

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Terry Waldron; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Ms Margaret Quirk; Dr Kim Hames; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Martin Whitely; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Ian Britza

JOHN BIASE D'ORAZIO

Condolence Motion

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [2.01 pm] — without notice: I move —

That the house records its sincere regret at the death of John Biase D'Orazio and tenders its deep sympathy to his family.

The sudden passing of John D'Orazio on 11 April 2011 will have come as a shock to many in the community, including members of this house. Many members here today will have their own memories of a larger-than-life character, whose determination was most on display when advocating those issues he believed in. John D'Orazio was a tireless worker for his community, demonstrated through his roles at the City of Bayswater and as a member of the Legislative Assembly. His humour, generosity and willingness to get things done left a lasting impression.

John D'Orazio was born in Mt Lawley to Italian parents on 5 September 1955. His father had migrated to Australia in 1949, and, two years later, was joined by John's mother. As new arrivals to Australia, they faced considerable challenges with communication and custom but persevered and ultimately embraced the opportunities in Western Australia. John's parents settled in Bayswater, developing a market garden and a small home to house the extended D'Orazio family. John's approach to life was clearly influenced by his parents' work ethic as the family sought to establish itself.

After attending Christian Brothers College in Highgate, John D'Orazio welcomed the opportunity to train and work as a pharmacist at the Western Australian Institute of Technology, now Curtin University. He was a keen sportsman, who played grade cricket for WAIT and was subsequently captain of the All-Australian Gaelic Football Team. He earned the accolade of sportsman of the year at WAIT in 1978, and won fairest and best awards from the Gaelic Football Association.

John was keen to start his own business but encountered local council resistance to his plans to open a chemist shop. John credited this moment as a cornerstone to his decision to enter public life as a member of local government and later as a parliamentarian. Those who knew John D'Orazio would not be surprised to hear that he contested the town planner's decision to impose a setback requirement on his 13-metre-wide block. They also would not be surprised to learn that he eventually prevailed upon appeal to the minister. At 24 years of age, John commenced his extensive and notable contribution to local government. The following year, he became Deputy Mayor of the City of Bayswater, and by the age of 27 he had been elected mayor, and he served in that capacity for the next 17 years. There were significant achievements during his term as Mayor of the City of Bayswater: the city was the first local authority in Western Australia to be debt free. There was also the introduction of the first integrated recycling system, including green waste; the provision of community security patrols in support of WA Police; the redevelopment of the Galleria Shopping Centre; Western Australia's first wave pool, Bayswater Waves, an aquatic and leisure centre; and the foundation of the Bayswater Community Bank.

In 1995 John D'Orazio received the highest honour possible for an elected member of council when he was acknowledged as a Freeman of the City of Bayswater. The council also recognised his contribution by establishing John D'Orazio Park at the corner of Guildford and Garratt Roads, in Bayswater.

John was a planning commissioner for eight years and served as Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission.

With this background, it was not surprising that John D'Orazio decided to seek election to the state Parliament. He first contested the newly created seat of Ballajura in 1996, and despite polling well he was defeated by Rhonda Parker by just 44 votes. The result made Ballajura the state's most marginal seat. The outcome was reversed in 2001 when John again contested the seat against Rhonda Parker, this time winning by some 2 400 votes. John D'Orazio consolidated his position when re-elected in the 2005 election, achieving a swing of nine per cent and extending his margin to 6 300 votes. This was the highest two-party swing achieved by any candidate of the Australian Labor Party at that election.

In his first term in Parliament, John served as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, which undertook a number of high-profile inquiries, such as the engagement of visiting medical practitioners in the Western Australian health system, processes surrounding the operation of hospital trust accounts, the Port Coogee development and, reflecting his interest in planning, contributions by developers for land development costs. John D'Orazio also served as a member of the Parliamentary Services Committee.

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Following the 2005 election, John D’Orazio was appointed as Minister for Justice; Small Business. He also served as Minister for Police and Emergency Services; Justice; Community Safety from February to May 2006.

While John D’Orazio’s political career had many successes, it also served as a reminder of how quickly things can unravel. A series of events forced his resignation as a minister and, later, references to John in investigations by the Corruption and Crime Commission led to his resignation from the Labor Party. Notwithstanding his mixed fortunes during this period, he remained a popular member on both sides of the house. As an Independent he co-sponsored the 2006 bill for a major trial of daylight saving. It should be noted that John was cleared of any wrongdoing with respect to the investigations through the CCC and his party membership was able to be reinstated.

Nevertheless, John’s differences with the Parliamentary Labor Party contributed to his becoming an Independent Labor member in August 2006. He eventually chose to contest the general election in 2008 against the nominated Labor candidate. There does not seem any doubt that his impact in that seat and the overall election, as a consequence, was significant. His strong personal following in Ballajura was reflected in the results and ultimately helped deliver the seat to the current member for Morley.

Following his departure from Parliament, John returned to his pharmaceutical business.

The passing of John D’Orazio represents a great loss to the community, but his many achievements remain as testament to his significant contribution. He certainly will be missed. John D’Orazio had immense impact on his community as a pharmacist and through his extensive public roles at local and state government levels. On behalf of all members, I extend my sincere condolences to his wife Ailsa, his son Greg, his daughter Jessica, his grandson Jaxon, his family and his many friends. It is always a particularly sad moment when we have a condolence motion for a member of Parliament whom most of us would have served with and known well. It is a very sad event and I again restate the great sympathy from me and the Liberal Party to John’s wife and family.

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [2.08 pm]: On behalf of the state Parliamentary Labor Party I join with the Premier to pay tribute to John D’Orazio, a man who has touched the lives of so many and whose death on 12 April 2011 at age 55 is being mourned today by people on both sides of this house. John D’Orazio was born on 5 September 1955 in Perth. With an immensely proud history as the son of Italian migrants, John understood personally the trials and tribulations that migrants to Australia faced and overcame. His parents had emigrated to Australia from Abruzzi in 1949 and 1951. John’s family developed a market garden in Bayswater, and whilst living amongst extended family John and his brothers were taught about hard work and making a difference in their community. John decided early on that market gardening might not be for him. As is so often important to migrant families, John’s father told him that he had opportunities in this country that he himself had never had and that John should take them and make the most of them. John went on to become a pharmacist, working solidly for three years and then opening his own chemist store.

