

VALEDICTORY REMARKS

Member for Landsdale

MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale) [4.31 pm]: Madam Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to be your warm-up act, but more of you later.

Members, I will counsel you that it is a convention that valedictory speeches are heard without interjection. This may seem rich coming from me, but I make the remark for the sole benefit of the harrying, or is it harried, Leader of the Liberal Party.

Having heard my colleagues who have spoken already, I am overawed—all very different, all very moving. I wish all my colleagues who are retiring well.

How do I approach summing up 23 years of being the member for Girrawheen and subsequently the member for Landsdale in just 30 minutes? It was recently sheeted home to me how long that was when a constituent came to my office to get an affidavit witnessed. She told me I had given her a book prize at North Balga Primary School in year 7. She had finished high school, got married, had kids and was now divorcing. I told her that she had packed a lot more into those years than I had! Reflecting on what I might say today, I realised that I did manage to get a bit done.

All sorts of memories have been flooding back. I apologise to colleagues who have had to endure my endless anecdotes over afternoon tea, many of which have not made the cut.

I have had the privilege of undertaking many roles in government and in opposition. In that time, there have been five Premiers and 13 changes in Leaders of the Opposition. That 13 does count Colin Barnett a couple of times.

But let me start at the beginning. I was elected in 2001 as part of the victorious Gallop Labor government. I am delighted that Parliament has changed since that time. It is now much more diverse, with 50 per cent of members in this chamber being women; the members for Pilbara, Riverton and Jandakot, of Indian heritage, joining us; in the Legislative Council, Hon Ayor Makur Chuot, MLC, and Hon Pierre Yang from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and of course my good friend Carol Martin, the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to this place, in 2001.

My predecessor in Girrawheen was the avuncular Ted Cunningham. He cast a long shadow, so I was apprehensive. These concerns were not assuaged knowing that I would be operating in the patch of the KGB. In this case, KGB stood for the suburbs of Koondoola, Girrawheen and Balga and referred to a so-called youth gang.

I was further alarmed when police advised on security for my office, saying that we should install bulletproof glass. At \$75 000—big money in those days—I declined due to the cost, especially when I learnt that the recommendation was made due to my previous occupation of chasing organised criminals rather than any local concerns. Ironically, not long after, an armed robbery of a security van saw bullets flying nearby, one glancing off my office door. I was in Parliament that day, so my staff were, as usual, the only ones in imminent harm. Despite this, I found the good people of the multicultural Girrawheen electorate, as Ted would call them, fantastic, straight talking, hardworking, economically disadvantaged, many of faith and from refugee and migrant backgrounds, like Somalia, South Sudan, Vietnam, the Congo, Burma, Ethiopia, Macedonia and Italy, to name a few. I was delighted to work for them, celebrate important days and help them make their way—a rare privilege.

Not long after the attack on the World Trade Center, I noticed the tangible rise in abuse of Muslim constituents. This presented a real challenge to social cohesion. At this time, an Alston cartoon appeared in *The West Australian* showing two panels: the first, where they thought Osama bin Laden was, with him hiding in the mountains in Afghanistan, and the other, where he actually was, with the elusive terrorist in Coles, Girrawheen. With the zeal of a new member, I penned a pious and self-righteous letter to the newspaper. It was published. I also received a call from the cartoonist suggesting I was too sensitive. A few days later, one of the workers from Coles took me aside and thanked me for sticking up for them. She then added, “Mind you, we did have a bloke who looked like that working here, but he moved to Margaret River.”

While coming to grips with my electorate, I also had the role of Whip. There was a steep learning curve, since I was new to Parliament and the then Leader of the House, Hon John Kobelke, had a tendency to move suspensions of standing orders at short notice. I would immediately have to summon members into the chamber. Technology was not so advanced, so discreet text messages were not possible. Rather, the receptionists would be asked to page recalcitrant members over the loudspeaker. If I had a dollar for every time I heard the loudspeaker blare “Paging John Quigley, please return to the chamber”! I stress, members, that in those days numbers were considerably tighter than they are now and missing a division was a big deal. That said, I still remain guilty for being overly strict, uncompromising and short on pastoral care. By the way, it was only when I ceased being Whip that I discovered the locations of John Quigley’s hiding places around the building.

In my second term, I became Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier—Premier Gallop. That was a rare honour. He is a person of great integrity and strongly held beliefs, consistent with Labor values. WA had issues with the allocation of GST. We began to work with Treasury to prosecute the findings of the 2002 report of Professor Ross Garnaut and Dr Vince FitzGerald, *Review of commonwealth-state funding: Final report*, which found that GST distribution needed fundamental change. At one stage, Western Australia's proportion fell as low as 30 per cent. This was the beginning of a concerted campaign over more than a decade for a better deal for this state.

Members, I also had the all-too-short opportunity to serve in cabinet. Initially, I held the portfolios of disability services; citizenship and multicultural interests; seniors and volunteers; and assisting the Minister for Federal–State Relations.

The disability portfolio was life-affirming. I saw ordinary Western Australians doing extraordinary things and making sacrifices to care for their loved ones. Members, this was before the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The demand for supported accommodation far outweighed supply. Periodically, I would have to take to cabinet stories of elderly, often infirm or sick parents, having missed out on a placement for their then adult child. It was heartbreaking, as was the plight of young people with acquired brain injury from a variety of causes, including road trauma, who were warehoused in nursing homes due to a lack of more appropriate alternatives. That was something we managed with campaigners to get on the Council of Australian Governments' agenda and secure commonwealth funding. I thank Dr Ruth Shean for her sage advice during this time. In those days, disability services were not even on the radar, so it is appropriate at this time that I acknowledge Hon Bill Shorten, MP, for his important contribution by raising awareness, creating the NDIS and putting this important issue firmly on the political agenda.

I recall my first budget breakfast as a member of cabinet. The crowded function room of pinstriped 30-something finance types listened as the then Treasurer, Eric Ripper, outlined the key elements of the budget. I notice he is up there today, and Hon Ljil Ravlich, so I acknowledge their presence. In his generous way, the Treasurer kindly mentioned a minor win that I had when we restored a program that had been axed by the Court government. In the midst of all these sexy major announcements, he expressed delight that Margaret Quirk had restored the incontinence pad subsidy—not quite riveting for the audience, but I remember this generous gesture.

Alas, all too short a time later I lost disability services and gained corrective services. Overcrowding, a massive over-representation of First Nations prisoners, high rates of recidivism, sketchy or non-existent program delivery, systemic racism and departmental resistance to change were all challenges that had to be met. Nevertheless, I considered that I had at last found my vocation, but, as it turned out, I had little time to make a lasting impact.

One event has had an enduring influence on me, and that was the death by heatstroke of Warburton elder Mr Ward in the back of a private prison van in blazing heat while travelling from Laverton to Kalgoorlie. The coroner found that the air conditioner in the back of the van was not working and adequate checks were not carried out by the transport staff. There were other lapses in judgement by police and the local justice of the peace. Inexcusable. It should never have happened and was avoidable.

After the death, a range of remedial measures were taken, but public outrage was virtually non-existent. That saddened me. Surely, there should have been calls for my resignation—an outcry. Nothing. For that reason, I agreed to be interviewed on *Four Corners*. The interviewer, the now late Liz Jackson, won a Walkley Award for the program. I was reduced to tears on national television. Sometime later, I also agreed to another with the unctuous John Pilger on a program called *Utopia*. Again, hardly a murmur. I had several questions on notice asked of me by an Independent member and a Legislative Council committee held an inquiry to which I was not called to give evidence.

