



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VALEDICTORY SPEECH



HON PAUL LLEWELLYN, MLC
(Member for South West)

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL — RETIRING MEMBERS

Wednesday, 20 May 2009

Legislative Council

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Valedictory Remarks — Motion

Resumed from 19 May on the following motion moved by Hon Norman Moore (Leader of the House) —

That this house expresses its appreciation to retiring members for their significant contribution to the Legislative Council and the state of Western Australia.

HON PAUL LLEWELLYN (South West) [4.15 pm]: This being my last address, effectively, to the house, I will say that we—that is, the collective we, this Parliament—will not be judged by our peers; we will be judged by our children and our children’s children on not what we said in this place but in actual fact what we did, when we did it, how we did it and whether we did it with integrity. Through the course of this last speech of mine I will revisit how I started in this house, which was with my inaugural speech. I will take a few paragraphs from that speech and review it to see where we have gotten to. I will also honour the institution of the Parliament because, in actual fact, I have learnt a lot about this institution and I honour the societal institutions that we use to govern our countries and our states. I will then talk about my colleagues and staff, the people who have worked with me over the past four years, and then the most important event that has happened in the past week or two—that is, the change in Parliament with new Greens (WA) members coming into this house and, indeed, a new Greens member going into the lower house.

Without indulging myself too much, I will read a few lines from my inaugural speech because this is the way in which I will reflect on the day I came into this place and where I have gotten to. I started by saying —

I address this chamber for the first time. However, the year is not 2005. In fact, the year is 2055. It is the forty-ninth Western Australian Parliament. That is just 50 years from now. Members, please imagine that this house is being addressed not by me, but by one of your great-grandchildren, probably via virtual telecommunication conferencing technology. By 2055 the population of the South West Region that I represent has trebled to more than 800 000, while the population of Perth has decreased significantly. World oil prices skyrocketed in the first decade of the century, and that has driven extraordinary investment in energy-efficient technologies, with more efficient cars, more efficient appliances and more efficient industrial processes ... As the transport costs have increased, there is a trend towards the re-localisation of population centres, industry and agriculture. An explosion of new technologies, innovation and adaptation, combined with forward-thinking —

I will stop at this point and pause for thought —

government policy, has drought-proofed the Western Australian economy from global energy shortages. All the major centres throughout the South West Region—Northam, Bunbury, Margaret River, Narrogin, Pemberton and Walpole—have been linked by high-speed electrified rail networks. Those centres are well-serviced and compact urban areas, with light rail and public transport systems. Fuel cell electric powered vehicles have replaced the “infernal” combustion motors of the last century. Cities have become clean, safe, quiet and people-friendly places in which to live and work ...

I continued —

Agroforestry, integrated with water catchment management, has revitalised rural communities and secured regional water supplies ... The south west has become a largely self-reliant agricultural region. Western Australia is exporting bio-safe chemical-free agricultural produce as a result of an extensive program of research and development into clean and safe organic agricultural systems introduced by Hon Kim Chance early in the new century.

At that moment, Hon Kim Chance said, “Hear, hear!” That is true. It continues —

The South West Region’s renowned native forests and extraordinary biodiversity ... has become the basis of an internationally recognised tourism industry based on sail and solar powered ocean liner technology. Timber is sourced exclusively from farm forestry programs.

Cities, towns and many households actually produce their own power, process their own sewage locally and supply their own water on site. Power transmission lines, and massive sewerage and water reticulation infrastructure, all of which were showing signs of disintegration early in the century, are now almost

entirely a thing of the past as households and regions become more self-reliant. Western Australia has regained world leadership in solar power technology after the silicon smelter near Bunbury, which produced nearly one-fifth of the world's high-grade silicon in the first decade of the century, was converted into a centre of excellence for renewable energy technology.

That is, solar power. It continues —

The Western Australian ministry of energy and resource efficiency, ... was established following the 2005 ...

