

3

HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan) [7.30 pm]: Mr President, I begin by offering you my congratulations on your election and congratulating Hon John Cowdell on his election as Deputy President. I am confident you will both serve in your new positions with distinction and I look forward to your advice and guidance during my time in this place. I also take this opportunity to thank the staff of Parliament House for their support and help to this stage.

Like most members who have stood here before me, I am honoured and humbled to have the opportunity to serve in this place. To the electors of the North Metropolitan Region who supported the Australian Labor Party on 14 December, thank you. I assure them I will do my best to fulfil the trust they have placed in me and my party.

All members should appreciate that election to this place requires enormous support and effort from many people within political parties. To the hundreds of people who worked on ALP campaigns throughout the North Metropolitan Region at the last election, I say thank you very much. I am particularly grateful for the efforts of the ALP candidates who unsuccessfully contested Legislative Assembly seats in the region. Without wishing to diminish the efforts of any of the others, I especially mention the contributions of Nick Catania, Dianne Guise, Ann Barrett and Liz Prime. Their efforts were tremendous and I hope they will consider running again in four years' time for I am sure they will be successful at that time.

We all have special people who have helped us by providing their advice, support and encouragement during our political involvement. In my case, three people deserve special mention: Senator Chris Evans, Hon Cheryl Davenport and Roger Cook. Senator Chris Evans has given me great support and encouragement for many years. For the last three and a half years as a member of his staff I have had the opportunity to learn first-hand from his knowledge and skill. Hon Cheryl Davenport, as well as providing excellent support and advice, is a good friend and I am proud to join her in this Chamber.

I first met Roger Cook around the time of the formation of the National Union of Students, in which Roger was instrumental. In recent times Roger and I have worked together at Senator Chris Evans' office. Roger will make a great contribution to this State and I look forward to the opportunity of returning the support and friendship he has given me over the last 12 years.

There are, of course, numerous other friends, many of them in the Public Gallery tonight, whom time does not allow me to mention. I appreciate their friendship, encouragement and support.

My first involvement in the labour movement was as a rank and file trade union activist. I would, therefore, like to acknowledge the support of the members and officials of the trade union movement for the Australian Labor Party and myself. I particularly thank my own unions, the Community and Public Sector Union and the Public Transport Union. I also acknowledge the support of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union and the Maritime Union of Australia, with which I have been closely associated.

Last and most importantly, the support, encouragement and love of my parents, my family, my partner Trish and her family are instrumental in my standing here tonight. Thank you, each and every one of you, especially my partner Trish.

Following the last election a number of ALP members are no longer in Parliament. They all made significant contributions. To Doug Wenn, Graham Edwards, Kay Hallahan, Yvonne Henderson, Paul Sulc and Judyth Watson

go my best wishes for the years ahead. I will mention later the contribution Graham Edwards has made in the North Metropolitan Region.

I make special mention of Val Ferguson. I had the privilege of working with Val at Senator Chris Evans' office and I regret that I will not serve with Val in this place.

Tonight I will consider some of the challenges facing this State and where possible put them into a north metropolitan context. Hopefully my speech will give members an insight into some of my past experiences and the perspective from which I seek to find solutions to our problems.

I begin by looking at some economic issues. There is no economic issue more important to society than the elimination of long term unemployment. While we all work towards the goal of achieving full employment we must also ensure people are not left unemployed for long periods of time. It is extremely difficult to exit the cycle of long term unemployment once people enter it. A society as wealthy as ours has no excuses. Training and retraining people - which I do not believe has to be the case - is still better than our current situation. The plight of the unemployed is a concern I share with one of my predecessors in the North Metropolitan Region, Hon Graham Edwards. In his inaugural speech he raised the challenge of addressing unemployment, particularly amongst the young, when he said -

Unemployment manifests itself in all age groups, but it leaves its particular scar on the youth of this nation, many of whom feel they have been made redundant by society before ever having the opportunity to become useful.

He went on in his speech to say -

They must come to know that they have a stake in the future of this nation; they must come to know that the aims and ambitions they hold for their futures are achievable. We all have a responsibility to share their challenge. To do otherwise is to cast a whole generation adrift.

I wholeheartedly agree with Graham Edwards' comments on this issue.

