



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Mr David Templeman MLA
(Member for Mandurah)

Address-in-Reply Debate

Legislative Assembly, Thursday 3 May 2001

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Motion

MR TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [4.32 pm]: I congratulate you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr McRae) on your election to the position of Acting Speaker. I also congratulate the member for Wanneroo on her appointment as Deputy Speaker and, of course, the Speaker of this House, the member for Burrup, on his appointment. I also extend to all members of the House my congratulations on their election to their respective seats. I pass on my sincere congratulations to the member for Kimberley, the first Aboriginal woman elected to this Parliament, and to the previous speaker, who is the youngest member in this place. I am grateful to the electors of Mandurah for their support during the 10 February election. It became clear during the campaign that many people in my electorate are hurting. The goods and services tax continues to have a devastating effect on many small businesses in my community, businesses that form the cornerstone of our city's local economy. Local, decent, hardworking people who have been caught up in the finance brokers scandal continue to suffer from the previous Government's inaction. Self-funded retirees, pensioners, unemployed people, seniors, families and many of our young people felt that the Government of the day was not listening to their concerns. They want a better health system and a safer community, which includes more police on the beat. They want more resources and support for our schools and a Government that governs for all Western Australians. They wanted a better Government and I remain grateful to them for electing me to be their representative in this House for the next four years as a member of the Gallop Labor Government.

I am proud of my origins. I was born in Northam and educated in a state primary school, Avonvale Primary School in Northam. I went to the state senior high school in Northam and trained as a teacher at the Claremont Teachers Training College. I am proud that I have taught in three state primary schools - Three Springs, Warnbro and, of course, Mandurah. I am fiercely proud to be a product of a state school system and I applaud the new Minister for Education for his commitment to ensuring that we have the best possible state school system. My former colleagues in the state school system look forward to the minister's reforms and his endeavours in the portfolio.

I am particularly proud of my family origins. My grandparents on my mother's side were hardworking and successful farmers in the Narrogin district. They would have been supporters of

the other side of the House. However, I am pleased that my grandmother Win Bates is here this evening. I know that if my grandfather Jack Bates were here tonight he would be very proud that his grandson is speaking in this House. My father's parents were working-class people in Northam. Unfortunately, I never met my grandfather. He died when my father was a boy, but my grandmother Maud Templeman, who sadly is no longer with us, is smiling down on me this evening. She was very proud that I joined the party she supported her whole life. My dad, John, is also here tonight. He was a strong supporter of the late Ken McIver, the well-respected Labor member for Northam and later for Avon. I was thrilled to receive a letter of congratulations from Ken's widow, Joan, after my election to this Parliament. I will treasure that throughout my parliamentary career.

I am grateful to my parents: My mum, Ann, and my dad, John. They sacrificed much for me, my brother, John Templeman, and my sister, Karen Jones. Like many parents of their generation, they wanted us to be well educated. They worked very hard and gave us every opportunity they could. They instilled in me important values, which I cherish and aspire to uphold. There is no substitute for growing up in a loving family.

The electorate of Mandurah is very dear to me. Many members of this Chamber would have memories of Mandurah. The name might conjure up visions of a fishing village, a retirement town where they holidayed as children or visited during the peak holiday period. Many still think it is a place predominantly populated by retirees. In reality, Mandurah is very different. It has changed dramatically. The population growth over the past 20 years has been phenomenal. Mandurah has grown from a town with a population of just short of 14 000 people in 1981 to a city of nearly 50 000 in 2001. The city's population, with an estimated annual increase of 4.7 per cent over the next 15 years, is expected to reach 85 000 residents by 2016. However, these figures need to be framed in the context of the whole Peel region, which encompasses the local government areas of the Shires of Boddington, Murray, Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Waroona. The strong population growth in the Peel region will see it emerge as the second largest region in Western Australia by 2006, and it is clearly the fastest growing region in the State. We need to understand the demographics behind this huge increase in population. People aged 65 and over represent 14.4 per cent of the population compared with the State average of 10.5 per cent. However, it is in the younger sector that the huge growth in population has taken place. To give an example, people aged under 15 now represent 23.3 per cent of the city's population. That reflects the movement of younger families into the city and region.

