



**PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**INAUGURAL SPEECH**



**Mrs Liza Harvey MLA**  
(Member for Scarborough)

**Address-in-Reply Debate**

**Legislative Assembly**

**Tuesday, 25 November 2008**



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### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

#### *Motion*

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough)** [7.47 pm]: It is truly an honour and a privilege to stand in this place as the representative of the citizens of the Scarborough electorate. I begin by congratulating you, Mr Speaker, on your election to the office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. I wish you well and look forward to your advice and assistance as I navigate my way through the rules and regulations of this chamber.

I begin my address to the Assembly tonight with thanks to the people of the electorate of Scarborough who have placed significant trust in me to act as their representative in this place. Throughout my 16 years as a resident and business owner in Scarborough, I have had the privilege of interacting with many members of the community on a daily basis through many different avenues. I will endeavour to represent them to the best of my ability. Although this was a new electorate in the last election, it has previously existed in varying forms as the district of Innaloo and also Scarborough. The current district has been formed out of the electoral districts of Churchlands and Carine, and both electorates, I am proud to say, were commendably served in the recent past by committed and dedicated female politicians, Dr Elizabeth Constable and Katie Hodson-Thomas, whose fine examples have set me an inspirational standard. The current electorate covers the suburbs of Scarborough, Innaloo and Doubleview in full, with parts of Trigg, Woodlands, Karrinyup and City Beach. It also includes a major portion of the Osborne Park and Herdsman industrial estates.

Like many others in my electorate, I was relieved to see the new electoral boundaries for my community. The previous divisional boundaries also represented a divided community on many issues. The suburbs of Scarborough, Innaloo and Doubleview have been under significant development pressure over the years as our local government authority, the City of Stirling, rose to the task of meeting its infill quotas to increase our suburban densities. More recently, that attention has turned toward Innaloo and parts of Woodlands that fall into my electorate, with the development of a concept plan through the Stirling alliance team of the Stirling City Centre. The Stirling City Centre proposal is a bold plan for significant increases in residential density and the development of industry and workplaces around public transport hubs. The intention of this plan is to try to encourage people to live where they work so as to reduce our reliance on motor vehicles and also to improve the usage and viability of public transport systems. There are many opportunities and possibilities available in this plan with an acknowledged willingness and readiness of private enterprise to engage immediately with government to facilitate the redevelopment of this Innaloo-Woodlands hub.

There are many controversial aspects to this plan, especially the various options for the dispersal of traffic. Congestion throughout the Innaloo shopping precinct is a major concern and of frustrating annoyance to many residents in the Scarborough electorate. We need a solution to this problem. While the obvious response is for people to utilise public transport and use their cars less, this is quite simply not an option when limited access to train station parking is considered. The bus networks are not developed sufficiently to allow people access to the train stations in order to catch the earlier trains that have spaces available. There are many people in the electorate of Scarborough who have given up attempting to use the environmentally friendly option of public transport to their place of employment because it is simply too hard. We have a job ahead of us to convince commuters that the public transport system can provide them with the safety and convenience required in this modern age.

Previous density increases have not worked well in our suburbs to date. Our local streets are overflowing with parked cars that have been squeezed out of the confines of their property into the areas that have traditionally been kept free for vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access. The conflicts between our people, our children and our motor vehicles are becoming increasingly aggressive and problematic. While further density does not appear a logical solution on the face of it, I assert that vastly increased housing densities in well-placed locations near public transport could reduce our reliance on the motor car and address the problems of both vehicle storage and overuse, provided of course that the public transport system caters for the needs of its users.

Activism in my community is very prevalent and the Scarborough electorate has been blessed with a strong-willed community who participate in often fiery and emotional debate over contentious issues. No issue in my electorate has been more divisive or emotional than the form and structure of the revitalisation of the Scarborough Beach tourism and commercial industry. Indeed, the community has been as divided as the electoral boundaries that separated us previously. I share the strong desire of the community to ensure that the beaches will always be available to all Western Australians and that there will always be tourism availability for our regional cousins to also enjoy the area.

We feel a very strong sense of ownership of our beaches—they are our turf. Our beachfront area in Scarborough deserves to be revitalised to a world-class standard with our own Western Australian style. The regeneration has started but needs guidance and strong leadership to ensure that the privately owned areas rise to the challenge of becoming a vibrant and modern seaside town, while also ensuring that our fragile coastal dune systems and public open spaces are preserved, valued and maintained.

The citizens of the Scarborough electorate have expressed time and again that they are ready now for modern amenities and a defined town centre. We all want to feel proud of our beachfront and facilities. The commercial precinct has languished for long enough in a planning haze and the announcement of the approval of amendment 458 today will provide long-awaited certainty to private land owners. It is my belief, and the belief of many others in my community, that when our rundown and derelict buildings are replaced and Scarborough develops a town centre of which we can feel proud, a centre to complement our beautiful amphitheatre, we believe that much of the antisocial activity that has plagued us in the past will become but a distant memory.

