parties promise the sun, the moon and the stars; they avoid reference to how they will pay for that and they make excuses after the election. I am very pleased that we have a system of government as excellent as the Westminster system, because the Westminster system is going to need all of its inherent strengths to deal with the public disillusionment that will follow from people putting themselves forward for election with promises that cannot be paid for. I think all of us here, particularly our colleagues in the junior chamber, need to examine our souls on that question. If we promise less and deliver more, we will be held in higher respect in the community, and this excellent system of government will be less sorely tested. Testing even the best systems of government is something that we should not do. Honesty is the best way of avoiding that testing.

I have never studied political science, and the more I go along to talk to school students who are doing politics, the more I say, “I don’t know why I am up here and you are down there, because you are more educated in politics than I am; I have never studied it at all.” That is true, but I will propose a political science experiment for whichever party in this chamber is brave enough to try it first. We are four years out from an election, so members can plan it; in fact, I would like to see all the parties do it. They can go into the next election and say: we have problems with traffic congestion and transport. We would like to have a health system that is more readily able to meet people’s needs and an education system that delivers a better system so our young people would benefit. We are going to do our very best to improve each of these essential services; and, by the way, unless we are going to go down the path of Greece or Cyprus or one of those other unfortunate places I am happy I do not live in, we will need to find the revenue to pay for it. It would be fascinating to see what electoral support a party would receive from the electors if it was that frank and honest in putting itself forward to govern the state. I have raised this before with people who have had leadership experience. They have said, “But, Ed, you have to be strident and confident.” Can someone be strident, confident and honest at the same time? I like to think it is possible.

Hon Ken Travers: And your opponents do not mislead about your admission.

Hon ED DERMER: It would work best, if everyone adopted this. It is interesting, Hon Ken Travers, because we cannot control anyone else’s behaviour, and trying to persuade them is often a waste of time. The best chance of someone listening is if they ask for advice in the first place—no-one has asked me, but I am offering it anyway! I would like to see Australia’s political parties go to future elections with realistic assessments of what can be done to improve things and not promise the sun, moon and stars and to have a realistic discussion about how we pay for that. If a party that was brave and honest enough to approach an election in that way did badly in the election, I suppose the adage about democracy that people get the government they deserve might be true. But I think Western Australians deserve to have an honest engagement with all of the political competitors who put themselves forward to govern this great state. There should be a little bit of examination and a little bit of determination, hopefully, on all sides of politics, for people to be honest with the electors in the next vote. I think the electors in Western Australia are people of wisdom and commonsense, by and large. I think the party that

was brave enough and honest enough to engage with the electors to talk honestly about the limitations on what they can achieve, but can indicate the incremental achievements they are able to achieve and the need to pay for those incremental improvements, would receive their respect and support. I am putting forward a political science experiment. I am hoping everyone in this place will think about it and, hopefully, decide to put that political science experiment to the test at the next opportunity.

Colleagues, thank you for putting up with me. Thank you for sharing the last 16 and a half years with me, and that extends to people who are not in this place anymore; sadly, that includes Hon Max Trenorden, who I think was a marvellous Chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Administration. Now I am distracting myself, and it is just about 3.00 pm. I am going to try to be the politician who leads by example and keep to my promise of sitting at down at three o'clock. All the very best, and thank you.

[Applause.]

HON GIZ WATSON (North Metropolitan) [3.00 pm]: I thank Hon Ed Dermer for being an excellent Whip right to the very last, and thank him for also having been, in effect, the Whip for the Greens (WA) over many years. Thank you, Ed, for your consideration and your words.

I have a few things I would like to say this afternoon and I hope I manage to get through them without cracking up or losing my voice. I wanted to talk a little about the good bits, the bits that still need some work done, make some observations, and there will, of course, be numerous thankyous.

My reflections on the activities that have been part of this place have a business bittersweet quality, as despite achieving some progressive change, it is clear that much more needs to be done before we have a society and environment that receive the respect they deserve and need. Thus, for every milestone there is a further millstone to be removed. Firstly, the good bits: foremost in my list of positive outcomes is my role in the passing of legislation to provide equality to my fellow lesbians and gays. After decades of discrimination and criminalisation and many previous attempts at legislation by the Australian Labor Party, plus one attempt by the Australian Democrats, in December 2001 the Acts Amendment (Lesbian and Gay Law Reform) Bill was introduced. In 2002 and 2003, the Western Australian Parliament passed laws that gave same sex-attracted individuals and all long-term couples legal recognition in a number of areas, the main ones being: antidiscrimination protection; inheritance rights; stamp duty exemption; a system for property division after a split; accident and workers' compensation if a partner dies; partner state superannuation; recognition as next of kin; protection from discrimination on the basis of marital status; access to adoption; access to reproductive technology; and recognition as a parent of a non-biological child in some cases. My memory is that, in all, several hundred laws needed amending. These laws did not create new rights specific to gay men, lesbians and bisexuals; rather, they removed previous discrimination. The law now recognises de facto partnerships regardless of the gender or sexuality of the people involved. In the area of lesbian and gay rights, Western Australia went from the most discriminatory to the most progressive state, despite the most personal and bigoted debate I experienced in my 16 years in this place. It was an excellent community campaign, and I salute the work of Gay and Lesbian Equality (WA), Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the parliamentary working group that I enjoyed working with, the unwavering support of the then Attorney General, Jim McGinty, and the vital role of my comrade Senator Louise Pratt, who did an enormous amount of work within her own party; I acknowledge, of course, the love and support of my partner, June Lowe. I also salute the hardy souls who sat through day after day of vilification in the public gallery. If just one young lesbian or gay grows up knowing they cannot be discriminated against in law and will not be treated as second-class citizens, then my work here was worthwhile. I have a cold; I am not really cracking up quite yet!

Of course, there is much more work to be done to break down prejudice, particularly within the Department of Education, which remains intransigent in failing to provide young gay and lesbian students with a safe learning environment by refusing to deal adequately with homophobic bullying or provide a curriculum that includes gays and lesbians.