I think that was a bit ambitious. We have overshot that mark. Nevertheless, the concept is that there is a department of energy and resource efficiency. It continues —

Western Australia has been weaned off its economic dependence on mineral and energy exports to become a more self-reliant, balanced and robust economy.

Back then, I put on the table a proposition that I would be working towards turning around Western Australia's economy and bringing forward a new economic and environmental vision. I think that we went some way towards doing that.

Before I look at the way in which I have worked in my electorate, I will honour the institution of this Parliament. In doing so, I want to name some of the good, the bad and the ugly aspects of this place. I think it is important that I do all of that. Fundamentally, the good part of this whole institution is in fact the people—the people whom I have come to work with on a day-to-day basis such as the chamber staff, the committee staff and the other people who serve the Parliament and its institutions.

Another good part of the Parliament has been the parliamentary process. I have come to understand the history of the parliamentary institutions and how they are able to deliver order and clarity in bringing forward new directions for society. I have also come to understand how they can frustrate the progress towards new institutions and a better society.

I said that I would use the good, the bad and the ugly. The bad stuff is the lack of a clear model that this institution, and in fact this Parliament, provides for the people who come to visit it. The institutions are trapped in the past. This building is unsustainable and inefficient. In spite of the fact that it is well appointed, we still have a very large footprint in terms of the amount of energy and water we use. Late at night when I am going home—I went home at 11.30 or 12 o'clock last night—and I see the sprinklers come on and water the roads and the verges, I think, "What are we doing? Why isn't the Parliament of Western Australia providing a model for water-efficient gardens?" It is a beautiful place—do not get me wrong. I think that the gardens that replaced that magnificent lemon-scented gum show us how we can very rapidly transform the gardens into a water-efficient environment, but we do not do it. I think that the Parliament needs to be a model for society and should look at those things, in the same way that the New South Wales Parliament has made a commitment to reduce its ecological footprint by becoming more efficient and being a model for the rest of the community. We are trapped in some of these inefficient and, as my son would say, old-school ways of doing things.

I was reflecting on the dress code that was sent to members and how inappropriate it was to advise members of Parliament, particularly women, how they should dress, without an equivalent code for the men. I do not believe that we should disrespect the institution of Parliament by dressing badly or anything like that, but it certainly puts us clearly in the past and not in the present, and certainly not in the future. When we invite young people to come into this place, we expect them to conform to a dress code of the past, and I believe we can address that. I personally have kept my tie on, although I must say that it is very, very thin, and people have noticed that. I just think that having an institution that is grey and old school does not lend itself to moving forward and becoming a new society that is forward looking. That was part of the bad features. I think I went on for too long.

I will also look at some of the ugly features of this place and name them. Some of the behaviour in this chamber, and particularly in the other chamber, leaves me ashamed to say that I am a member of Parliament—the heckling and the disrespectful discourse that happens. I am not innocent of it. I found myself getting drawn into it. I believe that we need to look at those ugly parts of this institution.

I also think that another aspect of my parliamentary experience that has been ugly has been to see people on this side of the chamber and on the other side of the chamber change their stripes overnight as the government has changed. It does not augur well to have people making complete backflips on their position, and almost complete backflips in the way in which they represent the arguments and cases. If we are to have an institution of integrity, people need to be good to their word. I would say that at least the Greens (WA) have attempted to maintain that axiom that members must be good to their word, and say what they mean and mean what they say. I would like us to challenge those ugly aspects of parliamentary democracy.

I should finish on a positive note. I have had a very, very productive and fruitful time in this house, and I would like to honour the members who are in this chamber and, in fact, anyone who comes into the Parliament. I know from my personal experience of working with many of those members that everyone comes into the Parliament with a clear vision and with some hopes and dreams of making a difference. I have honoured that in the work that I have done in the Parliament. I have also honoured that in my work with the committees. For me, it is important that I acknowledge each and every person in this room and the staff for the contribution that they are making to democracy in Western Australia.