In the current Federal Government's first year of office the list of long term unemployed rose by 44 000 people, despite the nation experiencing economic growth. Contrast that to the last year of the former Federal Labor Government which had a reduction in the list of long term unemployed of 45 000. It is a national disgrace; but it is not only about lists, it is about thousands of individual stories of human tragedy. In Parliament and government one has the opportunity to be involved in shaping the big picture, but it is important that we never forget the view of our policies from an individual's perspective.

Last Friday I attended the tenth anniversary of a group called Northern Suburbs Youth Options. It also marked the opening of their new and larger premises. Northern Suburbs Youth Options is an extremely successful program which has helped many young people in my electorate with their employment and training needs. It began as a one person show, with Beryl Moore, working out of a back room of Graham Edwards' electorate office. It now has the respect of business, education institutions and the wider community. Its success can be attributed to many people, but none more so than Graham Edwards and Beryl Moore. I mention Northern Suburbs Youth Options as an example of how as members of Parliament we can become involved in and contribute at the local level to help individuals, and not be preoccupied with just the big picture. That shows how Graham followed up the comments in his inaugural speech with local action. It is the model of getting in and making a difference that I wish to pursue in politics.

Another economic problem that is exacerbated by high levels of unemployment is affecting working people; namely, job security, or lack of it. I am sure some would argue that the fear of losing their job will motivate people to work harder and to be more productive. Although this may be true in the short term, over a sustained period it will lead to a deterioration in the quality and productivity of a person's work. Members do not have to talk with too many people in the community to know this is the case. I accept that the globalisation of the economy means we all must accept change, but it must be done in a compassionate manner. I believe the culture of a job for life has played a part in the success of the Japanese economy.

The Government must start to show leadership on this issue. Take, for example, the area for which I currently have opposition responsibility - water resources. Even though Water Corporation employees were able to do work cheaper than private contractors, work was given to private contractors. Long term employees of the organisation were given redundancies or forced to work for the private contractors. Decisions like this cause massive harm throughout the public sector and workers say, "Who cares? Whatever we do they will still get rid of our jobs." People must feel that if they work hard and do their job properly, their job will be safe. It is up to Governments to set examples to the private sector in this area.

I will speak about two issues that contribute to the nature and form of our urban society - public transport and the development of regional centres. As a former Transperth bus operator, it is appropriate that I consider public transport first. In the "Plan for the Metropolitan Region Perth and Fremantle Western Australian 1955 Report" - often known as the Stephenson report - a great deal of importance was placed on the need to increase the use of public transport, particularly into and out of the central area. Members may be surprised to know that contrary to popular myth the report considered it essential that the railways should carry greatly increased numbers of passengers to and from the central area of Perth. There were calls for two new passenger railway lines; one from Daglish to Whitford, and another from Bayswater to Mirrabooka. It was envisaged that these two new lines and other measures to coordinate public transport would result in an increase from the then 3.5 per cent of workers commuting to the city by train to 22 per cent by the time the city reached a population of 1.4 million people. We are very close to that population now. The report made the point that this figure would still be only half of the 44 per cent of Melbourne city workers who commuted by train. At that time Melbourne was already a city of about 1.4 million people.

Unfortunately, these proposals were dropped before the Stephenson plan was given legislative effect in 1963 through the metropolitan region scheme. Thankfully, in the late 1980s the then Labor Government resurrected the idea of a northern suburbs railway line and we now have a first class service to the region. The Stephenson report was the result of concern at the time about growing traffic congestion in the centres of Perth and Fremantle. Today we still face the problem of increasing congestion in the central area, but now have the added concern of environmental and health problems due to our reliance on private passenger cars. Recently two reports were released - the Perth photochemical smog study and the Perth haze study. Both reports highlight that Perth has a major problem with its air quality, which, if not addressed urgently, will lead to long term health and environmental problems.

It is worth noting that this is not a new problem. On 30 April 1971 the *Daily News* in Perth carried the page 2 headline: "LA style smog in Perth yesterday". The Government has started to address both traffic congestion and air pollution. I congratulate it on what it has done so far, but a lot more still must be done.

I accept that public transport alone is not the answer. There are many other parts to the solution. There are things we can all do, such as using gas powered vehicles. I take this opportunity to say to the Minister for the Environment that if she needs a guinea pig to trial gas vehicles in the government fleet, she should pick me. I had already started to make inquiries about getting a gas powered government provided vehicle prior to the Minister's announcement.