On the other hand, one of the success stories in corrective services was the Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women. It was designed for women about to transition back into the community and to equip them with basic life and work skills. At a time of low unemployment, I would regularly be approached as Minister for Small Business about staff and skill shortages. The then head of the Small Business Development Corporation, Stephen Moir, suggested we invite a number of employers to an event at Boronia to showcase the skills of the women, particularly in hospitality and horticulture. It was a huge success. The prospective employers were pleasantly surprised by those they met and relationships developed between them and the centre, leading to a regular conduit for jobs on release. The feedback was invariably positive.

It is trite, but we all know that employment upon release is a key factor in reducing recidivism. It is no wonder that Boronia has garnered many awards and that international study groups frequently visit. I also acknowledge the marvellous work of the then superintendent Jan Allen.

Next stop: opposition. That was bleak, especially in the northern suburbs. Janine Freeman, the member for Nollamara, and I were the Labor outpost, with most state and federal seats being held by the Liberal Party. We had to show the flag at numerous events. They were lonely gigs. These days, there is a great Labor team in neighbouring seats—the members for Joondalup, Hilliards, Wanneroo, Kingsley and Mirrabooka, and the federal members for Pearce and Cowan.

I have often remarked that my personality is perhaps better suited to throwing grenades than ducking. I held roles in opposition including shadow for police, road safety, and seniors and multicultural interests. I am proud of my achievements during this time.

I was assisted by friends in the union movement—Graeme Geer, president of the United Firefighters Union; and Michael Dean of the WA Police Union. They were always accessible and briefed me on pressing and technical issues. They were not motivated by venal politics but solely by serving the best interests of their members. I thank them.

I introduced a private member’s bill to amend workers compensation laws to incorporate a presumption that certain listed cancers were contracted by firefighters in the course of their job. This would have eliminated the legal hurdle of identifying which specific incident was the cause of the cancer. Overseas jurisdictions like Canada had similar laws, and it was also enforced under commonwealth law for airport firefighters. Alas, the Barnett government rejected the bill for no good reason. A bill in almost identical terms was introduced by the Barnett government a year later. Since that time, the categories of cancer have been expanded.

At the risk of sounding immodest, an editorial headed “WA Liberals never worked hard enough” in *The West Australian* was written after the 2021 election. I will refer to it, because I think it remains topical. It states —

Then there’s government backbenchers like Margaret Quirk. When she was in Opposition she never let a day go by without trying to hold the Barnett government to account. Kirkup aside, you would be hard-pressed to find a single State Liberal MP over the past four years with one-third of the tenacity of someone like Quirk.

They say the harder you work the luckier you get. The WA Liberal Party just found out the hard way that the saying goes both ways. WA is now for all intents and purposes a “one-party State”. Thankfully, our readers can be assured *The West Australian* WILL work hard. Our role as the Fourth Estate has never been more important and it’s a role we will always take seriously.

I have to say that is a fine piece of writing. It is no wonder that the editor, Anthony De Ceglie, has moved on to greater things.

Members, I have served on a number of parliamentary committees. This is vital work, done without much scrutiny in a bipartisan manner and with the backing of conscientious and professional research staff. I am most proud of several inquiries: those on the challenges for governments of an ageing population, affordable housing needs, post-traumatic stress of first responders, and a review of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody that inquired into which recommendations were still to be implemented. In the latter inquiry in 2013, we recommended the need for a custody notification service to family. Alas, that recommendation was not actioned promptly. It may have prevented the awful death of Ms Dhu in the lock-up at Port Hedland in 2014. I congratulate the Labor government and Attorney General Quigley, in particular, for finally ensuring that the service became operational.

I was also chair of the oversight committee of the Corruption and Crime Commission in the last term. Of particular note was our extensive report on the risks of corruption in procurement. I have maintained my interest and some level of expertise in anti-corruption processes and have had the opportunity to speak at conferences and train parliamentarians from here and overseas. I intend to continue that work in retirement.

With redistributions progressively moving me north, by 2013 I had inherited Landsdale and lost some of the suburbs I had in the Girrawheen electorate. My margin was approximately 2.8 per cent. This marked a change in demographics, with fewer Homeswest houses and fewer people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, other than those from the Indian diaspora, which seems to be growing markedly. Instead, there are young families who value education and want sporting facilities and who, quite rightly, want basic community infrastructure, which the local government has failed to provide. I enjoyed the challenge of this changed environment. I know that my successor, a Landsdale local, will serve the electorate with youthful enthusiasm, vitality and strategic knowhow. I wish Daniel Pastorelli well in his endeavours and also a happy thirty-seventh birthday tomorrow.

There are many people who deserve heartfelt thanks. Members know that what we achieve we have not done alone; no, it is a team effort. I have been more fortunate than most to have had diligent, loyal, long-serving and long-suffering electorate staff, some of whom also worked in the ministerial office. Kylie Turner and Ingrid Telikostoglou kept it real and ensured within reason that I did likewise. They were the compassionate, friendly and highly competent faces of team Quirk in the early days when I was still finding my feet. Marvellous Ingrid retired in 2021 and is fondly and often remembered. Kylie was a fierce campaigner, especially during the internecine challenge in the 2005 election. I cannot thank them enough. Others whose presence in the electorate office needs recognition are Tony Minchin, Greg Roberts, Anthony Harris, Steve McDougall and Batong Pham, of course, who went on to be the first and only person of Vietnamese heritage to become a member of the Legislative Council before unfortunately suffering health challenges. More recently has been James Rowe, who coincidentally now is the deputy mayor of Wanneroo, who is a conscientious and highly intelligent addition to the office—wise beyond his years. Finally, the remarkable and indefatigable Michelle Sweet, who has been an electorate officer for me for 19 years—I repeat, 19 years. I cannot overstate my good fortune to have worked with Michelle. It has truly been a highlight. And, of course, the whole family is conscripted from time to time into “volunteering”. I thank her husband, Martyn, and

Sarah, Jessica, Ben and Aaron. Needless to say, all staff were imbued with good solid Labor values and approached their roles with professionalism, good humour and the right amount of scepticism.

Then to the ministerial office staff. It was a short ride but action packed. My chief of staff, Simon Ward, was excellent at dissecting a budget paper and fiercely loyal. He could hose me down metaphorically when some instance of rank incompetence or maladministration pushed my buttons! Ryan Taafe, John Lamb, Simone Rodwell, Peter Nella, Jacky Finlayson, Kyle Harrington and media advisers John Duffy, Inga Butefisch and David Harris were enthusiastic and anxious to make a positive difference.

Of course, family is important. As a childless spinster without a cat, I was in constant admiration of my colleagues with partners and young children. In the early days, sitting hours were less family friendly. It was really tough for them. I pay tribute to all those family members who have had to bear more than their fair share of responsibility while constituency and parliamentary commitments took priority. In my case, I have enjoyed the unconditional support from my family—brother, Chris, and sister-in-law, Sherry. I pride myself on being a cool aunt to Eleanor, Charles, Tom, Jack and Anna; and the next generation, Amelia, Chloe, Isobel, Gus, Maddy and Lachlan. I am also a somewhat delinquent godmother to Candice, Liam—who also has a birthday tomorrow—and Elliott. My marvellous parents Jim and Helen Quirk, now deceased, instilled in me a strong sense of faith and social justice, the merits of public service and an unflagging work ethic, and ensured that I valued the opportunities that they so generously gave me. Not least of these was a high regard for the enrichment that education can provide. I remember fondly close colleagues who have died—John D’Orazio, Jaye Radisich and John Kobelke.

