

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 27 May on the following motion moved by Hon Pierre Yang —

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Honourable Kim Beazley, Companion of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the state of Western Australia and its dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia —

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our most gracious sovereign and thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

The PRESIDENT: This is the honourable member's inaugural speech. I give the call to Hon Sandra Carr.

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [2.12 pm]: Thank you, President. I congratulate you on your election to the role of President and for the leadership that you promptly demonstrated in making the honorific of President gender neutral. I am heartened by such an immediate modernising action and look forward to working in this place under your leadership.

I also congratulate Hon Martin Aldridge on his election to the role of Deputy President and, additionally, look forward to learning from his experience and leadership.

I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land upon which we stand, the proud Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation. I thank them for allowing me to stand upon their land. I acknowledge the traditional leaders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of the traditional owners of this land.

I further acknowledge the election of the first Indigenous person to serve in this place, Hon Rosie Sahanna, and look forward to the knowledge, experience and insights that she will bring to inform and improve the work we do in here.

President, I rise here today and proudly bear the weight of responsibility that comes with representing the electorate of the Agricultural Region. It is without embarrassment or pretensions of humility that I confess I am exceptionally average, an identity in which I find both comfort and belonging: an average Western Australian-born, English-speaking woman elected from the extraordinarily unlikely position of third on the ticket—the Labor ticket, no less—for the Agricultural Region. I found myself in the perfect storm of circumstances of a landslide Labor victory due to the excellent leadership of Premier Mark McGowan and the WA Labor team. I am here on the back of the work of some outstanding people, many well known and more still who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes. I do not hesitate to acknowledge that this exceptionally average person is here teetering upon the shoulders of those giants. Given this and the great depth of knowledge, skill and experience around me both in this place and the other place, the temptation to surrender to imposter syndrome is significant. Yet I work to remind myself that governments should be at their core representative and the fact that I bring my mediocrity with me has fundamental value.

President, following your lead in having modernised the language of this place, I also would like to follow the leadership of some of my former students when they recently spoke publicly on climate change. These young people taught me, as young people so often do, that I should begin by advising that I identify by the pronouns she/her—in my case, pronouns that readily match with my presentation and, thus, afford me the luxury of not challenging the status quo. As such, I again find myself as one of the exceptionally average and, consequently, find myself with the responsibility and privilege that comes with falling within the majority. The responsibility falls upon us all to normalise being able to self-determine the pronouns by which one identifies and to demonstrate unqualified acceptance and the inclusion of those who do not sit within the comfortable majority.

Being part of a majority carries with it profound responsibility. The work that we do in this term of government, with the majority that we hold in both houses, presents some incredible opportunities and, along with it, significant responsibility. We are charged with setting the tone and opportunities for future generations, a mandate set for us by the voters of Western Australia. They have unequivocally placed their faith in us and from that faith we have opportunity to birth a future filled with renewed optimism for what is possible for Western Australia.

The evolution of life within the walls of this place is evident upon the walls of this building, upon which hangs an oil painting of the original Legislative Council—a group of white privileged men resplendent in finery that is reflective of our inherited Westminster system and the House of Lords, upon which our Legislative Council is based.

Today, I am surrounded by increasing diversity: women, men, the first Sudanese person to be elected to Parliament in Hon Ayor Makur Chuot, the first Indigenous Australian to be elected to the Legislative Council in Hon Rosie Sahanna, and the first Serbian-born person to be elected in Hon Klara Andric. We are a comprehensive collection of cultural backgrounds, values, beliefs, professions and life experiences, all accepted and equally valued. But for the work, determination and sacrifices of those who came before us—those who advocated and fought for rights, recognition, inclusion and change—many of us would not be in this place today. I take a moment to express my gratitude to those in this state, across the country and throughout the world who advocate for change and who fight for the rights of

the disadvantaged, exploited, marginalised and ignored. I am inspired by their efforts and vow to continue to work for equity, fairness and rights for all.

It is appropriate at this point that I should take a moment to pay tribute to one such change maker, Edith Cowan. This year marks 100 years since the election of Edith Cowan as the very first woman to be elected to Parliament in Australia. Many of us here today owe a great debt of gratitude to her for having doggedly prised open the firmly shut door that seemed determined to remain closed to women. But for the strength, determination, passion and, indeed, gumption of Edith Cowan, many of us would not be here in this place.

This year we are privileged to witness a good many firsts for women in both this place and the other place. In the electorate that I represent, for the first time voters elected two Labor women in the Agricultural Region—my colleague Hon Shelley Payne and me. Edith Cowan was born in the Agricultural Region at Glengarry, near my home town of Geraldton. Her legacy in working for the rights and social welfare of women and children is admirable. She understood the fundamental importance of education as key to addressing social problems. She worked to improve conditions for families, the poor, the under-educated and the elderly. She promoted sex education in schools, migrant welfare, the development of infant health centres; fought against domestic violence and drunkenness; and spoke openly about venereal disease, prostitution, contraception, illegitimacy and sex crimes. She advocated for disadvantaged groups, public education and the rights of children born to single mothers, and helped found the Children's Protection Society, the creation of which paved way for the Children's Court.

Cowan also played a key role in the development of the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. Thus, not only was she instrumental in creating the hospital in which my daughter Claudia was born, but she also pushed through the legislation that allowed women to be involved in the legal profession, the Women's Legal Status Act 1923, which paved the way for Claudia to be the lawyer that she is today.

I do not pretend to know what would be in the mind of Edith Cowan if she were to look upon the forty-first Parliament of Western Australia; yet I cannot help but imagine a momentary satisfied smile upon her lips before she turned her mind and attention to the cabinet and other matters related to social welfare, the smile replaced by a determined set to her brow and a renewed goal in mind.

It is the great many incredible women leaders who have come before us in politics, such as Edith Cowan, Joan Kirner, Carmen Lawrence, Julia Gillard—the sartorial choices I made today paying tribute to Julia Gillard—Penny Wong, Tania Plibersek, Sue Lyons and, internationally, women such as Jacinda Ardern and Kamala Harris, whose determined feet have stood fast and broken the hardened ground upon which women such as myself now dare to tread.

Here I pay tribute to the effectiveness of WA Labor's Towards 50 initiative. To those who would discredit such initiatives, I direct you to the great body of research on unconscious bias. Gillard's progressive work in the space of education and climate change were inspired, and her ongoing work in women's leadership see her positive impact continue today. I will forever find strength in the words of her iconic misogyny speech as a show of the true strength of women as I carry out my service in this place, and I heed her advice to call out sexism early. I will not tolerate it for myself or others in any space—I will not.

President, in Kalgoorlie in 1971, I was born to young parents Anne and Warren Kennedy, both of whom had left school by the age of 15 to enter the workforce. I was unremarkably named Sandra after a blond woman who lived down the road, whom my mum admired. I was welcomed by an older sister by 18 months, Karen, who now enjoys the appropriation of her name to summarise a set of values and behaviours our current younger generation loves to ridicule. However, I must note here that our Karen is a dynamic, hardworking, kind and generous woman who has worked long and hard to build an incredibly successful small business. When I hear the name Karen, for me it conjures all good things and a profound sense of love and admiration.

As a small child I lived to tell the tales of accidentally drinking from a glass of kerosene having mistaken it for water and in another fever of stupidity inhaling a small plastic diamond, presuming it safe to drink as a faux sugar cube. Suffice to say, I am something of an accident of survival. In my early years, we made our way from Kalgoorlie to Geraldton where my dad went to play football for the Brigades Football Club. In their spare time, he and my mum inexplicably produced my baby brother, Todd, whom my sister and I dressed and fawned over like he was our own personal living doll, which I later balanced with cruel teasing or worse as we grew older.

My brother is an intelligent and kind-hearted soul who finds great reward in helping others. He is humble and at his most animated when he has emerged from a great surf or having helped teach our young West Aussies to surf. The joy with which he tells the story of helping a young autistic man to surf stays with me as representative of his kind, caring and compassionate heart. My hometown of Geraldton is the traditional land of the southern Yamatji people. Being a port town, my family home sat beneath the looming shadows and strange noises of the soaring wheat silos, and we considered the wharf upon which the silos sat an extension of our backyard, a place in which we played, swam in and fished in and stole onto foreign ships to meet the crews from exotic worlds as we tried to communicate in unknown languages, an innocence now stolen from our young people and community by the experience of the 9/11 terror attack causing the wharf to be closed off to the public.

I lived walking distance from the town's centre, a hop and skip across hot sand to gemstone blue ocean and a slow, reluctant dawdle to the local public schools. Like so many Western Australians, I enjoyed the benefit of a public education, attending the oldest continually operating primary school in Western Australia, Geraldton Primary School, which was established in 1878. I have fond memories of playing elastics, dressing like they did in the olden days during the school centenary year in 1978 being labelled "Sandy" from *Grease* by my year 2 teacher and years of playing netball and basketball with my school mates.

I hold some not-so-fond memories too, most notably the terror of the angry roar of Mr Bob "the tyrant" Bryant, who was often booming *Great Balls of Fire* or *Hells Bells*. While I can accept he may have been a Jerry Lee Lewis fan, I find it too much of a stretch to imagine the woollen sweater, vest-wearing dictator was an AC/DC fan. These fits of rage inevitably resulted in someone being in consultation with "Dr Jarrah", a ruler he so named as it was his corporal cure for our apparent wrongdoing. I note now the ruler was in fact made of pine, but can confirm that its sting was no less so, despite his poor skills in timber identification. I finally escaped the lash of Dr Jarrah to attend Geraldton Senior High School, a school attended by former Labor Premier Geoff Gallop. During my high school years and, indeed, many of the years that followed, I could never have imagined I would be following in his much-admired footsteps to the Western Australian Parliament.