I return to public transport. I urge the Government to push ahead harder and faster in the general direction outlined in the metropolitan transport strategy, but also I ask the Government to reject the recognition in the strategy that cars will remain the dominant form of urban passenger transport in metropolitan Perth for the foreseeable future. We must overcome this mentality, especially for people commuting into and out of the central area of Perth each day. We must make public transport an attractive alternative for them. We must push forward now and not let the opportunity slip away, as it did 40-odd years ago. We must ensure a cultural change in our thinking: No more tunnels. What a missed opportunity this was to use our capital effectively. We should start this new culture by ruling out the suggested interchange on the Burswood highway at the Belmont Park Racecourse. The area already has excellent public transport access. Let us give public transport an advantage over the car.

The extension of the northern suburbs railway line to Clarkson, a new line to Mandurah and a new line to Ellenbrook must be brought forward as priorities. Members might find it unusual that a northern suburbs member is arguing for a southern railway line, but I will come to that issue later. The reserve for a railway line to Ellenbrook, which was added recently to the metropolitan region scheme, at least in part, follows one of the lines originally suggested in the Stephenson report in 1955. Further, we must ensure that as people move into new areas, they get into the habit of using public transport. All too often new subdivisions open up and people move in and it is not until some time later when there is a quantifiable demand that a decent bus service is introduced. We have recently seen this in the Clarkson-Merriwa part of my electorate. In an article entitled "Public Transport and Urban Growth" in *Western Landscapes*, J. Selwood points out that prior to 1966 the old Metropolitan Transport Trust was experiencing declining levels of patronage. He gives the credit for a reversal in this trend to an aggressive policy by the then MTT to extend services into new subdivisions as they opened up before there was huge demand. The intention was to get people into the habit of using public transport from the start. We must adopt this approach again. Many places around the world are moving towards providing high class public transport systems for their citizens. Why? It is because they acknowledge that the use of public transport is something to be encouraged and that we all - not just the user - benefit from public transport patronage. I hope that during my time in this place we, too, will move in this direction.

I am most disturbed by the recent state Budget and comments in the annual report of the Department of Transport that suggest we are likely to see further increases, rather than decreases, in fares. Selwood points out in his article a number of occasions in the 1960s and 1970s when fare increases resulted in decreases in patronage on bus and train services. There is a clear link between price and usage. I can hear the calls: How can we afford this? The

metropolitan transport strategy recognises that road users benefit from public transport through reduced congestion on our roads. Most road congestion occurs during peak hours when city workers are travelling into and out of the central area. In most cases those people have access to the public transport system, which is focused on the city centre - and if they do not have that access, they should have.

An option we could consider is to place a levy on parking space in the central area of Perth. Funds from this levy would provide extra money for improving our public transport system, educating passenger car commuters about alternatives and other measures that take pressure off the city centre. It would not be too dissimilar from making smokers pay the cost of encouraging them to stop smoking. Not only do commuters require the Government to spend money on building expensive road systems, but also their pollution is adding to the overall health costs. A parking levy would target those people, including members in this place, who have an alternative to using their cars. It would not affect commerce or people travelling to regional areas not adequately serviced by public transport. It would make people appreciate that passenger car use, when public transport is available, is a luxury. I believe it is an issue worth considering.

I now turn to regional centres and the role they should play in our urban planning. Again, we can find the basis of Perth's regional centres in the 1955 Stephenson plan. It argued for a clearly defined limit to urban growth, and stated that growth beyond this should be in separate and complete entities within the region. In the late 1960s the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority developed this concept further with what is now known as the corridor plan. This plan would see Perth grow along defined corridors separated by rural and recreational land. Within the corridors would be self-contained communities, clearly separated by public open space. It is from this plan that the current regional centres of Joondalup, Midland, Armadale, Fremantle, and Rockingham, and the future centre of Alkimos have developed. Like the original Stephenson plan, the corridor plan envisaged that within each region or district there would be neighbourhoods or communities, each with residences located around local schools, shops and community buildings. The aim was to ensure people had easy access to these facilities, reduce their need to travel and help develop a sense of identity and community.