John’s first foray into local government came when he challenged the planning precedents that applied to his first pharmacy shop. Finding the planning precedents unreasonable for his situation, and after attending a local council meeting at which little interest from representatives was afforded to his planning application, John’s 17-year local government career was hatched. John’s hard work, commitment and dedication to the City of Bayswater over 17 years will remain his strong legacy. Seventeen years serving the City of Bayswater and its local people left John widely known and respected. When he was elected to this local government in 1981, John was aged only 24 years, and at the time was the youngest sitting councillor. He would go on to become Mayor of the City of Bayswater in 1984 at the age of 27. He successfully delivered many community programs, including embracing the “garden city” concept, recycling schemes and Security Watch. John was not merely a leader in Bayswater; he was a genuine leader amongst his peers in local government.

John contested the state seat of Ballajura in 1996 in a difficult election for Labor, but he was defeated by Rhonda Parker by a mere 44 votes. His commitment to public office did not waiver. He contested the seat again in 2001. I remember that period well. There was a challenge to his preselection, and such was Geoff Gallop’s confidence in John D’Orazio that he staked his leadership on the successful outcome of that preselection for John. John was elected to the thirty-sixth Parliament for the seat of Ballajura on 10 February 2001. He defeated a sitting member, and thus was an important part of Labor’s victory in that election. In only his first term in Parliament, John was appointed Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, and was also a member of the Parliamentary Services Committee from August 2001. Throughout, he was an influential voice in our caucus.

John was re-elected in 2005 when the Gallop government was returned to office. His re-election again was an important part of our victory. John’s contributions and skills were recognised when he was appointed Minister for Justice; Small Business from March 2005, and then Minister for Police and Emergency Services; Justice;

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Community Safety from February 2006 to May 2006. During his time as minister, John oversaw a dramatic increase in the standards of management of community-based sentences and, in 2005, the lowest road toll in Western Australia for 40 years. As small business minister, he restructured the network of small business centres. Although he was a very hardworking and effective minister, following controversy he left the ministry. Later events showed that much of this controversy was based on unfounded and/or exaggerated assertions. Ultimately, in 2008 he stood as an Independent candidate for his seat. Many Labor people deeply regret the breach that opened between John D’Orazio and our party. In time that breach may well have been healed in a formal as well as an informal sense. It is cruel that John was denied time for not only that, but also so much else that his contribution to our community warranted.

John’s career was shaped by his tireless dedication and work, representing first the people of Bayswater, and then those of the seat of Ballajura. He indisputably listened to his father when he was first told to go after every opportunity in this country. His commitment to the community and others is something I sincerely hope will always be remembered. As the Premier has said, the sad loss of John D’Orazio so suddenly, and at a relatively young age, touches us all in a way that is above party politics.

On behalf of the Parliamentary Labor Party, I would again like to offer Ailsa and all of John’s family my sincere condolences.

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin — Deputy Leader of the National Party) [2.14 pm]: I rise to support this condolence motion personally, and on behalf of the Parliamentary National Party. As previous speakers have indicated, John D’Orazio was a popular and highly respected member of this place, and his passing last month was indeed a shock to us all. John will be forever remembered as a passionate advocate for, and tireless contributor to, his local community. As the Premier mentioned, not many of us can lay claim to such dedication to public life. John became Mayor of the City of Bayswater at a very young age—27—and remained mayor for 17 years. The first two speakers on this motion covered a lot of that part of John’s life.

John was also an outstanding sportsman. He and I became parliamentarians at the same time in 2001, and I have many fond memories of John around this place; having cups of coffee and chats—all the usual things we do around here. I remember that so well. I remember him also on the cricket field, playing for the parliamentary team, and afterwards enjoying a quiet drink. On quite a few occasions, he gave me great assistance when he was a minister, and I am sure that he offered similar assistance to other members of this place.

I also really valued John’s personal friendship; he was a good bloke. John D’Orazio’s passing is a tremendous loss to the Western Australian community. His service in both local and state politics, and in many other parts of society, is not lost on the National Party and is well recognised.

On behalf of the parliamentary National Party, and personally, I express our condolences to his wife, Ailsa, and to his family and friends.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [2.16 pm]: John D’Orazio was my friend. I first met him when he was Mayor of Bayswater and was also performing other roles, such as chair of the Western Australian Planning Commission. John was first and foremost a servant of his local community. He was Mayor of Bayswater at the young age of 27, and he served his community with dedication and distinction. Much of his contribution in that respect has already been placed on the record by the Premier, and I know it will be commented on by other members during this condolence motion.

In December 1996, he was the state Australian Labor Party’s candidate for Ballajura and, as the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, he lost that election by only 44 votes. I remember that election well; it was an election in which the Labor Party lost a few members from this house, and our vote actually went backwards. It was in that environment that John achieved a considerable swing to Labor in Ballajura and very nearly took a seat from the then government. That in itself was a remarkable achievement.

John persisted in state politics and again sought preselection for the 2001 election. Again, that is a period I recall very well. The Leader of the Opposition has already reflected on the fact that that was a hotly contested preselection battle. I remember it particularly well for the reason that my youngest daughter was born in July 1999. At one point I remember saying to John, “Look, I’m not sure I’m going to be able to keep coming to all these meetings to plan things with you because I’ve got the baby,” and he would always just say, “Bring her too! We like having babies!” We had a lot of meetings to which I took my youngest daughter during that time, while we worked firstly on his preselection and then on his election campaign.

It was a remarkable campaign and, as the Leader of the Opposition has commented, John certainly was a very important part of that victory for Labor in 2001. He defeated a sitting member who was well regarded and well resourced, and who had also run a very, very good campaign. John emerged the victor in that campaign, and it

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was testament to his local popularity and the general esteem in which he was held in the local community that he won his place in this Parliament.

John was a member of this place for some seven and a half years. He served as a backbencher, a committee member, a minister and a cabinet member. He sat on the government side as a member of the Labor government and then on the crossbenches as an Independent Labor member. One of the many great sadnesses I felt at John's funeral was just how little reference was made to his time in this place; it was as if John's life had gone into a kind of hiatus between February 2001 and August 2008. This was not because John had ever done anything of which he should have been ashamed; it was because the Labor Party stood by and let John be treated shamefully. John was not expelled; he was prevailed upon by the then parliamentary leader to resign. I am not aware of any other similar circumstances in which anyone has been asked by either major party to resign when they have not been found guilty of anything. Indeed, John was not even charged with anything. I hope that that kind of thing will never happen in the Labor Party again. What John did in a number of instances was neither illegal nor corrupt. At worst, some of the things could be described as inappropriate or unwise. What compounded this scandal, though, was the shameful and cruel depiction of John in the print media as some kind of "Godfather". In an instant his reputation, decency, probity and public service was sacrificed at the altar of the cheap media shot, the easy headline or the glib front page. I am certainly proud through all that time to have been able to call John D'Orazio my friend—a good and loyal friend—who I know had I been in a similar circumstance would have stood by me. That does not mean that we always agreed on everything; we certainly did not. Daylight saving was one clear example on which we absolutely did not agree.

