



**PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**



**Margaret Anne Bernadette Rowe**

**Member for Agricultural Region**

**22 May 2005–22 June 2007**

*Vale*

## Biographical Information

### Parliamentary Service

**House** MLC

**Party** Liberal

**Date Elected** 22 May 2005

**Electorate** Agricultural

**Electorates** MLC Agricultural Region 22 May 2005–22 June 2007. Elected to the Thirty-seventh Parliament for Agricultural Region on 26 February 2005 (for term commencing 22 May 2005). Resigned on 22 June 2007.

**Committees** Member Joint Standing Committee on Corruption and Crime Commission 22 May 2005–22 June 2007

### Office

- Shadow Spokesperson for Heritage 22 May 2005–4 February 2006
- Shadow Spokesperson for Science 4 February 2006–8 April 2006
- Shadow Spokesperson for Heritage 8 April 2006–22 June 2007

**Year Resigned** 2007

### Personal Information

**Birthdate** 1949

**Place of birth** Kalgoorlie, Western Australia

**Parents** Daughter of Archibald Richard Trahair and Margaret Mary Brock

**Marriage and Family** Married with children: one son and one daughter

**Education** St Mary's Convent School

**Occupation** Electorate officer

### Employment History

- Administration officer, Chapman Valley Primary School 1978–1984
- Personal assistant Mid-West Development Commission 1984–1996
- Electorate officer Hon Kevin Minson MLA 1996-2001 and Jeremy (Jamie) Edwards MLA 2001–2005

**Local Government** Councillor, Greenough Shire Council 1994, 1997-2004 (deputy president for two years)

**Background** Nominee Telstra Small Business Award 2003

### References

- D Black and G Bolton, eds, *Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia: volume two 1930-2010*, Western

Australian Parliamentary History Project, Perth, WA, 2011,  
Addendum, p. 4

- Parliament of Western Australia, Former Members, Parliament of Western Australia website, accessed 21 May 2014.



**PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**INAUGURAL SPEECH**



**Hon Margaret Rowe MLC**  
**(Member for Agricultural)**

**Address-in-Reply Debate**

**Legislative Council**

**Thursday, 26 May 2005**

# Legislative Council

Thursday, 26 May 2005

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## Inaugural Speech

### Hon Margaret Rowe MLC

(Member for Agricultural)

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#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

##### *Motion*

**HON MARGARET ROWE (Agricultural)** [12.34 pm]: As an incoming member of Parliament it gives me pleasure to address the house first with a quote from an outgoing member of Parliament, Hon Bill Stretch who, after 22 years in this place said -

... it is not the huge things one does in the electorate for which a member will be remembered, because there are few opportunities for us to change the world. ... The majority of the time of members is spent rescuing ordinary people and small businesses from the inevitable grind of the bureaucracy. It is important to realise that this happens whichever party is in government, because the very process of government is a slow and clumsy business. It is not like the law and it does not “grind exceedingly fine”; it grinds extremely roughly at times.

#### MY ELECTORATE

After 13 years as a Greenough Shire Councillor, two of them as deputy president, and 10 years as an electorate officer, I know too well the frustrations and inequities endured by some people in their dealings with bureaucracy. It has been said “that the wind speaks not more sweetly to the giant oaks than to the least of all the blades of grass”. Although giant oaks might topple if they are not well-rooted to the earth - a lesson for us in this lofty place - the grass is walked upon every day. The electorate office is the grassroots ear to the world. That is why I have chosen to locate my electorate office in the country in Geraldton.

