



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VALEDICTORY SPEECH

AND

VALEDICTORY REMARKS MOTION



HON KEN TRAVERS, MLC
(Member for North Metropolitan Region)

Legislative Council

Thursday, 25 August 2016

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APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2016–17) BILL 2016 APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2016–17) BILL 2016

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan) [2.32 pm]: Mr President, this is my one last blast, I guess. Today I thought that I would wear the tie that I wore during my swearing-in. I commence by acknowledging the Whadjuk Noongar people and pay my respects to their elders, past and present, for one last time in this chamber. It is good to see that Pokémon has brought a crowd into the gallery! It has clearly moved from Kings Park over to the public gallery.

I worked out that I have been a member of the Legislative Council for almost 170 000 hours, which I think makes the amount of time that I have spoken in this chamber quite reasonable, in fact, and quite modest. It is with a great deal of pride that I stand here never having missed a division. I hope the Whip and her predecessors appreciate that. It is also fitting that I make my final speech on the appropriation bills because when I arrived in this place, I knew very little about the state's finances. After 16 years on various estimates and finance committees of this house, I leave, I think, knowing too much about the state's finances, and sometimes their state depresses me.

It is often hard to know what to say as one leaves a place and as one who has had an experience like I have had over the last 19 years. It has been a great ride and an absolute privilege and I leave very proud of my contribution both here and in my electorate.

As I told my colleagues on Tuesday, all of us spend only a short time relative to history in this place. In fact, I note that it has been 1.1 million hours since responsible government was granted to WA. Our real legacy is in those who we influence and who continue to promote the values and ethics that we hold dear. It is for this reason that the comments from members around the chamber and from across my party—in fact since I announced my retirement—who say that they have learnt from me or appreciated the mentoring I provided them have been the most special to me over the last week.

I want to take a bit of time this afternoon to talk about my work on parliamentary committees and some of the portfolio and policy work I have been involved in, address some of the challenges that I think the state faces and, finally, say a lot of thankyou.

Let us talk about parliamentary committees. When I arrived here, I attempted to get on the then Estimates and Financial Operations Committee but was unsuccessful. But members will be pleased to know that I was appointed to the all-powerful library committee. There is a failure in my parliamentary biography in that it does not mention my membership of that committee. Sadly, I cannot tell members what that committee did because it was abolished before I ever got a chance to attend a meeting. However, sometime later I was appointed to the Select Committee on Immunisation and Vaccination Rates in Children. Excitedly, I did some research before the first meeting. Early in the meeting I shared the knowledge that I had built up about the countries around the world that I thought were doing good work in that area. From memory, they were the United Kingdom and Canada, or it could have been Germany. I said that we should try to get some more information about what they were doing over there that was so special. Later in the meeting, the question came up about the committee travelling. Someone quickly said, "Now, Ken, you want to go to the UK and Canada." I was quite shocked because I just wanted to get some information from them. I then discovered my first secret code of parliamentary committees. I can assure members that that committee never travelled.

In 2000, I chaired the Select Committee into the Finance Broking Industry in Western Australia, a politically charged and emotional committee. I remember holding back tears as we heard some of the evidence in that committee. I received a short but touching note this week thanking me for the work I did on that committee. I cannot say how much I appreciated it.

Also during that first term I was appointed to the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs, which in those days was the committee that looked after petitions. I have to thank the chair, Hon Murray Nixon, who taught me very early on how government and opposition members can work together for good outcomes on parliamentary committees and how we can recognise, manage and reconcile the different pressures each of us face depending on where we sit in the chamber. In fact, it also taught me that sometimes just a letter from a parliamentary committee can make a difference to someone who has been battling the bureaucracy for many years and can actually get the bureaucracy to change. One of the petitions that we commenced work on related to the erosion of private property rights.

After the 2001 election, I was appointed to the Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance, with, if I can say so, an excellent chair, whom of course the President knows very well! This committee continued the work on private property rights. After almost six years of my life, we finally tabled our report in 2004. I have a copy for anyone who wants one. Ironically, the issue of private properties or contracts and government views about the rights of individuals and compensation when the state takes those rights came up in the Standing Committee on Legislation that I was a member of, which reported in this house today.

Before I leave, I want to make some comments to members around this chamber. I remind them that governments are always—this is not a party-political comment—happy to legislate away our rights without compensation. In a state like Western Australia, which does not have a Constitution, this house is our only protection. I have noticed a growing trend in recent years. The Bell Group Companies (Finalisation of Matters and Distribution of Proceeds) Bill 2015, as noble as its modus may have been, would have offended the Australian Constitution if the commonwealth government had enacted it. All the asset sale bills that are coming through Parliament provide the power for government to break contracts and remove rights without compensation. We will be told that it is simply a precaution but, make no mistake, it sets the precedent and the precedent sets the future norm. In fact, only the other day, the Leader of the National Party went on radio and said that Parliament can legislate to override state agreement acts. I suspect that most of the ministers who introduce these types of bills do not even consider these matters. That is because they look at the big picture of the legislation and trust others with the detail. If this house does not stop that and send a clear message to those who draft these bills, I believe it will become a flood. I therefore urge all members to look seriously at this issue when it comes before this chamber in legislation.

Between 2005 and 2008, it was full-on committees for me. I think I got to be on five committees at one point—the Parliamentary Services Committee, the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young people, and the Joint Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations.

I want to share three lessons that I learnt from that time. Lesson one is that if we are government members on the delegated legislation committee and challenge regulations, we will actually protect our government. We are not doing a disservice to our government if we challenge regulations. We should not assume that anyone else has considered the best interests of our government. Ministers often sign off on regulations without looking closely at the detail, and they do not want to upset their departments in many cases. Lesson one: challenge—watch out for the bureaucracy extending its power.

At the time I was Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, the commissioner of the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Parliamentary Inspector were at loggerheads. That was an interesting and intimidating time for me. Fine legal points were being made that were well beyond my capacity to comprehend or even understand in many cases. However, moments like that reminded me to get back to basics and think about the outcome that we, as the Parliament, want. Others can sort out the detail of how we achieve that later on. We also need to focus on how we can improve relationships to ensure they are productive. Lesson two: focus on the outcome.