One thing one could rely upon John to do was to fight for his own views and his own principles with tenacity and with a totally undiminished will to win. John never gave up; he fought for his community, he fought his way back into the Labor Party that had put him aside, and he fought the cruel disease that ultimately took his life. If there was a benefit in John leaving this house, it was certainly to his family, who, in recent times, had had him back at least for a time. Losing his parliamentary seat meant that John could again do some of those things that he really was very, very good at: be a neighbourhood chemist, a husband, a father, a grandfather and a friend. I certainly want to place on record my condolences to his wife, Ailsa; his children, Greg and Jessica; his brothers, Tom and Rocco; his former wife, Roz; and all the very many family members who were close to John. I will certainly miss him. I will miss his great heart, his determination, his grin, his infectious cheerfulness, his optimism, his honesty and his integrity. The community really has lost a champion. This house has lost a gifted and generous alumnus. I have certainly lost a friend.

Before I conclude, I also want to say a few words on behalf of the former member for Swan Hills, Jaye Radisich, who also has been dealing with some health issues and did not contest the last election. Members may be aware that Jaye shared an office in this house with John. These words are from Jaye —

John D'Orazio was a colleague who became a friend, and his friendship endured beyond our two terms in parliament. I could not have asked for a better roommate during our time in office. We both experienced many personal and political highs and lows during that period and to John's credit he always remained calm in the face of adversity. I was lucky that John was a very patient office-mate who always knew when to leave me be, or when to offer sage advice or a Cherry Ripe from his secret stash.

Despite the mostly unfounded criticism that John faced over time, he maintained an amazing ability to distinguish the wheat from the chaff. He remained optimistic when lesser men could easily have become negative and bitter about the sort of treatment John and his family were subjected to. This strength and belief in what was really important stayed with John to the end.

My last conversation with John was very circumspect. We spent a long time swapping notes about our respective medical conditions and varying quality of the medical treatment that we were receiving. We joked that we might have even caught something from our shared room at Parliament House. But most of all, I remember coming away from my last conversation with John with a strong sense that he was content and at peace, despite the injustice of his one-in-a-million medical condition. Few people could have maintained such dignity in the face of the fate that he had been dealt.

I will always be grateful for having known John and to have had him as a friend and colleague. I will remember him dancing with his wife Ailsa with a spring in his step and a twinkle in his eye. I will always think of John whenever I see crayfish mornay or oysters kilpatrick on a menu. And far from being the "godfather" that he was portrayed as, he was a loving father and grandfather.

I extend my deep sympathy to Ailsa, Jessica, Greg and all the D'Orazio family. John's family, many friends and supporters will miss him a great deal, but we can all be thankful that he made an abiding difference to the communities that he worked in, and for, over his lifetime.

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Mr Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. We have all lost a great person from the community and he will be missed by very many people.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [2.25 pm]: The passing of our valued colleague John D’Orazio at the age of 55 years was untimely. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Ailsa; his children Greg and Jessica; and to the extended family, including his brothers, Rocco and Tom D’Orazio. I acknowledge his family and supporters and friends in the gallery.

As his close friend and successor as Mayor of Bayswater, Lou Magro, observed at John’s funeral, it was ironic that it was John’s generous heart that ultimately failed him.

As we have heard today, John’s legacy is substantial. He has a remarkable history of public service both in local government and in state Parliament. He was a warm and charismatic person of action, passion and enthusiasm. As we have also heard, John was proud to be the first member of Parliament in Australia from an Abruzzese heritage. His achievements and leadership in local government were impressive. The most impressive aspect of his leadership is that it was sustained over a long period. He served first as a councillor and then as Mayor of the City of Bayswater. He served as mayor for 17 consecutive years, resigning only to contest the parliamentary election in 2001. We have also heard that as a testament to that great service, the City of Bayswater named a park after him on the corner of Guildford and Garratt Roads, Bayswater. He was also made a Freeman of the City of Bayswater in recognition of his commitment and dedication to the city and its community.

John was a great strategic thinker and a man of vision. The innovative programs that he drove at the City of Bayswater, and more importantly delivered, were among many firsts in local councils. Bayswater council had the distinction of being debt free; the first amongst its peers. Other services were delivered, such as Security Watch, recycling and one of John’s particular passions, the setting up of a community bank. He also presided over many major projects, including the construction of Centro Galleria, Bayswater Waves aquatic centre and Morley Sport and Recreation Centre. These will of course be living memorials to John’s diligence, enthusiasm and commitment to his local community. It is also important to remember John’s eight years as a planning commissioner. He was also Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission. I have never seen anyone who was quite as enthusiastic about planning issues as John; it is a rare talent, I think.

John was also a community activist. In 1999 he led a campaign to stop aircraft noise affecting the suburbs within the City of Bayswater. That ultimately resulted in a deed of agreement being entered into between Perth Airport and municipalities groups.

A tribute issued to the media by the City of Bayswater at the time of John’s passing described him as an inspirational and visionary civic leader who worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for the Bayswater community.

In February 2001, John was elected to state Parliament as the member for Ballajura as part of the distinguished class of 2001. I, too, share the member for Midland’s concern that not much was said at John’s funeral about his state parliamentary career. In his time in Parliament, John was Chair of the Public Accounts Committee from 2001 to 2005, and, during that time, the committee was extremely active at John’s instigation. It is always very interesting when one is Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and one is in government; that is a fine line to tread. The Public Accounts Committee released a number of reports within that period, including reports on contracts entered into between Consolidated Constructions Pty Ltd and Main Roads WA and the Public Transport Authority; developer contributions for infrastructure costs associated with land development; hospital trust accounts, which has had reverberations for some time since; the Port Coogee development; the review of the role of the Public Accounts Committee; ensuring public sector accountability in the twenty-first century; and the use of visiting medical practitioners in the WA hospital system.

