

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 4 April 1989

THE SPEAKER (Mr Barnett) took the Chair at 2.15 pm, and read prayers.

PETITION

January 26 - Observance

DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [2.17 pm]: I have a petition addressed in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the undersigned citizens in the State of Western Australia respectfully sheweth:-

1. That the 26th January is the date chosen for our national day (Australia Day) and should be a day of observance and celebration for all Australians.
2. That it is quite inappropriate for the Australia Day public holiday to be held on any day other than the 26th January.

Your Petitioners, therefore, Humbly Pray that the Parliament of Western Australia will amend the applicable Acts of Parliament, to make provision for the Australia Day Public Holiday to be observed on the Twenty-sixth Day of January each year.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever Pray.

The petition bears 34 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 2.]

BILLS (3) - INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Criminal Code Amendment Bill (No 2)
2. Liquor Licensing Amendment Bill
3. Farm Practices and Agricultural Operations Bill

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr House, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY - THIRD DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 30 March.

MR NICHOLLS (Mandurah) [2.23 pm]: In speaking to the Address-in-Reply debate I will cover the future directions and needs of my electorate and its surrounding regions as we progress towards the next century.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the electors of Mandurah for the confidence they have shown in me and to the people who gave their support, time and energy to ensure the success of my campaign.

I also express my deep appreciation to my wife Janette and my four children who, along with my campaign committee, were placed under extreme pressure and hardship at many times.

As in any contest there is rivalry between competitors and a desire for victory. During my campaign for the seat of Mandurah I was privileged to be competing with a worthy opponent, the previous member for Mandurah, John Read, who I believe represented Mandurah to the best of his ability. I thank him on behalf of the electorate of Mandurah and wish him well for the future.

As a former town councillor I worked continually towards responsible progress. My election as the MLA for Mandurah simply means the lifting of that commitment to a new level.

Mandurah is an ideal location affording the convenience of a beautiful and relaxed environment in which to live within easy reach of the employment centres of the metropolitan area, Pinjarra and possibly Bunbury. Mandurah's future progress will not involve industrialisation due to the lack of suitable land and the fragile environment of the Peel Inlet and surrounding regions. Rather, Mandurah's progress will revolve around its development as an employment source and around recreation and tourism. To that end facilities such as a high speed, rapid transit rail link are essential to allow workers to reach employment locations and to provide an efficient transport service.

A spur line connecting Mandurah to the existing Bunbury-Perth line would open a potential employment area from Perth to Bunbury. If that facility were in place trains could leave Mandurah and proceed to Perth or Bunbury with either destination being reached within approximately an hour. The benefits would be far greater than just providing the Mandurah community with a suitable public transport service as it would mean that families and workers would no longer need to live in an area of large industrial build up with its associated environmental disadvantages when their leisure time could be spent in Mandurah.

I estimate that approximately \$15 million to \$20 million would be required to provide such a high speed spur line and the necessary station facilities. Whilst this is a relatively small cost when viewed in the broader context, the benefits to the community would be great. The long term objective should be to connect that spur line to the existing Fremantle line, thus providing a full circuit through the coastal centres and joining up with the main artery back to Perth. With the continued growth of tourism such a rail link would provide an essential avenue to boost the local industry on which Mandurah has based its commerce for many years.

If we analyse the expected congestion on our freeways there seems little doubt that the only real alternative is a railway service. At present there is no public transport from Perth to Mandurah after 5.06 pm Monday to Thursday and after 5.35 pm on Friday. On Saturday there is no service after 3.35 pm. This service does not cater for community needs and is ludicrous for a location which is dependent to a large degree on tourism. An airport for light aircraft would also provide greater opportunities for the private community and the commercial sector to access the area.

Due to the population increase there is already an urgent need to provide and expand educational facilities in Mandurah. This would allow the many people wanting to improve their knowledge and training before, during and after joining the work force the necessary opportunity to do so. It could also cater for our senior citizens who might wish to utilise such a facility during their retirement, as education endures throughout everyone's lifetime. Any Government, irrespective of which party, has a duty to ensure that everyone in the community has access to education at all levels. The need to ensure that appropriate land is made available in suitable locations is a matter of great importance. Although I am delighted to know that there are areas currently earmarked and identified as possible future locations for primary and secondary schools, they need to be continually reviewed and assessed as growth patterns change.