The last group of individuals I need to acknowledge are friends and colleagues who have been present along the roller-coaster ride. I am sorry if I forget anyone. Overseas is former member for Perth, John Hyde; interstate are my friends Felicity James, Simone Wood and Hon Michael Atkinson; and Craig Shannon, who along with Hon Bill Johnston, I have known since my Canberra days. Craig became my offsider at the last election in selflessly doorknocking in searing heat, a task he did not relish. He kept the morale high with his witty and acerbic observations. Other fellow travellers whose support I have appreciated in no particular order are Emi and Sylvia Barzotto; Bill Leadbeater and Margaret Norman; Marino Salinas; Councillors Brett Treby, Dom Zappa and Natt Herridge; Jai Wilson and Mary Monkhouse; and union leaders Ben Harris, Smoky Dawson, Brad Gandy and Mick Buchan. And, of course, branch members who over the years supported me and willingly and cheerfully staffed polling booths. Colleagues are too numerous to mention, but Kate Doust and Bill Johnston have been long-term friends. Of course, the class of 2001 is diminishing by the day. My progressive Labor faction allies—you know who you are.

Lastly, my dear pal Speaker, Michelle Roberts. I could say we were partners in crime but that might seem to infer guilt by association. She has been an excellent friend, who has given wise counsel and, at times, has had the unpleasant job of breaking bad news with grace and empathy. I think members would all agree that under the Speaker’s stewardship there have been positive changes to Parliament physically, administratively and procedurally. It is quite a record that no-one has been ejected in almost four years. I say yet; there are a couple of days to go!

I wish Premier Cook and his team a successful result in 2025. I have known the Premier for many years and I would describe him as a good egg. He is a patient and kind listener and a quiet achiever. All have worked hard over the term and deserve the continued trust of the Western Australian community.

In the interests of posterity, and mindful that many of the younger members will have an opportunity to give a contribution at my condolence motion, I must correct the record! I looked at my entry in Wikipedia. It cuts out at 2013. It is disappointing to think I could have been luxuriating on a banana lounge somewhere exotic for the past 10 years! My ChatGPT entry starts well by knocking two years off my age but then it becomes disturbing. It reads in part “Margaret Quirk was born in Western Australia.” Wrong. “Margaret Quirk pursued her education at the University of Western Australia where she earned a Bachelor of Arts, later completing a Diploma in Education.” Wrong. “Before entering politics, Margaret had a diverse career. She worked as a teacher and principal in various educational settings, gaining valuable insights into the challenges faced by students and educators.” Wrong. “Her election marked the beginning of a significant political career characterised by advocacy for education, social justice and communities welfare.” Partly wrong. “Throughout her time in the Assembly, she held several important positions, including”—wait for it, Minister for Education—“Minister for Education. In this role she spearheaded initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes.” Wrong. That goes to Hon Ljiljana Ravlich, who is upstairs. “As a member of the Labor Party, Margaret has been a strong advocate for mental health services, championing reforms that increased funding and resources to support individuals and families in need.” That is a good idea but wrong! “Her focus on mental health has made a lasting impact on the community, fostering greater awareness and understanding of these critical issues.” More accurately, I was obsessed only with my own mental health. “Her approachable demeanour —

Several members interjected.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: It should not be that funny! “Her approachable demeanour and willingness to listen have endeared her to many, making her a respected figure in her community.” Now, that is just getting silly!

Finally, people have taken to asking me what I intend to do in retirement. I am not sure. Travel is definitely on the cards. I hope to continue to contribute to our community and use my diverse set of skills in some helpful way. I am contemplating taking up pickleball. In short, the world is my oyster.

I rather like the way that President Barack Obama put it when asked, “Do you have a bucket list?” He replied, “Well, I have something that rhymes with bucket.”

[Applause.]

Distinguished Visitor — Dodie McGuinness

The SPEAKER: While people are giving their congratulations, I might acknowledge that Dodie McGuinness is here from Ireland. She has certainly been a significant political figure in that country.

Member for Midland

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [5.03 pm]: Members and guests, to serve in the Parliament of Western Australia is a rare privilege, one that I have never taken for granted. For a woman to serve in this place has been an even rarer privilege. When elected in March 1994, I was only the eighteenth woman to ever be elected to this place. To be selected by one’s peers and serve in cabinet is an even rarer opportunity. When I was sworn in as a minister in the Gallop government in 2001, the youngest member of that cabinet, I was only the thirteenth woman in the history of Western Australia to serve in a cabinet.

Joining us in the chamber this afternoon is Hon Kay Hallahan, just the fourth woman in Western Australia to serve in a cabinet. I am grateful for the opportunity she gave me to work in her ministerial office, first as a local government policy officer and then as a planning policy officer. In many ways, Kay and her contemporaries, such as Pam Beggs, Jacquie Watkins and Yvonne Henderson, paved the way. A girl in high school in the 1970s, I saw the very real example that they set in public life, and I knew that I could aspire to it.

Although the first woman elected to any Parliament in Australia, Edith Cowan, whose portrait is on the wall there, was elected to this very place in 1921 and closely followed by May Holman in 1924, until that 1983 election, only seven women had served in this place. The pace of change was incredibly slow, so it is simply amazing for me now to see a majority of women serving in this chamber and to jointly preside over this Parliament with a woman President of the Legislative Council, Hon Alanna Clohesy, and prior to that Hon Kate Doust.

I have had the opportunity to break a lot of glass ceilings. I was the first woman Minister for Police, the first woman Minister for Emergency Services, the first woman manager of opposition business, the first woman president of the Western Australian Labor Party and the first woman Speaker of this house. Of the nearly 31 years that I have served, I have spent all but six months either on the front bench or in the role of Speaker.

I started my journey in public life on 3 May 1986, when I was elected to the then much larger City of Perth as a councillor and subsequently Deputy Lord Mayor. I remain grateful to my uncle Charles Hopkins for his belief in my capacity, at just 26 years of age, to serve as a local government councillor and for his incredible support. It was where I had the chance to prove my capacity for public life, and it is what ideally positioned me to take that next opportunity.

I was elected to Parliament in a by-election on 19 March 1994 to the seat of Glendalough, following the resignation of Australia’s first woman Premier, Dr Carmen Lawrence, who had won federal preselection for the seat of Fremantle. I was elected with just a 2.6 per cent margin and in a difficult environment. The then Premier Richard Court had won government in 1993 and was enjoying somewhat of a honeymoon period. The support of my family and party members at that by-election was phenomenal. Just about every single member of the party I met in the next 20 years told me that they had worked on my Glendalough campaign, and they had! It was a great campaign but, unfortunately, the seat did not last. It was abolished in a redistribution, and parts of it went into five separate seats. Out of adversity came opportunity. The creation of a new seat of Midland, largely comprising the former seat of Helena, gave me the opportunity to seek preselection for a seat that I would contest seven times over a period of some 28 years.

Our family connection to Midland goes back generations, with my grandmother Olive Hopkins, nee Middleton, being born in Midland in 1912. Her father, Joe Middleton, and his brother Harry had come to Midland as young children in the late 1800s with their parents, John and Emma. Her mother’s parents, the Wisbeys, also lived in Midland, having arrived as free settlers in the 1850s.

