

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Shane Hill; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Speaker

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**ROBERT CLYDE BLOFFWITCH**

*Condolence Motion*

**MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Deputy Premier)** [9.03 am] — without notice: On behalf of the Premier, I move —

That this house records its sincere regret at the death of Robert Clyde Bloffwitch and tenders its deep sympathy to his family.

Robert Clyde Bloffwitch was born on 29 January 1944 in Subiaco, the son of John William Bloffwitch, a businessman, and Dorothea Lillian Read. He married Margaret English in Ipswich, Queensland, on 28 January 1967. Bob Bloffwitch was educated at Rivervale and Carlisle Primary Schools and Christian Brothers College, Perth. Bob was a junior clerk with Rowley Goonan in 1961 and served in the Royal Australian Navy from 1961 to 1971 in radio electronics. From 1971 to 1991 he was a self-employed businessman in car sales. Bob was a member of the executive board and was one-time president of the Motor Trade Association of Western Australia, a director of Motorcharge Pty Ltd, chairman of the Capricorn Society Ltd and a past president of the Geraldton North Rotary Club.

Bob entered this house as the Liberal member for Geraldton at a by-election on 13 April 1991 following the resignation of the former Labor member, Jeff Carr. Bob was the member for Geraldton until unsuccessfully contesting his seat at the general election on 10 February 2001. Bob served this house as Chairman of Committees from 10 June 1997 until 8 September 1999, and as Deputy Speaker from 8 September 1999 until 10 January 2001. In addition, Bob was the shadow Minister for Mid-West from 24 May 1992 and coalition shadow minister from 24 November 1992 until 16 February 1993. He was also the government Whip from February 1993 until June 1997. Bob was a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation from 24 September 1991 until 26 June 1997, a member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Anti-Corruption Commission from 12 November 1996 until 10 January 2001, a member of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Intergovernmental Agreements from 4 August 1993 to 14 November 1996, a member of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee from 10 June 1997 until 7 September 2000, and a member of the Procedure and Privileges Committee from 8 September 2000 until 10 January 2001. Bob also served as a member of the Select Committee on the Official Corruption Commission Act from 27 November 1991 until 5 March 1992, and of the Select Committee on the Official Corruption Commission Act from 26 May 1992 until 24 September 1992.

I served with Bob in this house and on a number of committees. We all remember Bob's robust performance in debate. He was the type of member who was viewed with a degree of affection by both sides of the house because of the way in which he added to the theatre and enjoyment of debate in this place. I always enjoyed my association with him on committees. Of course, we campaigned against him, but on a personal basis we had respect and affection for Bob. It was a matter of deep sadness for all members of the house to learn of the illness that overtook him and of his untimely death. We remember Bob with great affection.

**MR T. BUSWELL (Vasse — Leader of the Opposition)** [9.07 am]: I support this condolence motion for Bob Bloffwitch on behalf of the opposition. In doing so, I point out that Bob Bloffwitch served this Parliament and represented with much passion, vigour and dedication the people of Geraldton for a decade between 1991 and 2001. In this house of this Parliament, Bob Bloffwitch holds the distinction of being the last Chairman of Committees and the first official Deputy Speaker during the course of the thirty-fifth Parliament from 1997 to 2001. Bob was born and educated in Perth. He served in the Royal Australian Navy in radio electronics from 1961 to 1971 and then, on settling in Geraldton, established a successful car sales business. He was chosen as the Liberal candidate for the by-election in April 1991 caused by the resignation of Hon Jeff Carr. The seat of Geraldton had been in the hands of the Australian Labor Party for 80 years apart from three short interruptions, the last between 1947 and 1950. It had never been won by the Liberal Party, even though the Liberal Party had come within 67 votes of success in 1986 and 47 votes of success in 1989. Despite some favourable omens, Bob and his team needed to campaign extremely hard, because the massive anti-government swing in the by-election caused the ALP to finish in third place behind the National Party. Bob Bloffwitch led with 45.5 per cent of the vote in a field of 11. After nine preference distributions, he won Geraldton by a majority of 277 votes. This was the only occasion in a century on which the contest for this seat was effectively between two conservative candidates. At the 1993 election, more conventional voting patterns returned, and Bob was successful with 40 per cent of the primary vote and a final majority of 2 053, which was nearly 60 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. He was, as I mentioned earlier, a highly energetic and very effective member for Geraldton and the first conservative MLA to be re-elected to that seat. He was, again, comfortably re-elected at the 1996 election with an absolute majority of the primary vote.

