

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 24 May.

The PRESIDENT: I advise the house that this is Hon Paul Llewellyn's first speech. Therefore, he should be given the usual courtesies that the house extends to members.

HON PAUL LLEWELLYN (South West) [3.18 pm]: I address this chamber for the first time. However, the year is not 2005. In fact, the year is 2055. It is the forty-ninth Western Australian Parliament. That is just 50 years from now. Members, please imagine that this house is being addressed not by me, but by one of your great-grandchildren, probably via virtual telecommunication conferencing technology. By 2055 the population of the South West Region that I represent has trebled to more than 800 000, while the population of Perth has decreased significantly. World oil prices skyrocketed in the first decade of the century, and that has driven extraordinary investment in energy-efficient technologies, with more efficient cars, more efficient appliances and more efficient industrial processes. Imagine it. As the transport costs have increased, there is a trend towards the re-localisation of population centres, industry and agriculture. An explosion of new technologies, innovation and adaptation, combined with forward-thinking government policy, has drought-proofed the Western Australian economy from global energy shortages. All the major centres throughout the South West Region - Northam, Bunbury, Margaret River, Narrogin, Pemberton and Walpole - have been linked by high-speed electrified rail networks. Those centres are well-serviced and compact urban areas, with light rail and public transport systems. Fuel cell electric powered vehicles have replaced the "infernal" combustion motors of the last century. Cities have become clean, safe, quiet and people-friendly places in which to live and work. Imagine that.

Agroforestry, integrated with water catchment management, has revitalised rural communities and secured regional water supplies. I am talking about 50 years from now. The south west has become a largely self-reliant agricultural region. Western Australia is exporting bio-safe chemical-free agricultural produce as a result of an extensive program of research and development into clean and safe organic agricultural systems introduced by Hon Kim Chance early in the new century.

Hon Kim Chance: Hear, hear!

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: The South West Region's renowned native forests and extraordinary biodiversity - which has been protected by conservationists - has become the basis of an internationally recognised tourism industry based on sail and solar powered ocean liner technology. Timber is sourced exclusively from farm forestry programs.

Cities, towns and many households actually produce their own power, process their own sewage locally and supply their own water on site. Power transmission lines, and massive sewerage and water reticulation infrastructure, all of which were showing signs of disintegration early in the century, are now almost entirely a thing of the past as households and regions become more self-reliant. Western Australia has regained world leadership in solar power technology after the silicon smelter near Bunbury, which produced nearly one-fifth of the world's high-grade silicon in the first decade of the century, was converted into a centre of excellence for renewable energy technology. Western Australia in 2055 is now producing one-fifth of the world's photovoltaic electricity, rather than one-fifth of the world's silicon.

The Western Australian ministry of energy and resource efficiency, fondly known by friends as MERee, was established following the 2005 commonwealth Productivity Commission inquiry into energy efficiency, and following a major oil price hike just a few years later as world oil production peaked. Western Australia has been weaned off its economic dependence on mineral and energy exports to become a more self-reliant, balanced and robust economy. The energy-guzzling alumina industry in the south west has died a natural death as international carbon trading for greenhouse gas emissions bit hard into the Western Australia economy, which had become one of the world's worst greenhouse gas polluters. Aluminium and even steel were replaced by the superior carbon fibre technology by 2030. Composite materials have come into their own.

The state's zero waste policy, which targeted recycling and resource efficiency through investment, research and innovation, achieved its goal of zero waste by about 2035.

I now come back to the thirty-seventh Parliament. Mr President and fellow members, I look forward to our working together to expand this vision over the coming four years as we deal with the power, water and energy crises this state is facing. My central contention is that the technology to build a clean, safe and smart economy is already with us. However, it will take intention and not just hope to realise the vision of ecologically sustainable development.

We now need to take a journey back in time. In 1891 the Legislative Assembly, which was located not in this building but on St Georges Terrace, was lit by electric power for the first time. That power was supplied by the

WA Electric Light Co, a private company. The lights were dim and flickered and faded, but they were a powerful symbol of modernity. Today, barely 100 years later, we have Internet, extranet and wireless connection to the World Wide Web, our words are recorded and processed, and video images can be beamed into the houses of people in our electorates. From the time the Legislative Assembly chamber was first lit by electric light until now there has been a technological revolution in almost every area of life. The rate of change is getting faster and faster.

Electric power in the state of Western Australia has remained a creature of the steam age. It has been frozen in time. We still choose to burn fossil fuels, preferably coal, to boil water, produce steam and turn shafts to generate electricity that is transmitted along long, thin wires on power poles to appliances in homes hundreds of kilometres away. One could not think of a worse system.

Electricity has become an essential service. We can hardly imagine a modern world without electricity. As a matter of fact, although power is still generated from coal, gas and steam, there has been a revolution in power generation technology. However, that has not taken off in Western Australia. Solar panels can now be put on a person's roof and be plugged directly into the household electricity network, pumping power back into the grid. Just 12 modern wind turbines located at Albany on the south coast produce the equivalent of 75 per cent of that city's electrical power. I implore members and Mr President to go and look at that if they have not already done so. Some modern industrial economies in Europe are now getting 20 per cent of their power generation from clean, safe electrical energy.