When I contested Midland at the December 1996 election, the Court government had closed the Midland railway workshops, despite promising in 1993 to turn them into a centre of engineering excellence. They were mothballed and they did nothing but collect dust for the next three years.

[Interruption.]

The SPEAKER: That is baby Olivia!

Train manufacturing in this state had been closed down, and the institution that had trained thousands of apprentices over its 90-year history was abruptly shut. I repeatedly called for the creation of a Midland Redevelopment Authority, having previously seen the benefits of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority. Having had my calls rejected time and time again, the Court government finally caved in and created an authority just ahead of the 2001 election, but made little financial commitment to it. The Gallop government prioritised the Midland railway workshops precinct and restoration works began. We commenced a workers wall and people were able to have the names of their relatives inscribed on it. The first part of that new precinct was the police component, starting with the state Police Communications Centre and followed by the three-storey state-of-the-art police traffic centre, which was largely cleverly retrofitted into a historic railway warehouse building. The final part was the state-of-the-art state police forensic facility.

The Carpenter government and Minister for Health McGinty also made a commitment, including site selection and funding, to relocate Swan District Hospital to the workshops site, but this was delayed and privatised by the Barnett government. As well as the St John of God public and private hospitals, other fantastic facilities now exist at the Midland railway workshops. They include the Curtin Medical School, the PlusLife bone and tissue bank, the Stan and Jean Perron Child Advocacy Centre, the Lions Eye Institute, the Icon Cancer Centre and myriad other important medical facilities. It is now a go-to place for all things health in the eastern region.

We had six brand new government schools built in my time as member and significant upgrades to many others. Thanks to the member for Mandurah, as Minister for Heritage, we have heritage listed the town site of Guildford, or Mandoon. It is one of the most intact towns from European first settlement in Australia, with its original town plan still largely unchanged. Its old jail was built in 1841, and a host of other historic buildings more than justify its pre-eminence as being worthy of such recognition.

Our new Midland train station and bus interchange is currently under construction, but, most significantly, because of the commitment of the McGowan government and the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, rail manufacturing is back in Midland. You only need to tell the transport minister that something cannot be done to make her twice as determined to achieve it! It is an amazing achievement—rail manufacturing is back in Midland. I am proud to be part of a government that has delivered that, and I am equally proud of the effort we have put into apprenticeships and training, especially our fee-free TAFE initiatives that really give our youth a chance to gain first-class skills and then worthwhile, well-paid jobs. These are great Labor initiatives.

What has really driven me has been the opportunity to make a real and lasting difference for the better of our community, be that locally in Midland or across our vast state.

I have had the privilege of serving as a minister in three governments—something very few get to do. In opposition, when Dr Geoff Gallop first suggested that I take on the police and emergency services portfolio, I was taken aback. It was not a portfolio that I had aspired to. He was even more taken aback by my response, given it was a high-profile opposition portfolio and certainly a promotion. I told him that the last opposition spokesperson had lost his seat and that there were a lot of negatives, like having to talk about crime, drugs, guns, other weapons, police corruption, prostitution, speeding fines, drink driving and so forth—something that I subsequently spent most of my career talking about! Finally, I said to him, “You know they’ll be expecting a bloke; why don’t you just give them a bloke?” It was not that I was not up for a blokey portfolio. I had happily shadowed in planning and transport and had successful meetings with livestock traders, taxidrivers and the like, but policing in that era was a very different thing. No woman had ever done the police portfolio in opposition or government anywhere in Australia. It is also not a portfolio that wins you the most support with your Labor Party members.

Geoff convinced me, though, that it would be a great opportunity, so I agreed. I very quickly met with two former police ministers, Ian Taylor and Graham Edwards, in quick succession for some background advice. I then went with Nick Catania to meet the new WA Police Union secretary, Michael Dean. President Dean had no issue with a woman spokesperson, and that certainly made a difference. The same cannot be said for the command team of the day, who thought they would see me gone quite quickly. How wrong were they? The rest, as they say, is history. It is probably the portfolio that most defines my career and where I have been able to make some groundbreaking and lasting differences. With a total of over nine years as police minister, I served in that role longer than any other minister has.

In those first years of the Gallop ministry, we introduced a raft of permanent changes, including the requirement for a compulsory photo and signature on your driver’s licence, banning mobile phone use while driving, double demerits for speeding or not wearing a seatbelt on long weekends and decreasing the default speed limit on our roads from 60 kilometres an hour to 50 kilometres an hour. It is hard to imagine now that all these things became law only in 2001. Flashing 40-kilometre-an-hour signage and printing “40km” on roads in school zones were other road safety initiatives.

One of our most significant commitments was to policing in remote Indigenous communities. Following the Gordon report, we announced a commitment for nine remote multifunction police facilities to be built, with accompanying courthouses and facilities for other government agency support. Quality police housing and higher police pay

were other components. These locations were previously unpoliced or policed from bases hundreds of kilometres away. Balgo, for example, was policed with patrols from Newman. Subsequently, with the support of the federal government, an additional three remote facilities were built. This was a groundbreaking change, especially for the safety of women and children in those communities. In an Australian first, we entered into an agreement with the Northern Territory government to jointly swear in officers in the Northern Territory and Western Australia Police Forces to properly service the border communities. WA provided an officer to the remote settlement of Kintore in the Northern Territory as the first part of this initiative.

I was also proud to deliver positive change for our police officers. Occupational health and safety laws had been introduced in this state by the Burke government in the 1980s, but police were not included because they were considered to be not employees, but officers of the Crown. The WA Police Union campaigned hard and long for occupational health and safety coverage throughout the 1990s but was denied. Ahead of the 2001 election, we made a commitment and, as soon as we were elected, we set about delivering it.

We also gave police the right to appeal a section 8 dismissal to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission—something previously denied to them. We rolled out Glock pistols to all police officers, standardising the service weapon as there had previously been up to three separate service weapons in use and officers continually needed to retrain as they moved from unit to unit or location to location. We provided tasers as a nonlethal force option for police officers—something that has undoubtedly saved lives and saved police officers from more traumatic situations.

Other significant achievements during the term of the Gallop government included the first anti-hoon laws in Australia—something that was opposed by the Liberals in the upper house—which have been adopted in just about every other state of Australia. We introduced automatic numberplate recognition and purchased the first 100 recognition cameras. This technology has solved thousands of crimes right around Australia but is now probably best known for locating Cleo Smith in Carnarvon a couple of years ago. We passed the first legislation for the taking of DNA in the state and established the first police DNA database and linked it to a national database. This was the biggest leap forward since the taking of fingerprints probably 100 years before. We introduced the first sex offender register in Western Australia, and we entered all of those who had offended against children into a national database.

As Minister for Emergency Services in the Gallop government, the most significant achievement was securing a permanent and fair funding model through the emergency services levy. Another truly significant achievement was the introduction of a dedicated helicopter rescue service for the first time in our state, known as the RAC rescue chopper. This state government initiative, principally funded by government, has saved many hundreds of lives by getting those who are injured to hospitals within that first golden hour.

In the housing portfolio, I introduced the shared equity scheme that gave people the chance to get off the rental treadmill and into their own house.

