

common determination to work with the Government to make this State a better place in which to live.

In conclusion, I am proud that I served with the WA Police Force for some 16 years. In that time I worked alongside many very fine and dedicated officers. Rather than acknowledging these individuals by name, I prefer to pay tribute in Parliament to all police officers and their families. This professional body of men and women carry out a difficult job under difficult and sometimes highly dangerous circumstances. These officers work under enormous pressure and many times in deplorable conditions. However, I am not seeking sympathy for these officers and their families, nor would they want me to. They need the promises to become a reality. Their consideration is always for the safety and welfare of us, the citizens of the State.

Law and order was a major issue during the recent election campaign with both major parties committing themselves to all sorts of promises in that direction. These included extra manpower and improved police working conditions and additional legislative support to assist them to protect us. As both parties identified things to be done in this area, I hope common ground is reached by all politicians to achieve positive solutions as an urgent priority for police officers in this State. I will personally strive to ensure positive changes are made to the Police Force and to law and order generally.

An area I will closely examine, and for which I will provide appropriate support, is the fight against organised crime, which has steadily increased in this State. It will cost us dearly if we delay taking this issue seriously. We must remind ourselves that we are not isolated from the rest of the world and that organised crime, as witnessed in other parts of the world, spreads like a disease.

My parish priest at Beaumaris, Ocean Reef, made a very astute observation on Sunday: He felt that the 1990s may be remembered as a time of a general lack of respect; namely, a lack of respect for people in authority, for the individual and a general lack of respect for each other. Sadly, I agree with his sentiments. A notable example of this was the behaviour of some individuals at the opening of Parliament last week. However, should we have expected any better after witnessing the style of leadership and standard set by a number of members, in the highest offices of the land, of Labor Governments during the 1980s and leading into the 1990s?

My final words are left to express dedication to Diana, my fiance, who has made this situation all possible and worthwhile by her friendship, love, advice and support in the difficult times before and during the election campaign. This support continued during a time when we lost one of the most wonderful individuals I have met or am likely to meet; namely, my friend, Diana's father, Bruno Borserio. He was an avid supporter of mine and I am sorry he is not here to listen to my speech today.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Ainsworth), I thank you and the House for the courtesy and indulgence shown during my first speech. I shall do my utmost to fulfil the trust placed in me by the electors of Wanneroo in serving the public of this great State, and in making the Wanneroo electorate and Western Australia even greater.

[Applause.]

MR PRINCE (Albany) [11.28 pm]: I am obliged to you, Mr Acting Speaker, and the members of this House for the privilege of being able to address you in my maiden speech as the newly elected member for Albany. I am very conscious of the fact that I represent one of the original electorates to send members to Parliament from the beginning of representative government in this State. It is a great honour for me to join this Chamber and to follow the service of that most distinguished of parliamentarians, Leon Watt. Leon was the member for Albany for 19 years almost to the day of the last State election, and during that time he represented the people of Albany with honesty and forthrightness. He is one of the few of whom it can be declared that nothing said of him is other than to his credit as a truly decent gentleman.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr PRINCE: It is my pleasure to report to the House that he is enjoying a pleasant and active retirement, which I am sure all members past and present who had any association with him would wish to continue for many years to come.

I am grateful for the convention that a maiden speech is not subject to interjections. As a lawyer for the past 20 years, much of which has been spent in the courts of this State, and particularly the criminal courts, I am accustomed to interjections from magistrates and judges, who are always right when I am wrong, and from prosecutors who say they are right and I am wrong when they usually are! Jurors are not permitted to answer back; however, I am conscious that in this forum we have a jury of 50-odd members, and no doubt in future some members will not be as mute as during my maiden speech.

I come to this Parliament as not only a Liberal member of Parliament but also the advocate for the community of Albany. I take this opportunity to thank the Liberal Party and the electors of Albany for the confidence and trust they have placed in me. I am a comparative newcomer to party politics and so it was a particular honour to me to be preselected, endorsed and subsequently elected as the member for Albany. Credit for success in the election campaign, which was strongly contested, is due to members of the Liberal Party and supporters of the party who worked selflessly for many months. I am particularly grateful for the extraordinary efforts of Mr Bruce Dixon, my campaign manager, whom it is my pleasure publicly to thank.