The next good bit: it is 12 years since the unprecedented WA community campaign to protect WA old-growth forest led the Gallop government, with the critical support of the Greens in this place, to increase the forests and woodlands and conservation reserves from 265 000 hectares to 800 000 hectares, and to create around 30 new national parks and conservation reserves, plus a substantial reduction in the amount of logging in our forests. It was a fantastic victory to be part of, and I notice some people who were very much central to that are here today. However, due to the shortcomings in the definition of "high conservation forest", beautiful forest blocks such as Chester, Warrup, Helms, Arcadia and Yabberup have been or are being destroyed or are planned for destruction. Of course, along with the destruction comes the destruction of the habitat of endangered species such as the numbat and black cockatoos.

To add insult to injury, very little of the timber extracted is converted into high-value product. For example, only 20 per cent of the total volume of jarrah logs taken from our forests and sold to industry actually ends up as high-value timber products such as furniture and flooring. The majority is squandered as railway sleepers, charcoal and firewood. Further, after decades of clearing, overcutting and general mismanagement, many of our native forests and woodland ecosystems are left fragmented, degraded and in need of protection or restoration. The already serious impacts on our forests and woodlands have reduced rainfall, and diseases like dieback, armillaria and marri canker are compounded by logging, mining and inappropriate burning.

Also, there is strong evidence that the timber industry is in decline for other reasons. Relevant external factors are a global oversupply of woodchips, changing consumer trends and the development of substitute products. On top of that, recent commonwealth legislation to introduce a carbon price and firm up a carbon credit regime has the potential to create exciting opportunities for economic development in the south west, through managing forests for carbon credits. Western Australia could potentially earn far more money from carbon credits than it could from logging. This must be explored. I note that an Australian National University study conducted by Andrew Macintosh reports that if logging stopped, the south west forests could be worth between \$600 million and \$1 544 million in carbon credits in the time frame of 2014 to 2023. What is desperately needed now is a forest conservation plan, not another so-called forest management plan that will see an increase in the allowable cut of karri.

I am also delighted to have played a role—along with the vocal and effective conservation sector—in protecting many other precious places in WA, particularly during the campaign for Ningaloo Reef and other significant marine ecosystems, as well as the great western woodlands. I acknowledge and congratulate the Barnett government for its commitment to the establishment and management of five marine parks under the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy, and look forward to their early gazettal.

Another significant change in WA law was the passing of the Acts Amendment (Abortion) Act in 1998. The bill was eventually passed after much active public debate, days of parliamentary debate, and numerous amendments to the original proposal. The act amended the Health Act 1911 and the Criminal Code to make it lawful for medical practitioners to perform abortions as long as the women concerned had given informed consent. The Association for the Legal Right to Abortion played a vital role in the law reform process. ALRA was established in 1967, and I pay tribute to the many women, and some men, who over many decades kept the struggle going to ensure that women have reproductive rights in WA. Those I know and have worked closely with include Robyn Murphy, Margot Boetcher, Dorothy Anderson, the extraordinary Ruth Greble, who I acknowledge is here today, and former member Diana Warnock, who many members will know—I enjoy seeing her most mornings as we plunge ourselves into the ocean as City Beach—and Judy Straton and Cait Calcutt. I particularly pay tribute to former Legislative Council member Cheryl Davenport for leading the difficult job of carrying that reform through the Parliament. I thank Cheryl for her very nice card inviting me for a holiday to Norfolk Island anytime I am looking for somewhere to go!

I am also delighted to have played a role in enacting some of the strongest laws protecting the community from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke through carriage in this house of the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill. Through that role it was a pleasure to work with organisations such as the Cancer Council of WA, the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, the Heart Foundation and the Australian Medical Association. I am also pleased to have been able to use our numbers in this place, back in 2006, to block moves to dissolve the WA Alcohol and Drug Authority.

I have long championed, and, hopefully, demonstrated, the importance of cycling for health and environmental benefits, and hope that we may at last be reaching a tipping point in planning where cycling is given suitable priority. It is essential that we not only invest more in dedicated cyclepaths, but that we also make key commuting roads bicycle-friendly. Also, more needs to be invested in cycling infrastructure in regional Western Australia. I wanted to particularly acknowledge the good work done with the Department of Transport to organise the annual ride that involves members of Parliament and local government members, which I think has played a significant role in raising the profile of cycling among members of Parliament. I note that these days, several members of Parliament are committed cyclists.

Another area that I have pursued is recognition of the condition of multiple chemical sensitivity, or MCS. A surprising number of people suffer from this condition in Western Australia. They are constantly vulnerable to even small exposures of a frightening array of chemicals; chemicals that indeed most people do not react to at all. A significant number of MCS sufferers have developed this condition after exposure to the cocktail of 261 chemicals emitted by Alcoa's liquor burner at the Wagerup refinery. These people deserve to be relocated from places such as Hamel and Yarloop to create a proper buffer from the industrial area there. As a condition, MCS continues to be poorly understood and sufferers are not supported. There is a need at the very least for laws to recognise the condition as a disease.

Uranium mining: funny I might mention that! Many Western Australians continue to recognise that uranium is not just another mineral to be exploited. They understand that mining uranium starts a nuclear fuel chain that inextricably leads to highly toxic waste and potential weapons of proliferation. Western Australians recognise that there are environmental and health problems at each stage of that fuel chain, whether it be in the mining and processing of uranium and the resultant waste dumps, its use in nuclear reactors and resultant highly radioactive spent fuel rods, nuclear weapons, or the requirement to keep toxic waste isolated from the environment indefinitely. I am proud to have introduced legislation to prohibit the mining of uranium in Western Australia three times—in June 2000, August 2002 and in 2008. Surprisingly, and to me disappointingly, the first bill was defeated in 2003 by the only other political party to have an anti-uranium policy, the Australian Labor Party. In 2007, I introduced a third, much more limited, bill, requiring the Labor government to implement its own stated commitment to prohibit the mining of uranium on mining leases granted since 22 June 2002. Again the ALP defeated the bill, choosing instead to rely on a non-statutory policy position of the then Premier, Alan Carpenter.