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Bob was one of a number of Liberal Party members who captured and held seats in the 1990s and without whom there could not have been a coalition government from 1993 until 2001. His standing among his colleagues was reflected by his elevation to the position of Chairman of Committees in 1997. He had a very strong practical grasp of business realities and associated financial matters. He brought that to bear in his advocacy of the expansion of the mid-west region. He fought extremely hard to make sure that Geraldton obtained facilities of the highest standard, insisting that a planned police station be redesigned as an attractive and notable building. It was said that he was so committed to representing the people of Geraldton that he spent not only his electorate allowance, but also his entire parliamentary salary just doing his job. Bob Bloffwitch had that special kind of compassion. Once when a couple needed to drive their sick child to Perth and their car could not be repaired, he gave them a car from his yard with a full tank of petrol.

It is a matter of record that Bob was defeated in Geraldton at the 2001 election. In hindsight, he was already handicapped by the debilitating illness that clouded the last years of his life. The defeat does not detract from his record of commitment to Geraldton, nor his fine record of community service. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife, Margaret, and to his family.

**MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin — Deputy Leader of the National Party)** [9.11 am]: On behalf of the National Party, I support this condolence motion for Bob Bloffwitch. I met Bob Bloffwitch on only a couple of occasions, so I did not really know him. However, whenever people talk about Bob Bloffwitch, as the Treasurer said, they always speak of him with great affection and, to me, that shows he was obviously a very good person. On behalf of the Nationals, I would like to thank him for his work during his political career of about 10 years and to offer my sympathies to his family. I recently read an article about Bob Bloffwitch in which the member for Geraldton said —

The old saying around town was that Bob pretty much spent his whole parliamentary salary on the community . . .

The member for Cottesloe, the former Liberal leader, Colin Barnett, said that Mr Bloffwitch would be remembered as a great champion of the mid-west, regional development and small business. Certainly, when I speak to people about Bob Bloffwitch, they say he was exactly that. I extend our sympathies to his family.

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe)** [9.12 am]: I extend my sympathy and that of Lyn to Margaret Bloffwitch and to Margaret and Bob's children and their families. Bob had 10 years in this Parliament. I think it is fair to say that he came from a humble background. He worked in a variety of roles; he had a long naval career and then entered motor trades businesses in various forms and gradually worked his way up in that industry to become a very successful, very prosperous, well-regarded local businessman in Geraldton with his automotive businesses and car yards. Bob was in every sense a self-made man. He met every criterion: he worked hard, he contributed to his community and he was extraordinarily generous in all that he did. For someone of Bob's background to have been elected as a representative of his community in the state Parliament was probably something that he would never have imagined could happen. He was immensely proud of the fact that he was a member of Parliament and represented Geraldton in this place. He was in some respects an unusual parliamentarian, but he actually loved Parliament itself. He enjoyed being Deputy Speaker, he enjoyed his work on committees—he even enjoyed being the Whip. He loved the whole theatre and the debate of Parliament and committees.

He was very much a champion of his community, which is something that country members, in particular, pride themselves on. Bob spent most of his life and, certainly, his business career in Geraldton. He was an advocate for Geraldton, which had been going through some very tough times. The town was almost in decline; it had experienced tough agricultural years, and was looking, if I can say so, somewhat shabby; there were a lot of empty shops in the main centre and a lot of social problems in the town. Bob was very much aware of that and advocated for his community throughout his time here. Bob also took on a wider brief; he was very interested in the development of the mid-west. He saw it as an area of the state that had great potential and had, perhaps, been bypassed by developments elsewhere. We are seeing the scope of that potential being realised now and will, perhaps, see more over the coming years.

In particular, I always remember Bob as an advocate of small to medium-sized businesses and self-made owner-operated businesses. Many members of Parliament, and perhaps I for some time, misunderstood or did not appreciate Bob's understanding of areas such as taxation, employment and the like. Bob was self-taught; he had learnt the hard way by doing it. He had a very, very detailed knowledge of those areas and when he spoke in this chamber on a tax issue, particularly an issue affecting business, his knowledge could not be surpassed in this place. It is probably a pity that he did not have more opportunities to speak on those issues.