In 2005, the Joint Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations as we now know it was new. The structure and processes we established at that time are basically the same as the ones we use today. When I sat on that committee back then, I looked to the long term. I looked at what was good for the system rather than what was immediately politically expedient. I remember that the now Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council came in as a parliamentary secretary and was not very happy about the fact that we did not ask dorothy dixers in that committee. We got rid of them. I think that was a good thing, not just for that committee, but for the chamber and the way that we are viewed in the broader community. It is my view that ministers who still seek to use dorothy dixers—now that we have got rid of them—do so only because they are insecure in their positions. Sometimes it is hard for the chair of a committee to police the issues around dorothy dixers. However, members know when they are abusing that custom. I urge members to keep that tradition and not go back to dorothy dixers. I also ask members to remember that they are embarrassing themselves and the house. I appreciate the support of the Leader of the House on these matters. I know that does not occur in his committees and that he encourages the opposition to ask questions. I appreciate that. Lesson three: unless members are planning to be here for only a very short time, they should remember that one day they will sit on the other side of the chamber.

My last eight years on the estimates and financial operations committee have been a lot of hard work. It has also been very interesting, and a lot of fun, especially when I had Hon Ljiljana Ravlich join me on it, along with Hon Giz Watson and Phil Gardiner, and even the current members; I will make some comments about Hon Alanna Clohesy in a moment.

My final committee is the Joint Standing Committee on Audit. Having fought hard to get that committee established, and in fact once even asking a question about it during question time when we were in government, my last act as chair of that committee is to call for it to be abolished. The functions that are performed by that

committee are important. However, these functions can be undertaken by the estimates committee of this house; and, if necessary, the committee can confer with the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee under standing order 166. I want to thank all the members with whom I have served on committees. It has been a great time.

I turn now to some of my portfolio work. Whilst I have been in this place, I have had numerous parliamentary secretary or shadow ministerial roles—water resources; housing; disability services; state development, which at the time included mines, petroleum, industry and trade; small business; tourism; goldfields–Esperance; planning and infrastructure; transport; sport and recreation; electoral affairs; finance; suburbs; agriculture and food; infrastructure; wheatbelt; and midwest. I was even the acting shadow Treasurer for about a month at one point.

There are many highlights, and I have some proud achievements that I want to mention today. One is the creation of the Carers Recognition Act 2004. As shadow minister for disability at the time, I was assisted by my good friend Hon Cheryl Davenport, who joins us today, and who held the seniors' portfolio at the time, to develop a carers policy. One of the many outcomes of that policy was the Carers Recognition Act. It was great to work with Cheryl. She was a great mentor and taught me a lot about policy development, and the lessons that I learnt in that process have helped me throughout my career—so, thank you, Cheryl. The development of housing policy that resulted in the growth and expansion of social housing providers such as Access and Foundation Housing, which provide innovative and creative solutions to social housing options in Western Australia, is another achievement that I am proud of, and I hope to see them continue to expand.

My time as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Tourism was a highlight. In fact, I was very lucky to be made the parliamentary secretary to Minister Clive Brown, who had the portfolios of state development, small business, tourism and goldfields–Esperance. As I have mentioned, during those days the portfolio of state development included mines, petroleum, industry and trade. I appreciate Clive taking the time to call me this morning to wish me the best. At that time, Clive asked me to take a special interest in the tourism portfolio. I have to say that was an amazing two-year journey. Clive was someone who empowered you, supported you and trusted you, and I will be forever grateful for the fact that he did that with me. Clive taught me an amazing amount. Clive was a brilliant mentor and continues to be my friend.

At the time I was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Tourism, parliamentary secretaries were relatively new to Western Australian politics. It is fair to say that the tourism industry was at that point also fairly distrusting of Labor because of some things we had done before the 2001 election. Therefore, firstly, I had to convince the tourism industry that having a senior minister looking after strategy and a parliamentary secretary enthusiastically looking after the detail was a good thing and not a snub to the industry. At the same time, I had to regain the tourism industry's trust in Labor. On top of that, we encountered a series of disasters for the industry. We had the collapse of Ansett, the SARS epidemic, the Bali bombings and 9/11. Needless to say, we got very good at crisis management. However, we also did some good policy work.

[Interruption.]

Several members interjected.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: You can suspend me in an hour if you like, Mr President!

During this time, we reorganised regional tourism promotion into the five regions that continue to this day. That was opposed by many at the time, but I believe it has stood the test of time. We also attracted the Ironman event to Busselton. I still remember listening to the tourism officials outlining the idea of an event that attracts people from around the world to come here and swim 3.8 kilometres, ride 180 kilometres and run 42 kilometres. I must say I remember sitting there thinking, "You've got to be crazy. Only nut jobs would do that. Surely there would be only one or two people in the world who would do that." However, I think anyone who has been to Busselton for an Ironman will know that it now attracts hundreds of competitors, and it has expanded. Little did I know that one day I would go on and do an Ironman 70.3. I still think the people who do the full Ironman are completely crazy, of course! As I have said, I think we won over the tourism industry, and I maintain many friendships in the industry to this day.

During the time of Clive, I was also given responsibility for the carriage of a number of state agreement acts through this chamber that were essential for the establishment of the Gorgon project and for Fortescue Metals Group. I am very proud of that role. It was not always easy to get those bills through the house, with people like George Cash and Norman Moore not necessarily making it easy for me.

After that, I got to be involved in my policy passions of transport and planning as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. One bill that we introduced sought to modernise the taxi industry. We were successful in getting some reforms through this Parliament. At that time we offered fair compensation to the taxi industry as part of those reforms. Sadly, the industry and members opposite, who are now in government, opposed the reforms and they were not successful. At the time the Liberal Party made promises to that industry about returning to privately owned plates and a number of other promises. Thankfully, it did not keep its promises because if it had, there would now be twice as many families suffering financial hardship that the current

government chaos has created for the taxi industry. I make one final plea to members on the other side: people in the taxi industry are suffering. They made investment decisions because of policies the Liberal Party took to elections. These people invested in plates. They have debts of hundreds of thousands of dollars and they now do not have an income to support them. Please help them and help their families.