Like many regional centres, Geraldton has a proud history. I follow in the footsteps of Edith Cowan, OBE, the first woman elected to Parliament in Western Australia. She was born in 1861 at Glengarry Station near Geraldton. The Premier is a Geraldton boy. An outgoing member of this chamber, Hon Derrick Tomlinson, taught literature at the Geraldton Senior High School. Award winning author Randolph Stow was born in Geraldton and immortalised the town in his book *The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea*. Tim Winton’s novel *Cloud Street* has its origin in Geraldton. Actor Ernie Dingo was born at Bullaroo Station and studied at Geraldton Senior High School. Another famous Aborigine, Warrandy, was born in the Murchison around the 1830s, and was anointed as “King Billy” by Governor Weld. Former Western Australian Premier John Forrest is said to have

given him a room in his Perth bungalow whenever he required one. I, however, am currently homeless. I understand that it might be several months before my permanent electorate office is leased and furnished. Perhaps this is inadvertently fortuitous, as it will give me time to begin to know the broad expanse of my electorate. This will take some time, as it stretches from Kalbarri in the north to Esperance in the great southern area. It comprises 68 local governments and in excess of 90 000 constituents. I am fortunate to share this responsibility with Hon Bruce Donaldson and Hon Anthony Fels.

I noted that, in his inaugural address in 1993, Hon Bruce Donaldson observed the reluctance of most Western Australians to settle beyond the great Darling scarp. This reluctance continues today with the majority of people clinging to the long strip that hugs the coastline. How much do they know about life on the other side of the hill? My country experiences go back a long way. I was born and educated in Kalgoorlie, where my family ran a small business. I understand first-hand the issues affecting families who live in remote areas. As the second eldest in a family of seven children, I am well aware of the challenges faced by large families in rural environments. My colleague Hon Anthony Fels has already spoken extensively about Esperance in his inaugural speech. I have chosen to base myself in Geraldton because I have established a close relationship with the Geraldton community. In fact, I worked for 12 years with the Mid West Development Commission.

I also chose Geraldton as my base because it has some important common links with other parts of the Agricultural Region.

### **THE FISHING INDUSTRY**

Like Kalbarri and Esperance, Geraldton has a significant fishing industry that has progressed from the pioneering days of tiny wooden boats to the current multimillion dollar high-technology industry. Even in the 1950s, fishermen still had no easy communication with land. They said goodbye to their families and set up camp for months at the Houtman Abrolhos Islands. The wives and families stayed in port and waited for messages sent back on carrier boats, and they tuned into the local radio station in the evenings for the fishermen's requests program when families could send brief messages. The boats these days are highly sophisticated, high powered and high tech. The skippers and their deckies can speak to their families and conduct their business with the push of a button, and they can read the bottom of the ocean like a map and track their catch. Their bounty feeds an international trade. Salt water is in their blood, and often their children will finish university or some landlubber's job, and then come home to work the boat. These fishermen still brave the open seas, especially those on the Great Southern Ocean and live with danger in pulling their pots, setting their wet lines or trawling their nets. They are the farmers of the ocean.

In port, the farmers of the land battle their own problems with salty water. Therefore, I was pleased to see that the government last week, after some prompting by the opposition, recommitted to spend \$315 million in the joint commonwealth and state programs that will include salinity control.

### **THE FARMING INDUSTRY**

But Geraldton has more than salt water in common with the rest of my extensive electorate; it also has a hinterland of mixed farming that mainly involves grain and sheep. While people in the city tend to take for granted the fruit, vegetables, processed grains and trays of meat in the supermarkets, we often forget that they tell the story of family members who have waited with their eyes turned to the sky for the first drops of rain or cursed a downpour at shearing time or watched a crop, lush and ripe and ready for harvest, laid flat by hailstones. We do not think about the farmer driving around all night in a dark paddock ploughing and seeding. We do not think about the farmer carting hay to handfeed sheep, which are sold or have the gun taken to them when the drought in the bank matches the drought in the paddock. We do not think about country children waiting at the farm gate for a bus to take them 30 or more kilometres to a little school in the nearest town. We forget that women

are more likely to die of breast cancer and men are more likely to die of prostate cancer if they live in the country. We do not think about the road trauma victims being flown to Perth for treatment away from their family support. We close our eyes to the terrible statistics regarding Aboriginal infant mortality and morbidity, and we cannot bring ourselves to think about the high rate of rural youth suicide. We forget that while we idealise, farmers have to survive the politics and realities of controversial issues such as the live sheep trade, genetically modified crops, the mulesing process and the flatulence tax on animals. We prefer to remember the days when the country rode on the back of a sheep and farmers reputedly charged around their paddocks in Rolls Royces with a ram or two in the back. Those days were short, and they have gone.

