

VALEDICTORY SPEECHES

Member for Mirrabooka

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [4.26 pm]: I really appreciate the opportunity to give my valedictory speech. Given my late decision to not recontest, and after a bit of pressure from some of my colleagues, I feel very appreciative that they made me stand here today to say goodbye to you all. I recognise the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and their elders past and present. It is with a great sense of pride that during the 12 years I have sat in this place, the First Nation people have been recognised in the WA Constitution. That is something that we have done while I have been here. Recognition of the First Nation people now leads the opening of the house each day. I congratulate the Speaker for that legacy. That is a great legacy to be leaving this place with.

In government, Labor has delivered many landmark native title settlements and land use agreements. There is so much further to go in reconciling our past, and truth-telling. I thank the Noongar and other Aboriginal people in Mirrabooka, particularly elders such as Doolan Leisha Eatts and Walter Eatts, for working with me in our area to make grassroots changes to honour the history of our country. It has been an honour and a privilege to represent the rich and diverse electorate of Mirrabooka. I was lucky enough to follow in the footsteps of the late John Kobelke, and of Margaret Quirk. Along with many other members of Parliament, they have provided great support and inspired me in how I undertook the most privileged job in my life.

The Mirrabooka electorate reflects the multi-faith and varied national and cultural heritage that has always made up the story of settlement in Australia. Australia reflects our globalised world, interconnected through not just technology, but also people. Globalisation cannot be just about trade. The diaspora in Australia want an effective avenue to contribute to Australia's foreign and other policies, particularly when there are injustices and conflict in their country of origin. For example, the Indian community, particularly the Sikh community I have worked with, want to be able to voice their concerns about the impact of recent legislative changes on Indian farmers. They are concerned that given 86 per cent of India's farmland is held by small landholders who own less than two hectares, the protections of their standard of living are at risk and will be subject to predatory corporatisation with the removal of the minimum price. We all know that we like to set a minimum wage. We all think that that is an important thing and we need to uphold that throughout the world. With this in mind, I commend the tenth report of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee titled "Turning to India: Investing in our Future", and recommendation 6, which includes active engagement of the Indian diaspora. I urge a future state government to adopt its recommendation for not only the Indian but also other communities.

With some 52 per cent of people in Australia born overseas and 60 per cent speaking a language other than English in their home, Mirrabooka constituents paint a picture of modern Australia. Based on the ABC's 2019 "Australia Talks Survey", the key element of being Australian was in respecting institutions and laws. It is clear to me that people who were either born in Australia or came here as migrants—be it skilled, students or seeking refuge—want the right to belong and to be treated equally by the laws and those government institutions that uphold them. In sharing democratic beliefs, respecting rights and liberties, and upholding and obeying laws—the pledge made at citizenship—all Australians seek a life of dignity and pride and one without prejudice based on race and religion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly reinforced the catchphrase "We're all in this together", which is similar to the saying "A fair go for all". But for that to be a reality, it needs to be reflected in our institutions and in our leadership with support and commitment. In particular, it needs to be reflected in our equal opportunity legislation. The 1984 legislation no longer reflects what is needed to ensure our community responds to discrimination, in particular racism and intolerance.

On a positive note, the multicultural framework introduced this year and based on the multicultural charter is a document that I am proud to have worked on with the multicultural advisory group. Of particular note is the great work of Said Padshah; Maria Osman; Iqbal Samnakay; Zang Ye, or Edward; and Helen Maddocks. Although COVID-19 has delayed some of this great work, I urge all government departments to embrace this framework as a guide to the innovation that diversity will bring to our institutions. That success is the experience of Kaleidoscope, the workplace program for newcomers, in which both participants and employers have had great experiences. It is another great initiative I was honoured to be part of. I thank the City of Stirling for its innovation.

I truly want to thank all the people of the electorate of Mirrabooka—those who live there, those who work there, and those who have lived there—who have all embraced the spirit of the place in their hearts, including myself. I sing the praises of an area steeped in culture and celebration, from Harmony to Eid, Songkran, Tet, NAIDOC, and the Karen and Chin New Year. I used to say that my new year started in September with Persian New Year and finished with Songkran with the Thais in April. It is great to have New Year's resolutions when they are for only six months!

It was with pride that I saw the Koondoola Community Centre built to cater for the large and cohesive Vietnamese seniors group, and the opening of the Westnam United Soccer Club, where the love of soccer sees all the different communities in the area play alongside each other. There are so many landmarks to mark my 12 years: the Reid Highway bridge; the Princess Road Park upgrade; the development of the land around Mirrabooka, including Mia Vista Nursing Home; and the establishment of the Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Resource Centre.