High school proved something of a revelation for me as I had always believed myself to be an average student, drifting through my school years somewhat unremarkably happy to seamlessly blend in as a generally shy and uncertain child. Regardless, Geraldton Senior High School was a place in which I was blessed with excellent teachers, a credit to the public education system, who identified in me that which I could not identify in myself. They harangued and encouraged me; they berated me for my lackadaisical approach and for not fulfilling my potential. They alerted me to my intelligence. However, the siren song of the ocean remained strong and my high school years were largely spent prioritising time on the beach with friends, playing sport and enjoying the freedom of that clichéd notion of a simpler time. Even during my year 12 tertiary entrance exams, as they were known at that time, I felt none of the pressure I see suffered by students attempting Australian Tertiary Admission Rank today. For this reason, I am heartened to see the range of pathways that have more recently been established for students to attend university or to complete their further education ambitions. Throughout my schooling years, I was fortunate to be blissfully ignorant of the fiscal gap that separated many of us. My family were battlers and all about me were friends from families of business owners, doctors, fishing families, farming families, teachers and other professionals. Yet somehow, I remained unaware and unbothered by the vast financial divide that separated many of us. That is part of the beauty of regional living. There is generally space for inclusion and pretensions or distinctions due to wealth are typically not appreciated. It was only in my early adult years, when my mum spoke of our financial struggles, that I began to truly appreciate the significance of the sacrifices my parents made for our family. This is most tellingly revealed in a simple story my mum shared of once splurging on a can of aerosol deodorant only to drop it and have the can burst and empty of its contents and her crying at the great waste they could ill afford.

My dad, who is one of 14 children of Maude and William—or Bill—Kennedy tells stories of the great poverty in which he grew up, feeling hungry, sharing verandah space that doubled as a bedroom and meowing like a cat at his dad's heels in the hope of being thrown extra table scraps when the meal had not been sufficient to fill his grumbling stomach.

My nana, Maude Kennedy, or "Midnight Maude" as she was affectionately known, was an incredible matriarch, a woman who stoically and miraculously held her family together when my pop's own unknown demons saw him spend his money on medicinal amber rather than on substantively supporting his 14 children. This responsibility eventually fell upon my dad's older brother, Reginald Kennedy, or "Red" as he is known to most, who worked in the mines and sent money home to support his brothers and sisters. My mum's family was also a large Kalgoorlie clan, Stella Isabella and Jack Turner had 10 children. My grandma, Stella, had a wicked sense of humour and suffered from acute depression, a condition for which I am told she had electric shock therapy. I also had my own memories of her hiding in a darkened room holding a single candle in silent terror whenever there was thunder or lightning. Those who have some understanding of mental health and intergenerational trauma will have no difficulty imagining the impact of this upon others in the family and generations to follow. Mental health being a subject I will return to later.

My granddad, Jack, was in the Army and worked as a cook, spending time in Northampton to defend our shores during the war, Northampton being a part of the agricultural region I now represent. He never knew his own father and it is for this reason I, and others, were always in awe of his capacity to be a great and caring dad and grandad. He was hit by a car as a young man and had to have his leg pinned together, which became infected. The same leg was injured again in a later accident. As a result, he had one leg much shorter than the other and it could not bend. He wore a boot with a thick sole of about seven centimetres to even his stance. He walked with a limp and had a bicycle with its single pedal, which he rode one-legged to work on the mines. It was a highlight for us grandchildren to get a ride on grandad's bike. He was a determined and dependable man, a loyal and staunch Labor man and, like one of his favourite songs, he remains unforgettable.

The stories my parents tell of their respective childhoods are overwhelmingly positive, but, needless to say, life was challenging for both my parents' large families. They were the classic Aussie battlers that formed part of our national identity. They both know struggle, and their lives are, as are those of many Australians, a triumph over adversity. But more than this, they are a triumph of growing up having to care for and support one another, to share the load, to look out for each other and to know the importance of family and true grit to ensure survival. Consequently, my parents are both caring and compassionate people. They look out for others and help others. Many is the time we had people in need and family members staying in our home, sometimes for a short time, but others for the better part of a year.

My parents coached our sporting teams, volunteered at our schools, volunteered in various groups and organisations and, to this day, remain deeply embedded in their community and the notion of service. They are my greatest supporters and always provide a soft place for me to land when life has been challenging. They love me without condition and I am so incredibly grateful for them both.

It was my dad who, some years ago, first planted the idea that I should enter politics and who also offered his unhesitating support when I sought his counsel when considering nominating as a candidate for the Agricultural Region. My mum, despite her initial hesitations, as I imagine protective mothers so often feel when one of their own enters politics, threw herself behind me by single-handedly manning the Chapman Valley polling booth on election day, braving her neighbours from the traditional Nationals' territory in support of her daughter. If that is not love, I do not know what is!

As part of the Kennedy family, it is a particular privilege for me to be delivering my inaugural speech during Reconciliation Week. This year's Reconciliation Week theme is "More than a word: Reconciliation takes action", and I am pleased that I will be able to take action here today to formally amend the record of my own family history. I am deeply honoured to acknowledge and place on record here today that my family history dates back to our First Nations people. I am less proud, however, of our historic treatment and undervaluing of our traditional landowners, the impact of which is evident in so many ways in our society, one of which is in my own family history in which the fact that our blood runs with that of the traditional landowners was largely kept hidden, having been the subject, I am told, of an enforced silence.

Today I am very grateful to my uncle Mervin Kennedy, who has dedicated significant time, energy and passion into researching our family history to bring the fullness of our origins to our attention and having our Indigenous heritage recognised by the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council. I am incredibly grateful to the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council in that after all this time and silence, it is willing to acknowledge and welcome us. If only other institutions in this country would exercise the same spirit of generosity towards our First Nations people.

My uncle relates our early Western Australian history thus. Great-grandfather William John Kennedy made his way to Western Australia, acquiring land in Cunderdin and Quairading and marrying into the Walker family, who were farmers in the Avon region. We come from the King and Kennedy families, who resided in Northam, Cunderdin and York. Great-grandfather King married Eliza Belle, nee Dickerson-Skelton. Her mother, Mary Brazely, was an Aboriginal woman who hailed from Gingin and the Moore River settlements, with links back to the famous tribal elder known as Wilbur. Much of this history is new to me and for this reason I feel an ever-increasing urgency to say that we must be vigilant in questioning and examining the negative biases that lurk within us. As is always the case when a group is marginalised, devalued or disadvantaged, we frequently unconsciously reinforce these in our behaviours, words and actions. It is important that we take pause to reflect and ask ourselves what words and beliefs do we have whispering in the back of our subconscious minds that have the unintended impact of reinforcing disadvantage. We must ask ourselves what conscious action can we take to address these biases. It is my most sincere hope that my action here today goes some small way to reconciling my family history with that which has been hidden and can more broadly be viewed as a positive gesture of reconciliation. Adopting the Uluru Statement from the Heart would be another such important act of reconciliation.

My journey to this place is a story of exploration, stops and starts, and life-changing mistakes. While in my late teens, I was the victim of sexual violence, and this naturally has had a significant impact upon my world view and my own mental health. It led me to make self-destructive choices, such as entering and remaining in relationships that were abusive, coercive and violent. It is important that I acknowledge these experiences, as again they represent the experiences of so many women, and they drive me to be part of the process that works to address these ongoing social problems. It is why I now sit on the board of Desert Blue Connect, an organisation providing a range of services to individuals and organisations in the midwest, including children's services, crisis accommodation, unplanned pregnancy support, family and domestic violence and sexual assault support, primary prevention and men's community intervention.

Following the trauma in my late teens, despite starting a range of courses and degrees, I found it difficult to settle, to feel safe and secure, and to build significant connections or relationships or, indeed, any sense of self-worth. I began and withdrew from a series of degrees, behaviour reflecting my inner turmoil—from a fine arts degree to sports science, then politics, philosophy and sociology and then three years of law, during which time I also married

and had my daughter, followed by the subsequent end of my marriage and my return to my family in Geraldton as a sole parent. At that time, there were limited concessions for sole parents and external studies were yet to be commonplace, so despite my attempts at persuasion, I was not permitted to complete so much as a unit of my law degree externally. So I once again withdrew. Sometime after, I met my son's father and completed a Bachelor of Arts, followed by a Graduate Diploma in Education, and these important steps allowed me to redesign my life path and that of my children. Since becoming a teacher, I have taught in schools throughout Geraldton and travelled throughout the midwest, Gascoyne and wheatbelt areas, delivering drug and health education. I have held numerous leadership roles and positions, along with gaining a renewed sense of self and a vehement belief in the power of education to transform lives.

As one whose sense of self-worth was minimal throughout my younger and early parenting years, I found myself in a series of abusive relationships and experienced family and domestic violence. I still do not fully comprehend the complexity of my thinking that caused me to be in such a position, yet I can say with absolute certainty that those who find themselves in such predicaments need your absolute compassion, understanding and support. We simply must do more to help people in those situations and to educate our community to help enable helpful dialogues and primary prevention initiatives.

An estimated 300 000 Western Australians have experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner—one in six women and one in 16 men. Collectively, they would fill Optus Stadium almost five times over, and I would be in one of those stadiums. One in four women have experienced emotional abuse caused by a current or former partner. That is twice the population of both Geraldton and Bunbury combined. In a group the size of an average primary school class, one in three children will have witnessed domestic violence, and Aboriginal women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised for family violence-related assaults. On average, one woman is murdered by her current or former partner each week in Australia—a statistic I barely avoided becoming when a former partner threw a hammer at me in anger, narrowly missing me and hitting the wall beside my head.