The Deputy Prime Minister was quoted this week as saying that Australia is in danger of running out of farmers in a decade because conditions on the land are so difficult. He spoke in response to the drought crisis in the eastern states, but what extra pressure will apply to WA farmers if eastern states farmers collapse? Will Western Australian farmers find themselves carrying the load of a nation? Will our farmers be able to survive without tax incentives for drought proofing their properties and for land improvements and the old killer, transport subsidies? According to the WA Farmers Federation, at least half of WA farmers are battling the cost price squeeze. It is not that farmers are not working hard. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has reported that 59 per cent of farmers, compared with 19 per cent of all employed people, worked 49 hours or more a week in 2001. Farmers often work beyond the traditional retirement age, with 15 per cent of farmers in 2001 being aged 65 years or over. Indeed, the proportion of farmers aged 65 years and over is greater than the proportion of farmers younger than 35 years of age. Fewer young people are becoming farmers. The Farmers Federation also stated that business imperatives and succession planning is a key risk for Western Australia's primary industry. Perhaps it is the quiet pride and tenacity of our farmers and graziers, and their remarkable capacity for economic survival in a changing weather global system and volatile international markets, that allows us to live our illusions about the good life. The reality is that farmers have no pay cheque in the bank each fortnight. Even when a fortnightly pay cheque arrives in the letterbox in the small marginal towns that service these farmers, the income and employment security in that town depends on the wool clip, the amount of grain delivered to the local silo or the size of the catch. Country WA also owes much of its existence to small business - retail, commerce and hospitality - and government-based health, education and housing input. We must recognise and support the retention of the townships and the small business model.

I am pleased to say, however, that there are some encouraging signs. Major findings of the 2003-04 Australian Bureau of Statistics survey include an overall increase in wheat production, with Western Australia showing one of the largest state increases with production up by 174 per cent. That was a welcome relief after the 2002 drought when production was effectively halved. Lamb and sheep numbers also showed signs of recovery following the low of the previous year. The largest increases were in New South Wales and Western Australia: our state's figure was up four per cent with a value of \$24.8 million, which is a credit to our farmers given that over 80 per cent of agricultural production is exported. In a globalised marketplace, farmers are the price takers rather than the price setters. All this effort and risk is for a 20c return on a \$3 loaf of bread.

### **TOURISM AND REAL ESTATE**

On the other hand, real estate agents in my electorate are getting better returns. The high cost of housing in the eastern states is driving investors west. The City of Geraldton and Shire of Greenough are booming with some of the hottest real estate in the state. Esperance and Kalbarri have some of the most beautiful coastline and spectacular gorges in the nation and are attracting thousands of visitors. Geraldton now has more visitors per annum than is the case with Broome. One of my great passions is tourism. This passion was heightened when I served as chairman of the

shire's standing committee for tourism and community development. We have seen a tourism explosion in the south west and our far north, and the mid west will be the next to experience this growth when Indian Ocean Drive is completed. All that remains is an approximately 40 kilometre section between Lancelin and Jurien Bay, and I intend to work stridently for that completion date to be brought forward.

It is not surprising that city dwellers are drawn to the country to refuel their souls, not only because of the open skies and big horizons, but also because of the people. The strength of the family unit has served the Agricultural Region well, and has my support and respect.