It is often claimed that you cannot really do anything in opposition—it is just a whinge fest—but that is not the case. It is a time to listen, to plan and to make commitments for when you are in government. It is truly satisfying when you do reach government and you are able to deliver on things like occupational health and safety coverage, medical coverage or a redress scheme for injured police officers. Yet, there is other potential for real wins. In 2012, I took up the case for Kate Sanderson and Turia Pitt, who suffered life-threatening burns in a bushfire that ripped through the course of the Tourism WA-promoted Kimberley ultramarathon. Many approaches had been made to the Premier and his ministers to establish an inquiry but they had been denied. These two young women had nearly died and numerous other runners had been severely injured, but the government refused to take any action. With the support of then opposition leader, Mark McGowan, I was given the opportunity to give the lead opposition speech in the Address-in-Reply debate that year. I made the case for an inquiry and I also made it clear that I would not be dropping the issue anytime soon. Ultimately, the Premier backed down and agreed to refer the inquiry to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee, and I was co-opted to that committee. Public hearings were held, the participants had their say and the committee made a number of important findings and recommendations, including one for compensation by way of *ex gratia* payments.

It is also true that in opposition private members' bills seldom get through Parliament, but in 2009 from opposition I moved a simple amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 to put beyond doubt a mother's right to breastfeed in a public place, and I succeeded. Although most now would see this as being non-contentious, there was opposition to it at the time. A breastfeeding mum in a Bunbury cafe had been asked to leave. There was outrage amongst a number of other Bunbury mothers, who staged a breastfeeding protest at that cafe. Another breastfeeding mum was asked to leave the Hyatt hotel foyer. I checked the law and spoke to former Equal Opportunity Commissioner Yvonne Henderson, who pointed out that she had previously recommended an amendment to the act. Initially opposed by government, the then Attorney General, Christian Porter, backflipped and supported my bill, given the media attention his government was coping, especially after the member for Fremantle, Adele Carles, burst into tears in

this very chamber while speaking on the issue. We also secured an undertaking from government for support of the private member's bill in the Legislative Council and for its proclamation.

In opposition, I took the issue of medical support for our police officers to our Labor state conference and won unanimous backing. We set about delivering on that commitment when the McGowan government was elected, first putting in place a redress scheme for previously medically retired officers, then removing medical retirement from the stigmatised section 8 of the Police Act 1892 and finally putting in place a permanent scheme for medically retired police officers. We also delivered on a commitment for the Police Star to recognise officers injured in the course of their duty.

Under the McGowan government, ever mindful of the difficult and dangerous work done by our police, we delivered world's best stab-proof ballistic vests, personally fitted to every single police officer. We also provided body-worn cameras to all of our police for the first time and the so-called OneForce phones, putting more information at their fingertips than ever could have been dreamed possible.

I was supported in all of my endeavours and could not have achieved even half of what I did if I did not have so many able and loyal supporters. I am grateful to all of those who have worked on the front line of my electorate office, especially Di Welch, John Gangell, Lyn Jager, Steve Wainwright, Rashelle Predovnik, Veronica Whitehorn, Shane Hill, Jo O'Loughlin and Frank Lanza. I want to thank my chief of staff in the Gallop and Carpenter governments, Emiliano Barzotto. Your experience, capacity and total loyalty over my whole career has been amazing. My chief of staff in the McGowan government, Rachel Sackville-Minchin, who was also my senior policy officer in the Gallop and Carpenter administrations, was the main constant in my ministerial life. Her intelligence, capacity for hard work and attention to detail is unparalleled. She is possibly the only person whose attention to detail is so perfect that even I do not check things again! In the early years, I know that some senior police who loved giving everyone a nickname referred to me as "the Queen" and Rachel as "Princess Pushy", but persistence is a quality to be admired, and without our persistence nowhere near as much would have been achieved.

Dr Bill Leadbetter has been the other constant in my political life, working closely with me in the ministerial office and working alongside me in opposition, always ready to assist. Bill is yet another highly intelligent and capable person. No-one writes a better speech. It is hard to single out other ministerial staffers. I had so much assistance from so many high-calibre people, I am truly grateful to you all, but I will mention my executive officers Nathan Hondros, the wonderful Sally Anne Curtain and the best appointments secretary ever, Marie Consel. I also want to make special mention of two incredible media advisers, Mark Thompson and Grant Wynne, two of the very best who are enormously capable and professional. I always knew both of them had my back and that I could trust their advice.

Not many of us get to recommend the appointment of one Commissioner of Police, let alone two. I recommended the appointment of Karl O'Callaghan in 2004 and the now Governor, Chris Dawson, in 2017. Both served in that role with distinction. I also make mention of some other senior police who I found exceptional: Assistant Commissioner of Police, Graeme Lienert, who gave exceptional assistance with the royal commission into police corruption; Deputy Commissioner of Police, Murray Lampard, who was so dedicated to supporting Indigenous communities and also exceptionally dedicated to road safety; and Deputy Commissioner of Police, Gary Dreiberger, who did such a brilliant job alongside Commissioner Chris Dawson protecting the community during COVID and stepping up to take on many of the commissioner's duties while he fulfilled that lead role in COVID. I also make mention of Deputy Commissioner of Police, Allan Adams; Assistant Commissioner of Police, Jo McCabe, Commander Laurie Panaia; and the current Commissioner of Police, Col Blanch. I also give a very special mention to my good friend, the former police union president and staff member in my office, Michael Dean. His assistance was second to none. I am also indebted to several other senior public servants. I am indebted to former head of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority Bob Mitchell for his excellent advice and stewardship of emergency services across Western Australia. My sincere appreciation also goes to former Road Safety Commissioner Iain Cameron, who guided me in so many lifesaving road safety initiatives. I also thank the current commissioner, Adrian Warner, for his contribution.

It has been said in politics that if you want a friend, get a dog, but I have had so many friends in politics over so many years. My dear and trusted friend the member for Landsdale, Margaret Quirk, has been a brilliant and caring friend for nearly 40 years. My first campaign director for Midland and former upper house President Nick Griffiths is a most loyal friend whose advice always proved to be astute. There is Geoff Gallop, from whom I learnt so much in those early years and who showed so much confidence in my capacity. Stephen Smith, now High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, became an even better friend and supporter, despite me challenging him for preselection in Perth for the federal Parliament. Carol Martin, the first Indigenous woman member of Parliament in Australia, is a deadly legend with whom I have had so many good times. I mention former federal leaders Kim Beazley and Bill Shorten, both of whom would have made excellent Prime Ministers. I mention my friends at the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association of WA, led by Ben Harris, and a special mention to my colleagues Bill Johnston,

Kate Doust, Ed Dermer and Martin Pritchard. We have shared so much together. I also pay tribute to Don Farrell and my colleagues at the national SDA. I thank them for their support.

Sadly—it has already been sad enough—many of my closest colleagues in this place are no longer with us. Jaye Radisich, who was just 35 years old, was so smart and so much fun and told us to keep it real. Ted Cunningham passed away at just 65. He was such a passionate supporter of mine. John D’Orazio was only 55 when he passed. He was so smart, so generous and such great company. John Kobelke had considerable time post-politics but passed away at just 69 years of age. He was a smart and thoroughly decent person whose strong support I so deeply valued.