I congratulate Minister Simone McGurk, as WA's first Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence. Her significant work in the development of the *Path to safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020–2030* represents a substantial paradigm shift from the approach of previous governments. One in every three women in Australia has experienced physical or sexual violence perpetrated by a man since the age of 15, and I have already discussed the impact on my own life experience, causing me to pinball through life, making poor choices. This reference to the experience of women is not to deny that men and those who identify as "they" are not victims of sexual and/or physical violence. The statistics show us that they are. However, it is to say that those experiencing these social problems are overwhelmingly females and children, and it is to say that, as a society, we have a problem that we must collectively address. Entitlement, notions of proprietary rights and a culture that has historically made light of the suffering and value of women are both causal and accountable.

I will stop short of using the popularised term "toxic masculinity" as a means by which to denote the cultural norms that allow for such alarming rates of family and domestic violence, sexual violence and the general undervaluing of women in society. Words are powerful tools and they should be used thoughtfully and intentionally. It is my observation that the term "toxic masculinity" is prone to divide rather than assist. It generates a defensiveness from that half of the population that feels labelled and attacked by the nomenclature. It is my ardent belief that "toxic socialisation" is the better language, as it carries with it the notion of our collective responsibility to socialise all our young people to be respectful, empathetic and proactive in building attitudes that respect and protect the rights of all. I am, after all, the parent of young man, and my role is also to allow him to see his own value and worth while simultaneously seeing, respecting and supporting the same in others.

It was only upon extricating myself from the situations of family and domestic violence that I succumbed to panic attacks, anxiety and depression, and so began the long journey of addressing the mental health impacts upon not only myself, but also my children. Unfortunately, these experiences also place me in a far-too-common statistic. However, as is also often the case with our negative experiences, there were some helpful outcomes too. My life experience allowed me to teach from a place of compassion and trauma-informed practice long before this became a concept delivered in teacher professional development. It helped inform my pastoral care of students, allowing me to more readily recognise trauma and mental health struggles in students, and therefore be of assistance and support, and for this I am grateful.

As a sole parent, I have for much of the time been the sole provider for my children, at times juggling up to three jobs so that I could ensure my children were well provided for. My experience is not unusual. More than 80 per cent of sole parents in Australia are women. That being the case, women retire with less superannuation, are more likely to retire in poverty and, among older women, are increasingly likely to experience homelessness. Despite my life challenges, or perhaps because of them, I am proud of how I have consistently worked to do and be better. Most importantly, I am incredibly proud of my two children, who are my reason for always wanting to do better. I am here in this place in the hope that it will make them proud. My daughter, Claudia, who is now a lawyer, has worked as a lecturer and tutor at Curtin Law School, started the *Western Australian Student Law Review* to provide a platform

for peer-reviewed student writing to be published, graduated on the Vice-Chancellor's List, completed her honours year while working full time as a judge's associate for Supreme Court Justice Vaughan, won numerous course awards throughout her degree, and has co-written a law book, all before turning 25. Claudia, I am consistently filled with awe at the amazing powerhouse of a woman that you are. You are wise, strong, and an amazing role model and advocate for other women and regional kids. I consistently burst with pride and "mum brags" at the woman you are.

My son, Jack, is currently completing year 12. After many tumultuous years in the school system, a system that was never really designed for a young man like him, he has shown true strength of character, and this year has managed to wallpaper our fridge with commendations for achievements in his courses. He works two jobs, has the savings mentality of a young Warren Buffett, and is a kind and caring young man with an entrepreneurial spirit that is inspiring and may well place me in a lovely nursing home in my twilight years, or so he tells me! He has been part of our family financial decision-making since his early teens. He chose our family home with me and purchased his own car, phone and computer at 16, and is always ready with a loving and comforting hug, words of support and words that make me laugh until I cry. Jack, I am so incredibly proud of who you are, how far you have come, and I watch with admiration and pride as you come into your own as the wonderful and hilarious young man you are.

Today, I come to this place as a teacher. The irony is not lost on me that having now left the profession, my life continues to be run by bells! Teaching is a profoundly rewarding profession, but I must confess that I did not choose to be a teacher. I chose to be a parent and then chose to study teaching as it seemed to me to be a career that would allow me to both work and be a parent, with the ability to keep the same school hours as my children, or so I thought. It is merely a very surprising and happy accident that I found myself in love with teaching. My teaching years have been some of the most rewarding and fulfilling years of my life. This is due, in most part, to the students—WA's regional kids. Many years ago, before I was a teacher, I sat in a school assembly at a primary school my daughter was attending and listened to the speech of a retiring teacher in which she shared her teaching philosophy. It was this: she made it her duty to find something to love in every child who walked through her classroom door. This compassionate child-centred approach stayed with me, and I brought that ethos into my own teaching. Let me tell you, even when demonstrating their absolute worst, it is incredibly easy to find something to love in every student when you are actively seeking their best attributes or, as my old Geraldton Senior High School motto states: the seeker finds. I would urge every teacher to consider adopting this approach. It enriches your own experience and means that every student receives the very best you have to offer them. It is worth keeping in mind that for some students you may well be the only positive encounter that they experience on any given day.

I have a great love for teaching, but I cannot deny that being an educator is also challenging. The pressures, expectations and workload are great, and the appreciation can be limited. Accountability and administrative measures have increased the workload of teachers, who will tell you that they often find themselves juggling these requirements with the quality and content of their teaching. Make no mistake, teachers care about students and the quality of education they deliver to your children. We care about your kids. We lose sleep over your children. We shed tears over them. We fight for them behind closed doors to ensure they are given a fair go. As my 17-year-old son recently pointed out, traditionally, the education system was designed to meet the workforce needs of industrialisation. Today's world is a far different place and many of the jobs and needs of the world of today and tomorrow have significantly changed or are yet to be fully realised or imagined. Education should and must reflect these changes, and for this reason it is pleasing to be part of a government that recognises this and is investing \$136 million in new science, technology, engineering and mathematics classrooms and resources to prepare students for the jobs of the future. Moreover, education is more than a mere mechanism for churning out a workforce. Quality education will help create our deep thinkers, carers, innovators, creators, lateral thinkers and problem-solvers. There is an opportunity to apply best practice research to improve education, just as we do with science-based developments in areas such as vaccinations.

Investment in education will reward us manyfold and must be at the core of what we do. We know that with education comes better health, improved life expectancy, reduced experiences of violence, higher salaries and greater levels of home ownership, just to name a few positive outcomes. Innovation and research require traditional skills, along with exploration, creativity and minds that have been encouraged to remain playful, inquisitive and unafraid of failure, because they have been taught to view failure as a learning experience and a step closer to success. I invoke all those charged with planning our curriculum and education models to consider how best to achieve this end to ensure kids have lively, explorative and engaging learning experiences.

The proliferation of the use of digital devices amongst our young people has seen the emergence of a concerning issue: the pornification of our young people's lives. The ready access to all manner of internet pornography and pornographic images, the large body of which is harmful or unrepresentative of human love, intimacy and respect for relationships, is highly concerning. Young people simply do not have the cognitive capacity or life experience to adequately process the images to which they are being exposed. Schools have an important role to play here in educating our young people about respectful relationships, healthy body image, healthy human intimacy and the vitally important concept of consent—indeed, enthusiastic consent. Thus, I am pleased that this government has

made an election commitment to expand the WA Respectful Relationships Teaching Support program to address these matters.

The McGowan Labor government has also invested significantly in public education infrastructure and classroom resources across the state. It is heartening to see the investments in our schools, the additional support for students in classrooms, the commitment to quality education in regions, and the development of the centre for excellence in the explicit teaching of literacy. Additionally, the McGowan government is delivering a \$104 million boost to student support and wellbeing and providing 100 additional psychologists in WA schools over the next four years. Such welcome initiatives will provide more assistance to the significant number of students presenting with mental health issues, supporting those experiencing anxiety, depression or disengagement from school.

On the issue of mental health, I again represent the average. One in five Western Australians experience mental health issues in any given year. For this reason, I am a vocal advocate for normalising conversations around mental health as an effective way to encourage people to understand this health challenge as a normal human experience and as an important driver to encourage people to seek appropriate support. I offer my respect and great thanks to the member for Cockburn, David Scaife, for his frank and open account of his experiences of his own mental health challenges in his inaugural speech in the other place, and to the member for Mining and Pastoral Region Hon Peter Foster for speaking of his struggles with anxiety in his inaugural speech in here last week. It is particularly important for men, who are so often conditioned to value stoicism over vulnerability and openness, to normalise conversations around mental health.

Over the years, my own brother's long undiagnosed mental health condition, which led to his self-medicating, a suicide attempt and a number of mental health crises, has highlighted for my family the gaps in our mental health services, particularly in regional areas. The more remotely one lives, the more problematic this becomes. The trauma of attempting to access timely assistance at the peak of my brother's most recent episode remains with me. The inability to access immediate support left my family helpless and feeling that my brother's death would likely come before assistance. I am relieved to share here today that he was finally able to access the support of mental health professionals and, along with his own willingness to participate in his recovery, is now part of a support system that has him well and truly on the path to recovery. However, the scars of the experience run through our family. Again, the importance of reflection upon experience is vital if we are to operate in a space of better prevention and early treatment that intervenes before crisis strikes.

Additionally, I would like to briefly touch on the problem we have with the criminalisation of mental health and the consequential high rates of imprisonment of those self-medicating due to mental health struggles and trauma. Here I would like to pay my respects to the family of a Yamatji woman, who for cultural reasons I will refer to as JC, who was shot dead in Geraldton after her family called the police. They were seeking assistance in transferring her to hospital, as she was—as her family described—“experiencing difficulty” after being released from prison. This tragic outcome points to an urgent need to examine this problem and how we might best adopt a significant paradigm shift to support those in our community who are suffering and those who are self-medicating. We must be unafraid to rethink our approach and to challenge some of the long-held ideas that persist despite defying reason or common sense.