Western Australia is suffering from an electrical infrastructure crisis. To understand how we can remedy that crisis, we need to understand how our electricity system was built and how we got to the point at which hundreds of kilometres of fragile powerlines are delivering power in this state. In the 1900s many small privately owned or local-government run power generators were dotted throughout the regions. They were set up suburb by suburb and town by town, in places like Claremont, East Perth, Fremantle, Northam, Bunbury, Collie and Albany. Isolated local networks were running the streetlights, the local iceworks and a few small factories. The power was unreliable and of poor quality, but hell, it was modern and convenient.

As time went by, we got bolder and bigger power plants and turbines and longer wires. There were more consumers and more appliances. There were even electric trams. After the war, the big state takeover happened in earnest. Suburb by suburb, town by town, local generation networks were taken over and connected to the state grid. That consisted of main power stations with long, thin wires. It can be seen what was in the making. In 1951 Harvey, Waroona and Mandurah joined the grid. In 1964 it was Narrogin, Kendenup, Kojonup, Brookton and Pingelly. Fridges, washing machines and lights were being used by everyone. Reliability and quality of supply was only just good enough. When the power went down, the Simpson washing machine just went a bit slower! That was okay. By the 1970s we all had two fridges, televisions, automatic washing machines and dishwashers. There were big industrial expansion plans and the power system was reasonably stable because all the poles and wires were relatively new. We then come to the 1990s to 2005. Enter personal computers, lap tops, airconditioning, heaters, coolers, three televisions, two fridges, king-size freezers, computer games, EFTPOS, security systems, videos and VCRs, all of which are highly sensitive to power quality. That creates a problem. Let us look at that. They all demand high-quality power supply. That is the case even in the bush where it might be expected that people could get by with a little less power.

The features of the system are giant-size generators located hundreds of kilometres away that supply highly sensitive micro loads through long wires - wires that have reached their use-by date. It is an infrastructure nightmare in the making. Cascading system-wide failures become common. The system is unstable, inflexible and brittle with little room to move. When one major generator goes down, the system cascades and there are major failures. There is a collision of the public interest and environmental and occupational health and safety.

There are a lot of unsatisfied customers out there and they vote. We are charged with making the decision about how to remedy that situation. The solution on offer from our utilities is more of the same - another coal-fired power station, please, more transmission lines and more energy-guzzling industries. At the same time we are experiencing climate changes that bring the state to a standstill. They include record hot days, record rainfall events and even tornadoes. I wonder what that is related to? Could it possibly be climate? That is not to mention failed water pipes that bring the entire city to a halt. There are infrastructure problems, but they are all part of the same problem. When will we learn that when we are in a hole, we should stop digging? When will we learn that when the temperature gauge in the car gets into the red, we should stop the car to work out the problem? I tried that one day coming back from Manjimup. The gauge was in the red and I put my foot down because I thought it would help. It did not.

There is another way we can resolve this infrastructure crisis. We need to go back to the future. We should look at the way our infrastructure was developed from small-scale generators that were located within local networks. If we do, we can start reconstructing the infrastructure from the outside by using modern, efficient power-

generating technology. We can build the infrastructure to what it was. We have to locate the generation and the control at the local level, where it all started.

This was what I was up to in my former life before being elected to this house. Using four modern turbines, we aimed to inject power into the local grid to meet all the electricity needs of the township of Denmark and the surrounding district. By locating the generator at the extremity of the grid, we would be able to reinforce it. Not only that, the wind farm was to be community owned and driven. The economic benefits of generating that power were to go straight back to the local community. It was in the public interest.

One of the great energy experts of our time, Amory Lovins, in a recent book titled *Small is Profitable - The Hidden Economic Benefits of Making Electrical Resources the Right Size* states that there are three critical ingredients to electrical power planning. The first is an understanding of the technology. We need to become energy literate at this time. We need to understand markets and the role of markets and equity and fairness in those markets. There is also a need for good government and policies. All those factors must act in the public interest.

There is a technological revolution in power generation that is no different from what has happened in telecommunications. The mobile telephone I am holding has no wires. Renewable energy technology will do to the power generation industry what laptop computers and memory sticks have done to the information technology industry. The device I am holding is a memory stick. It contains the entire library of this place. It uses smart technology that will be able to replace some of the steam-age technology that we are using. That is the upshot.