But those are the built forms, which do not demonstrate the pride in the area—a pride that is strongly defended. When, some seven or eight years ago, the front page of the daily news screamed about the fear of young African–Australian men, the community stood strongly against the stereotypes that misrepresented the good work of so many young Australians. Indeed, the defence went so far as to take the matters to the Australian Press Council and seek redress to highlight the leadership of young African–Australians. Those Australians with African heritage, such as Ayor Makur Chuot, who is the number 3 Labor candidate in the North Metropolitan Region, demonstrate the strength of the community to rise above the prejudice and adversity that unfairly confronts them. I look forward to seeing her in the other house following the next election.

One of the biggest issues that confronts the Mirrabooka community is employment opportunities. From the high of 25 per cent unemployment that we saw under the Barnett government, the residents of Mirrabooka have seen a decline, in March 2020, to 19.1 per cent. Given the circumstances, it is comforting, but it is not enough. The federal government’s changes to JobKeeper and JobSeeker will have a detrimental impact on the community in Mirrabooka. I urge the WA government to continue to lobby for unemployment benefits that reflect the cost of living of people of Western Australia.

Through COVID, we have learnt that decisiveness is valued by the community and expected of our leaders. We politicians have appreciated the respect of our communities and worked with them to ensure that both their physical and mental health needs have been met. Through my 12 years, but particularly in this year, it has been an honour to work with the local councils in my area and their staff at the Cities of Stirling and Wanneroo. I particular want to thank the local councillors I worked with, David Boothman, Keith Sergeant, Hugh Nguyen, Domenic Zappa, Vinh Nguyen and Brett Treby, both the mayors and other mayors, and the past councillors, including Anh Truong.

There is never one reason to make a decision to leave your job, but even though I may change my title, I will not change the thing that drives me and makes me passionate about seeing a more inclusive, fair and equitable Australia. As the saying goes, meaning and hope are as important to human beings as bones. This role, representing the people in our Mirrabooka community, has given me that and more. In the Parliament, the opportunity to be on parliamentary committees and, in particular, to be the Chairperson of the Education and Health Standing Committee, has been a highlight. I have achieved many things in this place, both in opposition and in government. I got to work in the second chamber on pivotal health legislation on which we now rely, and changes in vocational education training in schools that came from an inquiry that I chaired. I am proud that this government delivered on the fly in, fly out worker report I worked on and established an occupational health and safety code of practice for mentally healthy workplaces with a view to preventing self-harm and suicide. I was privileged to work alongside the member for Kimberley as we investigated the tragedy of Aboriginal youth suicides to produce the recommendations in the “Learnings from the Message Stick” report. I welcome the federal and state governments’ Closing the Gap commitments to build a community-controlled sector, which is critical to developing appropriate and effective services. It is important to have those community sectors and community organisations deliver on the ground to people in need.

I am very passionate about the report “The Food Fix” and the need to address the epidemic in our community that is type 2 diabetes. It is a disease that costs people their lives, and costs some 10 per cent, and increasing, of the health budget. This is a disease that can be put into remission. The health authorities’ lack of action is questionable. We should give people the hope they need, work with primary providers and meet the challenge with proactive and resourced responses, such as those in the recommendations of the report. I urge the government to do this. Thanks to all the committee staff who worked with me over the years, not forgetting my three years on the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation and our good work on fees and charges, and Australian Standards.

To the state Parliamentary Labor Party staff, members of Parliament and electorate office staff in other members’ offices, all of whom I have worked with over my 12 years here, thank you. To the ministerial staff, who, in both Liberal and Labor governments, have been respectful and helpful, and the many public servants I have worked with, thank you for your dedication and commitment to our WA community. To all the staff of Parliament, both on the frontline and in human resources and information technology, including in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, thank you. Please accept my thanks. You have always been respectful and helpful, despite my naughtiness at times—I can be a bit naughty at times! Your willingness to stop and share your personal stories with me has made my time in this building rich and fun. Thanks to those who are endlessly patient, like reception; those who listened and corrected my speeches, like Hansard; and the clerks and chamber staff who let me challenge them when I was in the chair. It was always fun to grab out the green book and question what I was being told. I thank the Parliamentary Library staff for their acceptance of my continual requests for articles and books, the catering

staff for the tolerance of my eating habits, and to those who run the Parliament. I get that it is difficult, and your concern for staff and safety is a core commitment. I acknowledge and thank you. But it is a house of the people, the common house, and those people include parliamentarians. The building should be a welcoming place. During the 12 years I have been here, I fear that that has been undermined by other priorities that are maybe no less worthy, but without the commitment to a core value of making us, MPs, feel as though we fully belong. I commend the decision to have a family room, but it needs to be more than a room. It has to be inclusive, accepting and tolerant of inconvenience, and most of all give a sense of belonging.