To my best campaigner, John Gangell, to Di Welch and all the Wainwrights—you have been amazing. To the many friends who have supported me since the very beginning, and some who have joined along the way—Craig Shannon, Clyde and Lesley Bevan, Brad McGuire, Nick Catania, James Limnios, Simone and Ian Rodwell, Marino Salinas and so many people from the Filipino community, Mark and Lisa Thompson, Rashelle Predovnik, Lyn Jager, Noel Whitehead, Peter Scott, John Little, Joe Marino, Gary Hodge, Gary Mitchell, Richard Farrar, Terry Burke, Sean Burke, Mark Stansall, Peter Peck, Bradley Woods, Brendan Conroy, Mitchell Goff, Filomena Piffaretti, Carmel and Ray Ward, Joe Bullock, the late Jack Marks, the late Paul Roberts and the late Charlie Gregorini. I give my gratitude to you all.

I am confident that Midland will continue to have the highest calibre of representation. Midland is already most capably represented in the federal Parliament by Tania Lawrence along with her strong team. Hopefully, Midland will soon be represented by Stephen Catania. I am confident that he will do an outstanding job representing Midland and will make a long and productive contribution to our party and to this Parliament. He certainly has the credentials to do so.

I am delighted to have in my Speaker’s gallery today my mother, Frances Hopkins, and her brother, Chas Hopkins. Together with my mum’s late parents, Charles and Olive Hopkins, they were my first mentors in life, always believing in my capacity and potential. Mum aspired for me to have opportunities that she had not had. She was determined for me to get a university education and always encouraged me to believe that I had the potential to do and achieve anything that I wanted.

I am, of course, very proud of our own three beautiful daughters, Elizabeth, Candice and Eleanor, each of them intelligent, accomplished and compassionate. Each of them are here this afternoon, along with Elizabeth’s husband, Michael, and their children, James and Olivia. Olivia is only one month old. At 25 years of age, Eleanor has never had a mum who has not been an MP. Elizabeth and Candice had just turned five and three years old in the March that I was elected. My darling husband, Greg, is simply the best. Anyone who has met him knows that. We have been on this journey together. He is the real trailblazer. He took time out from the paid workforce to care for our first two daughters when very few other men would have even contemplated it. We had our third daughter conveniently at the beginning of a July parliamentary break in 1999. When I returned to Parliament for the spring session in August, we brought baby Eleanor to Parliament on sitting days for the rest of that year. Greg looked after her in my office; I dashed downstairs to breastfeed her at regular intervals and then handed the baby back to him. One big feed for Eleanor after question time meant that Greg could head off with her in the car and pick up Elizabeth and Candice from primary school. Greg has worked on every state, federal and local government election with me since we were about 20, well before I entered Parliament. He has supported me at every branch and Labor Party function and has been by my side at thousands—I mean thousands—of community events. We have been on this journey together. No-one could have a more supportive life partner.

This has been the journey of my life, and I look forward to my next adventures.

[Applause.]

Member for Swan Hills

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.41 pm]: Acting Deputy Speaker—sorry, Deputy Speaker! That is not a good start. It is the nerves.

In 2017, I had the great privilege of delivering the very first speech of the newly elected Labor government. I was utterly terrified and there was so much pressure to set the right tone. My great friend and mentor Hon Alannah MacTiernan offered me advice that has stayed with me: inaugural speeches are a rare opportunity to tell the world who we are and, when we are dead, who we were. She urged me to be bold and to use the moment to express my unfiltered thoughts. She also insisted I not show my speech to anyone beforehand. David Templeman, as Leader of the House and responsible for ensuring that our first day went without a hitch, was not having a bar of that last pearl of wisdom. He insisted on reviewing it days before the first sitting, just in case. Despite my trepidation, the speech I wrote was delivered word for word, unchanged. In preparing my remarks today, I re-read that speech. Now as I stand here older, wiser and on my way out, I have taken Alannah’s advice once again. I have written exactly what I think, only this time, I have not shown it to David!

Summing up nearly a decade in public life is no easy task, particularly in just 30 minutes. My journey began in 2015, when I was amongst the first batch of candidates to be preselected. Having come from the corporate world, and like many other newcomers, I had no real understanding of the political machine. What I did have was a deep connection to Labor values, a love for my community and a drive to contribute to the state, particularly in the areas of energy and climate change.

Every member of Parliament's experience is unique, shaped not only by who we are, but also by the electorates we represent, the issues we champion, the roles we hold and the friendships we forge—or not. Parliament is one of the most unique workplaces imaginable: a place of extraordinary diversity, endless challenges and immense rewards. It is also a paradoxical environment. It is probably one of the only places where you turn up each day, fully expecting that you or one of your colleagues will be shouted down and harangued in this bull pit of a chamber. You will then then pop into the members' bar and have a very pleasant chat with the same person who only moments earlier was giving you absolute hell.

In here, and out in the electorate, you can be humbled by extraordinary kindness and generosity, yet crushed by brutal and deeply personal attacks. You can shed tears of sadness born of heartfelt conviction or tears of laughter, often triggered by a quick-witted interjection—usually from Margaret Quirk. It is a place where tedium and inspiration sit side by side, where the work can feel simultaneously like a gilded cage and a call to action. One thing is certain, no-one leaves this place unchanged.

In my inaugural speech, I spoke about the importance of community. As my time here ends, I believe more strongly than ever that representing our constituents is the foremost duty of any MP. Serving is a gift from our communities, and their aspirations must guide us. Grounded in Labor values like fairness, equality, and opportunity, we build stronger communities, advance our state and shape a more just nation. Fairness ensures access to opportunities; equality challenges systemic barriers; and opportunity empowers potential, fostering inclusive growth for all. Labor's values drive us to invest in public infrastructure, lift people out of disadvantage, and ensure no-one is left behind. I am proud to have been part of this movement and deeply grateful to the Labor Party for the opportunity to serve a community I cherish.

Our constituents entrust us with their confidence, expecting us to govern in their best interests and no-one else's, especially on decisions as impactful on their lives as the leadership and direction of our great state. It has been the privilege of my life to represent the people of Swan Hills, a community I have lived in for two decades and that has given my family and I so much. Over the years, I have worked on countless local projects, and even with the cheeky extra 30 minutes I used in speeches last sitting week during my contribution to the Associations and Co-operatives Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, I know I have missed thanking so many people who have been part of this journey. To our local community groups: your efforts make Swan Hills a vibrant, caring place to call home. Thank you so much for your support.

Today, I want to especially thank the incredible individuals who work with our children. Swan Hills, one of WA's youngest and fastest growing electorates, has faced significant challenges with overcrowded schools, ageing infrastructure and a lack of essential services for children. I have worked hard to address this in my two terms. As a founding board member, I helped establish the Aveley Secondary College and fought for an education support centre at Aveley North Primary School. I secured our first child and parent centre in 2020 and worked with Ellenbrook Secondary College to introduce a gifted and talented extension program and the nation's most successful Clontarf Academy. I introduced \$250 merit and equity bursaries for year 6 students transitioning to high school and thoroughly enjoyed my classroom visits and hosting our kids here in Parliament. With such amazing young people, our future is in good hands.

Across Swan Hills, I want to express my deepest gratitude to all the principals, teachers and P&Cs who partnered with me over the years. Together we have delivered initiatives that ensure our children have the resources and opportunities they need and deserve. It is their tireless work that truly makes a lasting difference in our community.

The local achievement I am proudest of is the Ellenbrook Youth Centre. Before the 2017 election, local youth services were severely under-resourced. With unwavering support from Dave Kelly, Peter Tinley and David Templeman, and advocates like Jimmy Cangy, Debbie McCabe and Mark Bishop, we overcame significant challenges to deliver a vibrant, life-changing facility for our young people. The centre now stands next to the soon-to-open Ellenbrook train station, a symbol of this Labor government's commitment to delivering for WA communities.