I advise members of a small device called a micro gas turbine. It is a good device. When electricity is generated, most of what is produced is waste heat with only a small amount of electricity. Honda and Osaka Gas in Japan have invented a micro gas turbine that is the size of a domestic gas heater. Picture coming home on one of those days in the dead of winter. Everyone switches on their television, lights, heaters and reverse cycle airconditioners. The power demand peaks and an infrastructure crisis begins as the system becomes unstable. That would not happen to us. When we get home we would turn on our gas turbine, which has an electrical cord that is connected to the electrical harness of the house. It used to drive a fan, but now the micro gas turbine sends one kilowatt of electricity back into the grid at the very time when the grid is at its most vulnerable. Fifty thousand such devices could produce 50 megawatts of power back into the grid. There is no market for that type of technology. The only thing on the agenda is large-scale, coal-fired and gas turbines. We need to transform the market structures of this economy so that we can bring on line technology that is intelligent and powerful; technology that is equivalent to mobile phones and memory sticks. Fifty thousand turbines on line create 50 megawatts of power. If even 10 per cent of them are not working, only five megawatts of power would not be on line. If one of our gas turbines or coal-fired turbines goes down, the system goes into a state of shock. We should decentralise power generation and control systems. The domestic gas turbines would have an intelligent switch that can be switched on by the substation. Of course, it can be turned off if need be, but it can be brought on line on demand. That kind of infrastructure design is highly intelligent and of the technological world that we live in, not of the steam age. This is the way forward - small, profitable and in the public interest. It is inherently more democratic. The community directly participates in its own power generation and we resolve the infrastructure crises that we are having right now - just like rainwater tanks contribute somewhat to our water supply now. I will be working in this house to promote energy and resource efficiency like this; to remove the barriers to these technologies, which are clean, safe and in job-rich industries; to promote government leadership, mandated power procurement policies - are Hon Kim Chance and others listening?

Hon Kim Chance: I am taking notes.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I refer to power procurement by government departments of some or all of their electricity from clean, safe, renewable technologies. I will be working to ensure that markets are fair and equitable and that these efficient technologies get a fair go. I will be working to achieve feed-in laws for renewable energy so that the barriers we are experiencing now in Denmark and other places are taken away and that that technology can find its place where it belongs now, not in the past, not with steam age technology.

Mr President, members and friends, I look forward to working together with you to unleash the full potential of sustainable technologies so that we can build a safe, secure and sustainable future for our state. I have to thank all members but I must also thank some other people. I thank my mum, Dulcie Elizabeth Obery, and my dad, Gerald Vincent Llewellyn, who were in South Africa in the 1950s, in love across racial boundaries in the midst of the apartheid regime. They fled to Australia 20 years later, having feared for their lives, for a new life. I have had that new life and I have had the education. I am profoundly indebted for the steady, tolerant and generous nature of my mum and dad. I am indebted to this country for providing me with those opportunities. It is my turn to repay and to return that generosity. Pamela Rumble, my partner and friend, is responsible for my being here. If members have any complaints, Pamela Rumble lives in Denmark - call her! She is the brains trust and

she is steady, so I will have a lot of support. My son, Tsepo, and my daughter, Manda, have put up with having a greenie for a dad.

I need to thank the previous members of the Greens (WA), the people who were in this house, and I will do it in the order in which I met them when I first came to Australia. Hon Dee Margetts I met at Curtin University of Technology around 1972. We went to school together. She is an extraordinary person, who has taken an extraordinary leadership in the whole of Australia as a senator and led the antinuclear movement for quite a period of time. She has made a great contribution to the Agricultural Region of this state. Hon Giz Watson is my partner in crime, and will continue to be so. Since Murdoch University in 1975, we have travelled a few miles together; so look out; we are organised. Hon Christine Sharp made her first dashing entry into the campus of Murdoch University in 1975 as the first PhD student - looking at what? She was looking at the politics of the forestry industry. She has achieved an extraordinary amount in the past 35 years or however long it is. I am very grateful to have been associated with Hon Christine Sharp. I will come back to her, as a matter of fact. Hon Jim Scott and Hon Robin Chapple were early Greens members, forerunners and extremely hardworking people. I am very proud to be following them in this house. However, the last word is really for Hon Christine Sharp, from whom I will take over representing the South West Region in this house, and her partner, Andrew Thamo, and their family, Tosh and Lara, who have had to put up with their mum being a greenie. I wish them all the very best in their future lives. I take on the challenge of representing the South West Region and all of its magnificent forests, rivers and flowers, knowing that Hon Christine Sharp has laid a solid foundation.

[Applause.]

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

The PRESIDENT: Before I give the call to Hon Nigel Hallett, I remind honourable members that it is the honourable member's first speech and, therefore, it is not appropriate that anyone should interject.

HON NIGEL HALLETT (South West) [4.01 pm]: Thank you, Mr President. It gives me great pleasure to stand in this chamber to deliver my maiden speech. Mr President, I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to you on your election as President of this house. It gives me great honour and pride, first, to have been selected by the Liberal Party and, secondly, and importantly, to have been supported by the electors of the South West Region, which has a total area of 44 518 square kilometres.

I recognise and pay tribute to my family: my wife, Susan, and my two sons, Ian and Michael. My mother, Grace, is also here today in the gallery. My late father, Tom, was a person of great ideals, honesty and integrity. My parents were married for more than 50 years, and I had an upbringing of which I am proud. Their moral guidance, support and friendship helped to shape me as an individual. Both my parents were born in the United Kingdom. Both served in World War II, with dad serving in the Middle East, Borneo and New Guinea. It was here that my father forged a lifelong friendship with Keith MacKinnon, father of Barry, a former state minister and opposition leader of our Parliamentary Liberal Party. My parents were typical of their time. Both were committed to a stable home and to providing opportunities for a better life. Both lived through the Great Depression of 1929, the consequences of which I did not fully appreciate in my youth.