Regarding Parliament, when anyone questions the value of targets for women in Parliament, they will have to question the value of my contribution, as I am proudly the result of many women and supportive men ensuring that women like me stand in this place. One of them is in the gallery today, Helen Creed. I came to this place as a result of the Labor Party's commitment to affirmative action. As I have demonstrated here and in the electorate, I have merit. Some bloke with greater capacity was not overlooked because the party gave me, as a woman, preference through targets. If you are a woman who wants to follow your passion and seek to change the delivery of services into the community or introduce new innovations, my standing here tells you that you can too—well, you can if you are a member of the Labor Party. Bateman will be interesting! To take on this job, you need support from your colleagues, volunteers and community, but most importantly from your family and friends. To the freedom girls, the EMILY's List crew, the yoga mob, the neighbours and all my volunteers and supporters—too many to name individually—thank you all. Thanks to the community whom I represented and the non-government organisations. They are all fantastic people to work for.

Thanks to my family—now I am going to cry. It has been a hard year, but we have loved and supported each other through it. To Jodie, Nathan, Tracy and Ken, you are amazing; I love and cherish you all. To my mum, throughout my 12 years here you have taught me resilience and reliability with a strength of character that has served us so well in this tough year. You have also taught me that I have to deal with my anxiety, which is a very good lesson to learn. I could not imagine running for re-election without my biggest supporter and also my greatest critic, my dad; so now I guess I will not have to. To my lovely radical son who runs a close second in the questioning-my-belief stakes. He keeps me questioning and his arguments are pretty convincing. Can I just tell you that the women's revolution of the 70s produced me, so I am so looking forward to what the social revolution of this time, of this age, produces as the leadership of the future. I can imagine that that future will not be captured by the laissez faire capitalism of privatisation and small government that I was taught at uni, but it will embrace the health and wellbeing of its citizens. I am heartened that my belief—that the wealth of a nation is built on the public ownership of its facilities, the delivery of universal health and education, the importance of stimulating the economy for employment, and a compassionate welfare system—has borne fruit in this time of pandemic, and that is something that we should all be committed to. I trust that a future Labor government will continue to ensure that the wealth that is quarried from the Western Australian earth will profit all Western Australians, not just a few, and that the community of WA will continue to receive a commensurate amount of the wealth from the resources extracted, and that Aboriginal heritage and culture will continue to be preserved.

This health crisis is only a precursor to the urgent need to address climate change. I came into this place calling for a carbon price. That has been such a vexed issue, but we need to resolve it. I welcomed the government's recently released climate change policy and its commitment to net zero emissions by 2050. I am sure that this commitment will have a plan and goals to meet that target and ensure that we deliver on this urgent issue. I welcome the health commitments released today and commend the Minister for Health and Tarun Weeramanthri for their great work on the impact of climate change on the health of our community. Tarun Weeramanthri came to our culturally and linguistically diverse community to ask for input around that. We received a great contribution from him and he is a great asset to our community.

Back to my thank-yous. To my best friend in Parliament, Roger Cook. Your emotional intelligence makes you an exceptional human being and just a joy to be around. I can go dancing now without worrying, but you will have to wait until you give your valedictory speech before you can join me on the dancefloor in a nightclub. To my other parliamentary colleagues, I will miss you all. My first caucus meeting in this place was as the president of caucus. I sat before you as the president of caucus before I had even sat in caucus! You have all shown me—mostly all!—such respect and regard. You have also shown me why being in the Labor caucus is the greatest honour a political tragic like me could have. To the Premier, Mark McGowan, it has been an honour and a privilege to be part of your team. You never failed to acknowledge me in any setting—a simple, "Hi, Janine", whether you were rushing into a meeting or in deep concern, is a great testament to your unpretentiousness and your capacity to be a leader and to be one of us. Also, thanks for letting me burst into your office at any time, especially when Julia Gillard was visiting so that I could say hello! That was exciting.

To my union friends, particularly Carolyn Smith and all the others, thank you for always keeping it real, appreciating my work and listening to my concerns. To my staff, particularly Sue and Donata, who actually managed to stay with me through a campaign and beyond—thanks! To Razia, thanks for coming back to save the day. To all the

others in my staff who have contributed, it has been a real honour to work with you and I thank you for putting up with my bluntness, at times, and sometimes offhanded comments.

To all the Nollamara branch members and volunteers, especially Amy, Robert, Eric, Harry, Kayande, Rafal, Hiba, Nick, Senada and anyone I have forgotten—because you always do—and to all the booth captains and the workers, thanks for the support. The job cannot be done without you and you have all been fantastic. To Danny, thanks for your wisdom and guidance. To Shani, thank you for your support over these last several months. To my friend Elizabeth, thank you for being with me on an enormously long journey since university.