Mr President, I congratulate you on your election as President of this house, and I congratulate Hon George Cash on his re-election as Chairman of Committees in the Legislative Council. Although I appreciate the privileges and protocols of this house, I am under no illusion that being a member of Parliament will be glamorous. My introduction to my new role kept my feet well and truly on the ground: I doorknocked in temperatures in excess of 40 degrees, lost six kilos and was bitten by a dog. The Liberal Party's pre-selection personnel must have recognised some tenacity in me, and I thank them sincerely for their faith. I thank all the people who assisted so capably and selflessly during my election campaign, especially my family and friends for their love, support and friendship. Although there are too many to mention by name, I record my particular thanks to my father, Arch Trahair; my son, Bradley, and his partner, Rebecca; my daughter, Donna, and her partner, Nigel; and my wonderful grandchildren Hannah, Jonah, Ruby and Daisy; as well as my close friends Bill Perry and Kim Stokes.

#### **MY VISION FOR RURAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

So, what brings me to this place? Although I always made a contribution to the community as a shire councillor, an electorate officer and a sportsman, I felt I could make a more extensive contribution as a member of Parliament. In this position, I can endeavour to ensure that my constituents receive their lawful entitlements; however, I can also represent their views in how those laws are formulated and amended. According to the Western Australian Farmers Federation, there are 31 acts with 86 high-level regulatory areas governing agriculture. In Western Australia most of these are under the jurisdiction of two, and sometimes three, departments.

The Westminster system of government is based on representation. I will make no apology for the fact that I will speak for the bush. At a time when the country voice is smaller in Parliament, I will just have to speak more loudly. Despite adversity, in 2001-02 the gross value of agricultural production in Western Australia was \$5.5 billion. However, when all the other industries tied to agriculture are factored in, agriculture fuels in excess of 12 per cent of the state's gross domestic product and between 17 per cent and 20 per cent of the jobs. The Agricultural Region is the heartland of Western Australia, and I am proud to speak on its behalf. I would like to think that when it comes my time to leave this house, I can rest comfortably with the words of poet Robert Frost -

Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -  
I took the one less traveled by  
And that has made all the difference.

[Applause.]

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**MAKING A DIFFERENCE—A FRONTIER  
OF FIRSTS**

**WOMEN IN THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN  
PARLIAMENT 1921–2012**

David Black  
and  
Harry Phillips

**Parliamentary History Project  
Parliament of Western Australia  
2012**

## **MARGARET-ANNE BERNADETTE ROWE**



MLC Agricultural Region 22 May 2005–22 June 2007 (Lib). Member Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission 2005-2007; Shadow Spokesperson 2005–2007.

Margaret-Anne Bernadette Rowe (nee Trahair) was born on 11 April 1949 in Kalgoorlie and was subsequently educated in the same regional city at Saint Mary's Convent School. At the 22 February 2005 election for the thirty-seventh Parliament she was the fifth and only woman candidate elected for the Agricultural Region in which the party, aided by dedicated campaigning from Margaret, had notably gained a much higher region vote in the Legislative Council than in the constituent Legislative Assembly districts. Between Margaret's election date and assumption of her seat on 22 May 2005 the Parliament passed the one vote, one value legislation for the Legislative Assembly and increased the number of seats in the Legislative Council Agricultural Region from five to six seats, with vote weighting being exacerbated. However, Margaret did not seek a seat for the next election as she resigned due to ill health on 22 June 2007.

Historically, it has often been observed that experience in local government can be a valuable preparation for Parliament. Margaret, with over a decade as a councillor including two of them as deputy president at the Shire of Greenough, fitted this category. To this background could be added 10 years as an electorate officer which in contemporary times regularly fulfils a preparatory role for parliamentarians. As Margaret said in her inaugural parliamentary address:

... the electorate office is the grassroots ear to the world. That is why I have chosen to locate my electorate office in the country in Geraldton'.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to her electorate office experience for two Liberal MLAs, Minister Kevin Minson (from 1996 to 2001) and Jamie Edwards (from 2001 to 2005), Margaret had been a public service

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<sup>1</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 26 May 2005, p. 2359.

administrative officer at Chapman Valley followed by over a decade of employment as a personal assistant at the Mid West Development Commission.