Through my parents, the person who I learnt to admire for his achievements was the former Premier Sir David Brand. Sir David was born in Dongara and came from an early farming family in Mullewa. When World War II broke out, he enlisted in the Army. Shortly after, the Liberal Party was founded in 1944. Sir David won the seat of Greenough in 1945. In fact, he was the first parliamentary member of the new Liberal Party in Australia. Under his premiership, there was unprecedented industrial development in the state, including the development of the Kwinana industrial strip, the construction of the standard gauge railway from Kalgoorlie to Kwinana, mining in the Pilbara and progress on the Ord River scheme.

My father was allocated a small farm in Bridgetown through the war service land settlement scheme, and this was where my brother and I were raised. My education at both primary and high school level commenced in Bridgetown, and I later went to Hampton Senior High School in Perth. I was fortunate to have an opportunity to have a career in farming. My brother David and I worked together in partnership for 15 years. In the middle to late 1980s, interest rates were in excess of 20 per cent. For many small businesses there were opportunities to expand. However, the financial uncertainty was a limiting factor for many. I believed that there was an opportunity to expand the family business, and chose Corrigin. Ironically, the farm in Corrigin was once owned by the late member for Canning, Jack Hallett. There was some financial pressure at the time, but this venture proved to be successful for our family. Farming has a wonderful way of teaching a person many life skills through everyday challenges. The 1980s were a fantastic time to be part of the state's rural development. Having a young family, my wife and I experienced the difficulty of such things as not having a doctor on call and having to travel long distances for medical assistance. As country people, there was also the impact of dealing with isolation and single personalities in a small school, and then the division of the family, with the children moving to the metropolitan area for secondary schooling. Having been fortunate to experience both city and country lifestyles, I recognise that no matter where people live, they have a right to expect equal access to

quality education, health and police services, and they have a right to well-maintained roads. We need to change this government's city-centric approach and to ensure the provision of fundamental services in rural and remote areas. The region faces many issues and many ongoing problems, which typically result from a lack of understanding and action.

The agricultural industry has been neglected for many years by successive governments. Apart from the severe population decline in the bush, we are now witnessing a government that cannot develop initiatives and make decisions. An example of this can be found with the exceptional circumstances legislation, which has affected many of our north-eastern wheat growers and associated businesses. The time taken to evaluate the seasonal needs of these small businesses is appalling. Anybody who knows the industry can tell by September whether the season has failed. Why is Western Australia still negotiating with its federal counterpart in May of the following year? The state government can and should take a far more proactive role in this area. It is a reasonably easy solution.

Another area that I must comment on is our dairy industry. Western Australia has lost approximately 30 per cent of its dairy farmers through record low prices, and processors are also finding the going tough. I cannot find a winner in this outcome. The appropriate marketing bodies must help in identifying niche and expanding markets for the benefit of Western Australian businesses. For example, China has a serious shortage in its supply of milk. The average individual consumption of dairy products in China is 25 kilograms per annum. In comparison, the world average is 100 kilograms, and consumption in Australia is a whopping 381 kilograms per person per annum, which is among the highest levels of consumption in the world. China is importing every available dairy cow suitable for its domestic needs from Australia. Last year, it imported 60 000 head of cattle from Australia. Fortunately, this is to the benefit of cattle producers in the short term. However, to benefit industry in the long term, producers must be provided with the opportunity to export dairy products, without jeopardising the lineage of their herds. Agriculture needs leadership and stability.

A successful initiative of the previous Liberal government was the infill sewerage program, which was designed to move societies away from outdated and environmentally damaging waste disposal methods. The program had tangible benefits for the community, but has been sadly neglected by the Gallop government. That has been to the detriment of smaller towns. That has happened despite the Gallop government claiming to be interested in the environment.

We have also seen Labor's lack of resolve in projects such as the Peel deviation. Constant delays illustrate Labor's lackadaisical and irresponsible approach to infrastructure development. The need for this deviation is urgent. On a normal day, at least 30 000 vehicles pass through Dawesville, creating severe bottlenecks and unnecessary driver angst. It is only a matter of time before a serious accident occurs on this dangerous, choked-up road system. Expressions of interest to construct the deviation need to be called. The minister should make this project a priority by calling on Main Roads Western Australia to initiate the tender process, instead of dilly-dallying and waiting another 12 months, which is too often the case.