I would like to thank some of the colleagues with whom I have had to work very closely—in the first instance, Hon Giz Watson, on my right, who is a comrade and friend. She has been a longstanding friend since 1975 when we first met when we went to university together. We both studied environmental and life sciences. It has been a great journey with Giz, because we are not just friends; Giz challenges me with the high standards she sets. I do not know if many people come to Parliament House after hours, but if they came to our office, they would find that Giz's desk has not got one sheet of paper on it. Most people say that if a desk is that neat, nothing is being done. Nothing could be further from the truth. I found out where the papers go. I must say that I am slightly competitive and I would meticulously order all the papers on my desk, because my desk looked so untidy against the high standard that was set by Giz—nothing on her table, just the phone! I found out where all those papers go. Giz has a Perth-based office and she chucks them all in a bag and she takes them there! They are behind her desk in her Perth office, and members should see what that looks like! I have got that off my chest! Giz has been a fantastic mentor and has set extremely high standards, which, of course, I never met. As everyone knows I drop the ball, I break the rules and I do all sorts of things. Giz makes up for it.

I would also like to say that I have some excellent staff. In fact, all my staff have been excellent. To service the electorate and the vision that we put forward in that first speech, I chose people who were better than I am. I think they are listening, so I have to say that! I chose as my staff people who are more intelligent and more capable than I am. I was the only person in the office who was allowed to be mad or who could lose the plot. I needed people with the skills and the intellect and intelligence to keep me on track. Thanks to Elizabeth Gauci; to Sonia Anderson in the Denmark office; to Cheryl Reid, who supported the beauty and order in the office and made sure that all my forms were filled in on time; to Adele Carles—members will know that name!—who was my electorate officer in Perth; to Annie Mayo, who served in our office in Denmark; and to Sally Pamberger, who served me as a personal assistant in Perth and from whom Adele Carles took over. All those people were capable and effective people, and we worked as a team.

My staff and I have been on a number of interesting adventures because our electorate office became a central clearing house for the parliamentary work that I had to deal with as a Greens (WA) representative in the upper house, and because not many people make any distinction between the upper house and the lower house—and as we had no lower house members to forward complaints to—we were dealing with queries from individuals from electorates across the state. As a Greens member I was not only dealing with the parliamentary workload, but also representing the hopes, aspirations and vision of a whole new green community. When something is going wrong that has anything to do with the environment, members of that community will call the Greens (WA) office. We had two portfolios, the social justice issues and the environment and economy side, which was pretty hard going. Anybody who has a concern about the environment or the economy telephones the Greens because we give them agency; we give them a voice. And because we are known to give those issues a voice, we get a lot of people coming through the door.

There were other people who worked in our office on a voluntary basis. I will alert members to a mouse plague that I have unleashed on the community. It is a YouTube video called *21st Century Mouse* made by a film company called Squeaky Clean Productions. It is a vision for what the future would be, if we got it right; some town mice and some country mice show how they would use their water and energy resources. I encourage members to go to YouTube and type in “wapaullewellyn” and click on any one of the titles to see what Squeaky Clean Productions from the Denmark electorate has been producing. I will send a link to the Minister for Energy particularly, because it shows a vision that the mice worked out for a clean, green future by becoming more efficient and investing in clean energy. Members should have a look at *21st Century Mouse*. I would like to thank Craig Chapelle from the Denmark community; Michael Hemmings, the filmmaker; and Xavier Waterkeyne, the writer for those productions. I was going to produce a CD of maps and graphs showing my vision for the future, but Xavier came to me and said, “What makes you think that putting together a DVD with a PowerPoint presentation with maps and graphs will communicate what you stand for?” He said how about a story about some town mice and some country mice; the town mice lived in a very big town indeed, and being town creatures they liked their creature comforts, and so on. Members should look at it.