In 2005 John was appointed Minister for Justice and Minister for Small Business. He was then given the portfolios of police, emergency services and community safety in 2006. Under the justice portfolio, it was John’s responsibility to implement the recommendations of the Mahoney inquiry into the prison system. This included securing \$100 million funding from Treasury—no mean feat. He also established the Department of Corrective Services. In that capacity, he announced the 10-year reform program, Restoring the Balance, to deal with the management of offenders in custody and in the community. Under this program, corrections staff were given more support and more resources to do their jobs. These increased resources included a 24 per cent increase in the number of permanent community corrections officers, a 33 per cent increase in the number of new permanent juvenile justice officers, and a \$19 million boost for prison staffing, including at least 70 new positions and funds for training. Very importantly, under this program a set of professional standards to provide clear guidelines and procedures for offender management was put in place across the service. The program also aimed for better

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integration of custodial and community-based offender management, intelligence gathering and performance measuring. Finally, new measures were put in place for the classification of prisoners so that prisoners were placed appropriately, and to increase offender participation in work and training.

As small business minister, John exercised considerable political courage in undertaking a review of the business enterprise centre network. As part of the review, less productive and less efficient centres became targeted for closure. John did not demur, because he had the goal firmly in his sight to ensure that the small business centres gave the best service for their local communities. I believe it was his leadership that pushed the review through, and we now have more efficient small business centres placed strategically, despite the strident criticism at the time.

As I succeeded John in both these portfolios, it became apparent to me that senior bureaucrats of both departments held him in very high regard. John also took on the role of police minister in February 2006, which was one I believe he relished and had aspired to for some time. He was extremely active, and he presided over significant amendments to the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act. At first blush, this might not seem that important, but it closed loopholes to significantly restrict stolen goods from being traded through those outlets. Over time this has greatly assisted in the decline of burglary rates.

Despite high office and its many demands, John always remained in close contact with those who elected him. As a local member, he was extremely active and highly regarded. I was told that he was loved by seniors and that he was generous and kind to everyone. I am told also that he paid more than one electricity bill of a constituent who had got himself into financial difficulty. As a local member, John fought hard for and was successful in maintaining the continued operation of the Ballajura Police Station. Many in the area—the member for West Swan will attest to this—believe that the incidences of crime in the area have escalated since the closure of that station by the current government. John also worked closely with principal Steffan Silcox of Ballajura Community College, Councillor Maria Haynes from the City of Swan and RSL President Bill Gaynor to establish the Peace Park in the grounds of Ballajura Community College so that the local community has a focal point for its Anzac Day commemorations. Until then, the school hall was used, which was simply too small and became too crowded.

In John's latter years as an Independent member, he was not content to sit back and just work his electorate; he still wanted to make a contribution. In that context he and the then member for Kalgoorlie, Matt Birney, MLA, introduced a private member's bill on daylight saving. The bill was nothing if not polarising. It kept everyone, irrespective of their party, on their toes defending their individual positions with interest groups and their constituents.

I wistfully thought of John on Sunday during the football derby. He was an avid Eagles supporter. As we know, in recent years that loyalty has been sorely tested. He regarded Dockers supporters such as me as misguided, and did not pull his punches in telling us so. He loved going on fishing trips with friends to the Abrolhos and I recall him lobbying me when I was the Whip to let him off a day or so early so that he could go on one such trip. My steely resolve was sorely tested.

In his latter years, John's parliamentary career was marked with controversy, as the media likes to put it. I want to briefly reflect on those issues because I believe they provide valuable lessons and they are a part of John's legacy. During hearings at the Corruption and Crime Commission, counsel assisting used the word "godfather" when referring to Mr D'Orazio. That was deeply offensive on several levels. Firstly, it was an ethnic slur that offended the many thousands of Western Australians of Italian descent and, secondly, as someone from Abruzzi, he was used to hearing such allegations more usually made about the Camorra from Naples, the 'Ndrangheta from Calabria or the Mafia from Sicily. That would have been particularly galling for John. More seriously, the allegations had no basis in fact and were calculated to titillate and attract media attention. With power comes responsibility, and this allegation was irresponsible. This instance, I think, brings into focus whether public hearings of the CCC are always appropriate. It is necessary to weigh up the public interest of destroying the reputation of a high-profile individual against some illusory forensic advantage. Many other analogous commissions do not hold public hearings, yet are able to achieve results and even convictions. I worked for a little under 10 years at one such organisation. I believe that some threshold criteria should be mandated before a decision is made to hold a public inquiry. It is noteworthy, however, that since the shameful incident regarding John D'Orazio, fewer hearings seem to have been held in recent years.

The final issue I want to raise is the hounding of Mr D'Orazio from the Australian Labor Party. It does not reflect well on our party. Within the party we pride ourselves on having rules and observing due process. We vociferously defend in this place the need for due process and an individual's right to natural justice, yet when

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things got a little rough, the pressure was exerted on Mr D’Orazio to resign from the party. It was nothing short of constructive dismissal. Leadership, I think, can be most accurately judged and assessed by how things are handled in challenging times. The lack of loyalty and the craven actions of our so-called leader at the time do him no credit. I hope this episode will embed into the corporate memory of our party so that in the future we will act in a way that more favourably reflects our values and principles.

John was a hardworking, kind, gregarious, fun-loving people’s person. As my former colleague the former member for Geraldton, Shane Hill, said to me the other day, John was larger than life. He remained in touch with the community that he served, and he was a can-do person. He believed that no obstacle was too great to overcome. As others have already observed, he was a person of boundless optimism.

It was a credit to John that after Parliament he got on with growing his new business, a pharmacy in Alexander Heights. He had always been in the people business, and this gave him the opportunity to continue to help people. He enthusiastically embraced his third phase of life without any bitterness or rancour. He very much enjoyed being out of the public eye for the first time in 30 years and was looking forward to the future and spending more time with his beloved Ailsa and family.

DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Deputy Premier) [2.40 pm]: It is great to have this opportunity to say something about John, because I regarded John as one of my closest friends. I congratulate all those who have spoken before me for providing an excellent history of John’s life, his election and subsequent components. I particularly commend the comments about the way he was treated. They are very self-reflective comments. Perhaps not every person in the opposition agrees with those comments, but I personally wholeheartedly support them.

I start by apologising to Ailsa and the family for not being able to attend John’s funeral. I was in the Kimberley at the time with the Minister for Regional Development and the federal Special Minister of State Hon Gary Gray. A large number of meetings had been committed to for some time. I deeply regret not being able to attend the funeral to say goodbye to John. To me it is fantastic to have this opportunity to make some comments.

I first met John under circumstances similar to what he went through when he was elected to the City of Bayswater—namely, a dispute with the council. I was in a practice at the time. The shopping centre wanted to buy land that the council had for sale across the road. When I went and made that application, the council changed its mind and withdrew it from sale. I lobbied all of the councillors at the time and ended up in John’s pharmacy on Guildford Road in Bayswater. I had a long and very interesting discussion with John, who then said, “Look, if you feel that strongly, why don’t you run for council and we’ll support you.” That was the start of a very long association with John.