To my partner, John, I am not sure whether the last 12 years have been hard on us or kind to us, but we have loved each other through it and prevailed. I cherish your support and thank you for your no-nonsense guidance. You are kind, patient and loving. I love you and Thomas very much.

I could keep going, but it is Friday afternoon! I want to say in conclusion that I came into this place saying that I am a feminist. That did not mean that I was up for a fight or that I just wanted to change the use of language—although I did win on taking the “man” out of “chairman” in estimates. Every time someone printed a copy, that used to be me who scrubbed out “man”. But saying that I am a feminist did not mean that, and I did not come here to do those things, although those little things matter because, frankly, they are like fingernails scraping down a blackboard when you are a feminist. It meant I wanted to see change to make women’s lives better and to deliver equality. I wanted to see women represented in this Parliament. I have really cherished this Parliament since 2017, with all the women colleagues I have had. The change I work for is, like that delivered by Edith Cowan, one of significance. Next year will be 100 years since she was elected to this place and the first time a woman was elected to any commonwealth Parliament. This should be honoured by ensuring that next year we have the first woman Speaker of the WA Legislative Assembly. That the person who sits in the chair at the centre of the chamber should be a woman in the same house that catcalled and jeered 100 years ago when the first woman stood to speak seems to me a historical opportunity. Further, women have done it tough over the COVID pandemic, and early childhood education and occupational opportunities need to be the focus of the coming government—a focus that a commitment to a women’s budget will deliver.

It has been an honour and a privilege to be here. I could go on and on and talk about the many memories I have of this place. Now that I have spoken, I can keep going! I got really good at being able to speak at the drop of a hat. When I told the Whip I was leaving, he asked who he was going to get to stand up when he needed someone to speak. When I first came to this house, I hated public speaking. I used to get up and be really nervous and very reticent. I felt like you had to know so much to be here.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes, that is right!

I never wanted to let the people of Mirrabooka down by what I said or end up on the front page of the newspaper for having said something. I want to say things that can be a bit off the cuff sometimes and a bit cheeky! People have always listened to me and given me respect, although a few times maybe not. I can remember one instance when I felt like I was disrespected in this chamber. When I stand with a lot of women next to me in this house, it makes me feel like this place is a place for me and it makes me feel like it is easier to speak.

It can be a really odd chamber—standing across from each other. It is very adversarial. I do not think it needs to be like that. I have talked about the second chamber we had for the health legislation, which was back there in the committee room, and how it was such a different experience as a member of Parliament and how we were able to get really into detail and speak directly to advisers in a manner that delivered a better piece of legislation than the one that had come to this Parliament. We were in opposition doing that. At the time, the minister himself said that as he gave a speech for the third reading of the bill. Reform is needed in this place to make it more welcoming and inclusive. It probably needs to be more multicultural. How we bring in people from a diverse set of backgrounds is a challenge for the Labor Party.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes, okay! There are people who can do that on this side as well, member for Hillarys.

It has been an honour and a privilege, and I have really cherished it. I look forward to what happens after 13 March. I look forward to another WA Labor government. I believe Labor has done such a good job that it should be returned to government. I am looking forward to Meredith Hammat being the member for Mirrabooka, although she has to still go through the Labor Party processes! She has my support, just in case anyone wants to know! I thank you all for having me in this Parliament.

[Applause.]

Member for Bateman

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [4.50 pm]: Firstly, I would like to thank my colleagues for allowing me the opportunity to make a valedictory speech. I would like to open by saying that I have developed a great appreciation of, and respect for, the importance of Parliament. The most rewarding aspect is the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. The opportunity to walk in dad's and grandad's footsteps has been a privilege, but the challenge to deliver meaningful outcomes can be extremely frustrating at times, as all of us know. To serve as a minister of the Crown is something that I will never forget, and making the decision to move on in my family's best interest has caused me to reflect on some of the highs and lows over my journey.

As a minister of the Crown, I have had the opportunity to influence and be involved in so many wonderful projects for Western Australia, such as completing the gateway and opening at the Tonkin Highway upgrade with the Prime Minister; planning, coordinating, contracting and starting the Forrestfield–Airport Link; and redesigning, contracting and commencing NorthLink WA. There are some stories behind some of these things that I find interesting that have probably never been told. I will just share a small anecdote with people here. When the design was first put in front of me, it was actually a dual freeway through to Ellenbrook and then a single lane with traffic lights all the way through to the Brand Highway. I sat and looked at it and thought that surely this design would fail the moment heavy trucks started to move through the route. The designers said, "Yes, it will." I said that we have to work out how to do it properly. It was interesting. We broke the project into three components instead of two, we went out to tender and did all this work, and we managed to dual the road and have overpasses all the way to connect it. It was only after that point, when I was thinking that I was doing a fantastic job, that I discovered that that had been Main Roads' original plan. My previous boss had decided it was too big and cut it back. Unbeknownst to me, as a new minister, I was going against my boss's wishes and redesigning to what I thought was the proper way to do it. I am glad that I got that through and Colin never stopped me on the way through; I was really pleased about that.