It may be that members of this House perceived the electorate of Albany to be a pleasant, if usually quiet, place. It is certainly the jewel of the south coast, enjoying by far the best climate in the State, being neither too hot nor too cold and having a rainfall that is less than that of Perth. Albany was the first voluntary settlement in Western Australia by people of European descent, and they enjoyed a close, and largely friendly, relationship with the native inhabitants. Today that friendly relationship between people in Albany of Aboriginal, European and other descents is a feature of the community. Undoubtedly this is one of the reasons that Albany - I am told - at present enjoys the lowest crime rate in Western Australia. This is not good news for a criminal lawyer; but it is excellent news for those who live in and about urban Albany and the region it serves, and also for the many people who resort to the area for holidays.

Albany has always enjoyed an enviable reputation as a place in which to have a good holiday. Unfortunately, the promotion of the town and the region of which it is the centre has languished with upheavals in what can only be loosely called tourism support and promotion by past Governments in recent years. For reasons that are self-evident to anyone who visits Albany, it is past time that it was better promoted as a place to visit for a family holiday, a place in which people can enjoy unparalleled scenery and the best town crier in the State.

One factor that mitigates against the promotion of tourism in and to Albany is its distance from the metropolitan area, which is the principal source of, and entry points to, the State for overseas and interstate visitors. The crash landing of Compass mark I and the disappearance of Deluxe Coachlines from the road both severely affected tourism into the area, as was the case in other parts of the State. It took far too long for a new licence to be issued for another coach line and that fact was the subject of comments both before and during the State election campaign. It is pleasing to note that a new operator has commenced, is running a very efficient service and opened a new terminus within the past two weeks.

The commitment of the Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, prior to the election to promote the establishment of an airport at Busselton to enable a tourist triangle consisting of the metropolitan area, Busselton and Albany to be created for tourists and a shuttle service by air is a step in the right direction and a proposal which I am sure will be effected in due time by the present Government, preferably sooner rather than later.

Although Albany is an unequalled place to visit and in which to live, it is also a place to which many people, including my predecessor, Leon Watt, retire after a lifetime of work. The retirement population of Albany is close to one-fifth of the total and that fact alone speaks for the attractions of the Albany area as a place to enjoy a complete, secure and satisfying lifestyle.

Tourism is only one part of the economic base of Albany. It is one upon which I have now laid some emphasis, but it is not the only plank of the economic base. The town sits among one of the most productive regions in this State, productive in both agricultural and horticultural commodities and fishing. It has been said by many - I reiterate - it beggars logic that we in Australia should send so much of our agricultural produce overseas to be

processed and then pay with hard earned overseas currency for the import to Australia of the finished product. This State does not have the population to support a self-sustaining economy. It is obvious that through export we can bring income to the State which, in turn, provides for the growth and success of small business. It must surely be that the objective of adding value by processing our agricultural, horticultural and fishing products will be of benefit to the State and, therefore, should be encouraged.

This is particularly true of Albany and its region. A great variety of farming produce in the region could be subject to processing, but this occurs only to a limited extent. The recent support of the present Government to Southern Processors Ltd, the vegetable processor in Albany, and the support which I trust will come to the Albany abattoirs, are but two examples of the commitment of this Government to the promotion of value adding to products that are locally created.

In passing, I must commend the work of the Great Southern Regional Development Authority which, with a small staff and modest budget, has been largely responsible for the detailed planning for the redevelopment of the foreshore of Albany, a project which had its genesis as a community project more than 10 years ago, and of the Down Road industrial estate on the outskirts of Albany, as well as a number of other initiatives. I am aware that a number of studies have been conducted in recent years on the future of Albany, some of which have been carried out by or under the auspices of the regional development authority, with a view to establishing further processing industries in the town and its immediate hinterland. The aim is that wool, vegetable, fruits, skins, hides and other agricultural products may be processed or the processing of them enhanced and expanded.

The Deputy Premier said of Albany in a recent speech which he made in the town at the opening of The Developing the Regions Conference -

... the Coalition Government will implement or support a number of strategies designed to lift the regional importance of the town in ways that give it a greater ability to service its hinterland.