Here I acknowledge the important work of the Minister for Health, Roger Cook, and then Minister for Police, Michelle Roberts, for developing a range of initiatives that focus on prevention, early intervention, treatment, support and law enforcement. Their work has resulted in initiatives such as the 18-month pilot of active recovery teams in 10 metropolitan and regional locations that bridge the gap between clinical mental services inside hospitals and community-based organisations that provide care outside of hospitals. An additional positive development is the creation of step-up, step-down mental health services throughout the state, providing early, outside-hospital support for those experiencing mental health challenges. Providing alternatives to emergency departments for people with mental health and alcohol and other drug issues is vital. I note it is a key priority area identified in the McGowan government's sustainable health review and state priorities. I also note that the Mental Health Commission is looking into gaps in alcohol and other drug crisis intervention. I look forward to its recommendations and the important work that I am confident the Minister for Mental Health, Hon Stephen Dawson, will contribute in this space.

For over a year now the world has endured the challenge and the tragedy that is the COVID pandemic. It has taken lives; separated families, lovers and friends; placed our frontline workers under insufferable stress; stretched health services to well beyond their limits; seen the loss of jobs and homes; and caused much pain, suffering, instability and uncertainty. It is important that we recognise the outstanding work of the Australian unions and the Australian Labor Party in protecting our most vulnerable and securing the provision of JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments to both assist the people of our workforce to endure the impact of COVID and to support the Australian economy. To direct the credit for those initiatives to anyone else, or for anyone else to attempt to accept the credit for those initiatives, would be akin to attempting to pass off the homework of another as your own. The Australian Services Union, along with other Australian unions, campaigned relentlessly for a wage subsidy for workers to ensure members'

jobs were protected during the global pandemic. Prior to this, Prime Minister Morrison refused to consider a wage subsidy. However, the determination and unrelenting efforts of the unions won out, and that victory is reflected in an economy that has stood up well against the impact of the COVID pandemic.

Here, in Western Australia, I would like to thank our Premier Mark McGowan for his incredible management of our state. It is by no mistake that he has been informally awarded a light-hearted title that is paternal in nature! His steadfast, sensible, consistent and very human approach to keeping WA safe and strong has achieved just that. The proof is in the rich, healthy, robust state we remain, and the fact we remain the engine room of our nation. Here I also extend my gratitude to health minister Roger Cook for his continued outstanding management of the COVID pandemic that has been measured, science-based, and attentive and responsive to expert health advice.

A concept that is valued among the education fraternity is transferable knowledge—the capacity to pick up knowledge and experience gained in one area and apply it to another. It is my sincere hope that the experience and knowledge of COVID is transferable in this way. Those who were locked out, those who found or now find themselves essentially stateless for an indeterminate period, those being kept apart from loved ones, have discovered a heightened empathy for our refugees and asylum seekers suffering under the cruel practice of offshore processing and indefinite detention. The dehumanising cruelty of these federal policies must end, and I call upon the federal government to cease this needlessly cruel practice.

My deep concern for our long history of disregard for the natural environment again places me amongst the average. According to the recent Australia Speaks data, the majority of Australians today are concerned about climate change. Our collective inaction on global warming places a significant responsibility upon us all here today to be dynamically proactive and innovative in our solutions and the efforts we must take to deal with the natural disasters and many challenges resulting from that inaction. The strategic end is surely imminent for stranded assets such as oil and thermal coal, and we must be prepared to take the extreme structural pivot required to bring about this change. Investment in wind and solar, bioenergy and the hydrogen market must take precedence. We must remain alert to opportunities in the clean energy market and invest in research and development, and be a state of innovation and early uptake in terms of infrastructure to provide for the production and utilisation of clean energy and downstream processing.

As one about to celebrate the great privilege of achieving a half century later this month, I again join the average—and can confess to feeling a bit average at times, too! Just over 40 per cent of the people I represent in the Agricultural Region are aged 50 or over. I can say, with the great certainty that comes with age, that from all of life's challenges, tragedies and disasters, we must learn, change and adapt if there are to be any ensuing positives from the experience. If we do not do these things, history repeats upon us and we suffer the heartburn of that which has already been suffered.

As a regional member of this Parliament, I am pleased to note the McGowan Labor government has provided a masterclass on how to spend effectively in regional Western Australia, having spent more money in the regions than any previous government in our state's history. This is unsurprising given the Labor Party itself was born of workers from the bush, the regions and the country—everyday workers seeking better wages and conditions. We are the original regional party. It is in our origin story and it is in our fundamentally egalitarian values that grew out of our bush heritage. It is thick and fast in our values that place people and a fair go at the centre of all we do. The Western Australian state division of the Australian Labor Party was formed at a trade union congress in Coolgardie—just down the road from my birthplace in Kalgoorlie—in 1899. In our regions today, there is increasing diversity, improvements in education, the growth of industries and a greater acceptance of progressive social values, and this is reflected in the recent election result in which regional voters have shown their support in unprecedented numbers. The experience of COVID and rapidly rising house prices and housing shortages has people again looking towards regional living. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that traditional models of work can be adapted and that working remotely is possible, and indeed can prove favourable. It is important that we are mindful of creating opportunity in the form of key infrastructure to allow people to live regionally and to do so knowing they can readily access key services. It is also worth contemplating the value of regional locations as a second seat of government to improve outcomes for regional communities.

As the prospect of electoral reform is being explored, I am mindful that many of us here are regional members and bring the value, knowledge and experience of regional living. It is essential that there is an appropriate mechanism to advocate for the necessary human services—such as disabilities, mental health, drug and alcohol, and family violence services—for rural, regional and remote communities. A community services mechanism could operate in a similar vein to regional development commissions, which advocate for the economic development needs of regional communities.

A significant part of our Agricultural Region, which is more than 40 000 square kilometres, was impacted by cyclone Seroja. It devastated communities, families, businesses and individuals. Work remains to be done to assist these people to restore their lives, homes, infrastructure and livelihoods. It has been a great privilege to witness the various groups, individuals and volunteers collaborating to help our neighbours in need. However, there were

also roadblocks to the manner in which we could support and check in on those people who were impacted. Most notably, the failure of telecommunications left people vulnerable and unable to communicate, or access help and support. This has highlighted an issue that remains problematic. Telecommunication towers, absent of generators to allow them to continue to function beyond their short backup battery life in the event of power loss, shut us off from each other. From my own home in Geraldton, I relied on contact from a friend in Cunderdin for information and updates on the impact of the cyclone. Poor telecommunications and connectivity are an ongoing issue across our regions. The federal government must exercise its federal responsibility for this. It is an issue that I am determined to pursue during my time here in this place.

Mobile coverage and internet connectivity should and must be provided as a reliable and uninterrupted service, as a matter of both the safety and wellbeing of regional communities and as a commercial imperative, allowing all to compete irrespective of geography. I am doggedly determined to see our government work with the federal government to resolve this matter for our rural, regional and remote communities. It will unlock opportunities in the use of technology for business, health and wellbeing, education, and in attracting and retaining populations.

Export markets are also an important part of our agricultural sector. While any form of economic coercion must be strongly resisted, I am pleased to note Premier Mark McGowan's stance on building positive relationships with trading partners such as China. Diversification in trading partners is an additionally important measure to ensure the ongoing stability and success of our trading sector. The success of our agriculture and food sector is intrinsically linked to overseas markets. Agriculture is Western Australia's second largest export industry. We export approximately 80 per cent of our agricultural produce. Over the past decade, around 70 per cent of that trade supplied Asian markets, with China, Vietnam and Indonesia being some of our largest markets. Our agrifood market is ideally positioned to supply produce that is both sustainably and ethically produced.

Our state is one of the most disease and pest-free agricultural production areas in the world, a status we must vigilantly protect via strict quarantine requirements, just as we have worked vigilantly to keep our state free of COVID via hard border and quarantine measures. Along with innovation, research and development, this will ensure our market remains a significant part of our own food supply chain and continues to be a substantive contributor to the Australian economy that it is today.

Our primary producers are numbered among the best in the world and this is an identity worth recognition and celebration. If Western Australia is the engine room of Australia, WA's agriculture and food sector is both one of the engine rooms of our state and the lifeblood of our rural and regional communities. We must focus our attention upon creating and training a steady and consistent supply of workers for this sector, and attracting people to live and work in these communities if we are to continue to help keep the engine well running and well serviced.

The best time for us to take action on climate change and global warming was over 40 years ago; the next best time is now. Our sluggish approach to taking action has resulted in the need for us to act more expediently and innovatively than ever before. There is no more time to smirk rather than set targets, or to pander to players who have ignored science and continued to invest heavily in unsustainable practices and stranded assets, wilfully placing profits over people and planet.

It has been 10 years since Julia Gillard became Prime Minister of Australia. One of her government's major achievements was the introduction of the carbon pricing mechanism. Companies that were subject to the scheme saw their emissions drop by seven per cent. Today, we are fortunate to have the forward-thinking efforts of the Minister for Hydrogen Industry, Hon Alannah MacTiernan. Western Australia, a state typically locked in a boom-or-bust cycle, is well placed to become the land of the endless boom if we, as we have begun to do in recent years, harness our abundant natural and renewable resources and work from the front foot to be global leaders in the clean, green energy market. The investment we place in innovation and research will reward us manyfold and allow us to position ourselves as global leaders, and suppliers of the clean energy market. It is well past time for the lump of coal to leave the building!

As countries look to progressively decrease their emissions, the future trade in energy is increasingly likely to include trade in low or zero emissions energy. Western Australia has significant renewable resources, a well-established track record of exporting energy, and longstanding trading relationships with key energy importers. I am pleased to note that Oakajee, north of Geraldton in the Agricultural Region, is one such identified potential location for hydrogen production and export. Western Australia is well positioned to become a significant exporter of low or zero emissions energy. We are on the cusp of playing an important role in global decarbonisation efforts. It is indeed an exciting time to be representing the Agricultural Region and the people of Western Australia. I look forward to playing my part in building a future that our children can look towards with optimism.