My concern today is that these well thought out plans have run off the track. Firstly, we have seen haphazard local neighbourhood development that does not conform to the original concept. In the North Metropolitan Region, areas such as East Marangaroo still do not have a local primary school. The 1962 metropolitan region scheme report recommended primary schools with up to 450 pupils, none of whom would have to walk more than half a mile to school. Primary school students in East Marangaroo would be grateful if they had to walk only half a mile to school; the nearest school for many is 5 kilometres from home. Haphazard planning in the northern suburbs has also occurred with respect to shops and other commercial buildings. If sound planning criteria did not guide the development in the City of Wanneroo, one can only wonder what did. I look forward with interest to the findings of the Wanneroo Inc royal commission. Perhaps it will provide some of the clues. I hope initiatives in the state planning strategy and the community code will improve the development of neighbourhoods. I will be watching.

Secondly, increasing land values have placed pressure on maintaining the open space inside the corridors. Currently, the last large block of land that could provide an open space between the Joondalup and Alkimos regions in the northern corridor is under pressure for development. The bushland north of Burns Beach is also unique in that it is the last remaining significant piece of coastal banksia bushland anywhere between Woodmans Point and Yanchep that is not currently zoned urban. The lack of a decent belt of open space north of Alkimos is a debate for another day. We must ensure this important bushland is saved for future generations. As Stephenson said in an address to the tenth congress of the Australian Planning Institute in 1968: "The next generations will never forgive us if we leave them endless built areas. We owe it to our forebears to emulate their valuable legacy of parks and recreational spaces." Stephenson was, of course, referring to the decisions of past generations to preserve areas such as Kings Park. In the gallery tonight are some of my nieces and nephews. They are part of probably the most environmentally aware generation in western society for many years. I hope when I grow old I can be proud of the way I left this State for them.

Another problem regional centres face is the lack of government commitment to making them work. Earlier this year there was debate in the media which suggested there was a war between the northern and southern suburbs. The argument was that the northern suburbs were receiving favourable treatment. This is not true. I could list many government decisions, or lack of decisions, which have hindered the development of Joondalup. The one negative factor holding back development in all regional centres is the Government's preoccupation with the central business district. Joondalup is not a threat to the development of the Rockingham region or, for that matter, Midland, Armadale or Fremantle. The Northbridge tunnel and the extension of the railway line to Rockingham require similar levels of capital expenditure. Which did this Government choose? It chose the tunnel in the central business district. When this Government made a bid for the Commonwealth Games, where did it locate all the activity? It was in and around the central business district. Although rents are climbing in the central business district, how many government departments have moved into the regions? Every other aspect of government expenditure is rigorously

examined for cost cutting measures. Why not this one? If John Howard can run Australia from Sydney, why cannot Western Australian Ministers run their departments from Joondalup or Armadale?

Recognising that the malapportionment in this place means there is an equal number of representatives from non-metropolitan areas, I assure those members that I realise there is also a great city-country divide in this State. I believe it, too, is an issue we must address, but not tonight.

In further support of my case, I refer to a speech by the current Minister for Planning, Graham Kierath, to a meeting of the Property Council of Australia, formerly the Building Owners and Managers Association, on 21 February this year. I am told that in his speech he made it clear to the meeting that should any matters involving the central business district and a regional centre come before him for a decision, the central business district would get his support. That is this Government's position; the central business district will always win over regional centres. Those of us in the regions, who are committed to their development, must ensure we do not fall for this Government's divide and conquer approach. We must work and lobby together to ensure a change in the Government's attitude. North, south, east and west must unite against the centre, and that is not an Australian Labor Party factional comment!

The other issue that requires brief mention in regard to the development of Joondalup, is that it is now time for the Government to start handing over control of the development of that centre to the local community and other stakeholders. Future decisions on the development require greater local ownership. As members will by now have gathered, I truly belong in the green belt with my environmentally conscious colleagues from the ALP and other political parties. I look forward with interest to discovering where the rust belt exists in the House.