The Deputy Premier went on to give as an example the then recent decision to provide financial assistance to Southern Processors and said that there was, "a large number of equally specific proposals for other regional centres." This emphasis by the Government on the development of regional centres is one that I welcome on behalf of my electorate and its hinterland and look forward to seeing it implemented during the present and succeeding terms of this Government. It is time that studies were completed and plans for development in Albany and other regional centres were implemented, so that private industry can take the initiative, build the infrastructure and plants and get on with the job of production so that domestic consumption can be satisfied and export income earned. The result can only be of benefit to the community of Albany and its region by the creation of decent, viable jobs which are so desperately needed in the area. Unemployment is declining very slowly, but the region still has one of the highest unemployment rates in this State. For young people aged between 15 and 25 it is a State, if not a national, disgrace. This is no reflection on the present Government. I make the observation and statement to support and encourage the Government in its stated initiatives to correct the situation.

However, I make this point with as much force as I can: It is absolutely essential that development, particularly industrial development in Albany and the immediate area, be planned and executed in a way that does not adversely affect the environment. In Albany we know only too well that nutrient pollution levels in Princess Royal Harbour and Oyster Harbour mean that the mismanagement of one generation leads to an offensive crop to be harvested by another generation. I am sure that the people of Mandurah do not need to be reminded that Albany is far from being alone in this problem.

The unique location and characteristics of Albany and the superb natural harbour make it potentially one of the leading ports in the State. I know that the port authority has plans for expansion and has taken the initiative in seeking to broaden the range of trade through the port, in which endeavour the authority should be encouraged by the Government and Parliament. The location and characteristics of Albany also make it one of the best areas of this State for the growth of tertiary education. As the Deputy Premier said in his speech to which I referred -

An integral part of the regional development process is the growth of regional towns to sufficient critical mass to act as service, administrative, educational and cultural centres.

For far too long tertiary institutions have been concentrated in the metropolitan area and, although that is where the bulk of the population of this State resides, it is all too obvious to say that the expansion of the metropolitan area at the expense of country centres is a fact that must be addressed, countered and reversed. As a person who has lived in the country for the past nineteen and a half years, it seems that one of the most pernicious and insidious forms of discrimination in this State, if not Australia generally, is that between the metropolitan area and the country. It is my intention to speak whenever the opportunity presents itself to point out this discrimination that I perceive and to seek to eliminate it.

Albany is a natural and logical place in which to build upon the excellent basis of tertiary education which presently exists in the Great Southern Regional College, which is excellent notwithstanding neglect of its proper funding for years. This college could be augmented and improved to provide more courses specific to the needs of the region in agriculture and marine sciences, as well as providing training for employment generally in the region for the young people who would otherwise drift to the metropolitan area. This drift of the young, especially those potentially with skills to enhance the local community, is a feature not peculiar to Albany, but it must be addressed if regional communities, and especially Albany, are to grow in a healthy and viable fashion. If, in order to achieve this aim, moving some parts of institutions from the metropolitan area to Albany is required, so much the better.

I remind you, Mr Speaker, and members of this House, that it was from relatively modest beginnings that the University of New England in Armidale, New South Wales was born. Although it is not the perfect model to adopt in the Albany context, it is an example that can be an inspiration. To those who would say that the tyranny of distance prevents or severely restricts this concept, I point to the advent of modern telecommunications, both landline and satellite, which have been and are now being used most effectively by the Great Southern Regional College to provide courses to those people who live in the area by contract from other institutions situated not only in this State but elsewhere. The social benefits of diversity in tertiary education should be self-evident, not least in the movement of teaching and lecturing staff into the country, but also in the movement of students from the metropolitan area to the country thereby ensuring that they become aware there is more to the State than the area bounded by Wanneroo, York, Armadale, Mandurah and the beaches of Rottnest Island.

The proposal that I put forward for the enhancement of the growth of the regional and tertiary education clearly will not suit some disciplines. Medicine and nursing are dependent on teaching hospitals and must at least in the near future remain in the metropolitan area; other disciplines, for similar reasons, will not be suitable for movement into the country. However, should anyone doubt the proposal, I remind them that the Liberal Party has been advocating this policy for years, as has the National Party. During or shortly before the last State election campaign the Labor candidate in Albany spoke in support of the concept in a general sense, as did the candidate representing the Australian Democrats. Perhaps that uniformity of approval by political parties should be a cause for anxiety rather than rejoicing, but I remain optimistic that the proposition enjoys wide support.