I oversaw the development of the bus underground. Again, the departments we worked with were really proactive. We identified inefficiencies and built into the design the second entrance off Wellington Street. We included a design to put in the Charles Street bus bridge, because there were going to be a thousand buses a day heading north off Wellington Street into Northbridge. We could reduce the travel time of those thousand buses a day by six to seven minutes during peak time by spending another \$30 million to build that bus bridge.

We extended the Joondalup rail through to Butler and the Mitchell Freeway to Hester. There were a large number of projects in the Department of Transport in my time as minister and it was a real privilege to undertake them. But there was one piece of work that I initiated, and in some ways I regret that it has become a little bit lost. One of the problems we have is that members go from election to election and often, irrespective of what side they sit on, they have their favourite projects. For me, the problem was that there had not been long-term transport planning in Parliament for decades; really, the Stephenson plan from the 1950s and 1960s was the last time that Western Australia undertook long-term transport planning. Given that the Perth and Peel planning document had just been completed, I requested that the Department of Transport undertake the equivalent Perth and Peel transport plan, but I asked it not to base it on a time period. We know that population growth ebbs and flows, and I would rather do it based on the population than a set time. We talked about it being towards 3.5 million people and beyond. It was work that I instructed the department to undertake without the Liberal Party's involvement; I will admit that I did interfere with two little things in there, but I will come back to that. The whole point of this was that I really wanted some document that provided a road map. It involved the department, academics, the universities and industry preparing a transport plan for the long term for Western Australia as it continues to grow. I was really pleased with what we achieved. I have shared this before. I added two aspects to the transport plan, but I thought I had to take the politics out. Firstly, the line that went up Tonkin Highway did not cut into Ellenbrook; it kept going up and then swung back around onto the Joondalup line. I felt that, politically, I needed to make sure I had that connection, otherwise it would be a bit like Rockingham or Mandurah where the train line does not quite get into those centres. I wanted to make sure it connected. Secondly, as a city that I think will grow towards to a population of three, four and five million people, every city in the world that operates efficiently and effectively from a transport plan has greater connectivity with rapid transport solutions. I felt that it needed to have an underground rail loop for a population that is moving to 3.5 million and beyond. They were the two areas in which I had some say.

In working through all this, I wanted to do more. When I took new initiatives to the former Premier, he regularly used to say that I was already doing too much. My message to all ministers is that they do not have a long time. Work smart and go hard. I say that to everybody in this place. It is amazing; when we are in the middle of it, it feels like it is going to be forever. The time has gone so quickly. I encourage ministers to grab opportunities, go hard and do what they can for Western Australia while they have that opportunity.

I dealt with or worked on a few projects, some of which I would like to share because people may not be aware of them. Inheriting the construction work at Elizabeth Quay, I looked at it from a transport perspective. I was of the view that we had to connect Riverside Drive underneath the development. Earlier estimates made by Troy Buswell suggested that it might cost towards \$300 million. I wanted to look at it. I had formal quotes developed and took

three options to the former Premier. The first was a full freeway connection to Riverside Drive, so traffic did not end up on Mounts Bay Road or the Esplanade, resulting in traffic jam snarl-ups and people trying to move through that area. I proposed that stoplights be installed at either end. We would just put the infrastructure in, so the walls and the diaphragm could be dug out later. It would cost \$150 million for the full freeway, \$90 million if stoplights were installed and \$26 million if the infrastructure was put in for a future government to undertake it. I recommended that we put the infrastructure in. It would only cost an extra \$26 million. Unfortunately, it was not approved. It is something that I felt should have been done that has not been done.

Other things were brought to me by industry. I thought one of them sounded fantastic. We looked at value capture. The government has explored value capture and struggled with it. Industry brought a proposal to us to consider. It involved dropping Stirling Highway, the railway line and Curtin Avenue between Cottesloe and north Fremantle for the air rights to be able to develop above that. I looked at what was proposed. I thought it was fantastic. Again, Colin kept saying, “Dean, you’re doing too much.”