Bob came to a sad end in politics. He was defeated in the 2001 election after an extraordinary series of events took place. Sometimes the price can be too high in politics. I think Bob was a person of the highest integrity and

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I knew him to be a hard-working, good family man and an honest man. It emerged during the 2001 election that Bob owned some shares in Kingstream Steel and he had not declared those shares on the parliamentary records register. That was a mistake; no-one could deny that. As that fact emerged and became known in the election campaign, I must say that the Labor Party and the Labor leader of the time launched a vicious and personal attack on Bob. No doubt about it; it was vicious and personal. That is politics; that is the environment we live in. People at that time were not to know of Bob's degenerative condition. I did not know of it. On reflection, some members who served with Bob on committees said that when they look back they can find signs of behaviour that may have indicated that. Perhaps in hindsight, many of us could do that. During that last hectic week or so of the election campaign, Bob suffered under that attack. He suffered personally; as a proud self-made man he felt his self-esteem eroded, he felt humiliated, he felt he had let down his community and he felt that he had let down the Liberal Party and his colleagues. Indeed, some members on this side and within the Liberal Party abandoned Bob in that last week. I found myself speaking at Bob's campaign launch very close to the election day. He was distraught. Obviously, I asked him why he did not declare the shareholding. The shareholding in Kingstream, which was a prospective steel development, was small—I think from memory it was \$12 000 or so—and it was of no great consequence to Bob. I remember him telling me that the only reason he bought the shares at all—he was not all that confident about Kingstream—was so that when people in the street asked him whether he was supporting development in the area, he could say yes, and that if they asked him “Did you buy some shares and support the company?”, he could say yes. He said, “That's why I bought them; I really gave no consequence or thought to them at all.” Clearly, Bob was in error by not declaring that shareholding, but it was not intentional and it was an oversight that was, perhaps, brought on by the condition he was later found to suffer. I think it was regrettable that even after the election the attack continued on Bob. By that stage, many people—not so members opposite—were aware of his condition. This does not in any way reflect upon the current member for Geraldton who, I think, behaved impeccably both during the campaign and afterwards. However, I make the comment that in this house we can never be quite sure about politics, can we? When a volatile, harsh, hard debate becomes personal, we can never be quite sure who it affects—members and families—or how it affects them. Bob was an unlucky, unfortunate victim of some of the worst aspects of politics. I do not apportion blame in that sense; I think it is the nature of politics.

Bob was a good man and he was a proud man. It was so sad that the final years of his life were as they were. I found Bob's funeral to be a very sad occasion. Usually funerals are celebrations, but Bob's funeral was sad. It was so sad that his health and his knowledge of what was happening around him declined so quickly.

I pay tribute to Bob Bloffwitch. He was a battler and a self-made man who reached a pinnacle that he thought he would never achieve. When he came into this Parliament, he enjoyed every moment. He enjoyed the camaraderie of members from both sides. He loved debate in the chamber. He loved sitting where you sit, Mr Speaker. He particularly loved committees and he loved travelling with committees. Good on you, Bob; well done.

**MR S.R. HILL (Geraldton)** [9.20 am]: I rise to support the condolence motion. I first met Bob in 1999 when I moved back to Geraldton. He was a true gentleman from the start. We shared the 2000-01 election campaign period. Wherever we happened to be at the same event, Bob always came up and offered me a beer and had a chat about things and how Geraldton was going.

The member for Cottesloe has spoken about the illness that Bob suffered in the last couple of years that he was the member for Geraldton. I can assure members that the people in Geraldton supported Bob and understood that illness was involved, even though I know there were many rumours in the community that other factors came into play. From my point of view as the member for Geraldton, I congratulate Bob. He provided 10 years of loyal service to the people of Geraldton and the mid-west. He was passionate about many issues. His passion for the redesign and rebuild of the police station has been mentioned: I am not that passionate about that building—I think it was a bit of a disaster! However, he was passionate about another building, the police and citizens youth centre, and I know Bob, as the then member for Geraldton, harassed many of his ministers of the day to ensure that the PCYC was developed for the youth of Geraldton. The PCYC building stands today as a memorial to Bob. People from many other communities throughout Australia visit Geraldton to look at that building and to copy its design. On behalf of the people of Geraldton, I thank Bob for his years of service; he did us proud. Just yesterday, I was standing with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure—the member for Cottesloe mentioned Oakajee, and Bob is probably sitting up there telling everyone in Geraldton to just get on with it—when we announced that we will be moving forward on Oakajee.

I offer my condolences to Margaret and the family. We all wish you well, Bob, and I do not think the people of Geraldton will ever forget the loyal service you provided to the community.