As is customary, I would like to conclude by offering my thanks to the many hands that have carried me to this place. To begin, I would like to note that participating in the election campaign was an incredibly rewarding experience, due to not only the resulting victory but also the amazing opportunity to work alongside like-minded people who were all working towards a common goal that they genuinely believed in. It has been a great honour and a highlight of my life to date.

My thanks, first and foremost, to Premier Mark McGowan and the WA Labor team. Thank you to the incredible campaign team of Tim Picton, Ellie Whiteaker and David Cann. My gratitude and thanks to the voters of the Agricultural Region, many of whom voted Labor for the first time. We will not let you down. I also owe much gratitude to Hon Darren West. But for his work in building the Geraldton branch, and his time, effort and friendship, I would never have found the confidence to put my name forward as a candidate. Thank you for your faith in me and for elevating my belief in what I thought was possible. That is an incredible gift, and I am very grateful.

Thanks also to the candidates for each electorate in the Agricultural Region: Brad Willis in Roe, Michelle Nelson in Central Wheatbelt, Barni Norton in Moore, and the new member for Geraldton, the first woman to represent the seat of Geraldton, Lara Dalton. It was a great privilege to work alongside each of you. I credit my being here today to the hard work you have done in each of your respective electorates. In Geraldton, I would also like to thank retiring member Laurie Graham, the ultimate gentleman of WA politics. Laurie, thank you for all you have done for our region, for the kindness you have shown me and for the abundance of advice. I hope my own service does your legacy justice. Thanks to Margie Robinson for your work during the campaign, your friendship and for being your incredibly capable, intelligent and knowledgeable self. I would most certainly be wandering in the wilderness without you. There is also an incredible team working behind the scenes in Donna Plummer, Jodi Ingram, Judy Riggs and Geoff Cannon. These people are the quiet heroes behind our public success. Thanks to each of you. Thank also to Adam Dusty, the hardest working doorknocker and most knowledgeable political mind to land west side in Geraldton in a long time. Thank you for your hard work and mateship.

To my family: you have supported me, cared for me, attended events, handed out how-to-vote cards, believed in me, and now share in this honour with me today as the first member of our family to be a member of Parliament. Mum and Dad, I love you both dearly. I thank you for the countless ways you have shown me love and support. To my daughter, Claudia, thank you for your support, for the ever-wise advice and for flying in from Perth to Geraldton on the day to man the Dongara booth with me. To my son, Jack, thank you for encouraging me to go for it, for hammering up signs and for all the hugs and words of encouragement; I love you, mate. To my sister, Karen, for being my greatest supporter and best friend, I never want to contemplate where I would be were it not for you. To my brother-in-law, Mark Rowe—what a guy. He voted Labor for the first time ever, completely threw his support behind me and even drove to Nationals territory in Northampton to man the polling booth solo there. I owe you gratitude for that and so much more. To my brother, Todd, for always believing in me more than I ever believed in myself, and for being the best and funniest brother I could have ever wished for growing up. To my dear friend Rochelle and her husband, Noddy, thank you for your constant support, friendship and wise counsel; I love you both dearly. To my friends from work and life who offered words and messages of support, thank you; your every gesture has meant the world to me. To Ivan Debaughy and the “I Team”, as they are known—Louis and Elsie in Dongara—thank you for leading the charge there. We won Dongara! Finally, thank you to the Geraldton branch of WA Labor and the many, many volunteers who contributed along the way.

It is appropriate that I should end here in this space of thanks and gratitude, thus I conclude by thanking you, President, and my colleagues for indulging me this time. This very average regional Western Australian woman promises to roll up her sleeves and work exceptionally hard for the Agricultural Region and the people of Western Australia.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, honourable member, and congratulations. I wish you all the very best for your work in this place.

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [3.11 pm]: Thank you, President. May I begin by also congratulating you on your election to the role. I would also like to congratulate all my colleagues here today on their recent election to this chamber.

I would like to begin my inaugural speech by acknowledging the Whadjuk people as the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, and recognise that their culture, heritage and beliefs are still important today. Now, during National Reconciliation Week, it feels even more appropriate to acknowledge this, as it highlights an issue that is fundamental to our state’s and, indeed, our nation’s future. As WA moves towards 2029, 200 years since the establishment of the Swan River Colony, we have a unique opportunity to speed up our journey of reconciliation. Just this week, Reconciliation WA chief executive officer Jody Nunn said —

... as a State with our wealth, prosperity and opportunity—we should be the global leader in Indigenous cultural, heritage and practice ... “As we approach the bicentenary of the State in 2029, we’ve got a huge opportunity to say we’re going to have a new future.”

This is something that I am personally acutely aware of, because my ancestors arrived in WA in 1829 on one of the first ships. William Bashford arrived on 12 October 1829 on a ship called the *Caroline*. Soon after, he was gifted some land on the Derbarl Yerrigan, what we now call the Swan River, up in the Swan Valley, which, of course as we know now, was wrongly assumed to be unoccupied. In the shadow of the Mabo decision, the myth of terra

nullius has now been done away with and we, as a community, are now ready to take much bigger steps towards reconciliation. Fundamental steps should include truth telling and, ultimately, a treaty and a voice to Parliament. On this note, I would especially like to acknowledge Hon Rosie Sahanna on her election as the first Aboriginal person in this chamber. It is very, very significant.

My sense is that in recent years the reconciliation space has moved forward in a way that is deeply encouraging. Ideas that were once deeply radical and in fact controversial, such as dual naming, renaming places or finding a more inclusive date to celebrate our nationhood, are now increasingly part of mainstream conversation. I want to give my thanks to the very inspiring Western Australian First Nations leaders, whom I have had the honour of travelling alongside. In fact, as Richard Walley said this week, whom I have many times walked behind and learnt from, I hope that here in this place we can do our part in the forty-first Parliament to move WA along on this important journey towards reconciliation.

As I mentioned, my family have a long connection to this state, going back to 1829 on my mum's side. They were a pioneering family in the Swan Valley, where they lived for several generations until my grandfather Colin Hooper and his wife, Mary, who is with us here today, took the whole family, including my mother, Janet, to establish a wheat farm out east of Naremben. I cannot help but be amazed by the courage that it must have taken to take the whole family out bush, when there was no electricity in the wheatbelt, let alone telephones. Going to live in a Nissen hut that originally had a dirt floor and kerosene lanterns, and was miles from anywhere, was certainly very brave, but I also know that it was deeply rewarding. My mum's side of the family, more than 60 years later, are still working on that family farm and other farms around the Naremben area.

Less is known about my late father's side of the family, but I do know that dad moved to WA from Sydney as a boy and settled in Bicton. My grandfather William Pettitt was a customs officer at Fremantle port. My dad, Bill Pettitt, went to school in Freo, first at Fremantle Boys' School and then John Curtin Senior High School. As it happens, my mum finished her schooling at John Curtin in Freo as well. But that was not where they were to meet; that was some years later when dad, a sales representative, crashed his car and was looked after by my mum, who was a nurse at Fremantle Hospital. By the time I was born in the early 1970s, my parents had relocated to Roleystone in the Perth hills, where most of my childhood was spent. I have very good memories of that place, playing in jarrah bushland and being part of a tight-knit community that was extremely caring. I went to Roleystone Primary School and then Roleystone District High School before we all had to bus down the hill to what, at the time, was the biggest school in the state, Kelmscott Senior High School. As it happened, two other members of this Parliament, ministers Tony Buti and Rita Saffioti, also went to Kelmscott high—not bad for a public school in a largely lower socio-economic area.

After high school I took a year off and went travelling around Australia, mostly hitchhiking in a way we would not be allowed to do today, working on building sites and even hitching on a tug boat up the east coast before returning to WA and moving to Fremantle. I fell in love with Freo. I love its built heritage, its layers of history, its working port, its wonderful arts and music scene, and even its football team—most of the time. Freo is a place that I have largely called home ever since. On my return I also went to study at Murdoch University and was fortunate enough to have been taught by some of the best minds in this state, including Professor Peter Newman, Dr Patsy Hallen, Dr Ian Barns, the late Dr Ian Cook and even Hon Dr Sally Talbot, who now sits in this chamber. After completing my degree and then my doctorate I moved to Cambodia to work with Oxfam, an organisation that I previously sat on the board of and whose work I still greatly respect. In Cambodia, I learnt a lot and worked on a range of fisheries and forestry projects, but I also had that sense not only of how extremely lucky we are here, but also that we are living in a natural environment that is changing. It was there that the impacts of climate change, and the impacts it is having on the world's poorest people, first became evident to me.

From Cambodia I moved to Canberra and worked with the Australian government international aid program, which was then called AusAID and is now part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, before again moving back to WA and to Murdoch University to lecture in sustainable development, eventually taking on the role of dean of the School of Sustainability. I really loved teaching and research, and I love the role that universities can play in teaching us to think critically about key issues, but I was also deeply interested in how these ideas, and their well-researched theories, could be put into practice.

My time as a councillor and as mayor at the City of Fremantle was a wonderful opportunity to do just that—to demonstrate what the implementation of sustainable development can look like. I think it would be fair to say that there was no better place than Freo to do this. The Freo community is pretty unique. It is very passionate, very progressive and it demands local government think globally while acting locally. The leadership that Freo has shown on a range of issues was possible only due to the extraordinary support of this wonderful community, including the council and the City of Fremantle staff. I want to thank them for their support along the way on what was a very rewarding journey together.