As we long predicted, the ban was lifted swiftly at the stroke of a pen by the incoming Liberal–National government in 2008. Despite the state now being open to the mining of this highly toxic mineral and all the exaggerated claims of uranium miners, not one mine has yet transpired. In fact, a number of major players have abandoned uranium mining. In 2012, BHP Billiton cancelled the planned expansion of Olympic Dam, disbanded its uranium division and sold the Yeelirrie uranium project in Western Australia for around 11 per cent of the nominal value of the uranium resource. Also indicative of the state of the industry was Cameco’s February 2013 announcement of a \$162.5 million writedown on the Kintyre project in WA, as a result of a weakening uranium market. Far from there being a renaissance in the nuclear industry, the world uranium price has dived from almost \$US140 a pound in 2007 to just over \$US40 a pound today. In Europe, 150 nuclear stations are scheduled for closure—whoopee—and, shamefully, Australia is inextricably linked to the ongoing nuclear crisis at Fukushima, where we understand that rats chewing at power cords threaten to disrupt the vital cooling process for the spent fuel rods, so it stumbles from crisis to crisis. This is because there was Australian uranium in each of those four reactors.

Nuclear power is in retreat in Europe, Japan and the United States of America. The industry is pursuing India as a customer—a country that has nuclear power, refuses to sign the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has an appalling track record on nuclear safety. A decade into the nuclear renaissance, the global nuclear capacity has not increased. There may be modest growth, but utilities will have to build several hundred reactors in the coming decades just to replace the current cohort of mostly middle-aged reactors. The huge capital cost of these new reactors is proving to be the industry’s Achilles heel.

Another area I have introduced legislation in is the area of cat management. A Greens initiative that was eventually recognised and delivered by this government—congratulations; it was long overdue—was legislation to limit the number of unwanted cats in Western Australia. The Minister for Local Government was the actioning minister. I think at one time about six of them went through. I had to try to persuade each minister that this was a good idea, but I was unsuccessful, including, I seem to remember, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, who was not persuaded about the merits of cat legislation. Having undertaken a considerable amount of groundwork and community and stakeholder consultation, drafting and redrafting—I note with the valuable assistance of the now Hon Lynn MacLaren, who was at that time my research officer; who also knows way too much about cats!—I introduced a Cat Bill into this house in 2003. Although the bill was never formally debated and ultimately lapsed, I believe it advanced the push from conservationists and cat welfare organisations for laws to provide for the welfare of domestic cats while at the same time reducing the negative effects of cats on native wildlife. Again I congratulate this government, in particular the member for Jandakot, Joe Francis, for successfully steering cat legislation through this Parliament. It was not an easy task. It was the only piece of legislation about which I received a death threat! Beware all those who want to enter into the area of cat management; it is fraught.

One of my aims when I arrived in this place was to work in the spirit of consensus but also to stand firm on matters of principle. On working in the spirit of consensus, the quality of Western Australian laws, as we all know, relies heavily on members’ ability to work together. Although it is not much publicised in the media, a great number of bills actually pass with the support of all parties—probably about 80 per cent. I am proud to have played my part in helping this house reach agreement on numerous bills and on a variety of amendments to bills as well. Indeed, on my calculation—I lie; on calculations by one of my research officers!—I have contributed to debate on 380 bills in my time in this place. No wonder my hair has gone the colour that it has! In terms of standing firmly on matters of principle, I am proud also to have been a member of the only party that has consistently supported judicial discretion and opposed mandatory sentencing and, together with Labor and the majority of National Party members, to have opposed the stop-and-search laws. I am also proud that my office has been a supporter of the parliamentary intern program and has hosted, over the years, 30 interns on a range of topics. I congratulate the education officers in Parliament who do a great job in keeping that program

going. I also acknowledge the work of Janice Dudley at Murdoch University who I have worked with over many years.

The next thing I want to raise is the committee work, which is a lot of work actually. As we know, much of the important but often invisible work of Parliament is done within its committees. From the commencement of my time here, I have invested considerable effort in our committee system. I started as a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation in June 1997 and went on to spend 12 years on that committee, including eight years as the deputy chair. I concur with Hon Linda Savage's comments in her valedictory speech that it is of serious concern to see the demise of that committee. During the last Parliament, I was very concerned when that committee, in effect, became dysfunctional—let us not mince our words—not just for the immediate but also for the long-term consequences of a very important committee in terms of the scrutiny of legislation. There were many occasions during the last Parliament when I referred bills to the Standing Committee on Legislation in the hope that that committee would be reactivated to do the work that it was designed to do. In my experience, the reports by the Standing Committee on Legislation have provided significant additional research and public input into important areas of law. Not to have that committee functioning, no matter what members might think about it, is a disservice to the public of Western Australia who, hopefully, we are here to work for.

I also jumped straight into the challenging area of native title law, being a member of the Select Committee on Native Title Rights in Western Australia from September 1997 to November 1998. In 2003, the Greens provided the numbers to support the establishment of a Select Committee on Advocacy for Children. Between June 2003 and July 2004, Hon Barbara Scott, Hon Kate Doust and I examined the case for a children's commissioner in WA. The report of this select committee report provided much of the groundwork and momentum for the establishment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia. The commissioner in my view has proved to be an important and much needed advocate for children and young people, and I congratulate the commissioner, Michelle Scott, on the excellent work that she is doing on behalf of children and young people in Western Australia.

In September 2005, the Greens again provided the numbers for the Select Committee on the Adequacy of Foster Care Assessment Procedures by the Department for Community Development. Hon Robyn McSweeney chaired that committee, and Hon Sue Ellery and I were the members of that committee. We concluded that particular inquiry in August 2008.

Between November 2006 and August 2008, I chaired the Select Committee into the Department of Education and Training. Between May 2008 and June 2009, I was a member of the Select Committee into the Police Raid on the *Sunday Times*. I am looking at Hon Adele Farina, who was also part of that exhaustive committee inquiry. That inquiry went some way towards setting the scene for laws that we passed through this place recently, the so-called shield laws for journalists. I think that committee played a role in highlighting the need to provide protection for journalists for their sources.

I was also a member of the Select Committee into the Appropriateness of Powers and Penalties for Breach of Parliamentary Privilege and Contempts of Parliament, along with Hon Norman Moore, I seem to remember, from November 2008 to June 2009. This committee inquired into the appropriateness of the powers and penalties provided for in the Parliamentary Privileges Act 1891 and the Criminal Code in respect of breaches of parliamentary privilege and contempts of Parliament. The recommendations of that committee have yet to be implemented. I do not know whether any of the recommendations have been implemented; I think not. That does concern me. It is often the case that the momentum is there with a select committee and the tabling of the report, but the actual carriage of the recommendations through this place stalls, for various reasons. That really is a business that should be sorted out, because it is only a matter of time before another circumstance will arise in which the Parliament will come under scrutiny, and potentially criticism, for having such limited options to deal with matters of contempt. We cannot brush it back under the carpet. We need to address that issue, and I would encourage members of this incoming Parliament to look at that report. My recollection is that it was a unanimous report. I do not think there was any dissent from the recommendations of that committee.