In closing, I know members have mentioned Bob's support for the people who visited his electorate office. I found this aspect difficult when I was elected, as I think did Jamie Edwards, the then member for Greenough. Bob was very generous. When we were elected, people would come through the electorate office door expecting

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help with the sort of issues mentioned previously, such as Bob paying for a hire car and the hotel accommodation to get a sick child to Perth. I came in as the new member for Geraldton, and Jamie Edwards was the new member for Greenough. People took the same approach to the two of us. I remember the two of us walking down Marine Terrace having a bit of a chat about how we would deal with the issue because Bob was so generous when people came to talk to him about such issues. Bob provided a great 10 years of service to Geraldton and will be missed.

**DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [9.23 am]: I knew Bob since the time of my election to Parliament in 1993. He had arrived prior to that as the result of a by-election. It was easy to underestimate Bob, and I think many people perhaps underestimated him in the early days because he was somewhat short and rotund and sparse on top.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** There's nothing wrong with that.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** That is a bit like the Deputy Premier! I can quite honestly say Bob was popular on both sides of the house, in much the same way the Deputy Premier is.

The reaction was quite funny when Bob won preselection for that very critical by-election for the Liberal Party leading up to a general election; we really needed to win that by-election. When those of us in Perth saw that a car salesman of that physical stature had been chosen we thought, "What on earth have they done? We have no chance of winning that seat with someone like that!" There was quite a lot of criticism about that choice at the time. Of course, Bob won the seat and went on to make that seat, for a period, a safe Liberal seat. As I say, Bob was easy to underestimate, but when he came into Parliament, it was evident from the positions he was given, including his time as Whip, the respect he held on our side of the house. Bob certainly punched well above his weight on just about all issues, particularly in debate on some issues in our party room meetings.

Bob's generosity extended beyond the electorate of Geraldton. Although Bob gave just about all his parliamentary salary to the people of Geraldton—he obviously had other income sources—he chucked in a hundred bucks when I was raising income in support of a small issue in my electorate; I think it was someone with heart disease who needed sponsorship. In those days, \$100 was worth a lot more than it is today! It was not even for someone in his electorate. It was not an issue that he had anything to do with; nevertheless, when he heard that I was raising money to help a child, he put in \$100. I am sure such generosity would have been repeated, but other people did not know that Bob was able to come up with that type of support. He was a great character and a great human being.

I felt very sorry about the issue that happened at the end of his career. I do not blame the Labor Party. I used to sit behind Bob in the party room, and as a doctor I noticed certain physical changes that I was suspicious about. I remember one day talking to Mike Board who sat next to me and saying, "I think Bob is developing a particular illness." As it turned out, that was the illness. When the Kingstream shares issue came up, it was very tough on Bob and it was tough on the Liberal Party of the day. To the member for Cottesloe's great credit, he went to Geraldton and spoke in support of Bob at his campaign launch after the Kingstream issue. The member for Cottesloe copped some criticism for that, but he went and, to his great credit, he stuck by Bob. I very firmly believe that Bob genuinely forgot about his Kingstream shares. If people had seen the deterioration of his condition after that time, to the extent that two to three years later he did not know fellow members of Parliament, they would have understood. Good on you, Bob! Nobody blames you, mate.

**MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Minister for Education and Training)** [9.27 am]: I pass on my regards and condolences to the family of Bob Bloffwitch and to all those in this house who were his friends. I know also that some, who are not here at the moment, held him in high esteem.

When I was first elected in December 1996, I was 29 years of age. I arrived at this building and found myself, somehow, a little bit surprised by Bob Bloffwitch and the position that he held here. I was surprised by his career in two respects. I was surprised by the fact that he was defeated in 2001, and I give credit to the member for Geraldton for his success in that campaign. I was surprised because I knew that in 1991 the Labor party received only 15 per cent of the vote in Geraldton, and I thought, "How can we ever win that seat back again having won only 15 per cent of the vote in 1991." Of course, it turned around in 2001 and we were successful in winning the electorate. I was surprised at his defeat, yet on the other hand I was kind of surprised that he was here at all, as he always struck me as one of the characters of Parliament. We often hear that there used to be characters in Parliament and that they are no longer around. However, when I arrived, Bob Bloffwitch, Bill McNee and Ted Cunningham were members. These were people who were older, with different life experiences, I suppose, and a different style about them. They had a style of speaking and a grassroots approach to politics that perhaps, I do not know, is not here anymore—it was certainly in this place back then. Bob had that unusual way about him. When I saw him walking around the building, he always seemed to have his pants halfway down his legs! He was always friendly. I always liked him. He was always very nice to me. When we had end of year drinks and

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such events, he was very open and confiding. He would say all sorts of things after a couple of drinks that I suspected he regretted—particularly after talking to a member of the opposition about some of the things that were happening on his own side of the house! He was a very genuine, honest and open person. I have heard about his generosity in his electorate; it is all true. Many people have told me stories about his car dealership and how he provided money to other people. I have not heard that said about other members—the extent to which he went to do things for people in his community.