This rapid population growth has placed an increased demand on services and infrastructure in Mandurah and the Peel region. The need to ensure that the provision of services and infrastructure catches up and is maintained for this booming population is a major challenge for all levels of government. Provision of, and access to, quality health services remains a great need for my constituents, along with an increase in police numbers. Some members in the House may say that Mandurah is not special - however, I know it is - and that other areas in the State have also experienced rapid growth and have a demand for more services and infrastructure to support their populations. Mandurah has further complexities, as I hope this House will understand. Mandurah has a large number of people on fixed and low incomes. It also has one of the highest unemployment rates across all sectors in the State, and for a number of years the youth unemployment rate has been well above the State average.

People like my good friends Lynn and Albert Rodgers from WestAus Crisis and Welfare Service could tell members in no uncertain terms how each week they see and help many disadvantaged and marginalised people who are stretched to the limit on the meagre resources at their disposal. They see every day the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. While local and State Governments and local businesses do a significant amount to try to address the unemployment issue, an urgent need is access to jobs and job opportunities, and to further training outside the city. In

order for this to occur, it is essential to improve transport routes to Mandurah. I am pleased that the Gallop Government is committed to ensuring that the railway network is extended to Mandurah by 2005. The Labor Party in government has a proud record in rail transport. That record speaks for itself and is unmatched by the Opposition. I am very pleased, as are the residents of Mandurah, that the Gallop Labor Government will finally bring the rail line to Mandurah.

Due to the lack of adequate transport links to the metropolitan area, and until now a less than efficient internal bus service, many of my constituents have found themselves isolated from their community. This isolation is very real, and if people are single parents, elderly citizens, unemployed or taking on a carer's role in the community and do not have transport at their disposal, or if their access to effective public transport is limited, this isolation and its effects are compounded. I am pleased that the transport system within Mandurah will improve later this year when the new bus terminal is opened, but one of my goals will continue to be to ensure that those people who live in the more marginalised areas of Mandurah feel that they are part of the community.

I believe more should be done to assist those people in our community who find themselves in the role of carer. The people in our community who care for their loved ones face tremendous financial, emotional, social and physical pressures. As our population ages, the role of carers will not diminish, and it is the responsibility of government to seek ways to restore the dignity and understand the real needs of these dedicated people in our community.

I commend the former Government for a number of projects that it helped fund in the Mandurah electorate. Mandurah now has a magnificent performing arts centre, which is supported by the local council. The Mandurah marina project is now under way, and the joint senior campus-TAFE facility opened this year. Some of the other projects that are important to the future of Mandurah, apart from the transport issue that I have mentioned already, are the need to continue to foster tourism opportunities within the region, to ensure that the Peel deviation is recognised as a road of national importance, and to establish education as a key industry within our region.

I want to let members know about some of the people who live in my community. The group of people who make up the Mandurah electorate are tremendously resilient and committed. Much has been said by members in their maiden speeches about volunteers. It is clear that in all of our communities, volunteers have played and will continue to play an integral role in how our communities function. Mandurah is no exception. My electorate has a huge number of community organisations, both large and small, comprising people from all walks of life whose main objective is to help. Like many members, I could give numerous examples of volunteering that take place every day within my electorate. Volunteering takes place in the form of sport - of which I am sure the member for Dawesville is well aware - the arts, emergency services, support agencies and advocacy groups, financial support, disability support services, church organisations, crisis support, youth organisations and those organisations that support our valuable seniors. The hundreds of people involved in ensuring that those people in our community who are disadvantaged or in need receive assistance deserve our acknowledgment and recognition.

I am very pleased that Pat McGovern is present in the public gallery. He and his wife, Gail, have worked tirelessly to ensure that the local Neighbourhood Watch program runs effectively and is one of the most successful in the State. Another example is a group known as the May Day Club, which was started by a small core of women in the 1970s. Over the years that group has worked quietly, efficiently and with prudent financial management to secure its own freehold premises in Mandurah, and it continues to recycle and trade in second-hand goods, particularly clothing. Last year, that group raised nearly \$200 000 and distributed it to worthy causes in the community. The members of that group, like many groups, continue to volunteer their time and energy and do not seek any recognition or acknowledgment; they simply see a need and support it.