Hon Norman Moore: I agree with you entirely.

Hon GIZ WATSON: So hopefully there will be broad support for the changes that are proposed. It just will require the time of the chamber to put them through.

I was also a co-opted member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges from June 2005 to November 2012. I would like to note, as others I think have, the particularly successful review and adoption of the new standing orders by the Legislative Council. That was a long process—again I am looking at Hon Norman Moore and Hon Sue Ellery—and many hours were spent discussing the standing orders, as probably should be the case. It was a long, exacting and often tortuous process, over probably two years, to achieve that end. I think that most normal people would find much of the standing orders a bit esoteric, but they are the rules by which we operate in this place. That review of the standing orders has resulted in clearer rules, and in non-

gendered and contemporary language, which some of us worked very hard for. I have enjoyed being part of that committee to deal with, I guess, the internal workings of the Parliament and some of the challenges that we have in terms of governing ourselves.

Finally, in my committee work I have particularly enjoyed chairing the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations from June 2005 to November 2012. I would like to particularly thank my most recent fellow members of this committee. First, I thank my deputy chair, Hon Phil Gardiner, who was always an excellent deputy. I knew that if for some reason I could not be there, he would step straight into the breach. Actually, I must mention a couple of things that arose. I would come back from not being at a particular meeting, and suddenly there was going to be an inquiry into something, or there was something controversial, and I would think, “Gee; that seemed to happen when Hon Phil Gardiner was in the chair a couple of times”. You have done an excellent job, Hon Phil Gardiner, and I enormously enjoyed working with you. You have contributed an extraordinary amount to this Parliament in the short time that you have been a member of this place, and I appreciate your capacity to have an open mind, because that is very important, and also your capacity for hard work on that particular hardworking committee.

Hon Liz Behjat was also a member of that committee. It was not necessarily an easy job to be the only government member on a non-government dominated committee that was constantly prodding the state’s finances. But, Hon Liz Behjat, I have really enjoyed working with you on that committee, and I appreciate your fair play in that role and the fact that you truly operated as a parliamentarian, because one of the good things about committees is that hopefully we can take our party political hats at least half off in the work that we do there.

I also thank Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, an absolute stalwart, who always does her homework and always has been up since four o’clock in the morning writing the necessary questions to slowly grill any public servant who dares walk through the door—legendary—and also Hon Ken Travers, who does excellent work and has a fantastic knowledge of state finances. Of all the committees that I worked on, this was the one on which I thought we finally got all of that combination working well.

Hon Ken Travers: With your good leadership!

Hon GIZ WATSON: Thank you; I appreciate that. So I say thank you very much to the excellent and hardworking committee members for putting in enormous hours and dedication, for their support for me as chair, and also, dare I say, for occasionally having some fun.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Very rare!

Hon GIZ WATSON: That is not true, honourable member! I will tell members a story, then, because the member has just made me think about it. There was an occasion when the committee came back together for the first time after the summer break, and there was a spontaneous outbreak of hugging. I did not initiate it, which was actually quite unusual, but it was lovely to see, to the extent that the staff felt that they were missing out, so we actually had to include them as well. That is an indication of what can be achieved in a parliamentary committee with a little bit of fun.

I want to particularly pay tribute to the staff of the committee, because, of course, all this committee work cannot be done without a huge contribution from the committee staff. I pay tribute to all the committee staff. They do a very professional and extraordinary job. I think I have worked in various committees, both historically and currently, with practically every committee staffer, and there are too many to thank individually. But I would particularly like to thank the staff members who have supported the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations: Lisa Peterson, Carolyn Malouf, Renae Jewell, Samantha Parsons and Steve Hales. They have done an excellent job.

I now want to go onto the bits that need a bit more work. At the top of the list of unfinished business is responding to climate change. I wish I could leave this place secure in the knowledge that this government, and indeed this Parliament, is working to address climate change—cutting our carbon emissions, mitigating the impact of carbon pollution and adapting to a dryer climate. But sadly this is not the case. Accelerating climate change and reducing rainfall is upon us now. The south west of Western Australia is drying. We can see the changes occurring before our eyes in the south west, with significant die off, across the landscape, of mature eucalypts and other species—flooded gums, marri, jarrah and peppermint. We only have to drive through that area to see it. According to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, rainfall in the south west has already decreased 15 per cent since 1975. Stream flow has decreased by about 45 per cent. CSIRO’s climate modelling predicts that the south west will get hotter and drier again by 2030, the most likely range being an additional seven to 14 per cent decline in rainfall. Not only is the drying climate already impacting on the health of our forests, agricultural land, wetlands and threatened species, it will increasingly impact on human health and wellbeing.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has confirmed that Australia just had its hottest summer on record. Perth has just experienced its hottest April on record. Alarm bells should be ringing as we note that the Bureau of Meteorology has had to add two new colours—deep purple and pink—to its interactive weather forecasting chart. Its temperature range had previously gone up to only 50 degrees, now it extends to 54 degrees. David Jones, the head of the bureau’s climate monitoring and prediction unit, is reported as saying that the scale has just been increased today and he anticipates it is because the forecast coming from the bureau’s model is showing temperatures in excess of 50 degrees. The Australian Climate Commission recently acknowledged that Australia’s recent “angry summer” was worsened by climate change. Penny Whetton, senior principal research scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation recently said that such record temperatures will become the new normal in 40 years, as we are facing five degrees of warming by 2070 unless we significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Every major international institution, including most recently the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, tells us that exceeding two degrees of warming will cause unprecedented human suffering.

The response by this state government has been to ignore and downplay the changes and threats. Despite WA being a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions this government says response to climate change is a federal matter. On top of that, successive governments have invested in the refurbishment of the Muja coal power stations, an outrageous waste of money. Originally costed at \$150 million, it now stands at more than \$250 million and rising, with no completion date or final cost—more than \$250 million squandered on nineteenth century technology and polluting coal. What would \$250 million-plus have bought in clean energy?