Of course, Bob was an iconic local figure. When I drove into Geraldton, I saw the sign, I think it was “Bloffwitch Ford”, from where he ran his business. Part of the reason I thought he would be a very difficult person to beat in that electorate was his incredible local role and profile in the community. I visited the Geraldton Police and Citizens Youth Club on one of my trips to Geraldton when the government was in opposition. It was a magnificent building and a magnificent testimony to him. I suppose if at any time we could name something after him—I do not know the protocols for these sorts of things—it would be very worthwhile to name the PCYC after Bob. I saw the police station at Geraldton, which I thought was quite good—I stand corrected by the member for Geraldton. I think the maritime museum may also have been a project that he had wished for in Geraldton. Some good things, therefore, happened on Bob’s watch in his 10 years as the member for Geraldton.

I will touch on one last aspect; that is, his role in the Parliament. I agree that Bob liked being in the Parliament. He used to sit over in the corner where the member for Southern River sits. He would sit there and hang around in the chamber all day. He held that ability in common with the former member for Girrawheen, who used to sit on the opposite side. When I sat next to the member for Girrawheen, I was never in the chamber. The member for Girrawheen and the member for Geraldton used to consult a bit, although I believe there was not much consulting about the house; it was more about the races and other more important matters! They used to have dealings with each other. However, Bob also played the role of Deputy Speaker. I learnt a few lessons from him as Deputy Speaker. One was that the Chair is not obliged to give the call to a member who stands to get the call, because whenever I stood to get the call he did not give me the call! I always thought that was contrary to standing orders until I looked them up one day and realised that the Chair was not obliged to give me the call. Bob, the member for Geraldton, was therefore correct to deny me the call when I stood. He probably actually saved me from myself, for which I am grateful to him, and probably saved the rest of the house as well!

Bob Bloffwitch was a grassroots person, he was a good person and he achieved a lot in his life. Every member of this place knows that when they come into this place, they have had a go—unlike many other people. Bob had a go. All of us have that in common—Liberal, Labor, National and other members. We all come in here, put ourselves on the line and have a go. A lot of people are not prepared to put themselves on the line, but Bob Bloffwitch was prepared to put himself on the line. For that and for all those other reasons that I have outlined, he was a good fellow and I pass on my regards to his family.

**MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine)** [9.32 am]: I did not know Bob Bloffwitch in politics, but I had a great deal to do with Bob when I was commander of the country in the police service. Never was there a fiercer supporter of the police in his region than Bob Bloffwitch. In fact, I cannot recall ever getting a ministerial file from that area while he was the local member. That is probably a good lesson for all of us. Bob used to fix the problems in his own town. He has left two legacies in Geraldton, and both are associated with the police service. There were varying and fixed views about the nature and style of the police building there. As Bob used to say, “I didn’t bloody design it, I just got the money for it.” I must say that in my dealing with him I never met a fiercer advocate for his local area as a local member of Parliament. I think that is something we often forget in the theatre of this place. We sometimes think this is the only place that counts in parliamentary careers. The reality is that nine-tenths of a parliamentary career revolve around the people that elect and respect us within our own electorates. Bob Bloffwitch can hold his head high in that regard. I do not know what led to his demise in Parliament; I have read about it and I have heard about it. I can probably sympathise more than anybody else can about what may have happened to him at the end of his career.

There was a second incident. My brother had a business in Geraldton and, unfortunately, because of a number of incidents—I will not go into them—his business was eventually wrecked by a group of people in that town. Bob Bloffwitch was a fierce supporter of small business and he was a fierce supporter of my brother over what happened at that time. I therefore had nothing but the utmost respect for Bob Bloffwitch as a person and certainly as the local member.

I give my condolences to Margaret and other members of Bob’s family. They can hold their heads up proud about a man who, as the member for Cottesloe said, set out to be just an ordinary person in his own town representing the people who respected him and who elected him. He certainly did that. Whatever the political arena might say about him, he was a real bloke in the real sense of the word and he represented the people of Geraldton proudly.