I must make mention, and do so with pleasure, of one aspect of life that, although not peculiar to Albany, is certainly more noticeable and dominant than any other place I know; that is, community spirit. It is perhaps an indefinite and indeterminate concept, but it is illustrated partly by the harmony with which the two local authorities act in their administration of the urban area of Albany. The Albany urban area, which has a population of 26 000, is, from the point of view of anyone who lives in the area, one town. Actually, it is administered by two local authorities, the town and the shire, the two councils and their officers. They have for some years operated extremely well together in a number of joint projects to the benefit of the total community and I am pleased to say enjoy wide popular support.

Another feature of the Albany community is that it has learnt that if they need a facility that is within its resources to create, it gets on and produces it. I pay tribute to the significant number of people in Albany who are members of many clubs and organisations which

provide valuable support in material and other ways to the regional hospital, the hospice, the various aged and frail care homes and facilities, and to sporting and recreational facilities, all of which are of a very high standard. The spirit of willingness to work for the benefit of others as a whole is a feature of Albany which could well be studied by others. It is one of the causes of the remarkable reduction in the crime rate in recent years which has largely been brought about by support for community policing and for local initiatives to divert, particularly the young, from what would otherwise be antisocial activities. I remind you, Mr Speaker, and members of this House that activities like the blue light discos have their origins in Albany and many other programs of that nature are or have been active in the area, supported and encouraged both by public servants in their work and by many members of the community.

Unfortunately some concerns and issues are beyond local resources and despite the best will in the world and the best representation and advocacy over the years by the leaders of the local authorities and by Leon Watt, there are some publicly funded facilities in Albany that are in neglect, and in need of improvement. Public housing in the suburb of Lockyer is one problem area. Mr Speaker, I report to you with some pleasure that the responsible Minister, the Minister for Housing, has now given a number of public undertakings of support to the redevelopment of the Lockyer area after entreaties fell on deaf ears for the past 10 years. The plan for redevelopment is being formulated and discussed and I commend Homeswest for its involvement with those who live in the suburb and particularly with the Lockyer Residents Association.

Another area of some concern is one of which I suppose we rarely speak. It is a source of some wonder to me that over the years Governments of all persuasions will speak much and spend a good deal of taxpayers' money to ensure that which its citizens consume by way of food and drink is as harmless as possible and taken in quantities that are not excessive. No doubt, in public health measures of this nature, the taxpayer dollar is sought to be spread equitably over the citizens of the State. Therefore, it is surprising that the disposal of the waste products of consumption should not equally be the subject of an equitable distribution of taxpayers' funds. The sewage treatment system in Albany is inadequate and that has been known for at least the last five years and probably longer. A very clever and imaginative plan exists for a totally new waste treatment system involving irrigation onto land rather than discharge into the sea. The result is the growth of trees in plantations which will add to the significant plantations already being grown in the Albany area as commercial crops for structural timber and woodchipping. This is a commendable concept and project, but it will cost a significant amount of money. The provision of a decent domestic sewerage system is something that should be paid for by all taxpayers throughout the State whether the new system is required in Albany or anywhere else, and I urge a reconsideration of the concept of user pays in this area.

I note in passing that Bunbury, through the largesse of former Governments, received considerable sums of money to pay for similar problems. It is time that rather than target interest groups on a taxpayer funded dartboard, the principle of equity and fairness for all should be the guiding philosophy of government. For Albany, that requires a remedy for the inequity and unfairness with which the region has been inflicted in the past 10 years. Equity should prevail and Albany should receive its fair due.

I thank members on both sides of the House for the courtesy and kindness they have shown to me since my election. I also thank the staff of this Parliament for their valuable assistance and support.

[Applause.]

MR RIEBELING (Ashburton) [11.52 pm]: I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment as the Speaker of the House. I am sure you bring a lot of knowledge and a great deal of experience to the position. Your undoubted wit and guidance will keep us all on our toes in the years to come. I am somewhat less impressed by your treatment of the dead sheep that seems to have developed an attraction to your head area. The staff involved have also developed smaller versions of the same thing. I am sure the National Party would be enthusiastic for your obvious concern for the wool stockpile. Perhaps we should make wigs compulsory for all members. I am sure the member for Marangaroo would agree.

The SPEAKER: Fortunately you are not speaking very clearly at the moment.