There has also been a remarkably similar lack of desire to do anything about Geographe Bay. This bay is very important to Western Australia's health and economy. There are a number of areas of concern: pollution, erosion, an increase in pressure from the growing recreational and professional needs of the community; and various outdated methods of fishing. All types of trawling and net fishing should be banned, with the exception of crab drop nets. Aquaculture should be allocated much more research and development support, which will ultimately lead to more sustainable fish stocks. We should also consider the creation of more artificial reefs to improve the marine environment and the quality of the fishing experience in Geographe Bay. South Australia, New South Wales and the Northern Territory had massive turnarounds in King George whiting and other fish species, particularly barramundi, when they took effective and responsible action in dealing with similar problems. This has generated huge increases in tourism alone. I seek bipartisan support in preserving the quality of Geographe Bay for all uses well into the future.

Mr President, you may not be aware that the south west region extends from just north of Mandurah to just east of Albany. It contains three cities: Mandurah, Bunbury and Albany. The region has a population that is heading towards 250 000. The region is among the fastest, if not the fastest, growing of all in Australia. The south west has a broad economic base covering agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction, processing and manufacturing, fishing, tourism and retailing. I will give some examples of income derived in the 2002-03 financial year: mineral extraction, mining and processing, \$2.2 billion; retail, \$1.9 billion; tourism, \$588 million; agriculture, \$493 million; mineral sands, \$305 million; coal, \$273 million; and trade through the Bunbury port of some 12 million tonnes. When we consider that these figures do not cover the entirety of the economic story of the south west region, we can see the importance not only for this region but also for the future and prosperity of all of Western Australia.

This state needs the commitment of a government that understands and wants to see these areas develop and prosper. Why is it difficult to get basic infrastructure such as roads, a reliable power grid and a water supply that would prevent towns such as Manjimup, Bridgetown and Boyup Brook from being on drastic water restrictions? Why is this government continuing with another grossly inefficient and time-consuming feasibility study? The issues and the expertise to rectify these problems have been available for some time, yet the state government has never recognised this or seized the opportunity available. In a time of record revenue collection and a booming state economy, real infrastructure growth is a necessity that will carry Western Australia through the next decade. There are no excuses for delays or shortfalls given the predicted economic growth and population increase.

Let us look at stamp duty on vehicles and housing. How many members are aware that Western Australians are choosing to purchase vehicles outside this state because the Gallop government-imposed stamp duty is so excessive? Stamp duty on housing - one of the highest rates in Australia - creates windfall Treasury surpluses that are not being used for the benefit and development of Western Australia. When we look into recent history and to the British government at the time when Maggie Thatcher took over from James Callaghan's Labor government, we can see that she reduced the top tax rate by 20 per cent and actually collected more tax. Although her actions seemed counter-intuitive, they highlight the fact that when government lets people get on with working and making a decent living and stays out of everyday life, more revenue is generated.

Payroll tax is an abhorrent tax imposed in a manner that strangles the incentive for businesses to grow their work force. Compounding this structural problem is the fact that the revenue gained has not been re-invested in industry and training of skilled labour. There has been much talk in recent months about the lack of skilled workers in Australia. Once again I call for bipartisan support in this Parliament to abolish this tax, which will consequently encourage businesses and industry to divert their revenue from unfair taxation to skilling and expanding their work force.

While I am talking about apprenticeships, it is time to revisit these schemes. Apprenticeships need overhauling. They need to be tailored to fit individuals and based on competency, not time served. Students have a great understanding of modern technology; this, combined with greater flexibility and access to information, has created a generational shift that to date has not been accounted for in the education system. Apprenticeships are just as valuable as a university degree. This is the message that Dr Brendan Nelson, the federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, has been sending. We now have the difficult task of convincing a generation of secondary students and their parents that apprenticeships are valued and needed by society. This preconceived notion of inadequacy is quite amazing, considering that a majority of Western Australia's wealth is derived from the mining, oil and agricultural activities, which immediately come to mind, that are heavily dependent on tradespeople.

I will also briefly touch on tourism. Approximately 600 000 tourists a year visit Western Australia. This figure is a small increase on the previous year, but below the national growth average. Why is this, one might ask? Towns such as Mandurah, Busselton, Margaret River and Dunsborough experience population blow-outs during holiday destination time without being provided with adequate resources to cope with demand. What provisions are being made through infrastructure development to handle these ever-increasing numbers? I suggest very little. The road between Yallingup and Augusta has claimed many lives over the years, yet it still remains substandard. The ever-increasing heavy vehicle traffic on South Western Highway between Donnybrook and Manjimup is creating a potential traffic disaster, as we have all tragically witnessed in recent weeks. We must recognise that trucks are an essential part of our economy. Drivers' professionalism and dedication stands testament to the rig operators who support many Western Australian families and businesses. Governments at all levels need to work cohesively to provide safer and more strategic road systems to counter ever-increasing traffic problems and cater for all road users. Many tourist owners and operators are experiencing difficulty with large increases in tax rates on caravan parks and public liability insurance premiums on recreational activities. Government at all levels should be promoting such businesses and not use these enterprising people as mules for Treasury.

Western Australia's greatest resource is young people. Youth today face greater challenges and opportunities than ever before. To assist them we must continually develop programs to ensure the growth of Western Australia. We must encourage them to set goals, to embrace the principles of family and family life, to take part in communities and be part of community life so that the inextricable decline in social capital is reversed and a contribution for future generations is made.