I have a feeling of achievement because during the course of the election campaign my expressions of concern and my focusing on the overcrowding being experienced in Mandurah primary schools led to a commitment for two new primary schools, to be built and become operational by the start of the 1990 school year. These new schools, unfortunately, will only alleviate the current stress being felt in primary schools and the Mandurah High School will get virtually no relief. Temporary classrooms are very common in Mandurah today, as they are in many areas of our State, and there is a likelihood that such facilities will be used far more in years to come. However, it is apparent that the use of this type of accommodation is questionable when some schools, such as Mandurah High School, have had temporary classrooms for the past six or seven years. During that time the number of temporary classrooms rose to 21, which I believe is a record, but a record of dubious quality.

The need for capital spending on an ongoing basis is crucial to ensure that future children of Mandurah have a chance to achieve the academic levels which will be required as employers search for suitable talent from an increasing number of applicants. The announcement that a TAFE annex would be located in Mandurah, which was made last year before the election, has resulted in an expectation of local access to full time TAFE studies. However, as yet

there are no adequate facilities provided for such studies, although I hope that they will be provided in the near future. I also see a need for a tertiary institution in Mandurah, hopefully by the turn of the century, if technology has not provided an alternative.

I turn now to the matter of law and order, which has become an issue of major importance in our whole society today; Mandurah is no exception to that. Gone are the days when the community in general had a major influence over the actions of its members, particularly its young members. Although I would like to commend the Government for its recent focus on the Neighbourhood Watch and Safety House programs, such programs can only be supplementary to the police and their role in our society. The Mandurah community was given to understand that its needs would be catered for by a 24 hour manned police station. To my knowledge, this has not been achieved to date. I appreciate the relay service which is now operating through the metropolitan network and the relief that has been provided in the past, but the time has come to acknowledge Mandurah's right to a permanent, 24 hour manned police station. This is a priority, and while I am sure residents would like to see it provided immediately, the absolute deadline should be no later than Mandurah's proclamation as a city, which will take place in approximately 12 months. Police presence is only one third of the solution, with the penalties for the various crimes and parental responsibility making up the other two thirds.

The role of the courts is becoming harder by the day, but it appears that the current approach to the punishment for the crime committed is not acting as a deterrent, especially when it involves juvenile offenders. I believe that the majority of our youth today are both well behaved and community minded. However, when it appears that crime and antisocial behaviour does not attract any real retribution and that some sections of our community are seemingly exploited, it is little wonder that many people see crime and antisocial behaviour as a natural part of growing up. As a father of four children, I continually worry for their future and for the future of our nation as a whole, which seems to be slowly deteriorating to the point where the victim of a crime has fewer rights than the perpetrator.

I learned a valuable lesson regarding discipline during my 10 years in the Royal Australian Navy: Discipline exists only when the repercussions of breaking a law or for unacceptable behaviour are followed by being held accountable for one's actions; and this was, when required, followed by a form of punishment, which generally established a real disincentive to repeat the previous act. For the interest of members, I was 15 when I joined the Navy, and being held personally accountable at that age did not appear to harm me. This does not mean that I support the concept of all criminals being deprived of their liberty. Punishment in the form of work orders may prove to be a better solution. In saying that I do not mean just mowing the lawns for a couple of people; I am referring to removing graffiti, cleaning the pavements, or cleaning up the litter in our waterways, to suggest a few examples.

It is regrettable that the role of the parent seems to have diminished, to the point where many children today as young as 12 or 13 years of age believe they have a God given right to decide their future. Unfortunately their call for independence is closely followed by a demand for social welfare or other forms of charity because they suddenly find themselves homeless and destitute. We need to adopt a proactive approach; for example, we need to enhance family structures to the point where it is easier and less expensive to get marriage or family counselling than it is to get a divorce.