I am very excited to be part of a government that makes decisions in a timely fashion. Many people in the Scarborough electorate have placed themselves near to the ocean to enjoy the marine-based lifestyle that has become our culture in Western Australia. The success of our own family recreational fishing business is testament to the importance and enjoyment of this culture. It has been very encouraging to see the shift in focus from the spoils of the catch to the enjoyment of the activity of fishing. The recreational fishing community has been through a monumental change of attitude to the issue of sustainability. Many of our customers are now deeply involved in ensuring that the fisheries they are accessing now will still be available for future generations.

It is exciting to see the growth in interest in aquaculture industries where possibilities exist to reduce pressure on our wild fisheries in order to provide fish for consumers. While the environmental concerns around aquaculture are acknowledged, the reluctance of our governments to embrace aquaculture when we have become so adept at growing most other sources of food is somewhat baffling. Recreational fishing has become part of our outdoors-based lifestyle here in Western Australia and I am confident that with a collaborative effort between all users of our marine resource we will secure the future health of our fisheries.

Coming from a small business background, I am thrilled also to have the busy and vibrant Osborne Park and Herdsman industrial estates within the boundaries of my electorate. While fortunes are rarely easily made in the small business sector, this sector is driven by people who are employed in jobs that they love, working with people that they choose. It is inspiring and invigorating to utilise the industrial and commercial hubs within Osborne Park and see what a spark of possibility can achieve when combined with hard work, dedication and attention to detail.

While verifiable claims are always made that our great state has prospered due to the mining booms and, previously, from wheat cultivation or off the sheep's back, whenever the boom turns to bust or the drought hits, as they inevitably do, there in the background chugging away, keeping our economy steady, stabilising employment and watching the pennies, are the small businesses getting on with the job.

Indeed, there is no finer example of the legacy of small business than the example of my own family business. My husband's grandfather started the original Scarborough Newsagency in 1932 and I am indebted to my husband, Hal Harvey, and his parents, Jack and Daphne Harvey, for the fine reputation they have established in the Scarborough community over many years, such that my association with them bore me in good stead with many of the long-term residents of the community. My husband's family are typical of small business owners—hardworking, industrious and committed to their customers and employees, while striving to provide for a self-sufficient future.

Our duty in government is to continue to foster the entrepreneurial spirit that has developed our state and ensure that the voice of small business is heard, their needs are considered and their creative spirit is given room to flourish. To use the words of Sir Charles Court from his autobiographical memoirs, "The strength of the tree comes from the number of roots that it has." We must reduce bureaucratic interference and needless compliance. Government needs to keep its nose out of the business of small business, thereby encouraging prosperity in their enterprises.

Like others in this house, I am proudly fifth generation Western Australian. Mr Speaker, you may be interested to know that my grandfather's great-grandfather represented constituents in the first Legislative Assembly under responsible government as the member for Moore. Prior to his esteemed career in politics, a career spanning 33 years over both houses of Parliament, Hon George Randell ran a merchant steamer between Guildford and Perth, allowing trade to develop between the two settlements. It was said of George at his state funeral that his inspiring life was epitomised by his belief that diligence and integrity find their own natural reward and that he never leaned supinely on a paternal government to provide him with an easier path toward the reward of industry. It was said of him when he died that we owe more than to any other single person the provision of our beautiful cemetery at Karrakatta, halfway between the two cities of Fremantle and Perth. George Randell was the founder of Perth High School and did much to establish the Teachers' Training College at Claremont. He was a true Liberal, believing in the real conservation of human achievements and not the drastic forcing of social evolution.

I find it fascinating and frustrating that nearly 100 years after George's retirement from politics in 1910 the battle to prevent the interference of government is still being waged as citizens persevere in trying to establish their own paths to social responsibility through the pursuit of free enterprise.

Indeed, when tracking back to the very first sessions of Parliament under responsible government, I was astonished to find that one of the controversial issues of the day was the placement of railways, specifically the impact of the construction of the Yilgarn railway on the state loan account. Other matters under consideration were the low salaries of teachers, the controversial appointment of a manager of the Health Board and the introduction of reduction or remission of sentences for prisoners who had displayed exemplary behaviour during their incarceration. Although there is a certain sense of *deja vu* akin to futility when one sees that the main issues facing our society appear to remain the same, I have been joined this evening by many other proud descendants of Hon George Randell, and I believe that he would be well pleased to know that so many years after he stood up for the property rights of married women and the right of women to vote, one of his own descendants should one day stand in this place to follow in his footsteps.