Nationally, the latest clean energy index report tells a story of rising emissions and simultaneously falling electricity consumption across Australia. The key driver of increased emissions is growth in consumption of fuels, particularly bulk fuel for mining and aviation. However, output from coal-fired power stations is down and being squeezed out by the uptake of renewable energy and natural gas. The weaker demand for electricity, together with the shift to cleaner fuels, which has been noticeable over at least the last four years, largely explains the continuing fall in electricity-related greenhouse gas emissions. Perth households are leading the way with the installation of roof-top solar panels and the CSIRO tells us that wave power alone could meet Australia’s electricity needs five times over. The Australian Energy Market Operator also has recently found that it is technically feasible and affordable to run the national electricity market with 100 per cent renewable energy. The AEMO’s analysis identified that concentrating solar thermal power—technology the Greens have been championing, particularly in this last election—with molten salt storage is a key enabling technology as its thermal energy storage provides reliable around-the-clock power. What is lacking is the political leadership to make these renewable options reality. The lack of interest and commitment on this critical issue is astounding; it is inaction that we will all rue. This is an area in which being visionary and being practical are the same thing, and I implore this and future governments to immediately embrace this challenge.

The next issue I want to mention is biodiversity protection. We are consistently failing in our international obligation to protect WA’s unique plants and animals. In Western Australia there are 419 plants and 233 animals listed as “likely to become extinct or rare and therefore in need of special protection”. There are 21 ecological communities listed as “critically endangered”, 17 as “endangered”, 28 as “vulnerable” and three as “presumed destroyed” in the Threatened Species and Ecological Communities database. Only 20 per cent of Western Australia’s biological subregions meet the objective of 15 per cent or more reserved and 11 per cent of the subregions do not contain any formal reserved areas.

This is why, among other reasons, I introduced the Biodiversity Legislation (Priority Reforms) Bill 2012 to update the antiquated Wildlife Protection Act. Unfortunately, the bill lapsed but not before the government gave a commitment to introduce legislation of its own. I note that the opposition did the same. I urge the electorate to hold this government accountable to provide world-class biodiversity conservation legislation fitting for our internationally significant flora and fauna.

It is also worth noting that another piece of legislation that I introduced into this place was legislation to protect areas such as Margaret River from coalmining. Again, that was legislation that did not gain the support of other parties in this place. But I flag that that issue will not go away either. The question of the conflicting land use between things like coalmining and bauxite mining and, indeed, the potential impact of fracking in the state will see these issues arise in various communities again before too long. As much as I appreciate that it has been taken up by this government as a policy position, it is a bit like the uranium mining situation, easily changed by the stroke of a pen, a change of minister or a changed policy position. I am suggesting that somebody else might like to look at how we provide legislative protection, particularly for prime agricultural land in this state, and give the community a voice in determining what land use they want in their area.

The next issue I want to touch on is sustainable agriculture. I note the recent heightened attention from the Premier and the media to the state of agriculture in WA, and not before time. The viability of traditional farming practices is under sustained pressure from the high value of the Australian dollar and reliance on export earnings,

increasing costs, pressure from the giant retailers, continuing degradation and loss of fragile soils from erosion, salt and acidity, and reduced and more erratic rainfall. I note that the Premier said he could not make it rain. In fact, he is wrong. Clouds like trees, and he could do a lot to recreate the conditions that generate precipitation by refunding landcare work to reduce soil degradation and salinity and restore belts of native vegetation. New carbon farming and biodiversity initiatives also have the potential to diversify and supplement farm incomes but have been flatly rejected by the state government. As the Centre for Policy Development's recent paper "Farming Smarter, Not Harder: Securing our agricultural economy" states —

Without action to adapt to more variable and extreme weather, by 2050 Australia could lose \$6.5 billion per year in wheat, beef, mutton, lamb and dairy production.

With my background in environmental management I would never have guessed how much of my energy over the past 16 years would go into criminal justice matters! In the bidding wars between the other parties over who can be toughest on crime—I note from the motion debated earlier today that perhaps a truce has been called, which is an excellent sign—we have often been the only voice for rigorous scrutiny and an evidence-based, compassionate approach to this complex area of policy.

In December 2011 the outgoing president of the Law Society of Western Australia, Hylton Quail, wrote the following in *Brief* magazine —

Over the decade and a half that I have been involved in considering parliamentary criminal bills on behalf of the Society, most of them have promised 'tougher' laws in what seems to be a never-ending 'law and order' auction. As these initiatives are often perceived as electorally popular, they have rarely been subjected to close parliamentary scrutiny by major parties other than the Greens. Yet, with each passing year these new laws change the nature of our essential liberal democracy.

I am heartened that there is renewed interest in justice reinvestment. Taking a cooperative approach across all departments—education, health, housing, social welfare and justice—to address the causes of crime, is a far more just, sensible, compassionate and economical approach to criminal justice. Western Australia incarcerates people at twice the rate South Australia does, and I would like to think Western Australians are sick of forever throwing money at endlessly enlarging our prison capacity. Unfortunately, people are easily led by populist rhetoric geared to play on their fears, and I hope the current government might rise above this and provide some true leadership on this issue. On that note I thank Hon Simon O'Brien for his motion today, which points in that direction.

Throughout my time in Parliament I have strongly advocated for an alternative approach to reducing the scandalous rate of imprisonment of the custodians of this country, Aboriginal Western Australians. I have also called many times for the implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which have been gathering dust for 22 years. We have been reminded of the failure to act on these recommendations and the faults in a privatised custodial service by further outrages such as the wholly preventable death of Aboriginal elder Mr Ward in the back of a scorching transport vehicle owned by the state and run by the international prison corporation G4S.

That was after there had been a number of warnings about the condition of transport vehicles. I sounded the alarm by advising the house, well before Mr Ward's death, of an incident at Sandfire where a transport vehicle had overheated while Aboriginal prisoners were still inside it. This information had been provided to me by an executive member of the Aboriginal Legal Service. While I will watch with interest the approach within prisons of the new Minister for Corrective Services, there is an ongoing urgent need to stop people going into prison unless it is really warranted. Increasingly, evidence suggests that imprisonment does not deter, and results in worse behaviour than the behaviour that was actually the cause of the sentence. This fact has been highlighted numerous times—in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report, in the latest report of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, and in the evidence of criminologists including Professor Richard Harding, Professor Neil Morgan and Associate Professor David Indermaur.