A proposal was brought to me to consider residential development over the freeway and the railway line at Canning Bridge. That would have quietened down the whole precinct. I thought that was a fantastic initiative. Unfortunately, again, when I said to the developer that I wanted the southbound entry off Manning Road and a bus interchange, I was hoping to get some state infrastructure done at the same time, but, alas, I was doing too much.

The Roe 9 tunnel was an interesting piece of work. I inherited the upgrading of High Street and the consideration of Roe 8. I said to Mathias Cormann at the time that Stock Road would then be a problem. That is when the whole freight link design came in. I was never comfortable with it because it would impact commercial businesses. It would take out D’Orsogna, Koala Self Storage and the brewery; there would be massive impacts for those guys. It would also impact the cemetery and certain residents. I felt that we should be able to do something smarter and better. I asked the Department of Transport to undertake a series of work. It spent 12 months on this. It looked at 22 options to create a better solution. The Department of Transport’s recommendation was a tunnel option. I was quite cynical about tunnelling at this point. I was getting a bit of criticism about doing a railway line tunnel for the Forrestfield–Airport line. It was fascinating because we thought that it would cost an additional \$700 million but save \$400 million in property acquisition costs. When we went to the federal government, we looked at the benefit–cost ratio. We believed that it was a similar benefit cost because it was a shorter distance to Fremantle port. I went to the federal government and it supported it. The tender for doing the tunnel for Roe 9 came in cheaper than what it would cost to upgrade High Street and Stock Road, which shocked me. Similarly, when we went to tender on the Forrestfield–Airport line, we allowed a \$2 billion budget. The tender came in at under \$1 billion. We did some improvements that spent a bit more to allow for some project management and a few other costs, but there was still a massive saving. It was cheaper than taking the rail line down Roe Highway and through Horrie Miller Drive. All of a sudden, I saw the potential of using technology to go under the city more cheaply than we could above, and a lot of that was because of property acquisitions or the relocation of services. I see that as an opportunity for future governments to explore so that there is less interruption for a local community by creating throughput in our communities.

Sometimes it can be the little things. I keep saying the member for Thornlie, but it is the member for Gosnells, is it not? A couple of years ago, the member for Gosnells and I were trying to inspire each other to work a bit harder on our fitness. In 2018, the two of us completed more than 20 000 kilometres on our pushbikes. It nearly killed me but I really thank him for that. We have Strava on our bikes. Heading northbound on Roe Highway, there is a cycle bridge over Welshpool Road. It is the “Dean Nalder” bridge. I am not sure who set that up on Strava. I am not sure whether it was the member for Gosnells but I felt very privileged! There is a story behind that. When we started the freight link, people might have thought that the freight link was killed off, but part of the freight link was upgrading Roe Highway from Tonkin Highway to Welshpool Road, and that included an additional three kilometres of cyclepaths. This is an example of people not being recognised or rewarded. I was given the credit for making sure that it connected but what happened—I will not mention their name for their sake—is a junior in the department rang me on the quiet and said, “Have you had a look at the design for freight link?” I said, “What do you mean?” He said that I should look at the cyclepath. I asked him what he meant and he said, “It stops at Welshpool Road.” I feigned as though I had no idea about this when I asked to see the designs to check them. I said, “Where’s the cyclepath?” I was told that it stops. We had 24 kilometres of freeway-grade cyclepaths all around the airport and Tonkin Highway and everything else, but there was a section of 50 metres where cyclists would have to stop at a set of lights. They said, “This will cost \$4 million. You can’t do it because we haven’t got the budget.” I said, “Let me tell you, politically, I’m going to get more grief over this 50 metres than I’ll get benefit over the other 24 kilometres!” They agreed and found a way, hence the cycle bridge. I get credit for it but the reality is that someone quietly let me know about the problem. These things can happen to members on both sides when they are undertaking work. They might not see the gaps until it is too late and then they are left with something that has not been done properly. I am really thankful for being told about the gap and I have since thanked the person privately. We share a birthday—not too far apart—so we wish each other a happy birthday every year.

There are things such as the Charles Street bridge, which saved 1 000 buses travel time of four or five minutes off-peak and six or seven minutes in peak time. It is quite a big saving when each day, 1 000 buses are saving four to seven minutes in travel time. That is quite a big saving for the bus fleet at a cost of \$33 million.

There were challenges in my time as a minister. I was stuck in the middle of Uber entering Perth. What a nightmare! It was fascinating to listen to 6PR yesterday morning—or the day before—when someone rang in and said, “Dean Nalder destroyed the taxi industry.” Millsy said, “Well, some people suggest that he revolutionised it.” The reality is that Uber happened all around me and I was stuck in the middle of it. It was a challenging time. I was of the opinion that the taxi industry needed reform. I did not believe the service offering was satisfactory. I did not believe that enough of the revenue that was generated in the industry was flowing through to the drivers and operators of the vehicles. I was quite happy to try to reform the industry. However, Uber then came in and smashed the place, and that made it very difficult.