Soon, we will break ground on the Ellenbrook pool and the Ellenbrook community hub, delivering yet further on our commitments. Together we have built schools, roads, medical facilities and community assets, supported recovery from bushfires and navigated COVID-19 challenges. Every promise I made as an MP has been delivered or is now underway. I look back on my time as a local member with joy, gratitude and pride, knowing we have transformed Swan Hills for the better.

When we are not out in our communities, we of course spend a lot of time in this place. I have always been fascinated by the workings of democratic institutions. My academic focus began with my undergraduate constitutional law thesis and continued at the University of Cambridge, where my master's thesis explored the dangers of executive dominance over the legislature—a perspective shaped by my time working for the Senate, especially after John Howard seized control of the commonwealth Parliament and turned the Senate into a fully operational Death Star in 2005.

In the Senate, I witnessed parliamentary accountability at its finest, particularly through committee processes, which shifted national debates, exposed injustices and delivered true accountability. These experiences highlighted how balanced Parliaments strengthen democracy and improve legislation, policy and public administration. I have had the privilege of observing democracy as an academic, a parliamentary officer and as an elected member of this Parliament. The fortieth and forty-first Western Australian Parliaments have been especially rich in democratic challenges, from privileges controversies raising profound constitutional questions to the unprecedented concentration of executive power during COVID-19.

I thank Simon Millman, the best Attorney General we never had, for sitting shotgun with me in the chamber as many of these fascinating episodes unfolded and for crying into his beer with me afterwards. When enough time and distance has passed, maybe keep an eye out for our book and lecture series titled “Things that make you go mmm”.

In this chamber, I have had the privilege of supporting transformative social reforms. Early in 2016, I voiced my backing for voluntary assisted dying, a position that alarmed my campaign manager and delighted Alannah MacTiernan. My campaign manager was horrified, given the intense backlash he faced on this issue during his own “Kevin 07” campaign. My experience, however, was starkly different from his. The Swan Hills community overwhelmingly supported reform, many expressing frustration at the remaining barriers to access. Similarly, with abortion, I stood firmly with my constituents in recognising it as a deeply personal health matter between a woman and her doctor.

On another pivotal issue, fracking in the Kimberley, I believe I also shared the views of the vast majority of my constituents. Coming from an energy sector background, I recognised the role of conventionally sourced natural gas in the energy transition. However, I firmly believe that with WA's abundant conventional gas reserves and world-class renewable resources, we do not need to jeopardise one of the planet's last great wildernesses. Protecting the Kimberley remains a priority for me. I was proud to stand with Josie Farrer against fracking, advocate within caucus and join a cross-factional group calling for a statewide ban. Taking a stand on issues of deep importance tests your character and sometimes comes at high personal cost, but remaining authentic and true to yourself is worth it. My visits to the Kimberley have deepened my resolve to preserve its beauty, especially after witnessing the environmental scars across fracking fields in the United States last year. The mark of true leadership is a willingness to consult and show respect for your colleagues, to demonstrate an openness to differing perspectives and to have the ability to engage constructively with those who may disagree with you. I am grateful that this ethos defines the Cook government and is a hallmark of our current Premier. I hope that a re-elected Cook government will take decisive action to protect the Kimberley.

Beyond what goes on in this chamber, I found this Parliament is most often at its finest in committee rooms. Some of my most enjoyable and meaningful parliamentary experiences came as Chair of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. We undertook fascinating inquiries and made a real impact with each report, whether on regional airfares, short-stay accommodation, smash repairs or our trading relationship with India. Committees offer the rare chance to set aside partisan politics and engage in constructive, detailed public policy work. They allow us to tackle complex problems with a focus on consensus and the public interest—exactly how the public expects us to operate. I had the privilege of working with a terrific committee. My thanks to you, deputy chair, Stephen Price, and Yaz Mubarakai for being my steadfast wingmen; to David Honey for his contribution towards the end of our term; and to Terry Redman for his collaborative and constructive work as deputy chair. As a self-confessed energy geek with over a decade in the sector before Parliament, the highlight for me on that committee was our inquiry into distributed energy. We explored the implications of a rapidly changing energy system, consulted extensively with industry and developed pragmatic recommendations for secure, affordable and sustainable energy. That inquiry significantly advanced WA's energy transition, avoiding the pitfalls of past energy policy debates. Its success was due to our fact-based, open-minded approach and the remarkable support and engagement of industry and community. They spoke and we listened. If only all energy policy debates could be conducted with such collaboration, consultation and focus on science and evidence.

In 2021, I moved into the executive branch of government and had the extraordinarily good fortune to be assigned parliamentary secretary to the minister for fun, David Templeman! We had tourism, culture and arts at a time when no-one could come here, no-one could leave and no-one could go to a gig, and we had a ball! In all seriousness, it was extremely challenging figuring out how to best support industries in severe hardship and how to turn crisis into opportunity. The work undertaken in those days by Tourism WA paved the way for much of the success that we are now seeing, but the best thing to come out of that period for me was friendship. David, it was such a privilege to work with you.

Over these past four years, I have actually worked in four ministerial offices across 15 portfolios. From late 2022 onwards, after navigating a particularly challenging period both personally and professionally, I had a series of profound realisations. Chief among them was the understanding that this job—being an MP, even rising to the ranks of cabinet or Premier—could not be an end in itself. I needed something more, a purpose that aligned with my values and the reasons I first sought election to Parliament. Although I had thoroughly enjoyed working in portfolios that had an economic element—it certainly helped working for one of the best blokes in this place—I could no longer be content addressing issues that were distant from the areas I care deeply about, especially when I knew how much needed to be done in the fields where my expertise and passion could make a real difference.

The second realisation was that there were certain areas of public policy I never wanted to work in—areas I deliberately avoided throughout my entire adult life for deeply personal reasons. The third realisation was that in politics, you generally do not get a choice. I am so grateful for the friendship and support of David Templeman and Roger Cook during that time. As Deputy Premier, Roger gave me the opportunity to contribute in areas I am both passionate about and skilled in. I was thrilled to work with him, knowing his strong vision for WA, his drive to transform the economy and our shared commitment to the energy transition. Over the past two years, in the state and industry development, jobs and trade, science and hydrogen portfolios, I have undertaken the most rewarding work of my life. I have explored how the state’s financial capabilities can support economic diversification and growth; engaged with the space industry to pivot existing capabilities towards an entirely new frontier; and leveraged my energy expertise to help shape WA’s response to the domestic gas inquiry through meaningful consultation with industry. Along with the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation’s Steve Dawson, we engaged right along the value chain to develop sensible, pragmatic and implementable proposals that were sensitive to the needs of sector participants, that recognised their challenging pathways to decarbonisation and that were mindful of the need to progress energy transition.

In hydrogen and green metals, I have collaborated across government, industry and community to chart pathways for strategic industrial areas and gigawatt-scale renewable energy projects—focusing on what it takes to deliver real outcomes. Meeting proponents with bold ambitions to decarbonise WA and drive global energy transition has been inspiring. In 2023, leading WA’s delegation to the B20 Summit in Indonesia was a standout experience. It highlighted the Indo-Pacific’s economic opportunities tied to climate action and the critical importance of energy security for our region. Through inbound delegations, government partnerships and academic collaborations with institutions like the Harvard Kennedy School, the Perth USAsia Centre, the University of Western Australia’s Defence and Security Institute, the Curtin Institute for Energy Transitions and the Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre, I have gained valuable insights into the energy, security and economic challenges confronting WA and beyond. This work drives me; it fills me with purpose, yet with my electorate and parliamentary responsibilities, I have been able to dedicate only a fraction of my time to it, and that is not enough. It is not enough for me, it is not enough for Swan Hills and it is not enough for advancing WA’s climate agenda.