There was a factional group at Bayswater council. It was not political. In fact, there were two factions that contained Labor members, one of whom was working as secretary for one of the ministers at the time. The other faction contained John and subsequently had Hon Adele Farina as one of its members. I was in that particular faction. I can tell members that John had no political allegiances at that time. In fact, he previously helped one of the federal Liberal members during an election campaign. I got to know John through that process. In fact, at one stage I was about to become deputy mayor under John and was supported by him, but Hon Adele Farina decided that that was the job for her. Because we were all mates and did not want to break up the faction, I stepped aside and Adele became deputy mayor, which was a role that I took on later. It was an interesting time.

John was Bayswater council; John was the driving force behind everything we did. While he had been in council for a short time before my arrival—just a few years when the previous council had been sacked—he was the driving force behind things such as the “garden city” concept and the development of the rubbish collection system through Cleanaway. We still argued with the City of Stirling over who was the first to start the no-loans program, but we swore it was us. It was John in particular who started the no-loans program that in the end created millions of dollars to spend on infrastructure. We both tried to claim credit for the Morley Sport and Recreation Centre. John and I, while being good mates, were fairly fiercely competitive along the way. We both regarded that as our project, as we did the Altone Park development that was built in conjunction with the City of Swan.

What was really interesting at that time was John’s age. John is roughly the same age as my wife; he is only a few months younger. John always had the great skill of looking older than he was while most people said that I tended to look a little younger than I was. I remember going to the RSL opposite the park on Grand Prom and one of the old chaps asking John if I was his son. John never forgot it. He always remembered that particular comment with great outrage that anyone could think that he looked that old.

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Towards the end of our time in Parliament, John and I went on these legendary fishing trips. As I said, we had become good mates. I am pleased and proud to have been the one who suggested that a park be named after John D’Orazio. He did not like the idea. I have subsequently criticised the City of Stirling for naming everything after sitting members but, in retrospect, I am extremely happy I did that because that was a great outcome, thinking back to what has happened.

I also had a hand in John becoming the planning commissioner. I remember getting a call from Richard Lewis, who was the minister at the time, saying, “We’ve had this nomination from John D’Orazio, putting himself up as the state planning commissioner. What do you think? I’ve heard whispers that he’s Labor.” I said, “No, no, John’s not Labor.” In fact, I can tell members that he was a member of the Liberal Party. I am not sure if anyone opposite knows that, but John was a member of the Dianella branch of the Liberal Party and he was supporting me when I was trying to get preselection. Even amongst us, branch stacking was alive and well!

Mr E.S. Ripper: Were you ever a member of the Labor Party?

Dr K.D. HAMES: No, I was not. John had no particular allegiances; in fact, his philosophy was pretty much between Liberal and Labor. It is like being an ex-smoker; I have never seen anyone convert so much as John. John became a fanatical Labor member in terms of his philosophy and views on life once he became a member of the Labor Party. The sad thing about that was that all these Italian people in the Morley region, whom we were all mates with and had regular meetings with, particularly about fundraising for local government election campaigns, subsequently ended up helping him win seats for the Labor Party. I think we lost a lot of good Liberal supporters through that process.

Our group used to go fishing. The two Charlies were probably John’s best mates, aside from his close family, of course; that is, Charlie Tricoli, who owns the store on the corner of Beechboro and Walter Roads, and Charlie Fazio. Charlie Fazio was Barry’s father-in-law. Charlie Fazio was a long-term Labor supporter who came in behind John and gave him support. He was the fishing coordinator. He would ring us every year. They went to the Abrolhos Islands every year. They went before my time, during my time and after my time. I went about eight or 10 times. I was the token skip, not the skipper but the skip Australian. They liked me there because I was a doctor. I would hand out all the seasick tablets and the like. We had Charlie Fazio, Basil Ricciardello, Vito Prestiani, Pino Gangemi and Frank and Larry, whose surname I can never remember.

Mr M.J. Cowper: Pantaleo.

Dr K.D. HAMES: That is right. Larry runs the Pinjarra bakery, which is in the member for Murray–Wellington’s electorate. We were all part of the group that went fishing. I think I mentioned everyone; I apologise if I missed anyone. We had a great time. Charlie and Larry were the cooks. We would have pasta all the time, and capretto. We played briscola. We had this great competition playing briscola every time we went away. I remember John for this game that he and Charlie used to play. If one were Italian, one would know it. It is sort of like a hammer, nail, scissors thing. We would be ready to go fishing at six o’clock in the morning with Charlie and John. It is like a one–two game, but they would call out a number like tre or quattro. I heard earlier today the name of this game, but it was never-ending—they used to drive us crazy playing that stupid game. Of course, once we got fishing we were fanatical fishers. John and I would be on opposite sides of the boat, watching each other like hawks to see who could catch the most fish and who could catch the biggest fish. Sadly, he always caught the most dhuiies, but I caught the most fish so I guess in some ways we were even.

I will just talk briefly about what happened. It is interesting; I think me being in Parliament was a stimulus for John to get in himself because we were so competitive. I got into Parliament first but I lost in 2001 when John was elected, so for four years he was in this place on his own. I came back to Parliament when he was a minister, but we still got on very well and talked often. I just want to talk briefly about individual events without being critical of what happened. Remember, one event was driving without a licence. Subsequently, it was discovered that the police had sent the licence renewal to the wrong address although they had his actual address. I think there was a court case, but the police apologised for what happened. Therefore, John never in effect drove without a licence.

The second event was the issue of superannuation. I know John copped a lot of criticism for not having paid superannuation to his staff. However, we in fact discussed that before the proverbial hit the fan because one of his staff had come to him and said that they had not been paid their superannuation. At the time John was working hard as a minister; he had someone else running his practice. John said to the accountant, “Go through all the books. Find out who’s been paid and who hasn’t.” They found that some staff had not been paid superannuation, some staff had been paid too much superannuation and some staff had not been paid enough superannuation. When John went to make the payment to fix it all up, the tax office said that he could not do

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that; there had to be a review and it had to be paid as a lump sum and that was what was going to happen. In between that, the girl at the heart of the story went to the media and suddenly it became a major press story.