Local government has already been the subject of a fair bit of discussion in this house. I agree with many of my colleagues that local government is about more than just roads, rates and rubbish. In fact, I think the strength of local government is that it can be connected to, and meet the needs and wishes of, its local community. In this house I hope we can continue to support and not squash the innovation and leadership that can come out of the local government sector when it is working well. I was lucky enough to have served on the Fremantle council for 16 years as an elected member—almost 12 of those as mayor. I am incredibly grateful that my community trusted me in this role for so long, a role that taught me a lot. It taught me that you can do things differently and get good outcomes. It taught me the importance of being pragmatic and not letting the perfect be the enemy of the good. It taught me the value of working across the usual political divides and it taught me the value of collaboration and working as a team. As a result of this and my very good fortune of being surrounded by many great and competent people is that my hometown of Freo is now going through a decade of change perhaps not seen since the days of the America's Cup.

When I became mayor more than a decade ago, I was scared that Freo was turning into what we call a dormitory suburb—a place where people go to sleep and not do much else. We knew that our focus had to be on economic development, bringing back investment that actually would make sure Freo was a place where people could live, work and play all in one place. Although the results of this are still being revealed, the approach we took has worked. We are seeing more than \$1 billion of new, private sector investment come into Fremantle. Importantly, that means we have now doubled Fremantle's residential CBD population and created thousands of new jobs in the centre of Fremantle and lots of great new places for people to recreate in. I highlight this because some might say that is not what they would expect a Green mayor or a Green-leaning council to be focused on but the evidence shows that economic development and community building can and, in fact, must go hand in hand, and that is exactly what we did. Let me explain this a bit more. Sustainable cities are compact cities, the cities in which you can live, work and play all within a short distance of each other. I love the term the "15-minute city", as some experts have called it. They are compact, mixed-use cities with more density, more jobs and a greater diversity of dwellings. This kind of city, of course, is a more sustainable city.

The CEO at the City of Fremantle used to always tell the council as we were debating these issues about density: "Just remember, every dwelling that we build here in central Freo is one less that we are required to build on Perth's urban fringe." That is really important because what we are doing at the moment is actually bulldozing our way, as we sprawl, through an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot—one of about only 30 in the world. We are putting most of our new housing on the urban fringe and, unfortunately, most of that housing is car-dependent and not part of a 15-minute city. It is a city in which you have to travel a long way to get anywhere. As a result, I read recently that Perth has just become the longest city in the world. I am not sure that that is something we should be proud of. I think, actually, that needs to change for both the good of our people and the planet. A 15-minute city, in addition to slowing urban sprawl, means that people can have access to the things they need. It means they can choose to drive less to get to work, school or shops and gives people a real choice about how they get around, be it public transport, walking or cycling. It also means that you can actually have people coming together, creating community. This was the other part of what we are trying to do: retain our diverse and inclusive community. At the heart of that was making sure we had the affordable housing to do it.

Some of the things I am proudest of are projects like SHAC, which stands for sustainable housing for artists and creatives, along with Gen Y housing in White Gum Valley, Nightingale Fremantle and the Bannister Street partnership. They show that we can make smart, innovative and affordable housing, even in an area with really high property values like Freo. We even did things that are now normal, like "Granny flats without grannies", which started in Fremantle. Now, of course it is a statewide initiative. The Fremantle alternative housing model is also being trialled, showing smart ways of doing infill and getting more people living in our centres. Importantly, economic development like this also has social and cultural benefits. It has meant that people of varying incomes and demographics are able to be part of the Freo community. It also means that we are able to provide more spaces for artists to work and live, making our community richer and more vibrant. The picture that I hope members take away from this is that a progressive, what some might have called Green-leaning council, was also one that had a strong economic development focus in addition to the cultural and environmental issues that we were often better known for. This is because a sustainable future, one that I am passionate about, also has a triple-bottom-line approach: economic, social and environmental. It is this triple-bottom-line, pragmatic outcome-focused approach that I think we used with great success in Freo that I hope I can also bring to this Parliament. I hope I will be able to contribute to better decisions and outcomes at a state level.

I stepped down as mayor—I must say, a job that I loved to the very end—and ran for this seat because I did not want what we were doing in Fremantle to be the exception. I wanted it to be the new normal across the whole state. I remember not that long ago when the City of Fremantle banned single-use plastic bags—twice! Under the previous government, this very house twice voted to overturn that ban. I want to acknowledge the work of Minister Dawson on this issue. It is now a mainstream, uncontroversial, statewide ban with huge benefits but I think members can

see that local government can lead the way on some of these conversations. I hope that this house can support more of this kind of innovation on issues that matter.

There is perhaps no bigger or more substantive issue facing us right now than climate change. The global transition towards decarbonising our societies and our economies over the next decade is going to be—in fact, it must be—at a scale we have never seen before. We must act urgently if we have any chance of a safe climate for our grandkids and kids. By the end of this decade, we will likely be living in a world that has undergone a major transition, and hopefully a state that has, too. This transition is a huge opportunity for our state and, with the right leadership, we can do it in a way that benefits everyone. If we get it right, by the end of this decade, we will have a reliable and affordable energy grid running predominantly on renewable energy. Western Australia will have stopped investing in new oil, gas and coal projects and transitioned workers to secure clean energy jobs. We will be a major exporter of green hydrogen and lithium, and other rare earths and components that are essential for the clean energy transition and created thousands of new jobs in these areas. We will have permanently and fully banned logging in our native forest areas and instead have expanded our forest plantation industry and invested in regenerative forestry as a major carbon sink. New electric vehicles will outsell those running on petrol and diesel. We will have greatly increased the number of people getting about by riding, walking and catching public transport by investing in the right infrastructure to make leaving the car at home a viable alternative. We will have become a more compact city, with less sprawl and enlivened urban centres with more residents and jobs at their core.

All these are great ideas and they are all ideas that are supported by the Greens, but they are not exclusively Greens ideas. All these ideas are the recommendations of global experts in energy, public health, urban planning and climate. They are all based on the best evidence available. Whether it be the Royal Society, or the US National Academy of Sciences, whether it be NASA or the CSIRO, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change or the Medical Consortium on Climate and Health or the International Energy Agency or the Planning Institute of Australia, they are all saying one thing: we must get to zero emissions as soon as possible and this decade is the critical decade to do it. Listening to the best experts and making decisions on the best evidence has served this state extremely well over the last 15 months when it comes to COVID. I think we can all agree on that. Now, the challenge is that evidence-based decision-making must better inform us on issues like climate whereby science and the best public health experts should guide the necessary and significant changes we must make. Western Australia is already feeling the impacts of climate change. Experts tell us that the average temperature has already risen by about one degree. Perth and the south west's climate is drying. Rainfall has decreased by 20 per cent since the 1970s and flow into our dams has dropped by about 80 per cent. The fire risk has significantly increased across the state and the rising sea level is causing erosion at some of our favourite beaches.

Emissions reduction is going to be a big challenge for WA. We are one of the worst performing states in one of the worst performing countries when it comes to emissions reduction. Our level of carbon pollution per capita is nearly double the average that other developed nations are emitting and more than four times the world average. As the world rapidly transitions to making, first, a 50 per cent reduction by 2030, which is the new emerging global consensus, and, second, net zero by 2050, it means that WA will have more work to do than most. But the good news is that we also have more opportunity than most. We live in one of the sunniest and windiest places on earth, an ideal place for the renewables revolution. This energy revolution is essential for the WA economy, but it is only one part of the net-zero challenge before us. We must decarbonise all of our economy, from housing and transport to energy and agriculture, and the experts tell us that this is the very decade in which we must do it. I am talking about this decade, because pretty much every political commentator has suggested that it is highly likely that the Australian Labor Party will be in government for not just the next four years, but the next eight. That is significant because if we think about it, it means that it will take us through to 2029—almost the end of the decade—and we will actually start to think about the long term. This unprecedented election result, which I think we all agree it was, means that we can think big and plan for the necessary transition that is before us and work across the aisle to make sure that the transition is sustainable and just, and one that does not leave anyone behind. I am looking forward to working with each of you to achieve this in a constructive, collaborative and pragmatic way, on not only climate and carbon reduction, but also planning, housing, homelessness and mental health, and the many other areas that desperately need our attention.

I would like to finish by thanking those who have supported me to be in this chamber today. They are many and I am extremely grateful to them. First, I would like to thank the Greens party. People have asked me why I chose to join the Greens, perhaps thinking that it might have been a relatively recent decision. I have actually been a member of the Greens for about a quarter of a century. One of the key reasons for that—it has probably come through in this speech—is that I have a sense that the Greens is the only party that has grasped the scale of the changes that we as a society will need to make for this planet if we are going to leave one that is better for our children. Progressive but necessary reform is something that the Greens are proud to lead on, even though, as my colleague Alison Xamon recently reflected in her valedictory speech, it is often five, 10 or 15 years later that the majority end up adopting our position. I am very proud that the Greens membership and much of the voting public have placed their trust in

me to be their voice in this Parliament. It is a huge responsibility but one that I am committed to doing everything that I can to further.

I thank those members and supporters who doorknocked, phone-banked, leafletted, stood on stalls and staffed polling booths. Those people gave up their time and energy because they have put their hope and trust in the Greens to create the change that they passionately believe in. Rest assured, I have listened and I will do everything that I can to represent you.

Thanks to the Greens WA staff who put in a huge effort in the statewide campaign. I particularly want to thank those who were a part of the South Metropolitan Region team, who volunteered and worked so very, very hard, had my back and looked out for and supported each other. Special thanks to former MLC Lynn MacLaren; Daniel Garlett, who joined me on the South Metro upper house ticket; and to the amazing lower house crew, Liberty Cramer, Mark Brogan, Gerard Siero, Lauren Rickert, Felicity Townsend, Simone Collins, Breanna Morgan, Heather Lonsdale, Jesse Smith, Simon Blackburn, River Clarke, Robert Delves, Jody Freeman, Adam Abdul Razak and Annie Hill Otness. All 15 of those people and the team behind them are the only reason that I get to be in this place.