Finally, I would like to turn to some of the initiatives that the Greens (WA) have put on the table by way of getting to this vision. If somewhat out of sequence, I will name the bills I have put on the table on behalf of the Greens. Our Western Australian Electricity Industry (Western Australian Renewable Energy Targets) Amendment Bill

2005 for a 20 per cent production of renewable energy by 2020 was passed with thanks from the Greens to the Liberal-Nationals and the Independents. That would transform regional Western Australia into the powerhouse of the state. The Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction (Hot Water Systems) Bill 2007 would result in the shutting down of coal-fired power stations because of the use of solar hot water services. The Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction (Power Stations) Bill 2008, which sets an emission targets for power stations in Western Australia, would mean—this is directed to the Minister for Energy—that those people who say they can bury their waste and sequester emissions can go right ahead and run power stations but those people who cannot manage their mess have no right to operate in this energy market because these bills are internalising the cost of air pollution in the economy. The Greens also introduced the Water Services Licensing (Water Conservation Target) Amendment Bill 2007, which is stranded as a result of some mismanagement over the past few days.

Hon Norman Moore: By whom?

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: It was my own mismanagement, as a matter of fact. I should have known that the stewardship of that bill through the Parliament required a bit more work than I had put into it. However, that water conservation target bill would see 60 gigalitres of water saved through water efficiency initiatives throughout houses and buildings and businesses and industry across Western Australia. Sixty gigalitres is more than the volume of a desalination plant.

As regional members, we have had to deal with planning issues, and I raise the Margaret River town planning scheme and the Busselton Jetty arrangement, for which we felt that the community was being overridden by an overzealous government that was going to trade the fixing of the Busselton Jetty for selling off public foreshore land. The community rejected that and that needed to be heard, so the Greens stepped into that debate. We stepped into many debates on coastal planning issues, waste management and container deposit legislation. The Greens stepped into the debate on the development of large-scale electrical transmission across the region by insisting that we apply the new facilities test and economic regulatory tests to new facilities to ensure that investing hundreds of millions of dollars in powerlines could not be avoided by investing hundreds of millions of dollars or rather tens of millions of dollars in efficiency and good electrical design.

In addition, climate change, energy and water issues and the economy have come up in the last four years. No-one imagined, and fewer predicted, that the economy would run as fast and then fall as fast as it did; however, Greens (WA) members have worked towards putting a new economic paradigm, a new economic analysis, on the table for a green new deal. To have a conversation in this place about how we can develop a new prosperity for Western Australia while not losing but in fact enhancing the diversity of the economy was very much a part of my personal agenda.

Three new Greens (WA) members will be formally sworn in to this chamber later this week—Robin Chapple, Lynn MacLaren and Alison Xamon.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You Greens are even recycling your members now!

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: We do recycle, but I am not 100 per cent sure that I will be recycled through this place. I think that I have done a fairly good stint here, and for those people who think that I will be back, I hope that I will be back in another form. However, I am not sure that this particular member will be recycled in this chamber!

Hon Simon O'Brien: Are you going to the Assembly now?

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: That comment brings me to Adele Carles—number one and the first of many! Hon Simon O'Brien has put some ideas in my head. I had not given a thought to running for the Assembly. However, I am putting this place on notice because Adele Carles, my former staff member, who has not worked for the past six weeks because she has been doing other things, is the first of many Greens we will see in this Parliament, including in the other house. I look forward to the day when there will be green governance in Western Australia and a serious challenge to the two-party system. In that regard, I acknowledge the National Party's role in succeeding in gaining a major role in both houses of Parliament. That will also be a challenge for the Greens. The challenge for the Nationals is to be sufficiently different and sufficiently committed with sufficient integrity to stand aside and be counted on the really important issues. We would like to see that in the course of the next four years. National Party members will soon find out what it means to be in the balance of power and about the difficulties of the role, but we will stand by the Nationals if they make the powerful choice to express individual views on the important issues, particularly in regional areas.

Finally, I would like to say that I have enjoyed this journey, and that I will continue to enjoy the journey towards a new, sustainable economy. I intend to be a change agent, not just in this Parliament, but outside the Parliament. I look forward to working with some members in the future. I particularly look forward to working with the Minister for Energy to bring forward some of the powerful visions that we have to find a pathway to a new, clean green future and a clean energy future for Western Australia