In closing, there are a number of people I must acknowledge for their support, time and experience in my political journey, which began in 1996. My wife, Susan, endured the rigours of lay party political life. As a former senior vice president of the Liberal Party, she has supported my endeavours. To my sons, thank you both for your understanding. My thanks extend from the MacKinnon family to my divisional president in Charlie Martella; Hon Geoff Prosser, the member for Forrest; Michelle Riley, who ran my campaign; divisional stalwarts

Hon Muriel Patterson, Judy Johnson, Garth Hammond and Craig Carbone; my new colleague in Troy Buswell, the member for Vasse; the current member for Leschenault, Dan Sullivan; Bob and Leonie Maslin; Fay Duda; and Gary Beckett.

The last person, but certainly not the least, is former State President of the Liberal Party and now senator for Western Australia, David Johnston. I have been to many parts of the state with David, and he has always been ready to give encouragement and advice. Our friendship has grown in respect over time, and it is one on which I place great value.

In closing, I congratulate all new members in this the thirty-seventh Parliament of Western Australia. The reason we are all here is to achieve a better outcome for Western Australia and all its people. It is a role that I embark on with great pride. It is truly a humbling experience to represent the South West Region in the Western Australian Parliament.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: Honourable members, I am about to give the call to Hon Shelley Archer. It is the honourable member's first speech; therefore, in accord with our usual practice, there will be no interjections.

HON SHELLEY ARCHER (Mining and Pastoral) [4.21 pm]: I am very proud to stand in this chamber today as a new member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in this vast electorate. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and recognise the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet today and of the land encompassing the electorate of the Mining and Pastoral Region. I had the opportunity to meet with some of the local indigenous elders and community workers during the recent election campaign. I found that, against all odds, they continue to campaign and work for their people. They show perseverance in the face of much hardship. I commit today to helping them in my new role.

I want to talk briefly about the Mining and Pastoral Region. This region is an area of vivid contrast. It has a natural beauty, with magnificent scenery - gorges, billabongs and tidal surges that are second to none. It has a magnificent coastline. People can enjoy a sea expedition into the stunningly beautiful Buccaneer Archipelago, camp under the stars on remote beaches, fish, collect oysters, bushwalk, bird watch or just dream. The region contains some of our state's richest history, colourful characters, pristine and fragile environments and greatest wealth, but at the same time it has terrible poverty and appalling living conditions. While it is an ancient land, for the most part untouched since the Dreamtime, it is the centre of global attention from Tokyo to Beijing, and from London to Los Angeles.

I am particularly proud of the fact that the Australian Labor Party won three of the five seats in this region. It was a privilege bestowed on me by my party when it selected me as its candidate; but, more importantly, it was a privilege extended by the voters of what is arguably the world's largest state electorate. While I am aware of the trust that has been reposed in me, I am also aware of the enormous responsibility it brings. Today I will outline how I intend to address that task.

I am from a large Catholic family. With mum and dad plus 16 kids and the odd foster child along the way, we could have almost made an Aussie Rules football team. It was always a struggle for us to get by. I know how tough it was and can be because I lived it with my family and siblings. My journey began with my father, Ted Archer, who was one of this state's most distinguished trade unionists. He embodied the values of respect for others, tolerance, equity and fairness, social justice, help for others less fortunate in the world and the right of working people to freely organise into trade unions and to bargain for better living standards and social conditions. At a very early age, dad aroused and encouraged in me a sense of justice, integrity and social conscience, and the need to look after those who are less fortunate than we are - the poor, the disabled, the disadvantaged, the old, the oppressed and those who need a helping hand.

The Liberal Party and its policies have produced a further drift away from the mainstream of Australia of the young, the poor and the old. These people believe that they are now being punished for the circumstances in which they find themselves.

My father has been gone now for 18 years, but he is still very much with me, in my memories and in my heart. I can feel him today looking down on me, and I am warmed and strengthened by his presence.

As an adult and an independent woman, I have received help and inspiration from some impressive women whom I have met through Emily's List. I particularly want to thank Joan Kirner, Kay Setches and Cheryl Davenport, who have been my mentors from the time I was preselected. Emily's List is a political network that was formed to increase the number of women Labor parliamentarians who are willing to support the crucial issues of child care and equal pay and to be pro-choice, and they must support in the community the principles of equity and diversity. It is because of this organisation that my journey took a turn. We were in Alice Springs at

a national meeting of Emily's List and indigenous women when I realised that there needed to be equal representation in Parliament of women from all walks of life. I made a commitment then that I would do all that I could to ensure that women and working families had a strong voice in Parliament.

Life is stressful for many working families. Balancing work with family needs is particularly difficult when the contemporary imperative is that both parents work and the kids are in child care or out-of-school care. Much of the onus falls on women. For families in the north it is even worse. Promoting a more family-friendly balance between work and family life will be a constant theme of mine in this chamber, as will the issue of equal pay for women. While the principle of equal pay was won over three decades ago, the reality today is that women are still paid less than men.