Another area that still needs work is the issue of violence against women. Over the years, I have used my position here to be a voice for women and children affected by domestic violence. It is a depressing fact that women continue to be assaulted and killed within their homes, most frequently by family members or partners; 85 per cent of the victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence are women; and it is still the case, in a wealthy community like ours, that every day, half of the women and children who apply for refuge are turned away due to a lack of safe accommodation—the most basic of human needs. This has to change. I was pleased to play a small part in the amendments to the restraining orders legislation, in particular ensuring that the voices of those people who work at the coalface of this difficult issue were heard and reflected in the legislation.

Another significant area in which Western Australian laws were made antiquated and dangerously inconsistent is the area of sex work. I was proud to provide leadership in the push to decriminalise sex work in Western

Australia. In 2008 this Parliament passed legislation that effectively decriminalised prostitution, but the legislation was never proclaimed and lapsed under the incoming Liberal–National government. It is entirely predictable that any renewed push by this government to further criminalise sex work, as has occurred in Queensland and Victoria, will result in the sector being pushed further underground and into the arms of organised crime. One of the consequences will certainly be poorer public health outcomes and greater safety risks for sex workers. Meanwhile, Western Australia’s unofficial containment policy continues in some form, despite the fact that it was supposedly officially abandoned and despite the fact that it has been the subject of adverse comments and criticism due to its lack of clarity, the absence of legislative foundation and the potential to afford opportunities for corruption. The police have retained a unit within the organised crime division of WA Police that is responsible for liaising with operators and workers at sexual service premises. This unit maintains a database of sex workers, despite the fact that it is not an offence to be a sex worker in Western Australia, and that these people have not committed any crime. It is highly inappropriate, to say the least, for WA Police to retain this database—a permanent potential blackmail list—and to continue the unit’s practice of contacting and obtaining the identity of sex workers and other information. In my view, sex workers should have the same right to privacy as anybody else.

I leave troubled by the lack of transparency around the role of private donations and the influence this may have on policy and politics in Western Australia. When I say “donations”, I mean not only gifts, but also fees paid for service—for example, political fundraisers where purchasers receive ministerial contact in return for the cost of a seat. In WA, mining company donations to the WA Liberal Party went from less than \$100 000 in total in the mid-2000s to more than \$1.2 million in 2010–11, forming around one dollar in five of the party’s revenue. There is a serious question to be answered about the influence of such donations on the Liberal–National government. I am also troubled by the vast inequality in electoral spending and the effect this has on our democracy. It is becoming harder and harder for political parties that decline the donations—and the influence—of corporations to compete in election campaigns. The Greens will continue to advocate for a cap on election expenditure to provide a more level playing field.

The Legislative Council and its members in my view need to remain vigilant in protecting the powers and privileges of this place. Over my time here I have been deeply embroiled in understanding the history and ongoing role of the parliamentary system. While not, of course, perfect, the Legislative Council continues to play a vital role on behalf of all Western Australians by holding inquiries, scrutinising the operations of departments, working with parliamentary commissioners, interrogating the budget, accessing information withheld from the community and holding the government to account. Again, a lot of this work gets done within the committee system. It is of grave concern that the last Parliament saw a number of challenges arising in a number of committees.

During my time here there have been a number of challenges to the powers of the Legislative Council from either overzealous corporations—or their legal counsels—paid lobbyists and bodies such as the Corruption and Crime Commission. I am proud to have played some part in defending the Legislative Council, often in difficult circumstances. I believe the powers of the Legislative Council remain intact, but vigilance will always be required to maintain those powers.

I want to also stress the important role of independent commissions in this state. The Ombudsman, the Auditor General, the Commissioner for Children and Young people, the Inspector of Custodial Services and the Equal Opportunity Commissioner all provide important advocacy, advice and oversight in their particular areas.

Finally, some thankyou. I have enjoyed working with, and having been hugely supported by, my friends in the Greens; I am delighted to see many of them up there in the public gallery, and thank you very much for joining us this afternoon. They are too numerous to name, but I want to say that I love the Greens, I love the party and I love our commitment to the values of consensus and nonviolence, our commitment to social justice and the environment, and our commitment to working closely with the community. I hope I have been able to demonstrate some of the values of my party in my work here. I am deeply indebted to all the staff who have supported me in my work. I will start firstly with the staff here at Parliament—the chamber staff in particular, who I probably see more often than members of my own family and who feel like members of my family! Thank you for the friendly, professional and always timely assistance that you have provided over the years I have been here. I particularly want to thank Brian for his advice on my cricketing skills from time to time, when we had occasion to be playing the media. My skills did need some work, so thank you, Brian! I also thank the Clerk, Malcolm Peacock, for your support and advice and the professional work that you do on behalf of the people of Western Australia. I have valued it greatly. On that note, I also acknowledge the support and advice of two former Clerks, Mia Betjeman, and, in particular, Laurie Marquet, who was Clerk when I first started here. He was always a source of information and advice, whether it was the advice I was actually looking for or some other bit of useful information about the history of the separation of powers, or the French Revolution! Usually, if I went for a five-minute piece of advice in Laurie’s office, I would emerge an hour later thinking, “I must

remember all that; it was probably really important!” Seriously, I learnt a lot and I know my colleagues at the time, Hon Chrissie Sharp and Hon Jim Scott, also benefited from Laurie’s advice, and we miss him.

As I have already mentioned, the committee staff do an extraordinary job. More broadly, the staff of the dining room, the telephonists—everybody in this place—provide the most extraordinary service in a very professional way; I cannot fault the support that is offered to members of Parliament here. It has been a delight, and I will miss all of you very much—particularly some of the dining staff who, again, I feel are part of my family: Deb, Steve, Vince and Ozzie. They will be greatly missed, and I will have to come back and have lunch just to see them. I want to thank the many friends I have made in this place from all the other political parties I have worked with here. I have learnt from them and disagreed with them and we still remain friends. I note particularly the formidable parliamentarians such as Hon Norman Moore, whom I respect for his extraordinary and tenacious contribution and his honourable conduct. I think I have said this before, but when Hon Norman Moore gives his word, that is what will happen. I might not always like it, but he has been consistent. I respect the amount of work that it must I respect the amount of work that must have been done by someone who has been in this place for as long as you have, Hon Norman Moore. I wish you all the best for some more time to do other things. I also note other leaders from other political parties with whom I have enjoyed working. I did some committee work with Hon Murray Criddle. He left very suddenly from this place. I certainly enjoyed working with Hon Murray Criddle. Hon Kim Chance was the previous Leader of the Labor Party in this place. We also spent many, many hours working together. There are many other members of the Labor Party, in particular, whom I have worked closely with over many years. I of course need to particularly note the honourable comrade, Hon Sue Ellery, who I think after many years of protesting might now understand the value of a good hug.