I turn now to the provision of Government services. It is my view that the Bunbury 2000 strategy has had a negative impact on Mandurah, with residents frequently seeing regional offices being located in Bunbury to service Mandurah. Although I have publicly criticised the spending of \$2.8 million on a Government office building in Mandurah, I do support the State and Commonwealth Governments' leasing appropriate premises from the private sector to accommodate increased staff and to provide new services. In the months and years ahead there will be increasing pressure for a fully operational hospital in Mandurah, and there will need to be ongoing planning for the provision of additional beds. We may very well be found wanting with a lack of funding or services to cater for our community due to the rapid growth of the Mandurah area.

Mandurah has become synonymous with a relaxed and enjoyable environment, with the emphasis being on recreational activities, which will continue to be an integral part of Mandurah's future. The opportunities for new ideas will have to be explored and, where

appropriate, exploited. The concept of an artificial reef for amateur fishing certainly falls into the exploration category and may well fall into the exploitation category also. Artificial reefs have been tried successfully in Busselton and South Australia, and there is every indication that a strategically placed reef north of the entrance to the Mandurah Estuary would be a boon to the area. Such a reef could be constructed out of old tyres, which would have the dual benefit of not disturbing the ocean patterns while at the same time contributing towards solving the longstanding problem of how to dispose of the tyres themselves. They are at present an environmental nuisance, and given the opportunity they could become an environmental blessing. For all those reasons, the concept is worth pursuing, which is what I intend to do.

The condition of the Peel-Harvey Estuary is of major significance to the community of Mandurah because its association with the water is very intimate. My initial investigations over the last few days have led me to believe that there is an organism which has the potential to clean up the Peel-Harvey Estuary. This organism has been developed in the United States over the last 10 years, and it operates by immediately seeking out and digesting nutrients such as ammonia, nitrates, phosphates and organic matter, such as algae, upon being introduced to the water body. The organism works in both fresh and salt water, and is purely biological. It is chemical free, non toxic, non pathogenic, and harmless to all fish, plant and aquatic life. Once organic wastes and algae have been consumed, the organism dies, turns into water, and forms a balance with nature. I intend to continue my investigations into this organism, because if a solution were available which used nature itself, without requiring major man made alterations, the benefits would be immense. The inventor of the organism will be travelling to Asia in the near future, and I hope he can be invited to visit Western Australia to discuss the problems of the Peel-Harvey Estuary and the suitability of this organism as a solution. While I do not expect the Government to stop the planning of the Dawesville Cut at this stage, I hope the various Government departments will be interested in further investigations regarding this alternative.

It has become more apparent to the community at large that funding for essential services is continually under pressure. The need for a bipartisan approach is often required if positive and fruitful solutions are to be achieved. It is my intention to pursue this approach whenever possible. I place on record today my disgust at the seemingly common fact of "starving" an electorate of capital works funding for a few years, only to subject it to political pork barrelling just prior to an election. I do not wish to elaborate on this subject today, only to say that I hope Mandurah will receive due consideration in the years to come.

This Parliament is at a significant point in history, with the public's focus being firmly fixed on Government accountability. While this may not be a revelation to members, the responsibility for ensuring that the integrity of this institution is upheld cannot be overstated. Personal integrity and Government accountability are the very backbone of our State, nation and, indeed, democracy.

I meet the coming years with anticipation and enthusiasm, and it is my intention, as the MLA for Mandurah, to explore every avenue for promoting improvements for the region and, where appropriate, to do my utmost to bring them to fruition. Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you and members for your indulgence during my first speech in the House. I look forward to listening, to learning, and to contributing to the strength and success of our Parliament.

[Applause.]

DR TURNBULL (Collie) [2.36 pm]: Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to the position of Speaker in this Parliament. I feel very privileged to stand here today representing the people of the electorate of Collie. I wish to thank the voters of Collie for the confidence they have placed in me, and I assure them that I intend to do my utmost to justify their choice. I am only the fourth elected representative for Collie to enter this Parliament, and I follow Mr Tom Jones, who retired prior to the last election. Throughout his 21 years as Collie's representative Tom Jones served the people of his electorate with a dedication that earned him the respect of all of them. During his last term of office he saw the realisation of some of his greatest wishes: A splendid Senior Citizens' Centre and a fine headquarters for the Police and Citizens' Youth Club. He has been a faithful and loyal parliamentarian both to Collie and to his party, and on behalf of the people of Collie I would like to pay tribute to him.