Of course, there are dozens of other amazing volunteers who helped in an amazing variety of ways. I apologise that I cannot name everyone, but I did want to name a few: Trish Cowcher, Juanita Doorey, Aaron Camm, Verity Ives, Tim Young, Troy Treeby, Jarrod Tan, Alex Wallace, Ryan Spencer, Josef Hubert, Chris Johansen, Bill Hare, Ursula Fuentes, Abbey Monk, Chloe Durant, Ross McCallum, Phil Jenkins, Mark Taylor, Christine Lindsey, Angel Reimers, Traci Gamblin, Rob and Nic Briggs, John and Jan Little, Roy Lewisson, Brian Smith, Giz Watson, Sarah English, Elizabeth Po, and Adrian Glamorgan. Thanks to all of you. I especially want to thank Rachel Pemberton for being so reliable during the campaign and holding the team together.

Finally, I want to thank all those who voted for the Greens in the South Metro Region and express my gratitude to those who keep fighting for what is right and necessary, whether it be the students marching in our streets or the Extinction Rebellion grandparents who have been quietly protesting each day outside this Parliament. My only disappointment is that I will not be working with former MLCs Alison, Tim and Diane. I was hoping to share this chamber with them. I want to thank each of them and Robin Chapple for the extraordinary work that they have done in this place over recent years. I hope that I can continue their impressive legacy and that of other Greens MLCs who have served in this house. I especially want to thank Alison Xamon for encouraging me to put up my hand in this place, and for her support during and since the election.

On a personal level, I want to thank my mum, Jan Little; John Little; and my sisters, Janelle and Renee, for their encouragement and support along the way. I also want to thank my extended family, including those who are here today, nan, Gail, Sheryl, Pat, Spencer, Greta and Kerrie. Thanks to all of you. It is wonderful to know I have the support of my broader family.

Finally, I want to thank my little family, who mean everything to me. Emma, thanks for your amazing support throughout this journey. Thanks, too, for your tolerance of a partner whose choice of profession means that I am often not there in the evenings and on the weekends, leaving you to carry the disproportionately heavy load. I honestly could not have done it without you.

Finally, I want to thank our little daughter, Aoife. She is a very cheeky little girl and I hope that I can do her proud in this place. It is because of her—in fact, all our children and grandchildren—that I am so passionate about what we must achieve. I just hope that I can make some changes that will leave her a world that is just a little bit better, cleaner, safer and greener.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Dr Brad Pettitt, congratulations on your first speech. I wish you well throughout your term. Members, before I give the call to Hon Neil Thomson, I remind members that this is the member's first speech.

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [3.38 pm]: I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and their elders, past and present. I also acknowledge the Aboriginal people of different nations across Western Australia, many of whom I have worked with and have developed close friendships with.

Like others in this house, I am a migrant, arriving from New Zealand 37 years ago. I am a proud Australian, living the affirmation I took when I became a citizen in the late 1980s. I was born in the small town of Ōpōtiki, New Zealand, which is located on the North Island's east coast where I lived until my family moved to the regional city of Gisborne. Those early days involved plenty of fishing and camping and, as I matured, a love for the mountains. Winter was especially important. However, I spent too many of my university years skiing on the slopes of Mount Ruapehu and with friends hiking the high peaks of the Ruahine and Tararua Ranges.

It seemed normal that after I finalised my study at Massey University of New Zealand, armed with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, I would work for a period as a shepherd, with working dogs in tow, on Mount Earnslaw station in New Zealand's Southern Alps. If you have watched the cinematic version of *Lord of the Rings*, then you will be familiar with Earnslaw station and the location of my shepherd's quarters. These were later to become the site of the Wizards Tower and the Orc's lair—with additional computer generated imagery. To this day, I struggle to imagine the Tolkien series as they should be, rather than thinking of the settings I have walked and each peak I have climbed.

I was part of a family of five children. My dad was a country police officer who worked in inquiries and youth aid. My mum was an artist and businessperson, owning and managing florist shops when she was young, using those landscape paintings to further subsidise household expenses. I am grateful for her artistic talent. Some of which has brushed off on me a little. Some of my earliest memories include travelling with dad in his personal car—there were no patrol cars in Ōpōtiki in those days—when he did his inquiries. We visited Maori families along the rugged east coast of New Zealand where I was plied with copious amounts of tea and biscuits as dad listened intently to Maori concerns.

My dad passed in February last year. He was deeply committed to his faith, as is my mother, with the theme of redemption always being at the forefront of their way of being. This theme also guides me. Dad's parents were Finnish migrants to New Zealand in the early part of the twentieth century and to this day we continue to have contact with our family in Finland. Hanging on the wall in my mother's house is a painting depicting a scene of a snow-covered forest in Finland, a gift in gratitude for the many food parcels my grandmother sent from New Zealand during World War II and afterwards during the recovery. I am told that the painting is on the very canvas that wrapped the food parcel—such a potent symbol of how resilient people can repurpose hardship into art and create a symbol of family bonds.

As we have heard in this place, through inaugural speeches, family narratives are important. It is our history. It is our truth. Mine is no different. Even my name "Thomson" is a relatively recent invention. My grandparents adopted it in order to fit into New Zealand society—Granddad's surname being Koskinen. To me it epitomises the era, the opportunity and the desire to fit into something new, as was the story of thousands across the globe. The story of migration continues with, we hope, greater acceptance of diversity.

As families have their stories, so too do nations, the importance of which resonates with our First Nations people as they find their voice in their truth telling. As we listen and engage, we come closer to healing and understanding, especially in this the week dedicated to reconciliation. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my friend Dr Robert Isaacs, who lives with his wife, Teresa, a few blocks away from where my wife, Debra, and I live in Broome. He lives and breathes the story of reconciliation, faith, perseverance and acceptance. I first met Robert through my role as executive director for the Aboriginal Lands Trust; he was the chair. Robert would always jokingly address me as the honourable Neil Thomson. Robert, I do not know what you knew, but your prediction has been realised. Like Robert, my father identified his natural family later in life. Unlike Robert, my father was adopted as a child and it was not until he was in his 50s that he learnt the details of his biological family, both pakeha and Maori across New Zealand. As dad grew older, he found tremendous comfort in engaging with both sides of his massively enlarged family, with numerous brothers and sisters he did not know he had earlier in life. It was his Maori brothers who said to him that there is no such thing as a half-brother in Maori culture, and they embraced him as one of their own. Debra and I have adopted this approach to our blended family. We have eight children between us and it is rapidly growing with the next generation—a family I am very proud of. We love them all and do our best to be there for them no matter what the circumstance.

My mother's story comes through colonial Australia with a history of hardworking Irish and English ancestors. In fact, my great-great-grandfather, Walter Bailey, arrived in Fremantle in 1851. He went on to build roads in and around Perth. It seems a fitting acknowledgement to my ancestors that my first job in Western Australia in 1985 was in road construction, operating a front-end loader and bulldozer on the Newman–Port Hedland Highway just south of Munjina Gorge.

It was in 1988 that I began my career in the Western Australian public service based here in Perth. We bought our first home, our second and our third as our family expanded, settling in the brand new suburb of Ellenbrook in 1998 where I became involved in many community-based activities, supporting my kids as they grew up. In the early days, there was nowhere in Ellenbrook to get music lessons or be involved in art. Along with a few locals, I joined the effort to establish a music academy and painters group. I acknowledge the many hardworking pioneers of Ellenbrook, including former Ellenbrook RSL president Brian Dillon; Councillor Patty Williams Jones, an inspiration to thousands of young people; and former Labor member Jaye Radisich, who, sadly, passed away in 2012. I also acknowledge the developers of Ellenbrook, LWP Group Pty Ltd, which was exemplary in supporting community groups. To this day, it continues to support the Ellenbrook Cultural Foundation, an organisation that I was a founding member of.

I am proud to have three adult daughters, the youngest being a commercial skipper off the Kimberley coast, another who is a social worker and mother of two wonderful boys, and the third a full-time mother of four beautiful and high-achieving children. My two sons work in the mining and exploration sector in the Mining and Pastoral Region. Debra's three sons came into my life as adults. They now work in the defence industries and the oil and gas sectors and the bond with them rounds out our very large family. Debra and I acknowledge and appreciate the devotion of those who have co-parented with us and recognise the challenges for all parents who juggle co-parenting responsibilities.

Over the last four years, my wife, Debra, and I have operated an economics consultancy based in Broome. We work across the Kimberley on projects delivering for Aboriginal corporations, local governments, state agencies and the private sector. We have met some incredible people in that role, people who fight tirelessly for the economic prosperity of our region: people like Shirley Brown from the remote community of Mulan, former ALT board members like Preston Thomas from Karnpa in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Patrick Green from Fitzroy Crossing and Jamie Elliot from the East Kimberley. I enjoy working with them on so many projects but most of all, I am the beneficiary of their friendship.

I have seen the frustration of Aboriginal clients who have battled red tape and the challenges of engaging with our bureaucracy as they try to achieve their aspirations for a stronger community. Land is central to the culture of Aboriginal people. Our land tenure arrangements and our bureaucracy are often too impermeable to enable the economic activity, home ownership, prosperity, and cultural security we need to deliver for both Aboriginal people and the broader community. This needs to change. I have had the opportunity to develop business cases and advocate for funding for road infrastructure and important social projects through our role with local government. I cannot say strongly enough that it is unacceptable that, for many thousands of people who live in the remotest parts of our state, regular periods of isolation and constant danger on our dirt roads is a feature of their lives. We are yet to make sufficient investment to ensure infrastructure is safe and resilient—all year. This is a priority issue for me. It is vital that we see our regions prosper, our kids educated and provide pathways into fulfilling work and a meaningful life.