In October 2023, Premier Cook outlined WA’s most ambitious economic development and climate action agenda at the Energy Transition Summit, framing climate action as both a challenge and an opportunity to create secure well-paid jobs and new industries. This builds on Bill Johnston’s legacy as WA’s most reforming energy minister and the incredible work of our energy policy entities, government trading enterprises and industry participants. WA has led the nation in so many aspects of energy transition but the task ahead remains monumental. Established industries—major employers and economic contributors—face significant operational, commercial and regulatory challenges as markets evolve, and they need time, support and understanding to adapt. They would be decimated by arbitrary measures that do not consider their specific challenges and roles in our national economy, nor their actual contribution to global net emissions reductions. Meanwhile, WA’s energy systems must transition in a way that ensures reliability, with conventionally sourced natural gas playing a key interim role alongside ever-growing renewable energy installations. At the same time, we must seize opportunities in emerging green industries like hydrogen, green metals, critical minerals, carbon capture and storage and renewable energy. To realise these, we need energy, water, road and port infrastructure, land, skilled workers and innovative funding—all delivered urgently.

The geopolitical landscape, including potential changes in United States energy and security policy under the Trump administration, offers both challenges and opportunities to deepen regional partnerships and drive decarbonisation, but to quote David Bowie, I think “We’ve got five years.” In the next five years, we must work harder than ever before to attract global capital and cement WA’s position as a leader in green industries, before investment shifts elsewhere to jurisdictions where governments, businesses and communities are also co-designing energy transition strategies; coordinating project development, often through energy transition authorities; jointly investing through innovative funding mechanisms; and developing multiple asset classes on an unprecedented scale.

In my inaugural speech, I spoke about the “active state” and the government’s role in stimulating economic activity, leading transformative projects and driving climate action. Climate action, however, is far greater than an energy policy challenge; it is an economy-wide endeavour requiring collaboration across industry, government and community. WA has a history of delivering mega-projects by working together—whether in natural gas or

iron ore—and now we must apply that experience to green metals, hydrogen and renewables to seize what Professor Ross Garnaut calls the “superpower opportunity”. There is a clear appetite in industry to work ever more closely with government to tackle energy transition in much the same way as 20 years ago when a Labor government set up Western Australia’s new energy market.

Transition also demands a far broader political consensus. Some policy areas like defence and trade are so critical to our society’s future that they are treated as bipartisan priorities. Energy transition must be seen in the same light. It is too vital to our future to be derailed by petty partisanship. We need a constructive, science-based and outcomes-focused approach, guided by economics and physics, not dogma or short-termism. Unfortunately, Australia’s energy debate has often been unnecessarily extreme and polarised, hindering progress. This approach serves no-one. It does not create a single job, attract a single dollar, reduce emissions or produce a single kilowatt hour of clean energy. It is also not what industry wants or needs. Although I have seen collaboration succeed in some cases, it is not always the norm, particularly at the national level, where polarisation and misinformation often dominate. This fosters fear and division, rather than empowering communities to actively participate in the energy transition—a vital element of its success. As I said in my inaugural speech, success lies in industry, government and community working together. I am determined to dedicate myself to this work full time, fostering the collaboration we need to move forward. I think I can do this far more effectively in a role outside Parliament.

I want to thank the Premier for giving me such a wonderful opportunity to work on the issues that are so important to me, and for always being a strong mentor and great friend. When our caucus overwhelmingly chose Roger Cook as leader, they backed a man with a clear vision for WA—a leader who understands the issues that matter to everyday Western Australians and is laser-focused on meeting their needs. Roger is someone who brings people together, listens, collaborates and leads with authenticity, care and genuine commitment. They also chose to support a strong and independent woman. Rita Saffioti holds her position through her ability to build meaningful relationships, her deep understanding of our economy, and her incredible talent, grit and determination. As WA’s first female Treasurer, she has broken barriers, demonstrating exceptional leadership and delivering time and again for our state. As Minister for Transport, she quite literally drives the bus, ensuring WA moves forward. Her contributions have been extraordinary. It has been a pleasure to work with her in our local area and I am certain she has even greater achievements ahead.

My time here has been a fantastic adventure and I am so grateful to those who helped me get here. I am thankful to the Australian Services Union, which I remain a proud member of, for fighting for the rights of energy sector employees; for the Use Your Power campaign in my electorate, which highlighted the risks of a privatised Western Power; for always engaging in such a collaborative, collegiate and positive way with the parliamentary branch of the labour movement; and for demonstrating such a positive culture that I am proud to associate myself with.

My campaign teams in 2017 and 2021 were just amazing and I express my heartfelt thanks to the wonderful Fiona Bennett, for her enduring friendship and support, who, for her sins, managed and directed both my campaigns. I am so grateful to the Ellenbrook–Swan Hills branch of the party, particularly the executive and our hardcore members and volunteers who have been so steadfast. I am reluctant to name names for fear of missing someone, but I want to acknowledge Rhys James and Sarah Lacy—congratulations on the birth this week of baby Gwyneth—Steve Applin; Didier Ombrasine; Kate Watts; Brodie Park; Virginia Aden; Brenda Brush; Lauchie Foley; Al Kirwan; John Purdy; Rod Teale; Lyn and Zac Zacharko; John Aciek; Shauna Nicholls; the Cappiello, Lerace, Elhousainy and O’Connor families; Jim and Kim Maher; the late Greg Jones and Frank Calabrese—both staunch Labor men—and the many other supporters in our local community. Together, we have turned Swan Hills from a negative 4.7 per cent margin to a positive 27.4 per cent—quite a turnaround. I sincerely hope you will give our fantastic candidate Michelle Maynard—another strong, local and independent woman—as much support as you have been so kind to give me.

Nothing I have done in this role would have been possible without the amazing people I have worked with in the Swan Hills office: Naomi Rakela, Rhys James, Sheila Payne, Jocie Watts, Kate Watts, Lynn Grierson, John Karrol, Alan McCallum and Haeden Miles. My current team is Jack McNulty, Aniwa Graham and of course Denise Williams, my longest suffering team member, who terrified me as Aveley Secondary College board chair and has kept me on the straight and narrow ever since. You guys have no idea how much I have appreciated all your hard work, care for our constituents and dedication over the years, and how much I also understand that I am the biggest problem in the Swan Hills office! Thank you for putting up with me and for serving our community with such compassion and diligence.

Thank you to the many dear friends I have made in this place, particularly the members of hands down, the best faction I have been a member of—the “fun faction”. You have kept me semi-sane, provided so much support, good humour and great times. We have shared quite a journey and I leave with some amazing memories.

I have not been able to write the next part of my speech, because I want to thank my family. I love you so much. You have been incredible and given me so much support and encouragement my entire life. You will never know how grateful I am. Everything I am is down to the support of my family and the values that you and dad gave me—and everything I will be. Thank you.

I leave this place with such a deep sense of gratitude to so many people, hoping that there are many new challenges and fantastic opportunities ahead. I am excited, I am terrified, I am determined but I am ready for the next adventure. Thank you.

[Applause.]