There are many opportunities present in the communities that fall into the electorate of Scarborough and there is also much work to be done. Although one of our primary schools, Deanmore Primary, is scheduled for a complete rebuild—it was promised by the previous government only after long-term lobbying by a group of dedicated and committed parents—there are other schools in my electorate that need refurbishment or, indeed, a complete rebuild. The teachers and principals are wondering whatever happened to the seven-year refurbishment schemes of old, and question the commitment of governments to state-funded education. This is an awful situation for our education system to be in, when we have fought so hard to ensure that the children of this state have access to a world-class education system. The Scarborough electorate is experiencing regeneration and there is a need to start now on the expansion of high school facilities to cater for the future needs of our children. Parents along the coastal strip are spoiled for choice of denominational educational institutions, but the opportunities for high-quality state-funded education have shrunk over time. We need to ensure that there is a choice for the education of those who are not religiously affiliated, and the choice needs to be one of high-quality state-funded education.

I am very pleased to be part of the first Western Australian government to appoint a Minister for Mental Health. The issue of mental health is very prevalent in the community and of great concern. The statistics are well known but nevertheless shocking. In 2006, 1 398 male and 401 female suicides were reported in Australia. It is believed that the suicide rate in this country is still under-reported by 30 per cent. One in four women and one in eight men will experience some form of depression during their life. There is no magic cure for this growing problem and the problem is not new; in 1891, the state government debated the merits of allocating £30 000 for the provision of a lunatic asylum. Our attitudes to mental health have thankfully shifted from those asylum days; however, there is an urgent need for the provision of services within our community to sufferers of mental illness, and for support services and respite care for their carers, usually their families. We must adopt a similar approach to that of the public health campaigns targeting smoking, and declare that every death from suicide is a preventable death. Having attended the funerals of too many people who have died due to mental illness, I believe that we should form the view that every suicide is a failure of our society to prevent that death.

On the subject of health, I also feel there is much to be done in the area of Aboriginal health and living standards. Our Indigenous health record is nothing short of shameful. The Aboriginal infant mortality rate is three times higher than that of non-Indigenous infants. Aboriginal children are overrepresented in our prison system and suffer a much higher rate of emotional disturbance than other sectors of the community. The constant grief and suffering that some communities endure is very present to me, having recently lost my 16-year-old cousin to a tragic car accident on the Mitchell Freeway, at the eastern end of my electorate. The level of grief, anger, disbelief and horror that our extended family and friends are experiencing is nothing short of desperate. I cannot imagine how our remote and country communities manage to cope with suffering this sort of grief every week of the year, with the intolerable rate of preventable losses of their young people to road

trauma and mental illness. I am confident that the Liberal-National government can start to make a difference by empowering Aboriginal communities to heal the wounds of the past while also putting in place practical measures that will help the communities to prosper. We must ensure that opportunities are presented in ways that enable our young Aboriginal children to take advantage of them. We must also ensure that the many successful role models from Indigenous communities are highlighted and acknowledged. We must move forward.

In closing, I take this opportunity to put on record my admiration, pride and love for my ever-supportive parents, Jill and Eugene Browne. I feel so blessed and am thankful every day that I was born in this country and into the loving environment that my parents provided for me, my brother and my four sisters. Being part of a big family has been a fantastic experience and, indeed, a great training ground for this debating chamber. Our parents' example of community service and their outstanding work ethic laid a very solid foundation for all of us. It was through my father's employment for more than 40 years as a public servant that my siblings and I were given the opportunity to live in many parts of our great state.

In fact, my father was part of the team that surveyed the townsite of Karratha. My years of schooling in Port Hedland in the early 1970s left me with a fond affection for the northern areas of our state—areas that I have revisited many times as an adult on recreational fishing expeditions. This is why I am especially pleased to be part of a government that has made a serious commitment to improving regional facilities and infrastructure.

I also acknowledge the support and dogged determination of my friend Sid Breeden and his wife, Carole. It is true to say that without Sid's persistence and faith in my abilities, I may not have pursued the path that has led me here. I also extend my thanks to our employees and the many volunteers and supporters who are in the public gallery, and who are too numerous to name individually, although I would like to single out my good friend Liz Behjat and two members of the Stirling Women's Committee, Anne Johnson and Marie Grout. I thank them for their support and for always being available to take up the challenge for whatever was required during the campaign. I especially thank those not naturally inclined to my political persuasions who assisted with the Scarborough campaign. Without their support and the support of the Liberal Party, the Liberal Women's Council, and the Stirling and Curtin divisions, achieving a seat in this place would not have been possible.

Finally, I extend my love and appreciation to my husband, Hal, and our children, Sarah, Elizabeth and Jack. I thank them for embracing the journey with me and enabling me to contribute to the community in this all-consuming way. I look forward with great excitement to the birth of my grandson in three short weeks; I thank Sarah in advance for that! I will honour their confidence and trust in me to uphold the values and beliefs of the Liberal Party while representing our community in this place to the very best of my abilities.

I wish you all well and thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to address the Legislative Assembly this evening.

[Applause.]

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