



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Mr Chris Hatton, MLA
(Member for Balcatta)

Legislative Assembly

Address-in-Reply

Tuesday, 16 April 2013

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Motion

MR C.D. HATTON (Balcatta) [7.00 pm]: As the new member for Balcatta, I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to address the house today. I begin by congratulating you on your appointment to the highly honourable position of Deputy Speaker in the Legislative Assembly. I also congratulate all those sitting in the chamber today for being representatives of their electorates.

I would like to publicly thank the many supporters who have journeyed with me to this point of time in this historic chamber. In particular, I thank my Italian-born wife, Pina, and my four wonderful children—Jacinta, Tamara, Jamie and Chloe—for their ability and willingness to show support, strength and compassion when most needed. You have all been a pillar of strength in sharing my vision of a bright future for the state of Western Australia. To my sister-in-law and dear friend, Mim Agostino, and her husband, Sam, thank you for being a guiding light on many occasions when one's judgement needed a degree of alignment and some added intellectual input. To my campaign team and helpers, I sincerely appreciate your efforts and belief in me. I give special thanks to Amy Yelash, Lisa Yarwood, Rod Webb, Cam Sinclair, Jocelen Griffiths, Josh Dolgoy and John Franklyn. To Ben Morton at Menzies House, you have been instrumental in this achievement. I certainly intend to honour the role in Parliament that belies me and to work hard for the constituents of the Balcatta electorate. Finally, I must gratefully thank the members of the Stirling division and my parliamentary Liberal colleagues here today who have supported me over the years. I commend Hon Liz Behjat, MLC North Metropolitan, for her passion and engagement with community organisations and cultural groups in and around the Balcatta electorate. She has been a great support and an inspiration to me throughout the election campaign.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am a proud Western Australian who was born in suburban Nedlands. My father, who was also born in Nedlands, in 1926, recently passed away. I pay tribute to him today for being pivotal to the strong values I hold. My mother, who is sitting in the gallery today, was born in country York, being the second oldest of 11 children. I have always been proud knowing that my parents, at the young age of 18, served their country in wartime 1945 in the Royal Australian Air Force. I fondly remember my early years as a young boy enjoying a safe and happy childhood, going to school, playing sport and travelling to York to visit family. My parents worked hard to provide my brother, Phil, my sister, Liz, and I opportunities to advance through schooling and to reach higher pursuits. All three of us entered teaching as a career at different stages. During my career in public schooling, I have taught in the north west in Carnarvon, Exmouth, Shark Bay and inland Gascoyne Junction. I have also taught in London and in a number of Perth metropolitan schools, finishing my career at Glengarry Primary School in Duncraig. Although now I leave teaching after 30 years, the profession remains a part of the Hatton family with my brother and wife currently teaching in Perth public schools.

Historically and over time the greater Balcatta area has housed a large European population that predominantly originated from post-World War II migration. Market gardening and hard work has very much been the identity of the area. Politically the seat of Balcatta has a quite

remarkable history. It was first created in 1904 with several boundary changes occurring over the years. On occasions redistributions have caused Balcatta to be renamed. It was not until 2005 that it again re-emerged to replace the seat of Nollamara. At this point, I would like to acknowledge the good work of the now retired previous member for Balcatta, Mr John Kobelke, who held the seat for a considerable length of time. I wish John all the very best in his retirement. Also at this point, I would like to proudly acknowledge that Balcatta is now a Liberal-held seat, for the first time in over 100 years.

Today Balcatta is an inner city northern Perth electorate that comprises the six suburbs of Balcatta, Joondanna, Osborne Park, Stirling, Tuart Hill and most of Hamersley. Although Balcatta is still home to many Europeans, it has now become a true hub of multiculturalism. Balcatta is well located, being relatively close to surrounding shops and services. On a good day—on a good day, I say—Perth is only a 15-minute drive south and the ocean is only 10 minutes west. However, population growth in the area is now demanding greater use of transport and roads are becoming congested. Travel times are certainly changing and it is my intention to address traffic issues with conviction. I am pleased to note that already a number of road improvements are being commissioned. Traffic lights have recently been installed at the junction of Karrinyup Road and Jones Street. Dedicated turn lanes have just been completed on Karrinyup Road and the resurfacing and kerbing of Main Street is near completion. The Cedric Street train station precinct with a new multi-car park facility has been in operation for some time. Road infrastructure projects, although costly, are necessary to improve traffic flow and commuter safety. In the northern part of Balcatta, there is high-level traffic congestion and delay times along Reid Highway, Erindale Road and the Mitchell Freeway overpass. Road users deserve better than the outdated single lanes along Reid Highway. Safety is definitely being compromised at the major intersections of Erindale Road and Mitchell Freeway. The upgrade of Reid Highway is a necessary road infrastructure project that needs to be advanced. I will pursue an outcome for local residents and commuters who use road networks in this area of the electorate.

During the election campaign, I visited residential aged-care facilities within the local suburbs. I was fortunate to meet many elderly citizens who displayed great appreciation for the care and compassion that they are being afforded within the provision of aged-care services. I have tremendous respect for the elderly in our society and I respect the humbleness that is often displayed by this generation of great Western Australians. The Balcatta electorate is home to several aged-care facilities and Osborne Park Hospital lies on the western border near Mitchell Freeway. I recently met with the Osborne Park Hospital Community Advisory Council and I wish to remain informed about the services that are available for the medical needs of residents and the broader community. I will look forward to further involvement. I am already pleased to say that a new car park is planned to be built at the hospital site. This will be beneficial to many commuters, staff and patients.