As a woman, I am concerned at the increasing intrusion of fundamentalist religious influence into the political sphere of our society. This trend is particularly concerning to me because it is especially oppressive of women's rights and freedoms. As a society, we are inclined to be dismissive of such concerns, associating fundamentalism with the oppressive sharia law and the denial of suffrage in non-democratic Arab and African states. However, in Australia we are not immune to it. Increasingly, we are seeing efforts to impose reactionary and literal interpretations of religious scripts on secular institutions and issues.

Freedom of religion and the right to practise our faith without hindrance in a multicultural and diverse society are rights that I also espouse. However, that must not override the important principle of the separation of church and state on which our legislation and system of law are based.

If we want to talk about what is fundamental, then surely it is a fundamental right for women to make decisions about their own lives and bodies. I deplore the public hand wringing over unwanted teenage pregnancies by those who at the same time want to restrict commonsense access to safe contraception, and the double standard of those who espouse individualism and free choice as an idealistic and political principle but who want to restrict the right of women to control their own fertility. As a woman, a mother and a grandmother, I will argue for the right of women to make choices fundamental to their physical and mental health, and that this choice should be available to all women, regardless of their economic status.

There is also another issue that I believe is truly fundamental - fundamental to our democracy. For too long I have noticed the practice of removing indigenous voters from the electoral roll. This is especially the case in the north west of the state. Before the last state election, a letter was sent to many indigenous voters. If the mail was not collected in time, they were removed from the electoral roll. This practice exploits the itinerant and nomadic nature of many indigenous citizens and applies a white man's one-size-fits-all law to indigenous culture. Indigenous people face many problems: third-world infant mortality rates; lack of access to fresh, clean, running water; lack of employment opportunities and training; and alcoholism and other health problems. However, if they are stopped from voting, they are excluded from having their voices heard in our society. In this chamber I will stand up for the rights of indigenous Australians. I will defend their right to vote and their right to share in the prosperity of this, their country.

One of the things from which I derive constant inspiration is the sheer physical beauty of my vast electorate. It is no wonder that icons like the Ningaloo Reef are on the World Heritage list. I opposed the proposed Mauds Landing development and applauded when the Gallop government quashed it. The need to develop a management plan to secure the long-term future of Ningaloo Reef is a high priority. At the moment, there are a number of overlapping state and federal departments and an over-abundance of agencies, all with responsibility for some aspects of the reef. They should be replaced with a single Ningaloo reef authority, modelled on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. In this chamber I will argue for an intelligent balance between the environment and development. However, if there is a reasonable doubt about the benefits of any development, I will give my support to the environment every time.

One of the things I remember as a kid is Sir Charles Court railing about the Canberra conspiracy. The funny thing now is how faint are the voices in the opposition to the most blatant power grab from Canberra since federation. The Howard government wants to run our tax system, control our health system, regulate our technical and further education colleges and universities, take over our industrial relations system and blackmail the state governments on funds for water and transport projects if they do not toe his ideological line. Australia is a federation of states. Even a constitutional conservative like Professor Greg Craven from Curtin University has criticised the Howard government for its power grab. I suspect it will be tough enough getting people in Perth to understand the needs of the north west let alone a remote insular bureaucracy nestled on the banks of Lake Burley Griffin. In this chamber I will support genuine cooperative federalism that has benefits for my constituents, but I will resist the power grab of the Howard government.

That brings me to the tax system and the institutionalised discrimination it imposes against the north west. The zone tax offset allowance has effectively remained unreviewed since it was first introduced more than half a century ago. A zone tax offset may be claimed by residents of remote regions of Australia in recognition of the

disadvantages to which those residents are subject, such as the unpleasant climate, the isolation and the higher costs of living compared with other areas of Australia. Earlier this month the federal Treasurer, Mr Costello, brought down the federal budget. Quite apart from the fact that the federal budget disproportionately rewarded the government's mates at the top end of town and did little for the battlers, it also did not review the zone tax offset allowance. There is a chronic distortion in the tax system when it comes to northern and remote Australia. The goods and services tax magnified the problem. Everything that people in the north buy costs more because of transport costs. The lack of competition means the price of many goods and services is inflated even further. That automatically means that it is more expensive to live in the north west of the state than it is in Perth and that the people in the north west pay extra tax. In this chamber I will call for tax reform that will encourage people to live in the sparsely populated north of this state, not penalise them for doing so. Although tax is mostly a federal issue, I will be seeking a fairer share of the state's goods and services tax revenue for the north.

It is not for nothing that my electorate bears the name Mining and Pastoral Region. It is the engine room of the Western Australian economy. More tonnage is shipped out of its ports than out of any other region in Australia. One of the distinctive features of the mining industry is that although it produces wealth from the region, it does not contribute much wealth to the region. Another feature is that despite the fact that the original mining agreements required a shift to value adding, our mining industries still export raw commodities. In this chamber I will support a vibrant and responsible private sector that creates the skilled jobs and good wages that entrepreneurial initiative can produce. However, the mineral wealth that those companies have developed belongs to the people of Western Australia. Therefore, in return for access to those riches, I want to see greater employment opportunities for indigenous Australians and a genuine commitment in this state to value adding to those raw materials.