After I stood down as parliamentary secretary, I continued my involvement in transport and planning issues that predominantly focused on the north west corridor of Perth. I co-chaired the North West Corridor Coordinating Committee that worked on the many transport and planning issues faced by the corridor. The biggest challenge was to make the corridor sustainable and to increase the number of locally based jobs. Currently, close to 70 per cent of people in the northern corridor—in fact there are jobs for only 40 per cent of them—drive out of it every day. The Labor Party focused on that and, sadly, when it lost office, some of the work that was being done was never completed. I hope that when the Labor Party gets back into government that work can be completed. In fact, I hope the future member for North Metropolitan Region will continue that work and champion the Yanchep railway line and the sustainability of creating local jobs in that corridor.

It is at this point that I borrow from Madonna to make some comments about the time I was Hon Alannah MacTiernan's parliamentary secretary. I refer to her song titled *I'll Remember* —

I'll remember the strength that you gave me
 Now that I'm standing on my own
 I'll remember the way that you changed me
 I'll remember

The things I learnt from Alannah stood me in good stead when I became the shadow Minister for Transport in 2008 and also the shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation. I very much enjoyed that time with my good friend the member for Wagin, "Tuck". We were opponents but we also did a great job in making changes to different sports. I always appreciated the cooperative way we were able to work in that portfolio as both shadow and minister.

Transport was my first choice of portfolios. I realised when I got it that I had been a relatively low profile MP, so I set about building my profile and reputation on transport issues. It was a hard slog, researching and working hard to generate stories. If I got a small story up, I would be very happy. I would always smile when I was able to provoke Hon Simon O'Brien, then the Minister for Transport, to attack me by name in his press releases. Hon Simon O'Brien cannot imagine how pleased I was when he named me!

Hon Simon O'Brien: If only I'd known, I could have indulged you more!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It was a way of getting my name out to so many more journalists than I could!

My big break came when my old uni friend, whom I had met at my first meeting of the uni ALP, Troy Buswell, became minister. Firstly, it raised the status of the portfolio. If a minister is getting a lot of media attention, their shadow can normally work their work into a story at some point. Troy was also highly combative, so one always had to be on one's toes. Any mistake would be pounced upon and I often felt as though I was in a heavyweight title fight. I look at the shadow ministers today and say, "You get it easy!" Secondly, Troy took to regularly trying to attack and belittle me in the Legislative Assembly. I am proud of the fact that despite those many attacks, I am not sure that any of them ever made it into the media. I even won the Whips' trophy on our side. It normally goes to a lower house member who has been able to wind up the government well during the week. I became the first member of the Legislative Council to win it for the way I was able to wind up Troy without even being in the chamber! I think it helped me build my reputation with the media and I also learnt some good lessons. By the time I finished as shadow Minister for Transport, I was regularly fielding calls from the media. I almost had too much media. It was an amazing journey from where I had started. There is still one piece of unfinished business in that area—that is, trying to get compulsory third party insurance for boats. In the meantime I hope all members support Kate Campbell, who is currently appearing on *Australian Survivor*. She was the young woman who came to me about that issue.

I will talk about Metronet shortly. I want to share today an achievement I had as shadow Minister for Electoral Affairs. When I took over the portfolio, it struck me that many Aboriginal communities were being discriminated against because they did not have polling booths on election day, yet they had a mobile booth for two hours in the weeks leading up to it. I compare those communities with many towns across WA with far smaller populations that had a booth for all of election day. I prosecuted that issue and was very pleased when the Western Australian Electoral Commission ensured that five large Aboriginal communities were given election day polling booths at the last election. There is more to do but it is a good start. I congratulate the WAEC for what it has done so far but I believe it is an area that shows there is still structural racism in Western Australia.

I also must say I regret that I did not get more time in the agricultural portfolio. It is an exciting area and it is an exciting time for that portfolio. I made a lot of good friends, though, and I hope that they will stay in touch. In looking back at my time here, I took the opportunity to go back to my inaugural speech to see what I said then and how my career progressed. I was actually surprised that it pretty much covered my career. I laid out what I wanted

to do and that is pretty much what I have done. I talked about the need for jobs and employment. I talked about the need to invest in public transport and to link it to good land uses. Back in 1996, I called for new railway lines, including one to Ellenbrook. I talked about the need to get a focus on railway lines and to get good public transport into new subdivisions early. Since the 1960s we have known that good public transport into a suburb as it develops can change behaviour and ensure that we have a long-term change in the mode of transport that people share. It reduces congestion and it saves money. I am sure that members who have been in this place in recent times have heard me talk about the Yanchep railway line in exactly the same terms—the need to get it there, as the Liberal–National government said in 2011 when it argued it should be a transformational priority project. We need to get it in so that people start using public transport from the time they move into those subdivisions and continue to use it into the future. That way, there will be an increase in the sheer number of people using public transport.

I also spoke about the importance of regional centres. I am sure that members have heard me talk about that many times since. I also talked about the need for new funding sources.

I spoke about the need for reconciliation with our Indigenous Australians. I am very proud of the things I have done in that time to assist that reconciliation process. I will make some further comments about that later.

I spoke about addressing the country–city divide. I hope some of the work I did on things such as tier 3 rail have lived up to me meeting the challenge I set myself. I also spoke about the challenge for all of us to promote integrity in our positions as members of Parliament. I hope I have lived true to the ideals that I set out at that time. As I say, I was surprised at how consistent my focus was in this place to do what I set out to do.