Like Hon Simon O'Brien, I worked for the Australian Customs Service prior to becoming a member of this House. During that time I realised how futile our efforts were to stem the flow of drugs into this country. I in no way wish this to be taken as criticism of the efforts of the staff of the Australian Customs Service, who are a hard working, dedicated and professional group. Rather, it is the mammoth task we require them and other law enforcement officers to pursue that makes it futile. I am sure that every member of this House opposes the use and expansion of availability of drugs in our society. Too many people are dying, but we must find a new way to solve this crisis in our society. We must ensure we send the message to young people that drugs are dangerous and they should not use them. We must find a way to ensure there is no longer a profit motive which sees drug dealers encourage more people to take up drugs. Drug dealers are like any business people, they will try to encourage more people to use their products. They are different only in that once they have a hold on a person, it is hard to escape - except of course for Bill Gates. It is time to throw away the old system of using criminal penalties to address this issue. I have no problem either with throwing away the key for convicted major drug dealers. We must find a way of helping the users - the victims - in our health system and not in the courts.

Even though it is quite common for members on this side to do so, it was not originally my intention to discuss industrial relations in my speech tonight. However, I believe the events of recent weeks warrant at least some comment. The contents of and manner in which the Labour Relations Amendment Act passed through this Parliament has placed odium on this place. In the eyes of many, it has made this a place worthy of derision. I look forward to supporting a Bill to repeal the Act, and I remain committed to that cause.

A book detailing the history of this Parliament, *House on the Hill*, makes reference to a banner used at the time responsible government was granted in this State hailing "At last she moves!" The role and composition of this House over the past 106 years has meant that we have not moved very far in achieving democratic control of this place. Hopefully the recent change in numbers means that we will soon be able to use the slogan "Finally under way!" I hope it is a prosperous journey for all of us.

Last year when I explained to one of my nephews that I hoped to become a member of Parliament he responded that I must be a liar. His automatic assumption was that being a politician meant being a liar. That stung me. It had the effect of highlighting to me that the status, role and integrity of members of Parliament are under serious challenge in our society. We should all look seriously at this issue if we value our democratic institution.

I realise it is a complicated and difficult issue, but I make the following suggestions, which hopefully will start the process of restoring the community's trust in its Parliament.

Mr President, I begin by congratulating you on your decision to limit the wearing of the wig. Hopefully, as we enter the twenty-first century, that symbolises that our practices are not locked in the nineteenth century. Secondly, we must ensure that pay, conditions and superannuation of members of Parliament are on the same terms as those of all other public servants. We need transparency in our pay and conditions. Allowances such as our imprest account must either be done away with or, if members believe we are entitled to them, be included in our salary, on which we can then be judged. If a trip is a legitimate business expense, we can claim it on our tax, just like everyone else. Thirdly, we must ensure that those who work for us receive proper remuneration and have decent conditions in which to work. I was pleased to hear that the Premier is looking at that issue.

Fourthly, we must be careful about how we use public money. The government advertising campaigns in relation to the labour relations amendment legislation - especially the one prior to the legislation's passing through this House - are nothing short of government propaganda and the electorate knows it. If a Government cannot get its message across through the free media and gain public support for its legislation, it should drop it. To use taxpayers' money to convince taxpayers they are wrong does politics no good. We will need the media's support on this issue and it will need to show greater responsibility in reporting.

We must introduce public funding of election campaigns and ban private donations. The cost of running election campaigns continues to increase. We must remove the perception of donations for favours. Many might see a contradiction in my previous two statements, but I do not agree. Spending money on a one-sided campaign is seen as unfair; providing money to ensure the integrity of this place is completely different. Finally, we must ensure that the laws we make can be upheld and that they apply as equally to us as they do to others, and that we ourselves uphold them.

Since my election to this place I have discovered that my great-great-grandfather, Edward Ogilvie, was a member of the New South Wales Legislative Council last century. I have also discovered that I am related to Jessie Street, a well-known feminist, peace activist and international lobbyist earlier this century. Both were recognised as people with an enlightened attitude towards Aboriginal people for their time. It is fair to note that many would today judge their views as paternalistic or patronising. I hope that I will be seen as someone with enlightened views for my time. I am committed to the process of reconciliation with the traditional owners of this country.

As members no doubt have realised by now, I support an interventionist role for government in our society. I believe that those who argue the contrary are hypocrites. I have yet to meet anyone who does not support some form of government intervention; it is a necessary and important part of our society. The question is how much and on what issues we intervene.

I look forward to the future with great optimism. I hope I will be a member of this place for some time, but not too long. Most importantly, if I am fortunate enough to be re-elected, I hope it will be to a House that is part of the democratic system of the Republic of Australia.

[Applause.]