We were fortunate in Western Australia, because the largest owner of taxi plates was the state government. A lot of people did not realise that. The Western Australian government owned close to 50 per cent of the taxi plates. Therefore, the biggest loser in the taxi industry was actually the people of Western Australia. However, the people of Western Australia wanted to see this level of change. That allowed us to pull some of the leased plates off the market and ensure that although the number of taxi fares was dropping, there was a competitive marketplace for the existing taxi service.

Another challenge was inheriting the deferral of the Metro Area Express light rail. Another challenge was obviously Roe 8. I will share with members that I was sitting in my office as Minister for Transport, and I got a phone call from Premier Barnett’s office: “Dean, the Premier wants to see you down at Roe 8 now for a doorstep with the press.” I said, “But all the protesters are there”, and he said, “Yes, that’s what Colin wants to do. He wants to go down there”. I thought: strewth! We went down to Roe 8, and we walked right through the middle of the protesters. The dignitary protection unit guys were surrounding us. I was standing behind the Premier, looking supportive, but ready to run. It was funny. Colin was trying to do a bit of a doorstep with all the cameras, and the protesters were shouting and screaming. I was thinking, “What am I doing?” The protesters were whacking me on the head with flagpoles, and the DPU officers were threatening to arrest them. Colin thought that was fantastic, but I was thinking it was crazy. It was an interesting experience and certainly a challenge.

I have never agreed with and do not support tolls. We are lucky that we do not have toll roads in Western Australia. I was trying to work out how we could rapidly advance freight movements throughout the metropolitan area by having a freight charge. I will come back to what I mean by a freight charge. I went to Singapore and talked to the guys about how we could do that. I wanted to find a way in which we could share the productivity gains. I thought that if the industry could pocket more than 50 per cent of the increased profit as a result of new infrastructure, and if we could get the cost of that infrastructure to below 50 per cent, we could rapidly advance a freight network around the metropolitan area. One of the promises that I made to the industry at the time was that if it did not agree, I would not proceed with it. That is what I was starting to explore.

However, sometimes what we are trying to explore gets lost in the politics, and that is what happened. The industry still wants to use the freeway for nothing. However, the reality is that only bits and pieces will be done over a very long period of time. For me, it was about trying to find ways in which we could rapidly advance and improve the underlying profit to industry. The cost of freight ultimately flows through to the cost of goods and products on the shelves in the marketplace. They are things that I have not been able to achieve.

In thinking about what I would like to say tonight, I did not want to look just at what has happened in the past; I wanted to look forward to what I observe state governments are doing and what I think about that. I look at state governments on the following lines—economically, socially, environmentally and administratively. They are the major strategic elements. As the shadow Treasurer, I have been focused on the economic drivers and the administration of the state government. From an economic perspective, Western Australia must attract industry and ensure that Western Australian businesses can compete effectively both nationally and internationally. The state government plays a critical role. It must ensure that energy is not only cheap, but also reliable and sustainable. It must create a competitive tax regime. I have some concerns about payroll tax and stamp duty. We cannot solve these things overnight. We cannot walk away from these things immediately. However, we should start to plan to ensure that we can deliver the most efficient and effective regime for industry and business so that they can employ people and can compete effectively with businesses around Australia and the rest of the world.

Most people will say that payroll tax is an insidious tax, but over the forward estimates, it will generate over \$3.5 billion to \$4 billion. We cannot turn it off, but there are things that we can start to do. It is fascinating to look at payroll tax; roughly 16 000 employers pay payroll tax and roughly two-thirds of them are small to medium enterprises that employ roughly 10 to 100 employees. In Western Australia employers pay the highest payroll tax of any state in Australia. We sit there thinking: “We’ve had the GST fixed. An extra \$1.547 billion has come into Western Australia, so we should be looking at ways to utilise that to ensure that businesses in Western Australia are

competitive.” We can do things that narrow in on that focus. I can say that less than five or six per cent of the revenue will mean that two-thirds of businesses paying payroll tax pay the cheapest payroll tax in Australia. They are the sorts of things that I believe are incumbent on us to work through.

I talked about cheap energy and a competitive tax regime. We must always strive for a streamlined regulatory environment. We need readily available access to land, and in Western Australia we are lucky in that we have plenty of land available. This needs to be a medium to long-term focus for not just us but also our kids and our grandkids. It is something I believe we have to do.