The last issue involved the Corruption and Crime Commission with regard to Mr Minniti. I know Mr Minniti very well; his children attended the same school as my kids, as in fact did John's kids—they all went to the same school over the years. Members need to know Mr Minniti to know what Mr Minniti was like, but if he rang John to say, "You need to come to my house", he would not ring once; he would ring a number of times and he would not stop below insisting that John came. If someone wants their local member to go to their house, generally the member goes, particularly if the member is Italian, part of that community and as community-minded as John was; they have to go. So John went to Mr Minniti's house. There was a suggestion that because Mr Minniti was being investigated and subsequently, I think, found guilty of doing some deals with the police to have people let off their speeding fines, there was a connection between that and John's issue with the police, which had nothing to do with that; it was about a licence fine—a totally different issue. Quite obviously after that, John was found not guilty.

As a result of that whole sequence of events, whereby John had either not done anything wrong or there was a simple error not of his doing, he ended up being kicked out of the party, and we all know the events that followed that particular occasion.

John D'Orazio was one of the most honest guys I have ever known, one of the most dedicated guys I have ever known and one of the most family-oriented guys I have ever known. He was absolutely totally dedicated to his electorate, to his supporters and to his party colleagues, who were part of his group in particular. John is a person of whom everyone who was associated with him was proud. He was dynamic and he was intelligent. He always had to be a minister; we could not have had someone who was that smart and that good at getting things done not being a minister in the end. Throughout it all, John was a very loyal friend. To his family, it is great to see you here today, great to see you again, and I wish you all the best.

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta) [2.54 pm]: In speaking to the condolence motion for John D'Orazio, it is almost impossible to do him justice in terms of the contribution he made at the state and local government level, and to the community, which he served as a pharmacist and in many unofficial ways.

A number of members have already mentioned much of his history and I therefore do not wish to go over the same ground and repeat that history. However, I need to put on the record my sincere condolences to his wife, Ailsa, his children, Greg and Jessica, and to the other members of his family and his many friends; particularly those who are here in the gallery today.

My first contact with John D'Orazio was as the member for Nollamara. Many years ago, part of the Nollamara electorate coincided with the City of Bayswater. I knew John not only as the mayor that he was for many years, but also as another boy who grew up in Bayswater. John was a Bayswater boy through and through. He grew up there and he continued to live there; Bayswater was John D'Orazio. John D'Orazio belonged to Bayswater and he never wavered from his commitment to that community and the people in it; taking his responsibilities well beyond that community as he moved into various other roles.

Members have already commented on his leadership skills as the Mayor of Bayswater for some 17 years. The fact is that the City of Bayswater was innovative and a leader in local government and, as the Minister for Health has already mentioned, John was the driving force behind that. He had so much energy, so much enthusiasm and was so friendly. People warmed to him because they saw in John D'Orazio someone they could trust, someone who was going to work for them, and someone who was very good at delivering positive outcomes. I think we see many areas in which John D'Orazio had a positive impact on the people he lived with and next to in the community that he genuinely wanted to serve.

He worked energetically for his community for many years; thereby earning fantastic respect and support from that community. Members have already reflected on some aspects of that. As the member for that area when John was the mayor, I now want to mention a number of things that members have not alluded to.

Members of the large and growing Jewish community in Noranda found it quite a distance to travel to the Mt Lawley synagogue—particularly if they were orthodox Jews. John was instrumental in getting the land on which to build a schule in Noranda to serve that community.

I also have some very good friends in the Filipino community; another very important and growing community in the Ballajura area. That community's club headquarters are now in Bedford in the City of Bayswater; again, through the efforts of John D'Orazio who saw the importance of a local headquarters to enable Filipino community members to support each other and to build connections with the local community, and become a very important part of our community.

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Another personal connection I shared with John was his fantastic knowledge of town planning. He served on the then State Planning Commission in a range of areas. He understood planning and was a great advocate of good planning. However, he was also aware of the economic realities of getting developments to go ahead. When I was shadow Minister for Planning in the 1990s, I relied on his sage advice and wealth of experience in planning matters.

It is clear to me from members' contributions and from the things many people have said to me that John had an incredible political or leadership ability to understand what people wanted, to see the opportunities, and to put in the energy and drive needed to achieve positive outcomes for the people he sought to help. We see that in the many areas to which people have alluded, including the things that he did as the Mayor of Bayswater, the things he did as a member of Parliament, when he joined us in 2001, and the things I saw him do as a ministerial colleague following the 2005 election. However, it was also clear that when, because of the problems we experienced in the Labor Party, John began to serve as an Independent member, his enthusiasm, drive and commitment remained. It was evidenced by what he did in the daylight saving trial. Coming from a business background, believing that there was a real need to make a change, he saw the opportunity, and teamed up with then member Matt Birney to put legislation through the Parliament. I give that as one of the many examples one can raise of John D'Orazio's ability to judge an issue, to see that a group wanted something done and to have the drive, energy and real political nous to deliver it. I think his contribution to local government and this place is something that needs to be admired and respected, and is something for which we should all be very thankful. When John left politics following his loss in 2008 when he ran as an Independent candidate, he went back to pharmacy; that enthusiasm was still there to serve the community. I will give another example to highlight that. Janine Freeman, the member for Nollamara, whose electorate covers Alexander Heights, has expressed to me the feedback she has received from local constituents who went to his pharmacy. Those people acknowledge that John D'Orazio was not only a pharmacist, but also someone who was interested in people and was there to serve and help them. In his most recent career, going back to pharmacy, he was still the same John D'Orazio who worked for people and tried to achieve outcomes for them and look after them. We are certainly very much the worse for his passing. Again, my condolences go to Ailsa and all the family, who have suffered a great loss with John's early passing.

MR G.M. CASTRILLI (Bunbury — Minister for Local Government) [3.01 pm]: I also wish to pay tribute to the former Mayor of Bayswater and fellow parliamentarian, Mr John D'Orazio, who passed away in April this year. John was born in Mt Lawley and raised in Bayswater. He attended Christian Brothers College in Highgate. His family has a long association with and history in the area after emigrating from Abruzzi, Italy, in 1949 and 1951. John entered local government in 1981 at the age of 24 and, as said, he was elected to the west ward in the City of Bayswater, which made him the youngest sitting councillor at the time. At the age of 27 he was elected to the position of mayor and served as Mayor of the City of Bayswater for 17 consecutive years before being elected into state Parliament in 2001 as the member for Ballajura. John's 17 consecutive years as Mayor of the City of Bayswater reflects his commitment and dedication to the community. His ability to guide the council and drive the delivery of significant programs and projects signified his ability as a leader. In his early years as mayor, John showed great leadership in supporting the "garden city" concept, which has been highly acclaimed and acknowledged by the community, neighbouring councils and local government.