I now want to look at some of the policies. Obviously my biggest contribution in public life, I hope, will be seen in the public transport area. I am very pleased that not only is Metronet Labor policy, but when I looked at the government’s recent draft plan, “Transport @ 3.5 million”, I saw it effectively adopts Metronet stages 1, 2 and 3 with the exception of a three-kilometre rail line between the Morley and Midland lines. I am confident that the logic of that connection will mean that it too will even be built by the other side, sadly, probably not until after I am dead, though—but I hope we will build it well before that. I am proud that that policy is now being adopted by all sides. Let us not forget that the new airport line will have two stations exactly in the locations where Labor said they would be, not where the Liberals promised them. The proposal for light rail that the Labor Party released in April 2011 is far closer to what that plan proposes than the promised MAX light rail put forward by those on the other side.

I want to quickly go through stages 1, 2 and 3 of Metronet. In July 2011 I released a document with Eric Ripper on stages 1 and 2 of Metronet. Mr Buswell immediately sought to attack it as being unrealistic and fanciful. He was especially critical of the idea of a tunnel running from Stirling underneath the University of Western Australia and the Swan River to the southern suburbs. Of course, anyone who looked at the transport plan the other day will know that that is exactly what the government is now suggesting we need. Members can imagine my delight when I read that plan to see that it was finally adopting Metronet in its fullest.

At a presentation last year I talked about stage 3 of Metronet. It was always my view that we would eventually need an underground tunnel in the CBD of Perth. I learnt two lessons from that process: keep the proposals easy for the public to comprehend, otherwise opponents will attack them; and that presentation is key, hence I spent a bit more time on Metronet. It was a document that the Premier unsuccessfully tried to ridicule. I had lots of great feedback from members of the public after that initial document was released. We eventually released the Metronet plan, which I called Metronet stage 1. I always expected that Metronet would ultimately have a city rail loop, and I discussed this last year. I note that the government plans to adopt this idea, but when it designs its zigzag line to Morley, it should make sure that the loop is incorporated into it and not make the same mistake of running it parallel to the existing lines.

I am also proud of the costings. If we forget about the spin, we got our costings pretty right. I remember very clearly at a briefing to the media prior to the start of the 2013 election that the opposition made it clear that our costings were in 2012 dollars with an allocation for escalation over the forward estimates, something that even senior public servants claimed to tell everybody was not the case, when in fact they were not even there. The costings we did have stood the test of time far better than the original \$1 billion costing for MAX that then became north of \$1 billion and, ultimately, most recently more than \$2 billion.

My last call is to urge people on both sides of politics to focus on the Yanchep line and the Thornlie–Cockburn line; they are the priority lines in my view. The Thornlie–Cockburn line is needed for the new stadium and Yanchep is necessary so we can get the change in behaviour early.

I wanted to make a few comments about the challenges the state faces. I do not think it would be a surprise to anyone here if I pointed out that I believe the state’s finances are stuffed. It is not just the level of debt; it is also the backlog of infrastructure and works that are now building up. We are dealing with the appropriation bills today. Since the budget was released, the government has made hundreds of millions of dollars of new announcements. They are all good announcements, but the problem is that they should have been part of the budget discussions. We

have now created in our community an expectation that government can do anything and everything and there will always be money for it, rather than government having to make decisions and tough choices about expenditure. Until we can get that spending addiction under control, the revenue side will not change anything. Dealing with revenue will not change it if the government has a spending addiction because as it gets more revenue, it will spend more and never make those tough decisions. We do not have robust forward estimates. Since the budget was announced, the government has given a \$2.50 discount at Utah Point. That is great, but it is \$20 million off the budget bottom line. The paraquad centre, Cape Leveque Road and the taxi reforms were put into the budget after the budget was signed off. The Minister for Education talks about a western suburbs school, but there is not a dollar in the budget for that. Robust forward estimates should have included the money for that school in the budget. The Department of Agriculture and Food tells us that it still expects a new headquarters, and it will need it because it needs the science research centres there. Yanchep police tell us they need a new police station. None of those things are in the forward estimates. Some of those have already been funded, but they were not part of the budget process.

If this state is going to get its budget in order, whoever is in government needs to set themselves the target of a cash surplus, not an operating surplus. Now that the finances are so damaged, we need to make the cash side of the budget, not just the operating side, in surplus. We need to do that very quickly. One way we can do that is to look at a compact with the union movement that will engage in wage constraint, but in return the government needs to keep increases in its own fees and charges at or below inflation. We need to trade off and ensure that people have job security again in the public sector as part of that compact.

We need to create jobs and build infrastructure. I urge future governments to look very much at investing in infrastructure in the non-financial public sector part of the government, which is the area that generates its own income—things like the outer harbour. Even building an Oakajee in readiness for the next boom would be a smarter thing than building infrastructure that is simply going to draw on recurrent expenditure of the government. The building of the Ocean Reef marina could be done through LandCorp so that, ultimately, it will be repaid through land sales if the figures provided by the City of Joondalup are correct. When we do projects, we need to have a far more rigorous budget process.

We still do not know the real cost of the Perth Stadium but we do know that there are ongoing costs, such as the money that has been put into attracting events to subsidise public transport at that stadium. We get a headline figure, but it is not the true cost because we do not have robust estimates. In fact, one of the things I would love to see in the future is a parliamentary budget office so that this chamber can be part of the process of holding governments to account.

I want to make some comments also about royalties for regions. I support royalties for regions but its failure has been the same as the way in which countries used to deal with developing nations. It is summed up by the old adage that you can give a person a fish and you feed them for a day or you can teach a person to fish and you feed them for a lifetime. I believe that royalties for regions has been focused on just giving people fish, not teaching them how to fish, by which I mean building infrastructure like Oakajee that will allow regional economies to grow and thrive. Too much has been put into just day-to-day expenditure, whereas if it had been invested in growing the economy in regional Western Australia, enhancing the supply chains for WA, those communities would be able to fund those activities themselves. There are many opportunities such as the Square Kilometre Array. There is an opportunity to invest and make sure that every port in Western Australia has the capacity for freight vessels to come in and out. We would have a domestic self-funding coastal shipping service but, sadly, we have not had one since State Ships has gone. What holds it back is reliable access to port space. I would love to talk about the GST but we need to get into the detail.