The environment continues to be of great concern to the people of Mandurah. Indeed, over the years Mandurah's unique environment, relaxed lifestyle, waterways, wetlands, beaches, fishing and recreational opportunities have attracted people to visit, holiday and eventually live in the city. However, this environment is very fragile. The Peel-Harvey estuary and the rivers that feed it are under stress. The spread of development from the metropolitan area and the demands that are placed upon our natural environment remain of deep concern to the residents. This is one of the reasons that the people of Mandurah - I stress this point - regard themselves as part of a regional city and not part of the Perth metropolitan area. We are keen to have key areas of the environment protected, and I therefore look forward to this Government declaring as soon as possible the Peel regional park.

Before I was elected to this place, I was an elected member and deputy mayor of the City of Mandurah. This council has, particularly over the past six years, established itself as a leader in this State and a quality council. I am pleased that also present in the public gallery is the Mayor of the City of Mandurah, Keith Holmes. I was pleased to be part of a council that saw the need to view our particular challenges with a strategic plan that encompassed a sustainable approach using the local agenda 21 principles as a guide. I was privileged to have served alongside Mayor Keith Holmes, Deputy Mayor Paddi Creevey and my friends and former colleagues, Councillors John Hughes, Coral Richards, Blanche Kyneur, Aileen Mitchell, James Trembath and an amazing lady, an 80-year-old councillor, who has fought tenaciously for the environment for many years, Councillor Kathleen Malta. I also pay tribute to the chief executive officer, Stephen Goode, the directors, and the hard-working and dedicated staff at the City of Mandurah for their continued efforts in making sure that Mandurah is a better place for all of us to live. I thank them for assisting me in my seven years as a member of that council.

As a councillor for the past seven years, I have watched as an increasing number of responsibilities have been shifted from the state and federal governments to local government. This has placed more financial pressures on local government and, ultimately, on the ratepayers of the municipalities. Although local government is well placed to deliver certain services and programs to its residents, they should not be expected to take on responsibilities without additional resources. Those of us who come to this place with a local government background would do well to remember this point over the next four years.

I come to this place with a great passion for the arts. It is through the arts in all of its forms that we can truly reflect our culture and its diversity. Many people, for example, Mandurah residents Stan and Rosalie Richards and John and Barbara Pannell, have advocated fiercely for the arts in the district for many years. My links to and involvement in the performing arts is well known in my electorate and I remain a strong supporter of adequate funding for that portfolio. Over the past few years before I entered this place I was employed in the entertainment industry. However, members would not recognise me if I dressed the way I used to dress. I believe that people involved in the arts deserve our support and encouragement, particularly the young people who seek to broaden their experience in that area.

I acknowledge the contribution of the former member for Mandurah. I also acknowledge the contribution of the former Labor members for Mandurah and Murray, John and Keith Read. I hope to represent the people of my constituency with the same dedication and compassion that these members showed during their terms of office. I sincerely thank those people who helped me make it to this place. I thank the wonderful members, supporters and volunteers of the Australian Labor Party in Mandurah. We are part of the oldest political party in Australia. Without their support and commitment I would not be here. I thank my friends Fran Bremner, Lia Comben, and Carol and Steve Evans who continue to give their efforts tirelessly to the cause. I also thank my family who are here tonight for being part of this journey. I thank the wonderful members of the arts community

in Mandurah, particularly my friends Les and Lesley Couzens and Dave and Gail Pearson for their unswerving loyalty and support. I thank also Donna Doust for keeping my feet on the ground and keeping me sane over the past year of the campaign. I wish to thank my doorknocking partner who is here, Andrea Evans. I am pleased that she is here tonight. She slogged the streets with me for many long hours. I thank Hon Wendy Fatin and Sally Talbot for their timely advice and support.

I thank Hon John Coddell, who I am pleased is in the Chamber, for his guidance and wisdom, strategic insight and for his total commitment to the Australian Labor Party. John, this is not a maiden speech; it is, indeed, a brazen hussy of a speech. I thank Beverley Weir and Fran Harmen for guiding me through these first few months and for making them acceptable. Finally, I thank a woman who sadly is not able to join us here tonight; she keeps the light on the hill always in sight. She has been like a mentor to me over the past seven years. Margaret Duff, we finally made it here.
