

**ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE**

**HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural - Leader of the House)** [9.59 pm]: I move -

That the house do now adjourn.

*Shire of Gnowangerup Councillors - Adjournment Debate*

**HON MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM (South West)** [9.59 pm]: On Wednesday, 23 May it was my great pleasure and honour to represent the Minister for Local Government at a very important function in Gnowangerup. In fact, I was there to present some framed certificates in recognition of outstanding service in local government to three people; namely, Councillor Rob Hitsert, Councillor Jan Savage and Councillor Ken Pech. I would like to document some of the achievements of these people in local government. As members will appreciate, particularly those with constituents in small country towns such as Gnowangerup, Jerramungup and those other south eastern wheatbelt towns that some of us travel to, the very fabric of society is dependent upon the hard work of people such as those three. The dedication and commitment shown by Councillors Savage, Pech and Hitsert, who have collectively given more than 60 years of local government service to their community, must be not only recognised but also applauded. I would like to spend a little time drawing the attention of the house to some of their achievements.

Councillor Hitsert has been living and farming in the area for more than 40 years. He is therefore very familiar with the issues that are of concern to local people. As well as attending regular council meetings, he is chairperson of the Plant and Works Committee and is a member of the Finance, Audit, Industrial Relations and Industrial Development Committees. Councillor Hitsert is also involved in the Gnowangerup Fire Advisory Committee as deputy chief fire control officer, and is a member of the Stirling Range Fire Management Group. He is also council's delegate to the Gnowangerup and Districts Tourism Committee, and is strongly committed to encouraging tourism in the area.

Councillor Jan Savage has been involved for some 20 years in local government. Her commitment began way back in 1987 as the third female councillor on the Shire of Gnowangerup, a position she retains to the present day. During that time, she stepped up when the need arose to become deputy president from 1994 to 1995. In 1995, she became the first female president in the history of the shire, a role she continues to perform ably. Apart from regular council meetings, Councillor Savage sits on eight council-related committees, including the Emergency Committee, the Road Wise Committee, finance-related committees and five community-related committees, including the Ongerup Telecentre, the Ongerup Sports Complex Committee and the Ongerup Museum Committee. On a regional level, she has been chairperson of the Great Southern Zone of the Western Australian Local Government Association for three years. I believe she recently also received an Order of Australia medal, I think in 2005, for her outstanding commitment to the wider community. She was also announced the Shire of Gnowangerup's Citizen of the Year in 1993. In the area of law and order, Councillor Savage contributes her time as a practising justice of the peace, which she has done since 1990. She has been a member of the Children's Court since 1992 and an Ongerup Football Association Tribunal member since 1995. That is quite a varied list of achievements and abilities. Last, but certainly by no means least, I acknowledge the more than 25 years of dedicated service of Councillor Ken Pech. Councillor Pech received an Order of Australia medal in 1999 for his outstanding commitment to the community and was announced the Shire of Gnowangerup's Citizen of the Year in 1990. He was also made a freeman of the Shire of Gnowangerup in 2006 and his long service in local government was recognised by the then Western Australian Municipal Association in 2003 when he was presented with a life membership of the association. I will quickly detail some of Ken's achievements and contributions in local government. He has been a councillor since 1981 and he has served as the deputy president from 1984 to 1986 and from 2003 to the present. Significantly, Councillor Pech was the public face of the shire as the shire president from 1986 to 1994. Councillor Pech has given tremendous service not only at the local level, but also at the regional, state and national levels. From 1987 to 2000, Ken was the council's delegate to the great southern ward of the Country Shire Councils' Association and has been a delegate to the great southern zone of the Western Australian Local Government Association from 2001 to the present. His leadership qualities were further recognised when he was elected president of the then Western Australian Municipal Association in 1996. He served in that role until 1998, following a term as its vice-president from 1994 to 1996. At the national level, Ken was a delegate to the Australian Local Government Association from 1994 to 1998. My comments are just a small testimonial to the outstanding service that Ken Pech has given to local government at all levels. He is totally committed to promoting local government at every opportunity that arises and is completely dedicated to everything that he undertakes. Along with his local government commitments he has been heavily involved in the local and wider community through his representation on the WA salinity council, the Agricultural Practices Board of Western Australia, the Gnowangerup Agricultural School advisory committee and the Gnowangerup Training Centre, of which he has been chairman since 2000. I

am told that Councillor Pech has even found a little time to do some farming over the years. However, with that sort of schedule, he has been a very busy person.

I commend all of these people. They are part of a very successful and motivated shire council. Their continuing hard work has been something of a legend over the years. All three people have committed themselves to their shire with an enormous level of hard work and commitment. I congratulate all three of them and wish them well in their future personal and professional careers.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.07 pm*

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