The other area I want to put on the map, which I think is a real strength for Western Australia, which will drive the economy into the future and which we do not use enough is the Telethon study. We have data in Western Australia that is world-class, which we should be using to invest in science at our universities—I love the fact that one of our Nobel Laureates is in the Parliament today as I say this—to attract the best researchers in the world because that will grow the economy. It is those knowledge-based jobs that will solve the problems of Western Australia. However, we must change expectations within both the Parliament and the community that government has an unlimited pool of money.

Finally, I suggest that rather than flogging off all the government assets and all the land in a fire sale, which will ultimately make very little difference to the budget bottom line, why do we not put it into an endowment fund for our universities or, better still, even use it to help build Metronet in the future. Sell that land when it is more valuable, not at the bottom of the market. By the time we sell the land, it will make very little difference to the budget bottom line.

I come now to some thank-yous. I start with Alex and Marcus from my office, who are here today and my honorary staff member Donna, who is not with us today. Thank you for all the work you have done. I think I can call Donna a bright young thing. I know they will have a big career in the Labor Party. Well done. To my former staff who have joined us here today, Trish Sinclair-Jones; Fiona Henderson, Chris Merfield, Michael Sheldrick and Julie Pettit, I say to each of you, you know what you have done and you know how you have supported me. Thank you

very much for your time and your effort. I am only as good as you have made me. For those staff who think I have left them out, I have not. I make special note of two staff members, Patrick Gorman and Emma Ramage, who have gone on to bigger and better things. They have a job ahead of them, one in the Leader of the Opposition's office and one in the party office. No pressure, but I am counting on you! Some other former staff are with us today. I do not know whether John Carey, our candidate for Perth is here, but I know he is watching online; Kelly Shay, number 3 on the North Metropolitan ticket; Matthew Swinburne, who is running for us in the Mining and Pastoral Region; and, especially, my current electorate officer, Emily Hamilton, who will be running for us in Joondalup. I look forward to coming here to hear your inaugural speeches and enjoying them very much. I know I am leaving this Parliament in good hands with those people. Thank you to all my staff for everything they have done. If I had one talent it was identifying good people.

I thank the Presidents I have served under. If people think I have known the standing orders too well and used them to my advantage, they can blame George Cash. He taught me extremely well. He was a great mentor to new members and I pay my respects to him, as was John Cowdell, who succeeded him. I used to sit where Hon Robin Chapple sits and had Cheryl Davenport on one side and John Cowdell on the other. I could not have asked for a better team to teach me about this place. I thank Nick Griffiths, whom I ran into last Friday and, of course, yourself, Mr President, over the last eight years. I thank you and Hon Adele Farina, all the Deputy Presidents and Deputy Chairs of Committee of the Whole for their tolerance and guidance and I apologise for my occasional unruly interjections and testing of the standing orders, although, Mr President, I might test your patience a couple more times before I finish today, so I ask for your forgiveness in advance.

Before I turn to other thankyous, I want to tell one more story about my good friend Troy. When I was trying to build my profile, taxis were a mess in the state. I campaigned about raising the standards and eventually, I thought: what about just before Christmas we call for rebranding taxis? Everyone else has yellow taxis so I said, "Let's paint them gold." As a result, Hon Troy Buswell proceeded to refer to me as Goldfinger ever after. My mother thought I needed something to go with the Goldfinger title, so she made me a lovely gold jacket. Thanks mum; I hope you are watching. Some people have said that it looks a bit like the one Joffa puts on when he thinks Collingwood has won, so to the Collingwood fans in the chamber, I am putting it on today because I am confident my colleagues are in the final quarter and will go on and win. I am Joffa today and putting on the gold jacket, confident my team has got it—but do not stop working.

I say to the Clerks and the chamber staff, thank you. When I first came here Laurie Marquet was the Clerk. All I can say is Laurie Marquet! Mia Betjeman was here for too short a time. I hope Malcolm Peacock is watching and chilling the champagne for when I finally join him on the grey nomad circuit. He was an excellent Clerk and I particularly admired that he worked his way up from being a member of the chamber staff to becoming the Clerk of the Parliaments in this place. Nigel, you have had some tough times and my thoughts have always been with you and Penny and I have very much enjoyed the fact that we could get you back from Tasmania. All the Deputy Clerks; the chamber staff, Hayley, Peter, Brian and all the people who regularly help us work in here. To the library staff, thank you. Thank you to all the committee staff who are too numerous to mention, but I will mention one who has been there since my very first standing committee, David Driscoll; thanks for all the times. I wish I could name all the committee staff who have made me look good as a committee chair or a committee member. To the catering and bar staff, Anthony, Maria, Lee, Mark, Enno and of course Deb. I am not sure what I will do in my life without getting a cup of tea every day from Deb. Thank you very much. Mr President, I have never forgiven you for stealing her from the parliamentary bar to be your attendant. I thank reception and the security staff, especially the boy from Mirrabooka, Lance, who is a friend. I have very much enjoyed the fact that he has kept me balanced throughout this time. In fact Lance was the first to recognise that I struck a very good resemblance to that fine looking chap Hymie from *Get Smart*. To Rob Hunter and the Parliamentary Services Department and all the other staff who make this place work, I say thank you. Thank you to the Education Office and Michael Loney, who I once saw being Prince Charming with horses falling off the stage at the Bristol Old Vic. Finally, and most importantly, thank you to all the—fantastic to have you in here Barb, although I am not sure I am supposed to mention that—Hansard staff, Barb, Jacqui, Bryce, Giles and all of them. They have taken my gibberish and turned it into prose. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

To my colleagues in this chamber, firstly, government members, we might not always agree but I know we have all shared the motivation of trying to do the best thing by our community. Peter, I appreciate the way you have led this place and tried to lift the standards of question time. I understand how hard it is, even as a parliamentary secretary, to sometimes get colleagues in the other place to understand the way we operate up here. To all members on the other side, I have enjoyed the relationships we have had across the chamber. Fight it hard in here but be nice outside.