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**MR D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN (Leschenault)** [9.35 am]: A lot has been said about Bob Bloffwitch's tremendous generosity in his own constituency and his very energetic approach to representing the people of Geraldton and the mid-west region. However, I would like to reiterate something that the member for Cottesloe pointed out: he was an absolutely strident supporter of small business. I recall in the four years that we were in government that I had the privilege of sitting in the party room with Bob and had a number of discussions over a matter that had gone before cabinet or a matter that was being considered in the Parliament. Nobody spoke more strongly on behalf of the small business community than Bob Bloffwitch. I think the member for Cottesloe pointed out that Bob had a very hands-on approach. The reason was very simple: he had been there and he had done it; he had experienced problems with the tax system and he had put up with all the red tape and so on. In all his years in business and through his involvement with the Motor Trade Association of Western Australia and other business groups and people in the sector, he gained experience and was able to bring that experience into the party room and into the Parliament.

However, I suppose I really got to see Bob's fervent support for small business when I chaired an inquiry into petroleum pricing and Bob Bloffwitch was a member of that committee. Although we were in the same political party, it was not always an easy job pulling the team together, meeting the deadline and sticking to the terms of reference and so on. I cannot remember who, but one member of the committee at one stage suggested that we should go further than we had gone and should look at antitrust laws, antimonopoly provisions and a range of legislative measures that were in place in the United States of America. That person also said that it would be a great idea if we actually flew over there to have a look at them. I thought, "Oh, my goodness! I don't see a need for an overseas trip. It's going to delay everything and it's not in our terms of reference." I must say that I was delighted when another member of the committee became an Independent and at one stage threatened to stand at the end of the runway waving his fists at the air if we did anything like that. We therefore did not go. However, Bob did leave a tremendous legacy from that committee. The committee examined mechanisms for pricing petroleum products; unfortunately, no government has had the guts to take them on. However, the other half of the equation was to do with accountability in petroleum pricing. It is something that Bob felt very strongly about. Recently, Patrick Walker was appointed national fuel pricing commissioner. One of the first things he said was that he would look at implementing nationwide some of the recommendations that came from the committee Bob worked on, and indeed some of the specific recommendations that Bob himself had put forward very keenly. I suggest that within the not-too-distant future Bob will have a national legacy and it will be in the area of fuel pricing. Hopefully, it will be an area that can be added to later by state and federal governments. All I can say, Bob, is keep an eye on things, because you will get your antitrust laws in this state. That will happen and it will be a great day for small business and a further legacy of Bob Bloffwitch.

I extend my sympathies to Margaret and the family as well.

**The SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling)**: Members, before I ask members to show the usual support for this motion, I too wish to add a few words about Bob Bloffwitch. Bob and I shared a link that is not overly obvious, but as a result of Jeff Carr leaving the Parliament and creating the need for a by-election in Geraldton, I was very fortunate to win the next by-election in the state. After the Liberal Party had achieved a 43 per cent swing in the Geraldton by-election, I was next cab off the rank when Pam Buchanan left. It was therefore with great trepidation that I stood for the seat of Ashburton, as it was in those days, as we had a margin of some seven per cent leading into an election held shortly after we suffered a 43 per cent massacre in Geraldton. I was fortunate enough to survive that and come into this place not long after Bob. That particular stage in the history of this chamber was the bad old days when committees travelled overseas a lot! They do not do that very much any more. I was fortunate to be on a committee with Bob that travelled around the world a couple of times! One of the trips was to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, and I remember the impact that had on Bob. He was quite moved by the fact that he was able to go there. I remember taking a couple of pictures for him near a certain section that he was particularly interested in. He said that it was one of the most important things that he had done in his life.

He was a very successful small businessman. I think we went to London after Washington and his suit was ripped during the plane trip. The particular suit was worth more than my entire wardrobe—it was worth thousands of dollars. I did not know that people spent so much on clothes. He was a very interesting person to travel with, and I enjoyed his company greatly. Rob and Bob were the two Liberals on that particular trip. I think it was chaired by Independent, Phil Pendal, and Liz Constable was also a member. It was a remarkable time.

Of course, I was in opposition through most of the time Bob was in this place. I enjoyed his contributions; they were unique. Some of my speeches doubled in length because all we had to do with Bob was throw out a piece of bait and he would be into it. It was very enjoyable to be part of this chamber during his contribution. He will be sadly missed of course, especially by his family. I give my support to this motion to say thanks to Bob for his

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contribution to Western Australia and to Parliament and for contributing to my enjoyment of this place during those 10 years.

I ask members to stand in their place and observe a minute's silence in support of this motion.

Question passed, members standing.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members.

[See also page 509.]