In 2003 Margaret was a nominee for the Telstra Small Business Awards. She was also an active sportsperson. In terms of sporting links, her son Brad Rowe played 72 AFL games for Brisbane, Collingwood and the Fremantle Dockers. Her daughter, Donna, did not pursue professional sport, but obtained two university degrees.

Margaret did not have higher degree qualifications but it seems from her *Hansard* parliamentary record that she had an excellent command of language with a literature bent. In her Inaugural Speech<sup>2</sup> she concluded her speech with the words of poet Robert Frost who wrote:

Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I  
I took the least traveled by less  
And that has made all the difference.

Again in her Inaugural Speech, when highlighting how Geraldton, like many regional centres had a proud history, Margaret chose to mention how former member of the Legislative Council Derrick Tomlinson had taught her literature at Geraldton Senior High School, and that award winning author Randolph Stow was born in Geraldton and how he immortalised the town in his book *The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea*. In addition, Tim Winton's novel *Cloudstreet* had its origin in Geraldton. In her display of historical knowledge of her Geraldton electoral base Margaret also mentioned how she was following in the footsteps of Edith Cowan, the first women elected to the Parliament in Australia, and that Geoff Gallop, the Premier at the time, was also a Geraldton boy.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout Margaret's two years as an MLC she took opportunities to represent regional interests. As she said in her first speech, 'I will make no apology for the fact that I will speak for the bush'.<sup>4</sup> In her contribution to the 'Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure' debate she forcefully indicated how:

The 2006–07 state budget continues the Labor tradition of profligacy in recurrent expenditure, the accumulation of debt and failure to invest in the wealth-generating regions of this state.<sup>5</sup>

Given focus was 'the state Labor government's city-centric focus for infrastructure expenditure'.<sup>6</sup> Two months later in debate on a motion 'that this house condemns the state government for its failure to provide adequate funding for vital infrastructure and development in rural and regional Western Australia' Margaret spoke at length.<sup>7</sup> Included in her address was a claim that 'the re-emergence of mining in the Mid West has created a well recognised need for a new port at Oakajee'.<sup>8</sup> Reference to the lack of investment in roads was accompanied by examples of regional road needs, particularly those which enhance tourism.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 2361.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 2359.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 2361.

<sup>5</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 27 June 2006, p. 4253.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 4254.

<sup>7</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 30 August 2006, pp. 5389 and 5401.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 5401.

Of far greater economic importance to the state than the cost overrun Perth to Mandurah rail link was the need to upgrade existing railway lines in the Mid West and to build new ones.<sup>9</sup> Another need was to address the infill sewerage program which had been started by the Court government in 1994.<sup>10</sup> Then with an expression of her ideological perspective Margaret said, 'I draw my contribution to a close by reiterating the key points' summarised as:

First, Labor slashed funding on infrastructure that is critical to the regions, despite enjoying what may well be the biggest revenue bonanza in the state's history. It would be interesting to know whether our state's public coffers have ever enjoyed a five-year period such as this. Second, cuts to regional infrastructure spending come at a time of unprecedented demand ... driven by tourism and population changes. Third, Labor already has an infrastructure backlog, and it will grow. We are already at least \$1 billion behind the infrastructure needs that should have been met with better financial management and priorities. Fourth, Labor is mismanaging the good times and blowing opportunities to progress the state by failing to deliver public infrastructure to the regions, which is a fundamental government role. Fifth, Labor is again showing why the rural majority is right to reject Labor. Hopefully, Perth people will see it more clearly at the next election.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, the rural electorate broadly speaking rejected Labor at the next 2008 election partly because the National Party, particularly for the Agricultural Region, adopted a more specific 'royalties for regions' policy which identified the infrastructure needs of the country districts and a formula which provided the revenue base. A related interest pursued by Margaret were parliamentary questions on government spending on research and development which she was able to indicate had fallen from 1.62 per cent in 1996–97 to 1.31 per cent in 2002–2003, a fall representing a decline of about \$265 million per annum.<sup>12</sup> Although agriculture Minister Kim Chance procedurally thanked Margaret for providing some notice on this subject, he went on to say:

I just want to add that I think this is a very good question. It is one that I fear we will have some difficulty answering. The member has done well to pick up on the whole research and development issue, because it is a very serious matter that threatens where our industry is going in the future. Australian dedication to research and development generally is probably a weak link in our structure. However, the difficulty in providing an answer is in obtaining that information, because much of the research and development effort comes from the private sector, and sometimes private sector involvement is hard to divulge.<sup>13</sup>

Another area of questioning that Margaret pursued was dry season assistance. When the Government in August 2006 announced a package of up to \$5.3 million to help farm businesses worst affected by the dry seasons in several Agricultural Region shires her mathematical analysis suggested the aid was closer to some \$3 million.<sup>14</sup> Then when not satisfied with the Minister's response Margaret pursued the matter seeking further clarification.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 5403.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 5402.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 5403.

<sup>12</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 22 August 2006, p.4961.

<sup>13</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 22 March 2006, p. 682.

<sup>14</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 22 August 2006, p. 4879.

<sup>15</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 31 August 2006, p. 5553.

Water resources in regional towns, including the cost of transporting water by road, Waterwise rebates from the Water Corporation and feasibility studies to determine additional sources of water for Northampton, were policy areas of interest to Margaret. She spoke at length with support in principle for legislation in the Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Bill 2005 which attempted to provide some 20 000 Western Australians who live permanently for extended periods in caravan parks and lifestyle villages with a greater security of tenure while renting their sites.<sup>16</sup> In one of her early speeches Margaret had spoken supportively of the wind farm project approximately 30 kilometres south of Geraldton to provide cleaner and cheaper energy.<sup>17</sup>

Although Margaret had only joined the Liberal Party in 2000, with her electorate office experience and more than a decade as a local government councillor and in community service, she had very good credentials for a political career. In the Legislative Council she served on the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission and was the shadow spokesperson for heritage and briefly the shadow spokesperson for science. In these capacities her parliamentary record indicates that she asked a number of parliamentary questions of the relevant Ministers. Nevertheless, her main focus was the representation and improvement of rural matters for the Agricultural Region. If ill health had not intervened she was very well credentialed for a parliamentary career in this direction.

#### *Reflections on the Member's Parliamentary Career*

In her Inaugural Speech Margaret Rowe said she would make no apology for speaking for the bush. Unfortunately, due to ill health, her time in the Legislative Council was limited. Nevertheless, when she did speak her views were sometimes cast in strong partisan terms. When addressing a motion by Hon Nigel Hallett 'that this house condemns the state government for its failure to provide adequate funding for vital infrastructure and development in rural and regional Western Australia',<sup>18</sup> Margaret opened with a quote from a discussion paper from the Committee for Economic Development for Australia. It had concluded 'there is strong evidence that investment in infrastructure has a positive and permanent effect on economic output...[and] generates higher returns than investment in other sectors of the economy'.<sup>19</sup> At one stage Margaret stated:

Growth in our mining sector is creating pressure on our ports. Despite the investment over the past decade, the economy is demanding even more port capacity. Geraldton is a prime example. The re-emergence of mining in the mid-west has created a well recognised need for a new port at Oakajee. It is interesting to recall the persistent criticism from Labor when the last Liberal government was planning and progressing the development of the Oakajee port and industrial area. Today, development of Oakajee is recognised by Labor as a necessity to meet the needs of the new iron ore producers and other miners and serve the broader community. I would like to hear why the government does not offer to put up \$200 million to help finance the Oakajee port development on a commercial basis, as it has done for other government ports, and allow it to be run privately without public sector and union control.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 4 May 2006, 2159.