To all my colleagues on this side whom I have served with, including Mark McGowan and Sue—the leadership of the Labor Party—I wish you all the very best in the upcoming election. It has been fun, challenging and productive. I am confident—that is why I put the jacket on—that you will go on to form government. If my leaving causes a little bit of stress for you, with the help of Darren West I have brought along a stress train for you all. I have one

for each of you. In fact, I might leave one for the future President and the Leader of the House, who I suspect will be the Leader of the Opposition, because they will need it when Alannah gets here! To all of the staff in Mark McGowan's office, I say thank you very much. There are too many to mention, but I think Rod, who looks after us in the upper house, deserves a special mention.

I did want to do one other thing before I finish up today. When I came into this place, Dr Judyth Watson gave to me this picture that had been presented to her. She said to me at the time, "Don't ever forget, Ken; this is what it's all about." To me, this picture has always represented the enduring Labor values of fairness, equity and opportunity. In fact, I had one opportunity to rely on this picture very much when I got a phone call late at night from one of my colleagues, who said, "Everyone's agreed that we should reach a policy position as the Labor Party to change our position on native title to support the government's position on the bills that were knocked back by the High Court." I said, "I don't agree. If we can't stand for something as important as native title, it's not worth me being here." Thankfully, that was done whilst Geoff Gallop was overseas and when Geoff returned, that attempt to change our policy fell through. I got so much pride watching the Premier, who had been part of the group that had said that people would lose their backyards if native title got in, proudly signing the south west agreement. Anyway, I undertook that I would pass on this picture to another member when I left this place. I have agonised long and hard as to which member I should pass it on to, and hopefully to be a reminder for all of my Labor colleagues about our Labor values of fairness, opportunity and equity. I pass it to my colleague with whom I have served on the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, Alanna. It has been great on the estimates committee. I know that you already understand those values, but I am hoping that because you are the secretary of caucus, it might occasionally get hung in the caucus room! I know that you will do it with pride and I hope you will pass it on to a member when you leave this place. To my other colleagues, it was a hard decision. I reckon the hardest thing I had to do today was to work out whom to give it to. I hope it also shows that we can work even across our sub-factions in this case!

To all my friends in the gallery, for those who are watching across the globe, whether in Sydney, Melbourne, Croatia—see, John; I mentioned it—Paris, New York or wherever they are, and the ones who are completely ignoring me, I say thanks for your support and friendship. To my families, my friends in the many unions, all party members, members with whom I have sat on policy committees—Tony, I saw you up there—and all the people across my electorate—the mayors, councillors and ordinary people in my electorate with whom I have worked over the last 19 years—I say thank you.

I want to mention four of my parliamentary colleagues who have been particularly special to me. To Simone McGurk, you were a friend before you got to this place, you became a colleague and when I leave you will still be a friend, I hope. To Peter Tinley, Peter's family and my family have known each other since he was five and I was six. We had a slight 40-year break, but to Peter, all the very best. To my good friend the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party, Roger Cook—in my inaugural speech I predicted that Roger would make a great contribution to this state. Mate, it has taken you a bit longer than I expected, but I think your time is about to arrive.

Now to my family. To my brothers and their partners and their children, some of whom are with us today, and particularly my nieces and nephews, Skye, Tanwyn, Anjea, Cushla, Toby, Darcy, Clancy, Tom and Louie—thanks for your friendship, your support and making my life a better one. Thanks also for bringing into my life Laurie jnr, Arlo, Lyla and Sietta. To my mum and dad—I hope you are listening and thanks for everything. I hope I have made you proud. To my parents-in-law, Arthur and Joy—it has been an absolute privilege to be part of your family. To my friend, my sister-in-law and the member for Mirrabooka—tomorrow you will be back to being my sister-in-law, because I am not sure that she counts me as a friend as much these days. Thank you, and thank you especially for introducing me to your sister, Jodie. Finally, to Jodie—I am sure every member of this place understands that you cannot do this job without the support of your partners—thank you for supporting me and putting up with me. Thank you also to your children, Cara, Alex, Luke and Kate, for letting me share your highs and lows, your joys and delights and your lives in general. Most importantly, thank you for letting me be a part of the lives of Chloe, Amy, Olivia and Cy.

I concluded my inaugural speech by saying —

I hope I will be a member of this place for some time, but not too long.

I hope I have got it about right. So now, Laine McDonald, it is over to you; no pressure, but the job is for you. I wish you all the very best, and also to Alannah. Thanks to everybody. I hope I have not missed anyone. In this speech I am sure there is someone I have missed. Goodbye and best wishes.

[Applause.]

HON KEN TRAVERS — VALEDICTORY REMARKS

Motion

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [3.31 pm] — by leave: I move without notice —

That this house expresses its appreciation to the retiring Hon Ken Travers for his significant contribution to the Legislative Council and the state of Western Australia over the last 19 years as the member for North Metropolitan Region.

On behalf of WA Labor, I thank my friend of some 30-odd years for his service to the good people of the North Metropolitan Region, to the Parliament, to the people of Western Australia and to the Labor Party.

The conventional public wisdom is that politicians are held in very low regard. Hon Ken Travers is an example of what is good about politicians—that is, a person who is deeply committed to public service. Public service is honourable and so is Hon Ken Travers, not only in the title he was given by being a member of this place. Public service Ken Travers style means this: he works hard, he does his research, he advocates strongly, he follows up the detail, he is pragmatic and realistic, he manages expectations, he looks after stakeholders and he brings people with him. He is a campaigner par excellence. The Labor Party owes him a debt. When he told me of his final decision last Tuesday, I told him privately, and I tell him now, that his leaving is a loss to the Labor Party, but we respect his decision to go at his choosing.

I wish that he could stay to be a part of what I hope will be a Labor victory in March next year, but I look forward to the role he will play. I know his commitment to a strong electoral outcome for Labor in Western Australia, particularly in the northern suburbs, means that he will be a campaign leader in the north despite doing so in a different guise.