The electorate is certainly demographically diverse and there are at times distinct differences in standards of living. Families and individuals live according to their financial constraints. For some residents whom I have met, life is not easy. Within Balcatta there are residents with disabilities and residents who rely upon government assistance to be housed and meet their needs. I intend to be an advocate for these people to improve their quality of life and to make provision for opportunities that may positively influence their lives. It is my goal to assist such people to open a new door to a better pathway. In this area of people's welfare, I believe that there are excellent social services available, but too often good services are lost within bureaucracy. I intend to, if necessary, peel back some layers of bureaucracy within particular service provisions or departments.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I truly understand the Liberal belief that recognises that small businesses, employing more than one-third of all Western Australian workers, are critical to the economic success of this state. We know that business productivity and success is affected by global conditions but an in-touch government such as that of the Liberal Party can greatly improve business confidence in various ways. I look forward to working with a government that will foster entrepreneurial spirit and confidence. I am aware of the impact of excessive taxes, charges and fees, and the impact of processing delays on project developments that can be caused by unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape. Balcatta is very much a home to well-established key business hubs that involve light industry, commerce and retail trade. The east Osborne Park industrial precinct is very identifiable and the northern Balcatta business precinct is centrally located. Over the years I have observed the growth and movement of many businesses, and I realise that there is still more to do to reduce the burden of regulation and red tape. The Stirling Business Association in Delawney Street is a fine example of an organisation that is providing best practice business models to existing and emerging businesses. I congratulate the association on its contribution to enhancing business success and I look forward to continuing my support of the association and local businesses.

A very exciting major development is now taking place in the vicinity of the Cedric Street–Mitchell Freeway area. It is called the Stirling city centre alliance project and it is planned to become Perth's second-largest business district. There are already businesses establishing their premises at the northern gateway to the new business district near Karrinyup Road and Cedric Street. The development of the area is a visionary plan that will encourage people to live where they work and reduce the reliance on private vehicle travelling and parking. The planning of this development will involve commitments from both government and private enterprise, commitments that will provide the best outcomes for present and future generations. Currently, people living in the Balcatta electorate enjoy using the Main Street retail precinct, which also hosts quality restaurants and food outlets; however, local parking issues are of concern and development plans will no doubt need to be adopted in the near future to address transport and parking in the area.

There are numerous clubs and sporting associations in Balcatta. Clubs and associations are often the backbone of strong communities, offering social networks and recreational facilities. They work hard to be sustainable and vibrant, and I certainly have a strong desire to foster situations that will enable local clubs to be strong and viable into the future. My four children have all been involved in local clubs and I therefore value the contribution these clubs make to young people's lives.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is my experience as a resident and representative of Balcatta that people are extremely concerned about repeated hooning and speeding. I will support any Liberal-led initiatives to enforce laws that will catch and detain offenders and their vehicles. It is certainly time to get tough on hoons who disregard the safety of others. I intend to explore the possibility of enacting greater power to restrict not only dangerous drivers from being on the road, but also drivers who deliberately use their vehicles to cause unnecessary noise pollution in residential streets.

Home security is a concern of many residents. It is unfair that people I meet, especially the elderly, are disillusioned with elements of society that show disregard for other people's welfare and property. I support the Liberal-led government plan to introduce mandatory jail sentences for home invaders. I believe in punishment fitting the crime; however, I also believe in restorative practices towards rehabilitation. What is necessary, though, is that the victim of crime is supported and that the justice system administers punishments that will deter potential offenders. I look forward to working with this Liberal government that is committed to protecting people and their property.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I leave towards the conclusion of my speech a subject of great importance to everyone, and especially Western Australian parents. I speak now of what I believe to be the greatest positive influence on an individual's life, that of education. During my 30 years of teaching, I have met wonderful administrators, teachers, parents and students. I have taught children of various ages and embraced changes in curriculum, curriculum delivery and pedagogy. I now reflect upon a career that, I believe, has been increasingly demanding of teachers, and a career that deserves respect. I certainly enter my political life with pride in having been a teacher and having had the opportunity to move children forward in their individual pursuits of endeavour and excellence.

Schools, school staff and school communities always need the confidence of government support, and now I look forward to engaging with many schools in a different capacity. It is pleasing to acknowledge here in this chamber today that last year West Balcatta Primary School was awarded the honour of being Western Australian primary school of the year. My wife, who is here today, is a teacher at that school. I am personally able to observe the outstanding commitment to teaching that occurs in that school community. A number of outstanding schools in the electorate have a lot of embedded history, such as Osborne Primary School, which opened in 1903, and Tuart Hill Primary School, which dates back to 1910.

Schools should always be well-maintained and well-resourced institutions that offer opportunities for excellence. It is my intention to assist all schools in the Balcatta electorate to be their best in accordance with community expectations and good governance—good Liberal governance. In recent years, the new model of independent public schooling in Western Australia, introduced by the Liberal–National government, has proved highly successful, and various schools within the Balcatta electorate are currently embracing that model. I aim to support the implementation of that model and encourage schools to excel. It is certainly an exciting time in education.

In closing, may I reiterate what a great honour and privilege it is to be here today as the representative of Balcatta. I follow my belief in supporting a fundamentally conservative government that is able to facilitate free enterprise and the ability to prosper. I support a government that is a prudent economic manager and a provider of essential services. I also support key infrastructure projects that will enhance the vibrancy of Western Australia, Perth city and its surrounding suburbs. In particular, in my representative role I pledge to seek solutions that will benefit individuals and families. I also look forward to working with my Liberal parliamentary colleagues on making this great state of Western Australia even greater. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[Applause.]