<sup>17</sup> *WAPD(LC)*, 25 August 2005, pp. 4567-4568.

<sup>18</sup> *WAPD(LC)* 30 August 2006, p. 5401.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

... There is one unmistakable complaint common to regional Western Australia; that is, the lack of investment in roads. One of the key infrastructure projects that should be well underway by now, if not completed, is Indian Ocean Drive—the Lancelin–Cervantes road ... The benefits of the road are so widely recognised and so obvious that the Western Australian Tourism Commission regards the building of Indian Ocean Drive as the number one tourist priority for Western Australia. Those of us familiar with the area know that there will be a tourism explosion once that road is built. It will stimulate more tourism along the central coast by decreasing travelling times from Perth and making the region more accessible to tourists. The road will open up a range of job-creating investment opportunities in the regional areas. Places such as Lancelin, Cervantes, Jurien Bay and other coastal towns are waiting to explore opportunities that have been retarded by inadequate infrastructure.<sup>21</sup>

... I refer now to the infill sewerage program. Sadly, the infill sewerage program started by the Court government in 1994 continues to suffer due to Labor's irresponsible and incomprehensible funding cutbacks...Had Labor kept the program on track, the metropolitan area infill sewerage program would be nearing completion, as would the program in a number of country towns ... Although the program in many metropolitan suburbs suffers from delays due to Labor's unnecessary funding cuts, it is the lack of progress in rural areas that is particularly noticeable. Perth does not face the reality of effluent pouring down the streets due to the effects of heavy rain, nor does it endure, worse yet, open sewage ponds. The house was recently reminded that such experiences are a reality even for substantial towns such as Derby and Hyden ... The government's decisions are contemptuous of the needs of the community in Western Australia, especially in the regions.<sup>22</sup>

I refer now to railway lines in the mid-west. The pin-up project of the government's capital works program is of course the Perth to Mandurah rail link. According to the government's latest cost estimate, but almost certainly not its last, this project is now some \$500 million above the cost of the former Liberal government's budget for the Perth to Mandurah rail link. What is arguably of far greater economic importance to the state is the need to upgrade existing railway lines in the mid-west region and to build new ones ... This is where the government should have been making its railway investments for the future.<sup>23</sup>

... I draw my contribution to a close by reiterating the key points. First, Labor slashed funding on infrastructure that is critical to the regions, despite enjoying what may well be the biggest revenue bonanza in the state's history. It would be interesting to know whether our state's public coffers have ever enjoyed a five-year period such as this. Second, cuts to regional infrastructure spending come at a time of unprecedented demand from the resources sector for infrastructure in regional areas as well as demand driven by tourism and population changes. Third, Labor already has an infrastructure backlog, and it will grow. We are already at least \$1 billion behind the infrastructure needs that should have been met with better financial management and priorities. Fourth, Labor is mismanaging the good times and blowing opportunities to progress the state by failing to deliver public infrastructure to the regions, which is a fundamental government role. Fifth, Labor is again showing why the rural majority is right to reject Labor. Hopefully, Perth people will see it more clearly at the next election.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 5402.


<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 5403.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

## Death Notice



**ROWE (Margaret):**  
11.4.1949 - 21.3.2022  
Daughter of Mary and Arch  
Trahair (both dec).  
Sister of John, Greg (dec),  
Roslyn, Cheryl, Patrick  
(dec) and Paul (dec).  
Lifetime friend of John.  
Mum of Brad and Donna.  
Nannah to Hannah, Jonah,  
Ruby, Daisy, Summer and  
Ava. Great Nannah to Atlas  
Our beautiful Mum  
Resting Peacefully



West Australian, 23 March 2022, page 64