I personally will miss Ken's assistance in the management of our business in this place. I will miss his confidence on matters relating to standing orders, although I am absolutely confident that he will be only a text or a tweet away.

If I have to sum up Ken in one word—although, as one of my colleagues quipped earlier today, we note that this is not something that Ken himself could do—it would be assiduous. He is his hard working in every task he sets himself. He is assiduous in making sure that the process and not just the outcome is right, which means that he understands that relationships matter. Numbers will get the outcome you seek, but sometimes if your relationships with others across the aisle are respectful and strong enough, you can achieve the same outcome. Ken's relationships, formed particularly in his work on committees, demonstrate just that. He is assiduous in his portfolio work. Some electoral cycles see members trying to save seats. For us, the 2013 election was partly about that. There is no doubt that Ken's baby, Metronet, saved us seats. We are grateful for that. When, if elected next year, we implement Metronet, that will be his legacy.

Hon Ken Travers is clearly not so assiduous about his fashion choices. I do not know what is worse today—the gold jacket or the grey knitted vest! He is assiduous in other matters.

Hon Ken Travers: You've got to get with the times.

Hon SUE ELLERY: My point exactly!

The team will miss Hon Ken Travers. I am confident that this house will miss him. I wish he and Jodie all the best for the future. I know that I will see him on the campaign trail and I know that our success in the North Metropolitan Region in 2017—and, I hope, widely across Western Australia—will be in no small part down to the work done by Hon Ken Travers.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [3.36 pm]: I stand to support the motion moved by Hon Sue Ellery acknowledging the contribution of Hon Ken Travers during his time in Parliament. I say most sincerely that I have great respect for Hon Ken Travers, whom I regard as a friend. I like to think that we will certainly see each other around the traps in the North Metropolitan Region post today.

In the adversarial nature of Parliament, in some instances it is very easy to lose sight of the nature of individual traits and qualities. I certainly have not done that. We have in that time, of course, had our moments both in committee work initially and in Parliament. But, as I said, in the adversarial nature of Parliament, that is inevitable. Above and beyond that, the relationship I have had personally with Hon Ken Travers has been overwhelmingly positive, and I doubt very much that too many people on this side of the chamber who would prosecute an argument to the contrary.

When I first came into this place in 2005, I found it, as most new members do, quite intimidating. One member I found quite intimidating was Hon Ken Travers. He is a very tall man, even from my perspective, and he has a booming voice. He has an extraordinary understanding of the parliamentary process and of everything related to policy formation. I sat with Ken on the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations inquiry into the

Balga works issue. Again, my understanding or opinion of Hon Ken Travers did not shift. He was quite formidable and very forensic in that process. Even though at times we had differences of opinion, what came out of the committee report was very positive and testament to the contributory work of Hon Ken Travers.

I regularly see Hon Ken Travers at events and functions in the North Metropolitan Region, a region we share as representatives. His knowledge of individual people and issues in the North Metropolitan Region is second to none. In my role as minister, I have had less time to spend in my electorate, which is an unfortunate consequence of the office of minister, but Hon Ken Travers has prosecuted arguments and advocated issues relating to the North Metropolitan Region with me in a very professional manner.

In the Parliament, I think all of us on this side of the chamber agree that Hon Ken Travers has been right up until today a formidable adversary. He is fastidious with facts, figures and his understanding of standing orders. His participation in debates is always extremely well researched and well presented and at times compelling. In addition, his committee work is second to none. His role as Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations over recent years is really commendable. In estimates hearings et cetera he is always fair, balanced and professional. I know that all of us on this side of the chamber respect that aspect of his character and the role that he has played. In policy formation, we are all very conscious of the profile that Hon Ken Travers gave to the transport portfolio. He raised the bar and we had to improve our act as well.

I am not one for regrets because we cannot really reconcile regrets, and I try to avoid them if I can. I guess the only disappointment that I have, and I mean this sincerely, as I said the other day—I am not sure whether Hon Ken Travers shares this—is that it is a travesty that he was never a minister.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I know. As I said, never regret it. You can look back on what you have achieved over the last 20 years and be proud. I think you would have ultimately made a good minister.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Hon Ken Travers in the electorate. I have enjoyed working with him in Parliament. I have thoroughly enjoyed his company. I wish him all the best. I thank him most sincerely for the work that he has done over many years for the electorate, the Parliament and the people of Western Australia. This is just the start for you, mate; the best is yet to come.

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [3.41 pm]: I would like to thank Hon Ken Travers for teaching me so much in this place. I entered this place in 2001. My first observation was that I had to deal with a parliamentary secretary named Ken Travers. I think the first thing he taught me was how not to ask parliamentary questions. I used to come out and ask, “Why did you do this?” or something like that, and I would get this one-line answer. After studying the responses I got, I thought that this bloke knows what he is on about.

My father always said to me, “Always argue the point and not the person.” If anybody has been able to do that in this chamber in a way that I have really acknowledged and appreciated, it is you, Ken. I mean that. Whilst he can go after people on policy and detail, he has never gone after them personally. I find that a really admirable trait. As I say, I look up to him. That is nothing to do with his height or my shortness either!

I have been the butt of many of Ken’s jokes, and I have appreciated them and I have never taken any umbrage at them. I remember being called a watermelon by Hon Peter Foss—green on the outside and red on the inside. Ken has never stooped quite to that level.

I have watched Ken do many things. I am an ex-stockbroker. I originally had some training in economics but I decided to leave all that behind and forget that. Ken’s diligence and level of forensic ability and ability to investigate has always astounded me, and I have learnt a lot from that. Having recently served on the Standing Committee on Legislation with Ken and watched that forensic nature again, I stand in awe of you, sir. You are a real professional. Also, Hon Ken Travers is a parliamentarian before being a politician. Thank you, Ken. I have enjoyed the ride with you. It has been only 12 years. I know you have been here a little longer. I have appreciated you as a friend but also as a really important member of this chamber. There is one thing that we remember from time to time. I noted Ken’s comments about Hon George Cash when he said that there are people who stick in your mind and you remember over time for having been good parliamentarians; others disappear into the ether. Ken, I hope that this place will always remember you as a good parliamentarian.