Hon Sue Ellery: No!

Hon GIZ WATSON: She still denies it! Thank you, friends, for the work we have done together. I also thank Hon Adele Farina. We have talked about a lot of issues together, particularly in the area of criminal justice. I valued her advice and discussions. She does extraordinary work on behalf of her constituents.

I also want to thank, of course, my Greens parliamentary colleagues for their support and wisdom, not just the ones here in the state Parliament but also those who have gone before. In particular, I note the former Senator Jo Vallentine who has kindly joined us here this afternoon. Jo has been an inspiration and a long-term friend of mine for many decades. Thank you, Jo, for the leadership you have shown. I also thank former Senator Christabel Chamarette, and Senator Dee Margetts, who also, of course, was here as a member for Agricultural Region for a term. Senators Rachel Siewert and Scott Ludlam continue to do a great job in the federal Parliament. I wanted to acknowledge our pioneering Green in this place, Hon Jim Scott, who came into this place as the first Green. It must have been a tough gig, but he did a great job. To former members Hon Chrissy Sharp and Hon Paul Llewellyn, who represented the south west and in whose footsteps I hoped to follow but did not quite get there, you both did excellent work in this place. I also thank my colleagues here. I think to the detriment of the Parliament and public life, Hon Alison Xamon will not be continuing here. Alison has done an extraordinary amount of work in this place. She understood straightaway the opportunities that arose by being a parliamentarian. Her capacity to get her head around an issue or a bill and to produce excellent contributions to debates here has been noted by many people. I think it is a sad loss that Alison will not continue here. I wanted to acknowledge her work in a number of areas. She has worked very closely with mental health advocates and has earned their respect, as she deserves. In juvenile justice she was always right at my heels, waiting to take my portfolio and to debate juvenile justice issues. That is great; that is keen. She has been a very fine advocate. Her passion for workers’ rights included raising the issue of industrial manslaughter in this place. She has also made contributions in the area of urban bushland, has raised concerns about fracking in this state and more generally has spoken about critical issues around water. Thank you, Alison; you have done a great job and I wish you all the best in whatever you do next. To Lynn and Robin, who will carry on in this place and carry the Green vision forward, I wish you all the very best; I am sure you will do a great job. I look forward to watching your work and progress from somewhere else.

Finally, I want to give my heartfelt thanks to my electorate staff, who have done extraordinary things over the years. My first electorate officer was a woman called Carole Hutchinson. Previous to working for me she worked for Fred Chaney and then worked for Reg Davies as a then independent member in this place. It was fantastic to have Carole working with me in that first term in Parliament. Even though I thought it was interesting that this person was coming from, in effect, the conservative side of politics, when I asked her what she thought her political leanings were, she thought about it for a minute and said, “I think I’m a Marxist.” That was a perfect fit! Carole was an excellent asset to me and to the party in that she knew how the Parliament worked, so I was able to land on my feet. I thank her enormously for what she was able to contribute. At that time my research officer was Hon Robin Chapple, so thank you, Robin, in that capacity as well.

I want to thank and acknowledge Trish Cowcher, who job-shared the position of electorate officer for eight years. She was then poached to go and work with Senator Scott Ludlam. She does not claim that she was poached, but I think it was definitely poaching! Sue Hall also worked for me for eight years and then went on to work for Hon Lynn MacLaren.

My most recent staff have been extraordinary. If anybody has commented on the amount of detail and research that has gone into some of my contributions in this place, that has been the work of two extraordinary researchers, Irma Lachmund and Tonia Brajcich, who are both legally qualified and are both sharp, capable, energetic, indefatigable and extraordinary. I am going to miss you both very much, because we were a great team. Thank you.

Part of that team also, of course, was Nina Jurak, who has been my electorate officer. Nina has been an extraordinary anchor for our office. She is always ready to do the utmost and was always ready with a joke when we were feeling a bit flat, so thank you, Nina. Members will know in their own work how much constituent work gets done by our officers without us necessarily seeing it happening. There have been many times when I have got feedback about the service provided by my staff in my office, which has been fantastic. I have been told by people that they had tried every other political office and that mine was the only office that actually took on their issue, had a look at it and provided some resolution for them. Thank you, team, and all the best for whatever happens next.

I also acknowledge and thank Cameron Poustie, who worked in the last Parliament for all Greens members and assisted us with the legislative program. Cameron made an extraordinary contribution and I am very sorry that he is not now going to be a member for North Metropolitan Region, because he gave it a good crack. Thank you, Cameron.

I wanted to also acknowledge some of the many relief and temporary staff I have had in my office from time to time over the past 16 years, as members can imagine. I want to emphasise in particular a number of young women who have worked in my office. Some of these young women started out by doing an internship and then did some work in my office, and they have gone on to be and will be extraordinary contributors in the political landscape. Most recently Jess Panegyres did a fantastic job working on forest-related matters. She is a brilliant young woman who will go far. I am sorry that she has been poached and gone off to Sydney, but I am sure she will have a great future. Roxanne Moore also did an internship with me in my office. She has had a fantastic career. She wrote an internship for me on the need for a judicial commission in the states—something I meant to mention in my speech. I have put that on the agenda for work still to be done in dealing with the criticisms that happen from time to time about the role of the judiciary. New South Wales has an excellent system of a judicial commission, and it is long overdue to have something like that here. Indeed, the former Attorney General thought it was a good idea too but probably not a high enough priority. Rox did that particular report and she went on to work for the Chief Justice. Now she is just about to go to America as a Fulbright scholar, so best of luck to her. Amy Green also did fantastic research for me and will go on to great things, and also Jess McColl, who worked in my office. My partner, June, did a bit of talent spotting at the University of Western Australia and engaged her in Greens politics. She now has very high-powered job working with Senator Rachel Siewert. It is great to see young women get involved in these important issues and the politics of the day.