My father was a trade unionist and my husband is a trade unionist, and the same commitment defines me as well. Trade unions historically have won rights and entitlements for Western Australian workers and have lifted the incomes of ordinary workers everywhere. They continue to do so. The recent state election gave us a mandate to pursue our industrial relations policies. The recent federal election did not do the same for the federal coalition government. Industrial relations was part of our campaign. A federal industrial relations monopoly was not part of the Howard government's agenda. It was raised as an issue only after the federal election. The other day I heard Michael Chaney, the chairman of a national company, call for one federal uniform industrial relations system in Australia, because he did not like the fact that he had to deal with six separate state jurisdictions. Mr Chaney knows that he can get a national agreement for his workers tomorrow if he is prepared to negotiate with the federal union. The only thing that will stop him is if he wants to cut wages and conditions to below the standards established in state awards. This ploy by the federal Government is yet another attempt to cut the wages and working conditions of workers while those at the big end of town enjoy their extremely high salaries. In this chamber I will stand up for the working people and the unions that protect their living conditions.

Workers' compensation is another issue on which we could do with a bit more honesty. It is an ongoing agenda for employers to complain about the high cost of workers' compensation premiums and to try to cut workers' benefits in order to reduce the premiums. A better way of keeping down the cost of premiums would be to cut the number of accidents and single out recalcitrant employers. Accident levels in Western Australian industry are still too high. The focus should be on three fronts: safety, compensation and rehabilitation. This is a tripartite responsibility involving governments, employers and unions.

Another issue that I wish to address is aged care. My mother, who has lived for over half her life in the north west of Western Australia, and the last 18 years in Derby, by choice, was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. I and the family researched the possibility of moving mum from the pensioner unit she was living in at the time to a more suitable aged care home in Derby so that she could be provided with the appropriate medical care. Unfortunately, and directly due to the lack of facilities, we had to move mum to Perth, where she is being cared for by one of my brothers, Vedant, and a host of carers who ably assist him in this very time-consuming task. It was quite heartbreaking for my family to have to tell mum that she could no longer live in the town she loved and in which she had hoped to live out the rest of her life because there were no facilities that would meet her needs. It is even more heartbreaking when we go to visit mum and she asks if we are there to take her home to Derby. The lack of facilities in Derby for an aged person with Alzheimer's disease is outstanding. I decided then I would do whatever I could to try to facilitate an increase in amenities for the aged not just in Derby but the entire north west. I acknowledge that in the past four years this government has achieved some of the goals that I have set myself. However, there is still a way to go before I will be satisfied that we have done what we can for this part of my constituency. I will be making every effort to ensure that our elderly people get what they need, including access to health care services, a bed in a nursing home if they need one, and access to home care services if they want to remain in their homes.

Now, very briefly, thanks to those who supported me in attaining this position. I thank the women who were just there: Eileen McParland, Barb McDonald, Diane Smith, Jill Hawkins, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, Sheila Mills, Colleen Hayward and so many others. I was fortunate to grow up with a strong network of women. As a young woman, we were the gang of five: Yvonne Heagney, Diana Forster, Jenny French and Elizabeth McSweeney. What times we had and continue to have. Thank you for everything.

I was also fortunate to be given the joy of becoming a godmother to a delightful group of what are now young women: Danielle Harmer, Chloe Forster, Emma Heagney and Victoria Sullivan. Thanks guys.

To my brothers and sisters - there are lots of them - but especially to those who live in the north west of the state: Allan and his wife Bonnie, Brad, and Wayne who believed in me and my ability to make a change and who came out to give a hand on the day. I also thank my nieces and nephews, Dene, Sean and Justin, who helped and gave me support, encouragement and a sense of themselves. My special thanks go to my daughter Melanie, who thinks I am absolutely not in my right mind for entering politics but has given her full and unconditional support to making sure that I achieve my ambition. I also thank the light of my life, my grand daughter, Taylah-belle, who keeps me grounded. I send my thanks to my other daughter, Leonie, and her girls, Jessica and Jade, for their help and their lightheartedness in the face of some difficult times. I thank Rod and Clint and their partners Justin and Emma. Thank you; I know it was not just the trip to Broome that enticed them to come all that way and give me a hand. It was because they believed in what I wanted to do.

I need to mention the other men in my life who gave me their support: Joe Bullock, Joe McDonald, Hon Graham Giffard, Rewi Lyall, Mathew Keogh - the young one - Kim Young, Kevin McParland and Ian Hawkins. A very special thanks to Brian Burke and Senator Peter Cook for their love and unconditional support.

Now, last but not least, a very heartfelt and special thanks and love to the extraordinary man in my life, Kevin Reynolds. He championed my cause and then gave me his all to ensure that I achieved a part of my ambition. Without him, I would not be here today. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Bruce Donaldson**.