Amongst his many attributes was his ability to champion the community's needs in areas such as recycling, Security Watch, community banking, aged care and child care. One of John's great concerns was the environment and he was instrumental in the introduction of the first co-mingled kerbside recycling scheme and of wheelie bins. The City of Bayswater acknowledged former Mayor D'Orazio's contribution to the city by naming a park after him. In 1999 John was awarded the highest honour that any local authority can bestow on an elected member and was made a freeman of the city in recognition of his commitment to the city and its community.

John chaired planning committees at both local and state levels and ventured into other fields of government and community interest, sitting on a wide variety of committees and boards. He was a chairperson of the Perth Airports Municipalities Group in Western Australia and vice-president of the Australian Mayoral Aviation Council. In 1999 he led a campaign to stop aircraft noise affecting the suburbs within the City of Bayswater. Many people thought that this was an impossible task, but not John; he got there because he had the strength, determination and willpower to succeed. John D'Orazio will be remembered for his commitment to and tireless efforts for the local government sector in general and to the community of the City of Bayswater in particular.

May I say that several people have actually mistaken me for John; I am not sure why! Maybe it is because he is Abruzzese and I am Molisano. He always used to say to me, "He is from Abruzzi," and I would say, "No, John, I am from Molise." He would say, "No, you are Abruzzese. Do not worry about it. You are an Abruzzese. Come

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with us. You are one of us.” I have had the pleasure on many occasions of being mistaken for John and I have had to correct many people over the years.

John’s passing at what I consider to be a young age really shocked me and many other people whom I know. John was very well respected and a very loyal person to his friends and family. That loyalty and respect was well reciprocated and he is deeply missed. I convey my sincere condolences to John D’Orazio’s family, including his wife, Ailsa; daughter, Jessica; son, Greg; brothers, Rocco and Tom; and extended family.

MR M.P. WHITELEY (Bassendean) [3.05 pm]: I cannot claim to have known John D’Orazio as well as many members of this place, but I am probably one of those who have known him the longest, if not longer than anybody, with the possible exception of the Deputy Premier. I first met John 28 years ago when John was the coach of the Morley Gaelic Football Club and I was the coach of the County O’Como Gaelic Football Club. John was an excellent Gaelic footballer. I think John played colts for East Perth and went on to set up a Gaelic football club, the Morley Gaelic Football Club. I think John won the best and fairest award for Gaelic football at least three times, possibly four times, in Western Australia. He was certainly a member of the victorious 1978 Western Australian Gaelic football team that won the Australasian carnival. I think he was captain—I may be wrong—of the Australian team that toured Ireland in 1978.

I did not start playing Gaelic football until 1983 and by that stage John was 26, although we thought he looked a lot older; we thought John was probably about 30. John was still a very good Gaelic footballer, but his knees had gone a little, so he was not quite the force that he was previously. Nonetheless, he managed to assemble a fearsome team in Morley. County O’Como was known as the Australian team. John’s team, Morley, was known as the Italian team and the other team that was a bit of a force in the competition was St Finbarrs Gaelic Football Club, which was the Irish team. Come the end of the season, my team played off in the second last game of the season and won that game. Morley was playing St Finbarrs in the last game of the season. Had St Finbarrs, which was coming third but was a powerful team, beaten Morley in the final game of the season, County O’Como would have won the league, because it was a points-based system. We won our game and had a shower and got a few beers and were lined up on the sidelines and were willing to cheer on St Finbarrs. St Finbarrs seemed to dislike Morley even more than they disliked us, so they were going to try to give them a walloping. John displayed a skill that I came to understand a lot better later in life; John had enhanced the ability of the Morley team by recruiting half the Subiaco league side for the final game. They ran out on the field and, needless to say, they went on to thump St Finbarrs and win the league. We were all a bit ratty at John for what we considered stacking of the Morley team at the time, but I have to be honest; I would have done exactly the same thing had I had the opportunity and the connections that John obviously had.

John was a very competitive person, particularly on the sporting field, but I cannot be critical of him because, if anything, I am probably more competitive in my nature than John is. In fact, it is probably time for me to apologise to John for blaming him for running me out in the parliamentarians versus press cricket match of 2008. I hit the ball past Peter Kennedy to one of the journalists, took off for a single and forgot to see if John was coming. When I got halfway down the pitch I had a look at John and there he was, sitting in his crease on his bat with no intention of moving. I blamed John. In fact, I said some quite uncomplimentary things about John. At the time he was not a member of the Labor Party and I made some quite uncomplimentary comments about his prospects of returning to the Labor Party. People thought I was joking, but those who know me well know that I am very competitive, particularly in sport. John, I have to concede today that there was not a run in it and your call was quite correct and you did the right thing.

I did not see John from the 1980s, when I played Gaelic football with him, through to 1996 when I became a member of the Labor Party. I obviously ran into John through the Labor Party. It is funny how things turn out. The events around John’s preselection in 1999 and the shift in the balance of power in the party at the time delivered me preselection for Roleystone by a margin of two votes. If John had not been around at the time, I would not be a member of Parliament, so I guess I need to thank him for that.

The most I had to do with John in his parliamentary career was when he was Chair of the Public Accounts Committee. John was a very fierce chair of a committee of inquiry. He was not so worried about being polite; he was more worried about getting to the truth of a situation. He really thought the duty of committees of inquiry was to inquire and to ask the difficult questions. I respected the role that he played in that. I particularly remember a few inquiries we did into visiting medical officers and hospital trust accounts. John was a real bulldog when it came to uncovering the truth. I liked his style. John was a doer; a person who was full of energy. He was interested in outcomes, sometimes at the expense of process. He certainly was someone who liked to get things done. He made a valuable contribution to the state and to his local community. Unfortunately I could not

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be at John's funeral because I was in the United States at the time. I would have liked to have been there but I would certainly like to take this opportunity to pass on my deepest sympathy to Ailsa and John's family.

DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre) [3.11 pm]: I will not spend a lot of time speaking about John D'Orazio. I want to give my condolences to the family and, from an opposition member's perspective—as I was in 2005—I will share some fond memories of John D'Orazio and some of the interesting debates we had. I particularly recall the Pharmacy Bill debate on the corporatisation of pharmacies. From my perspective, the debate was that the corporatisation of medical practices had happened many years ago so why should it not be the same for pharmacists. We talked about ownership of pharmacies only by pharmacists. There was a pharmacist–medical practitioner debate across the chamber for about three and a half hours. Of course John D'Orazio won the debate because the Labor Party was in government. He got his way. I will share with members what happened afterwards in the corridor. John came up to me with a great smile on his face, put out his hand and said, "Member for Roe"—as I was then—"great speech. I agreed with everything you said!" He was not only serious and hardworking but there was a human part of John D'Orazio. He could laugh at himself. Obviously today is testament to his dedication and the work that he has done. He was a great community advocate. I think that life events had not been kind to him, but I am sure all of us recognise his resolve, his ability to get up, and his ability to carry on and represent the community and community interests. He had a heart for us all. I pass on my condolences to the family. I did not know John intimately, but that was my human experience of him. I am sure we are all better people for knowing John D'Orazio.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Leader of the House) [3.13 pm]: I would like to say a few words about John D'Orazio and endorse the very complimentary comments that have been made so far by members on both sides of the house.