HON COL HOLT (South West — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.44 pm]: I rise on behalf of the WA Nationals to lend my support to the motion. I am glad that Hon Ken Travers opened with a description of how many hours he had been in this chamber. I think he absolutely undersold himself on the amount of time he spent contributing to debates in this house. Although I have been here for only seven of his 19 years, I remember quite a few of his speeches in this place that contributed to those many hours of debate. Who could forget the long debate when we stayed here until 10 o’clock in the morning or 12 noon the next day? Although I cannot forget it, I cannot remember anything he said that day. Even though it was repeated five or six times, I cannot remember any of the content but I remember the contribution.

Hon Ken Travers: I never repeated myself at all that night. There was no repetition.

Hon COL HOLT: I am sure there were a few points of order. He has made a fantastic contribution.

I would really like to quote from one of the member's speeches that I found to be an absolutely fantastic contribution. It was to the motion on the Anzac commemorations on 23 April 2015. That day the honourable member had been to an Anzac Day commemoration. He borrowed the speech from Flight Lieutenant Daniel Hodgson. I thought the contribution he made to the house that day was fantastic. With the indulgence of the house, I would like to read some of that speech that Hon Ken Travers contributed to the debate that day. He said —

... Anzac, which was initially a set of initials, changed from being initials to become a word. I will now quote directly from his speech.

That is, the speech of Flight Lieutenant Daniel Hodgson. He continued —

The actions of the first Anzacs forged what has become known as the Anzac spirit. It is the Anzac spirit that is the driving force behind all Australian servicemen and women ever since.

He then went on to point out to the students in the audience that it is not to just the serving men and women that we can apply that Anzac spirit. He identified three compelling qualities of the Anzac spirit. The first one was —

The Anzac spirit represents a sense of purpose and direction. The original Anzacs knew what they had to do and also understood how dangerous and difficult it would be. Yet, they got on with the job and did not let the difficulties stop them ...

...

Secondly, he identified that the Anzac spirit represents an acceptance of responsibility. Again, I want to quote Mr Hodgson, who said —

Take responsibility for everything you do. It is easy to say "I did that" or "That's my work" when everything goes right. However, we all know that sometimes, things don't go right. Sometimes you do something which is against the wishes of your parents and teachers. Remember the Anzac spirit and take responsibility for what you are doing. Don't play the blame game!

... Finally, the third Anzac spirit that he identified for the Currambine Primary School students was a sense of compassion, and that this is summed up in the Australian experience as mateship. He went on to talk about how they should treat their fellow students. He encouraged them to follow the Anzac spirit and said —

If you do this, not only will it make you a better person, but you will be keeping the faith with those who put the word Anzac into our language. That way, you will be helping to make sure that the Anzac spirit is always a part of life in Australia.

While we do not always agree on the content of the speech, I say to you, sir, that I admire your Anzac spirit, I respect your Anzac spirit and I think your Anzac spirit has shone through in the Australian Labor Party, the North Metropolitan Region, the Parliament and all of Western Australia. I wish you and your family well. You should be proud of your contribution in this place and your family should be absolutely proud of the contribution you have made in this place.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [3.49 pm]: I want to briefly place on the official record my appreciation to Hon Ken Travers. We started in this place on 22 May 1997. In the ensuing time, we have had many experiences, as members can well imagine. I simply want to say to you, Ken, that I am enriched as a result of our interaction over the years. There have been times, of course, when we have disagreed about matters. But you are entitled to be mistaken about things, as anybody is, and I forgive you!

Hon Ken Travers: Please use a cliché!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Heaven forbid!

I wish you all the best. I must admit that since Tuesday or whenever, when you surprised us, I have contemplated whether I want to make a bolt for it and beat you out the door. I will not be doing that. I sincerely offer you my very best wishes. I know how hard you have worked. The fact of the matter is we do not last long in this game without acquiring scars. Indeed, if we have not acquired any scars, we probably have not been a player. I am sure that you, Ken, and I for that matter, have scars, but they are to your credit. Wear them with pride—and please give my regards to Malcolm when you crack that bottle of champers that you alluded to earlier in your remarks! See you next time.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Members, I rise on behalf of all members and staff of the Legislative Council to add some comments and acknowledge the service of Hon Ken Travers to the Legislative Council and to the state of Western Australia for slightly more than 19 years. Much has been said today by various people about the contribution Ken has made to this institution and the community, and you can be rightfully proud of your contribution to this institution, the Parliament in general, the state of Western Australia and your electorate.

I particularly recognise your comments today on the erosion of private property rights. That is a journey we shared on the Standing Committee on Public Administration for about eight years. That culminated in the tabling of our report in 2004. Regrettably, there has been very little positive response from government to the findings and recommendations of that report. However, you made some very wise and astute observations on some other elements of that issue that are consistently cropping up here in Parliament and in the community. That is an issue that as a free society we need to take seriously and address.

You have obviously put a lot of thought and work into your valedictory speech, too, and I congratulate you on that. Often history is written about members of Parliament by people who refer to our inaugural speeches and our valedictory speeches. I am sure that the content of both your speeches will provide a very good analysis of your positive contribution to this place. Congratulations on your contribution and your legacy.

Congratulations also on your contribution through your representation of the North Metropolitan Region. To be a member of Parliament in public life is a unique privilege. It can be, and often is, satisfying and rewarding. But we all know that at times it can be very challenging and frustrating, and often harsh and depressing, in terms of what is said by people and elements of the media about people in public life.

We all do well when we leave this place—sometimes at a time of our choosing and sometimes not—to have the respect of others and our own credibility, and you certainly have that. So I congratulate and thank you, Ken, and wish you all the best for the future.

Question put and passed.

The PRESIDENT: That was passed unanimously!