Administratively, in coming to Parliament and being in government with my background in banking and finance, I was and I remain shocked at the lack of focus on expense management. With wages roughly at 43 per cent of expenses, I am staggered that there is not regular monthly reporting on FTE actual versus budget and on headcount actual versus budget. In 2016, I wrote to the Premier and we ended up in a two-hour discussion. As I have said, I think, privately to a few members around the chamber, my view—I shared it with the Premier at the time—is that the strategy of the Office of Shared Services, which we know lost over \$600 million by the time it was wound up, was correct. The strategy is not what failed; it failed in its implementation. The proponents did not understand the changed management required and they tried to swallow the whole elephant in one bite. We need to continue to look at this. The state government, the largest industry in Western Australia, employs, we believe, around 150 000 people, with a forecast expenditure across the total state government of around \$72 billion this year. I cannot believe that we rely so heavily on Treasury to do the economic modelling, forecasting and setting of the budgets, which is looking out the windscreen, when we do not have good visibility of what we are spending as we go through. I have never seen that in a business before.

I feel that the state government does not have enough of a business focus on what it is spending to ensure that it delivers the most efficient and effective level of services for Western Australia. If we could find savings of 10 per cent, the difference a government could make to the lives of Western Australians socially, environmentally or even economically would be massive. It is something that I took up with the Premier back in 2016. In my view, the answer to this, and where industry has gone, is that multinationals and multidiscipline industries have a global chief finance officer. My view is to keep Treasury looking out the windscreen, but the Department of Finance has to have a greater role looking at the rear view at monthly expenditure.

We should establish a global CFO, which is exactly what was done in my time at ANZ Bank. Every CFO in every business unit in ANZ had dual reporting. I ran a division for ANZ and I had my own CFO, but 50 per cent went through to the global CFO and they controlled all the financial reporting. That enabled us to standardise the financial reporting. I agree with the principle of wanting to reduce the number of departments, which the government has done, but the problem is that 135 agencies sit beneath them, all with different systems that do not talk to each other. The difficulty of everything underneath is still there. For me, if we start to create a focus on expense management, we can standardise the financial reporting, and when we standardise the financial reporting, we can start to get relevant reports that tell us where things are going.

One of the things in industry is to tackle discretionary expenditure. It is very difficult to look at that in government; there is no readily available report. I will share with members a story from 2014. I was Minister for Finance for only six months, but I decided to look at the ICT spend of government. I asked the staff at the Department of Finance what we were spending and they told me that they had no idea. I asked them for a report and they said that they could not provide one as they had no way to look at it. I said that I did not find that acceptable. I ended up getting PricewaterhouseCoopers to do an audit of what the state government was spending on ICT, and the report that came back said that it could not identify exactly what the state government was spending on ICT, but it estimated that it was somewhere between \$1.6 billion and \$2.4 billion a year. I said to the department that it was not the quantum that frightened me; it was the variance, as we did not know whether or not we were spending \$800 million a year. These are my concerns with the way that we look at this. From an administration perspective, I believe there are more steps that the state needs to take—they are essentially the same as those that the Office of Shared Services took—but they are baby steps to ensure that we can achieve it. It has to be done by multiple governments over a long period. This is a journey that needs to be taken by both sides of politics.

There are a number of things that I have witnessed in Parliament as a member and as a minister, but I implore all members of Parliament to remember the importance of Parliament and the role it plays in our freedoms and our lifestyle. It is critical that the sanctity of Parliament and our judicial processes are retained. No individual or organisation can be a higher authority than this Parliament. I plead with people to bear that in mind as we go forward. It is incumbent on all of us to ensure that we protect the democracy and the freedoms that we have in Western Australia.

There are some people I must thank for their support, including my family and my friends. There are too many to name, but some people have been critical at different times and have helped me get through the system; otherwise, I would not be here. Coming in as a member of Parliament and not being a long-term player of the game, I found

that there were certain routes to be sorted out within factions that I had no idea about. I thank Peter Shack, Raymond Pecotic and John Hassen. My preselection was a fascinating experience; between 30 and 40 legal challenges under the Liberal Party constitution were made against me. Senator Dean Smith played a role in helping me become a member of Parliament during my preselection. I also thank the staff from my ministerial office, the departmental office and then my electorate office who have assisted me. My three electorate office staff, Denise, Caroline and Felicity, have been absolutely outstanding. They have cracked the whip at me, particularly in the last couple of years, to sign things and to get out and about. They have done a fantastic job to ensure that I remained a good local member, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

In closing, I reflect on the words of Roosevelt in “The Man in the Arena”. I would always prefer to be known as the man who failed trying than as the man who failed to try. I like my basketball and Michael Jordan, so I say that I have failed over and over again and that is why I succeed. In the end, as Kenny Rogers said, you have to know when to walk away.

[Applause.]