Opportunities in the resources sector, the defence industries, tourism and services sectors provide opportunities for the next generation and I trust will continue to do so into the future. I have a vested interest in the future of this state and this country, as my family has their future deeply etched into its fortunes. The challenges we face with increasing societal dysfunction, rising crime and antisocial behaviour need to be addressed by the state. We can so easily become desensitised to the ongoing crime and wanton destruction in our communities, but this has a corrosive effect on the trust people have with each other and the confidence we bring to our society. Drug addiction, petrol sniffing and alcoholism are just the tip of the iceberg of dysfunction. The despair of neglect, domestic violence and child abuse can be addressed only when there is a grassroots approach, coupled with a strong response to law enforcement and justice.

There need to be positive pathways to recovery, focused on education and learning to respect each other. I appreciate the opportunities that both education and training provide, as they are a gateway to a better life. Without education, my life would have been less interesting, less satisfying and less prosperous. I have listened to the representatives of business in our regional chambers of commerce as they despair at the shortage of job-ready young people, but, on the other hand, I have also experienced firsthand the challenges of young people trying to break into the workforce at the end of their training or schooling. We need to find more creative solutions to enable the connection between education and training and work to be strengthened and optimised.

Although tertiary qualified, my first role in the public sector was as a level 1 field officer in 1988, undertaking field trials on behalf of the Department of Agriculture. We are fortunate to have some of the finest researchers and academics across the field of agriculture and other sciences. Our world-class botanical diversity is still to be understood in the development of new fodders, foods, nutraceuticals and medicines, and it is particularly important if we are to develop northern Australia and expand our existing pastoral farming system and our nascent irrigated agricultural sector.

Our natural world is becoming an increasingly important focus, as we tackle the challenges of climate change, oceanic pollution and the pressures on our natural habitats. We must continue to invest strongly in R&D and take advantage of our natural resources in a responsible way, including investing in our people to enhance their expertise. It was a commitment by the then Department of Agriculture to excellence and research that provided me with the opportunity to complete studies at the University of Western Australia, gaining a master's degree in science (agriculture), majoring in agricultural economics.

In 1997, I was transferred to the Department of Treasury, which ultimately led efforts in competition policy and micro-economic reform. It was the federal Labor government under Paul Keating that introduced competition reforms, which were progressed by the Liberal Howard–Costello partnership. This economic reform played a key role in creating our unprecedented prosperity, with the longest stretch of continuous economic growth of any Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development country prior to the COVID pandemic.

I am committed to promoting a market economy, coupled with sensible laws and processes that enable fairness, accountability and predictability. Creating this environment enables businesses to make investment decisions with the confidence that their risk assessments are predictable, and they are likely to be rewarded for their hard work and investment. For that reason, we should attempt, to the greatest degree possible, to ensure that our laws are properly defined and can be managed efficiently. If we do not have incentive in our society, we have failure. The strength of the Liberal Party is that we have fought to maintain incentive, contextualised within a fair and progressive tax system that involves a reasonable redistribution where it is needed. The system must be sufficiently beneficial to promote one of the most basic instincts of the human condition, which is to get up every morning and go and do a solid day's work and to put capital on the line, whether it is human capital in the form of physical effort, intellectual endeavour or artistic creativity, or to risk financial assets—investing to gain reward.

The unprecedented growth in Australia is no more felt than in the Pilbara, where we see huge opportunities. These opportunities come with community pressures. I acknowledge the incredible work of the Barnett–Grylls partnership, which transformed towns like Karratha and Port Hedland through the royalties for regions program. But there is still so much more to do in building our key regional centres, starting with ensuring that there is adequate housing and services to promote a vibrant residential community. The ongoing challenges of the interface of industry and our residential areas in towns such as Port Hedland also need to be addressed and done so fairly. Although FIFO has been essential in our state, there is no substitute for long-term residential populations in our towns. These generate strong small business sectors that support our volunteers, who are so vital for our communities. I see the impact of FIFO firsthand on my home town of Broome, where business owners are disproportionately represented in the army of volunteers in sporting clubs, marine rescue services, volunteer fire brigades and the State Emergency Service.

With its huge resources wealth, Western Australia is well positioned for the future, but we must diversify our economy if we are to withstand the potential global shocks from emerging international belligerence, the evolving pandemic and environmental threats. Even the risks associated with emerging technologies are tangible and should be considered carefully to ensure that a fair and equitable society is maintained into the future. We are also well positioned as a future energy superpower, with ample sunlight and massive potential oil and gas reserves that will enable our transition to the new energy economy over the coming decades. Our iron ore industry will need to diversify with the production of green steel, with sustainable energy an obvious opportunity. Legislatures around the world will increasingly grapple with the full impact of these emergent technologies on our social and environmental wellbeing. We must promote technology but understand its impact. It should be managed and understood.

This is also true for our social media. Although the issue was short-lived, the enormous power of Facebook was on display in its deeply disturbing action that saw many of our community services' pages shut down and our then state opposition leader's page cut off just weeks before the state election.

As assistant director general for the then Department of Planning, I was responsible for the information technology effort and observed with some disappointment the inefficiency of our data procedural management systems. I am an advocate for greater transparency and permeability in decision-making processes, and technology can be a key to achieving this. As shadow Minister for Planning, I will be advocating for greater community participation in land use planning decision-making processes. To this end, I am a great supporter of the role of local government. I have 26 local governments in my region and, in my experience, they have always punched above their weight. I have experienced incredibly positive examples in local government in my region and seen how they rise to the challenge when there is a gap, including through the COVID pandemic.

At the state level, we can achieve so much in partnership with both our local authorities and the commonwealth government. But it is in this place that we review laws, and I will always reflect on whether those laws are the right instruments to deal with the problems that we have or whether there are less-restrictive alternatives that can achieve the same outcome. This approach was enshrined in clause 5(9) of the Competition Principles Agreement, which was adopted as part of the competition reforms that I referred to earlier. Clause 5(9) is an incredibly effective tool. It is elegant and I will paraphrase it for the purposes of broader application here today. Firstly, in the review laws, you should always clarify the objectives of those laws. You should identify how those laws either restrict or empower, and analyse the likely effect of those laws on individuals, groups and the economy generally. You should assess and balance the costs and benefits of those laws, whether cultural, social or economic. You should also consider alternative means for achieving the same result, including non-legislative approaches. The discipline of this assessment should be applied before assigning bills into law, taking seriously the role we have collectively in this house of review.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge some key people who have influenced my life. I had the pleasure to serve as Hon John Day's chief of staff after the win of the Barnett government in 2008. I hope I can follow John's meticulous approach as the shadow Minister for Planning. Dr David Morrison was my mentor and boss in the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Treasury, and I worked with him on and off for nearly two decades. Hon Eric Ripper was Treasurer while I was assistant director of the microeconomic reform unit in Treasury. Eric was a great supporter and a model politician—someone who always read his briefings and provided feedback to the public service. I would like to give special thanks to Susan Chown, the immediate past president of the Durack

division of the Liberal Party, without whom I would not be here today. I thank Hon Bill Marmion and his wife, Katelyn, who supported me in my endeavours well before I entered Parliament. I thank Hon Melissa Price, MP, whom I have worked with closely in my role as president of the Durack division of the Liberal Party. Melissa makes an incredible contribution to regional Western Australia. Senator Dean Smith works tirelessly as the patron senator to Durack and is always willing to do a road trip in the bush to meet people in small communities, towns and our regional cities.

I acknowledge Councillor Geoff Haerewa, shire president of the Shire of Derby–West Kimberley and also a former Liberal candidate for the Kimberley. At the last election, Geoff had the largest positive swing in his primary vote of any Liberal candidate. Without his efforts, I would not be here today. I also acknowledge former member for Kalgoorlie Kyran O'Donnell. Again, without his dedicated work, I would not be here as a member for Mining and Pastoral Region. I also thank Alys McKeough who ran as the Liberal candidate for North West Central. She fought adversity during the campaign, including floods, as she promoted the Liberal vision. I acknowledge the relentless Camilo Blanco of Port Headland, who is passionate about his region, and stood as the Liberal candidate for the Pilbara in the last election. I acknowledge David Serafini from Derby and Jan Ford from Port Hedland who made the long trip to be here. Thank you for your support. To those who are watching this video feed—friends, colleagues and family around the state, the nation and the globe—thank you.

The Liberal Party is a grassroots organisation. It is run by volunteers across this state. They are good people from a range of backgrounds, including small business, volunteer groups, religious and non-religious, Indigenous and non-Indigenous—men and women all with different perspectives but with a common purpose as outlined in the objects of the party. Finally, I want to acknowledge my wife, Debra. Her love and devotion, I hope I can match. We are a team in life.

In closing, I would like to make reference to my mum, Joyce Thomson, in Zealand. She is in her twilight years and we converse regularly by phone. She continues to be that link to my past and family across the sea. Recently, when I told mum of the final count in the Mining and Pastoral region—which took some time as members would know—she was quick to provide some unsolicited advice: “Don’t be like those other politicians, Neil. Be honest and don’t exaggerate!” Then, as an afterthought, she said, “And most of all, love everybody.” Now that seems pretty straightforward; doesn’t it? I spoke to her a few days ago and she reminded me in her telling-off tone to remember what she said and not to forget that word. I asked, “What word, Mum?” “Honourable”, she said. “It’s a good word and you shouldn’t forget it!” Yes, Mum. I won’t forget.

[Applause.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Neil Thomson, congratulations on delivering your first speech. Welcome to the Legislative Council and all the best.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by **Hon Colin de Grussa**.

[Continued on page 980.]