I feel very fortunate in life to have had so many Italian friends, both in the United Kingdom before I emigrated here, and ever since I came to Western Australia 23 years ago. In fact the first friends I made were Italian Western Australians. The love that my family has for the Italians in the community both here and in the UK has resulted in my having three Anglo–Italian–Australian grandchildren—Antonio, Sophia and Lorenzo.

I enjoyed John's company on many occasions, not just in this Parliament but also at many Italian community functions. Indeed I have enjoyed the company of Ailsa and John at a private dinner. One evening I was invited to dinner by a leading Italian–Western Australian, Vince Scurria, at Vince's home. When I arrived, John and Ailsa were getting out of their car. There were about eight of us there. We enjoyed a very good evening.

There were times in this Parliament when I was John's opposite number. He was the Minister for Police; Justice and I was the shadow Minister for Police; Justice. We had to do whatever we had to do in this chamber. We appeared on *Stateline* on two occasions with Rebecca Carmody. John and I would do battle on *Stateline* and both come out claiming victory! The beauty of it was that, as we went into the studio, John and I were, I like to think, good friends. As we came out, we remained good friends. I have to confess that some people think I have some very right-wing views in society on law and order. John had very often told me privately, "I share the same views as you, Rob; don't worry about it." But of course he was a member of the Labor Party and some of its views were not the same as those of the Liberal Party. John was a very decent person. He was a good person in the community. He was very, very well respected not only by the Italian community, which is a huge community in Western Australia, but also by the wider community.

I first met John about 20 years ago when I was the Mayor of Wanneroo and John was the Mayor of Bayswater. I would occasionally meet him over the years and in the ensuing years when John came into Parliament. I think John made a very good contribution to this Parliament. He was a great advocate for not only the people in his electorate but also the wider community. John is somebody I respected. We might have shared the same views but we expressed them differently. John was respected by so many people. It was a loss to this Parliament when he did not retain the seat of Morley. He will be greatly missed by members on both sides of the house who knew him and knew him well. There are many members who knew him better than I did, obviously, but he is somebody I grew to respect and liked very much as a person. He had a good sense of humour; he always had a grin on his face and a cheery word to say. I pass on my personal condolences to Ailsa and the family.

MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley) [3.17 pm]: I take it as a responsibility and a privilege to rise and give my thoughts on the man from whom I tend to feel I inherited my seat—John D'Orazio. I have always felt that it was a great weakness of character to force someone to inherit an "offence" with another person. I was fortunate never to listen to anyone who said what they ever said about John D'Orazio, which meant that when I first met him I was able to meet him on a first-time basis. I met him for the first time a week before the last election, with the member for Eyre. John told me not to be upset or disappointed because "I wasn't in this race". He said, "Just relax, mate, and enjoy the run." I said, "Everyone has been telling me that, so I will." I did not see him again

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until the day of the election at around one o'clock. We both came from a particular polling booth. John shook my hand and said, "Ian, I believe you've got this one in the bag." I said, "You'd know better than me, John!" Of course history speaks for itself. I never had a great bearing on or understanding of the controversy surrounding John because I was not in this state when it occurred. I have often wondered why disloyalty is so destructive and bitter for someone to accept. I have come to believe it is because disloyalty can only come from someone who has already proven themselves loyal. That is why it hurts so much. However, John never shared his presumed bitterness or disappointment with me, for which I was very grateful.

After I went to the funeral and heard all these wonderful things that were said about John, I thought to myself: it is really true; he epitomises this wonderful phrase that only those who can see the invisible can do the impossible. To me, this statement epitomised John, because he always seemed to see the answer long before the majority even saw the problem. This was the manner in which he led his life, and I am so honoured to have been with him.

In 2008, I won the election in Morley, due in no small measure to the preferences of this man, and that started an extraordinary but wonderful friendship with a man who seemed in some ways to divide public opinion right down the middle. Over the past two years, he had become more of a friend than the opposition. He visited me in my office several times, and he allowed me to throw plenty of questions at him in an effort to gain a better understanding of the electorate that I had inherited from him. Up until the moment when he left us, I regarded him as my primary political mentor. I am sure that will come as a surprise to some people in this house. I do not ever recall John being flattering to me. However, he was completely honest and open about what he thought about me, the electorate and the people whom it is now my responsibility to serve.

I had only two private meetings with John, but I had several meetings with him and other people. I remember that at the first private meeting that we had, we had been talking for about 10 minutes and he stood and said to me, "Stand up", and I said, "Yes, sir!" When I stood up, he ran his hands up and down my backbone, and I said "Are you feeling me up, mate?", to which he responded, "No. I just want to make sure you've got a backbone so that we can strengthen it". I then realised that he was giving me little tests to prove that I was listening to his counsel. When a story appeared in the local newspaper about an issue that he had directed my attention to, he would ring me up and say, "Well done, mate, but for heaven's sake, can you be a bit more aggressive!", to which I used to say, "Watch out, mate; I'm older than you!" I have no doubt that being absent from Parliament allowed him to be less circumspect and more open and retrospective about his approach to public office. I found John to be an extraordinarily forthright and truthful man. He was always respectful, courteous and considerate towards me, and he always wanted to assist me, in every way possible, to hold on to an electorate that is deserving of someone who genuinely wants to serve the community.

Although our friendship was very private and confidential, I am honoured, privileged and grateful to have spent some very valuable time with a man who gave so much of himself to a community that sometimes did not always respond in a manner that reflected his heart for the people he served. His political mentorship, counsel, advice and guidance were immeasurable, and I shall genuinely miss his presence. Penny and I want Ailsa and the family to know that our prayers and thoughts have been with them over these past couple of weeks and they shall continue to be with them as they deal with the physical vacuum left by a man with a great deal of compassion and vision.

The SPEAKER: Members, I ask you to stand in support of this motion and share a minute's silence.

Question passed; members standing.