I want to acknowledge you, Mr President, in terms of your role and what you have provided in this place in the last Parliament. You are an excellent President—having experienced a number of them, which is no criticism of the other ones. Your commitment to a consensus approach is excellent and this Legislative Council is in safe hands with you in the Chair and I acknowledge the work that you do.

My last thank you is to my family. “Hi” to Mum and Dad who are watching me on the screen in Albany, if they have worked out the technology—I hope they did. They may be in their 80s but they can still work the technology, which is pretty good. They have been a constant source of support and inspiration to me. They remain politically active and interested and are forever giving the member for Albany a list of things that he needs to do. The member for Albany has said to me, “I saw your mum the other day. She still wants me to do this.” They remain very engaged in the political process and were active in the recent election campaign even at the age of 87 years, so thank you very much.

Finally to my partner, June, who has a put up with me working ridiculously long hours and being preoccupied with public matters for 16 years. She has been an invaluable source of advice, support and, to top it all off, an excellent campaign manager. I first met June when she was the campaign manager in 1990 for my first campaign when I ran for the seat of Forrest in the south west; I was so impressed that the rest is history. Thank you, June. Perhaps we can have some time to do other things now rather than being preoccupied with Parliament. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion be agreed to. Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich has the next call I believe.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: No.

The PRESIDENT: Have you finished?

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: No, I have not. I have deferred my speech. I have sought leave to continue my remarks at the next day of sitting.

The PRESIDENT: This is your opportunity to continue them if you wish.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I am paired, Mr President; therein lies the complication.

The PRESIDENT: That has not stopped people in the past, but I will take whoever stands.

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [4.05 pm]: I am not paired and I am here. I would like to join other members in this house in thanking His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia, Malcolm McCusker, for his speech opening the first session of the thirty-ninth Parliament of Western Australia.

This is my final opportunity to make special mention of Hon Norman Moore, my colleague from the Mining and Pastoral Region, who has been a consistent source of guidance and counsel as I am sure he has been to other members. After 21 May his absence will be noted and he will be sadly missed. His contribution to Western Australian politics has been significant. Last week we were attending the “Cue Parliament”; that is, the Murchison zone council meeting made up of councils from Meekatharra to Yalgoo, Sandstone, Mt Magnet and Cue. That was the last Cue council that Hon Norman Moore attended in his official capacity. In reciting the number of years he has been going there, he has attended 60 of those “Cue Parliaments”, which is probably a record that nobody else will match for a long time.

Hon Norman Moore: I don’t know if anybody wants to.

Hon KEN BASTON: I think I have done only 16 and I will certainly not reach 60. Hon Norman Moore, I wish you and Lee all the best for the future and I hope that parliamentarians can honour your legacy by continuing to govern to the best of our abilities and conscience for all Western Australians.

I recently welcomed newly elected members from the electorates in the Mining and Pastoral Region, and I also express my thanks to the very hardworking Liberal candidates in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and the north west. Although they were ultimately unsuccessful, they mounted wide-ranging and engaging campaigns, and, of course, the views of their electors were passed on to me and I will endeavour to ensure that they are represented in Parliament.

I will use this time today to outline my priorities for the Mining and Pastoral Region in our next term of government and beyond. The Mining and Pastoral Region possesses a huge amount of potential and is currently at an embryonic stage of development. As I previously said, I strongly believe it should be a priority of this government to facilitate the growth of this region. In order to do this, we must look carefully at what must be done to continue to encourage investment in regional Western Australia. We must continue to build strong foundations for growth. Decisions made about Western Australia’s future in the next decade will likely reverberate throughout much of the next century.

The Mining and Pastoral Region offers great potential for many industries: mineral resources, tourism, agriculture, fishing and aquaculture and so on. I believe the government can help to lay that blueprint so these industries can develop; most importantly, we must ensure the beneficiaries of this growth are the towns and communities that play host to these industries. As we all know, Western Australia has experienced a period of strong growth, although it is coming to a bit of a slowdown now, and I feel strongly that the government must consciously invest in our regional centres so that the state can absorb this growth. It is our job to ensure that the state’s economy remains strong and diverse and that our cities and towns are liveable and sustainable places where people can experience each stage of their life rather than having no choice but to move away to access better health and education opportunities. The key to achieving strength, diversity and liveability is ongoing investment in infrastructure such as roads, ports, air services, health services, education and housing in our regional centres.

Much work has been planned and completed by the Liberal–National government in making this a reality, and I look forward to seeing this continue in our next term of government. For example, in health, Kalgoorlie has received a \$55.8 million upgrade to health services, including a palliative care wing and an expansion that allows most of the acute services to be located closely together. The emergency department and the special care and observation wards will be located alongside the medical imaging department and a new building will be

constructed on the site. The expansion of the patient assisted travel scheme will also reduce the financial burden on people living in remote areas when they need to access special medical treatment. This is very important.

In housing, the affordability of and access to entry-level housing for young families and first home buyers is a challenge that has been met by this government in a number of regional centres. Learning from the incredible growth in population and housing shortages faced by centres such as Port Hedland and Karratha, this government has successfully and efficiently delivered projects in Broome, Kalgoorlie and Kununurra. I will mention LandCorp's Broome North development, which has provided much needed land, giving some breathing space to absorb the growth that is very likely to occur as the resources, agriculture and tourism industries continue to grow. The only word of caution I have is that we have tended to make the blocks smaller in those new developments. It is a shame that in order to bring down the price, we shrink the size of the block. When we have so much land in those vast areas, I think we can afford to continue to have 450 or 650 square metre blocks. Some of the blocks in those developments are smaller than that and I suppose that makes the land affordable so that somebody can build a house, but I believe that with people living closer together, we could have social problems in the future.

In referring to infrastructure, I would like to talk about the Browse liquefied natural gas joint venture partners, who have decided against a processing plant at James Price Point in its current form. However, I am hopeful that other projects will come into that area. Onshore Canning Basin gas was mentioned today, and I think Hon Norman Moore mentioned that in his speech yesterday, and, of course, that LNG industry is still there.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 698.]

Sitting suspended from 4.15 to 4.30 pm