



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VALEDICTORY SPEECH



Hon Stephen Pratt, MLC
(Member for South Metropolitan)

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 27 November 2024

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VALEDICTORY REMARKS

Statement

HON STEPHEN PRATT (South Metropolitan) [6.17 pm]: With the Acting President's indulgence, I take the opportunity this evening to make a member's statement that will be my valedictory speech as a member of the Legislative Council. As members are probably all aware, I have been preselected to contest the important seat of Jandakot in next year's state election. That means I will resign from this place as soon as the writs are issued in February next year.

When you first enter the Parliament at the beginning of a parliamentary term, everyone warns you that the years will go by very quickly. As I stand here this evening, that has become all too true. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being an honourable member of the Legislative Council; I do not want it to end! That is why I am standing to be a candidate in the upcoming election in March for the seat of Jandakot. So far in my working life, I have been committed to community service. I was a local councillor of the City of Cockburn for eight years—a local government led by Mayor Logan Howlett that does great work for its ratepayers. The area of that local government takes up a large portion of the newly drawn boundary of Jandakot. I have very fond memories of working as a collective to deliver the Cockburn ARC and the much-needed upgrades to Armadale Road and the North Lake Road bridge overpass, to name just a couple of projects.

I also had the pleasure of working as an electorate officer in Kwinana for now Premier Roger Cook back in 2008 for nine years in opposition. Working in an electorate office gives one a good grounding. It was in this role that I realised how much I enjoy being able to assist people. I still run into people from time to time who I was able to assist in my role in the Kwinana office, and then as an adviser in the portfolios of health and mental health in the previous term, under the McGowan government.

Every step of the way has been a learning experience. I am always open to learning more and taking on new challenges. I have served on two committees during this parliamentary term, and volunteered to be the Deputy Chair of Committees. I wanted to know the ins and outs of the Legislative Council chamber and to understand how things work; some things are still a mystery to me! But there is no better way to learn than to be thrown in the deep end, sitting in the big chair up the front and chairing proceedings.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the committee work and the journey that culminated in the tabling of the forced adoption inquiry report, *Broken bonds, fractured lives: Report on the inquiry into past forced adoption in Western Australia*, and working with members from all walks of political life. I have also had the pleasure of working with Hon Donna Faragher and my parliamentary colleague Hon Matthew Swinbourn through Parliamentary Friends of People with Rare and Undiagnosed Diseases. I think we should be very proud of the things we accomplished in this term for that cause.

I also feel very lucky to have served in this place with and to have witnessed firsthand the brilliance of Hon Alannah MacTiernan, and to have been guided by Hon Sue Ellery as Leader of the House—a couple of trailblazers who have paved the way for the many women MPs we see in today's Parliament; not to mention you as well, President, for your strong but fair deliberations in this place, and as someone who I have been lucky enough to work closely with, in the previous

term of government and now in this one. I also make special mention of Hon Rosie Sahanna, whose portrait was unveiled today in the Edith Cowan foyer, in recognition of being the first Aboriginal woman elected to the Legislative Council.

Right now, as a government, we are supporting the WA community with a range of measures to get us through the current challenge we are all facing with the cost of living. I love being in a position where I can help people who live in our community. Looking ahead, I am excited and extremely motivated at the prospect of representing the community of Jandakot in the next Parliament. I want to build on the experience I have gained from spending the past three years in the Legislative Council as part of the Cook government. It has been an honour to represent the South Metropolitan Region, which covers 15 lower house electorates, including Jandakot. I have learned a lot. I want to take those lessons to the next level. I want to continue to make an impact. In fact, I feel like I am just getting started.

There is so much happening at the moment. We are preparing for the huge opportunities that a new outer harbour will bring and our ambitious commitment to modernising the public transport network with Metronet. I know that people in the Jandakot electorate who are planning to start families will be supportive of our commitment to delivering a new women's and babies' hospital at the Murdoch Health and Knowledge Precinct, right on their doorstep.

I have made some great connections with community sporting clubs within the electorate of Jandakot over the years, and I look forward to working with them going forward. I have made mention previously of the great work that the Jandakot Jets Junior Football Club do as a community sporting club through their mental health and breast cancer awareness rounds. There is a huge growth in women's sport at the moment, especially in Aussie Rules football, and with that comes the need for appropriate facilities and infrastructure. I have mentioned this on a number of previous occasions in this chamber. I believe that sporting clubs play an extremely important role in our community as avenues towards better physical and mental fitness, a sense of belonging and as places to make lifelong friendships.

I want to thank all Legislative Council members, the clerks and staff in this place, for your friendship and guidance. As you are all aware, this role can be unforgiving. It is unique and it takes a lot of energy and enthusiasm to do it right. On that note, I thank my wife, Elena, and children Imogen, Phoebe and Lennox for their support and understanding. Lennox entered the world during this term of Parliament, and navigating sitting weeks with three young children is certainly challenging. Much of the heavy lifting on the home front is left to Elena. I extend that thanks to my extended family in Robyn, Alex and Beryl; my parents Baden and Cheryl—my biggest supporters, who are out doorknocking with me most weekends; and my brother Clifton. They have all helped with advice and grandparenting duties.

In closing, President, and my colleagues in the Legislative Council: it's not you, it's me! It is goodbye, but just for now. I wish you all the best for the future and whatever comes next, and I truly hope that I am given the opportunity to be in the next Parliament as a representative for the people of Jandakot in 2025. Thank you.

Members: Hear, hear!