

HON JAMES (JIM) McMILLAN BROWN

Condolence Motion

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [10.02 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house expresses its deep regret at the death of Hon James McMillan Brown, a former member of the Legislative Council for the South East Province and a former member of the Legislative Assembly for the electorate of Merredin–Yilgarn; and places on record its appreciation for his long public service, and tenders its profound sympathy to members of his family in their bereavement.

Can I begin today by paying my respects to Jim's family, who are in the public gallery today, in particular Jim's sister, Vera, daughter, Kerry, and son Bill, who join us today.

Throughout his 15 years of parliamentary service, Jim Brown was described as someone with high standards who had earned the respect of members of both sides of the house. He was very much, and very passionately, a traditional Labor man. Always willing to assist members, he worked hard on behalf of his constituents. He was born on 5 April 1927, the son of William Brown and Susan Godridge in the country town of Merredin in regional WA. Merredin would be a town that remained an important place for him throughout his entire life. His early years were spent there attending Merredin state school for a greater part of his education, while his busy parents owned the local coffee shop, had farming interests and ran the theatre, a historic building that stands today.

Jim's father passed away on Jim's fifth birthday. Not long after this event, his mum moved her family to Fremantle where Jim would finish school at John Curtin High School, followed by a brief stint selling newspapers before enlisting in the Royal Australian Air Force not long after his eighteenth birthday in 1945. We honour him for his active service with the RAAF as a leading aircraftman in Australia, but by 1945 the war was drawing to an end and so too did his time with the Air Force, and he was discharged in 1946. Soon after the war, his home town was calling him and he resided in the greater Merredin area for many years, running the Muntadgin store and later a Massey Ferguson farm machinery dealership with his brother George, as well as farming and spending many years as an insurance agent. It was around this time, in 1952, that he married his first wife, Patricia—or Dawn, as I am told she was known to Jim—and over the coming years, they would have two sons and one daughter, Bill, Richard and Kerry. Kerry and Bill are in the gallery with us today.

Jim had a love for sport, having played league football for South Fremantle Football Club. He was elected foundation president of the Muntadgin Golf Club, was an avid bowler, and was president of and player with the Merredin Football Club. He was playing for Merredin the day the club won its first premiership. If you were to look back through the local Merredin newspapers during the 1950s, you would see that his playing stats and accolades for his football performances received a regular mention. But it is his political life that defined Jim. *The History of the Merredin District*, published in 1961, outlines Jim's local involvement in politics, saying that —

Soon after settling Muntadgin he was urged by the people in that part to contest a seat on the Merredin Road Board and was elected in 1953. At the time, he was only 25 and one of the youngest men in local government in the state.

He first ran for the seat of Merredin–Yilgarn in 1968 when he was preselected to replace Labor Minister Lionel Kelly, but lost to the Liberal Party's Jack Stewart. Recontesting the seat in 1971, he won and became only the second Labor member to hold the seat.

History shows that Merredin–Yilgarn, which later became known as Merredin, has not been a seat that those of us on this side of politics have found easy to hold. For most of its 68 years, the seat was held by Country, National or Liberal MPs. It is a testament to his hard work, dedication and popularity within his community that he was elected to the seat at all. It was short-lived, and during the 1974 election, he was beaten by the Country member and then Nationals MP, Hon Hendy Cowan. Despite this early setback, this would be just the beginning of his parliamentary career, because in 1980 he was elected to the upper house seat of South East Province, a seat he would hold until 1989, at which point he would become the very first member for the Agricultural Region until 1992.

Jim's parliamentary career was defined by his passion for regional WA and his service as a hardworking member of Parliament. His electorate was expansive; going from representing the much smaller area of Merredin–Yilgarn to the much larger area of the Agricultural Region must have been difficult, but he was able to successfully adapt to his ever-changing electoral circumstances.

He served for a long period under two Labor Premiers and the O'Connor–Court Liberal governments. He held positions on a range of committees, including Deputy Chair of Committees in the Legislative Assembly, Chair of Committees and Deputy President—only the second Labor member to hold the post—member of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, member of the Standing Orders Committee and member of a number of select committees that looked into a range of areas, including electricity, mining and occupational liability. Notably, he served on

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Darren West; Hon Simon O'Brien; President

two royal commissions—the honorary royal commission on hire purchase and other agreements and the honorary royal commission into dairy products and market milk.

He was active in the community across a range of roles and organisations, including as a member of the Australian Workers' Union, a justice of the peace, a Rotarian, an honorary secretary of the Royal Commonwealth Society and a patron for numerous community and sporting organisations.

In the years after his parliamentary career, Jim was perhaps best known for being a member and then secretary of the Western Australian Parliamentary Former Members Association, a role that saw him frequent the Parliament members' bar long after his retirement, and that is where I, Madam President, and I am sure you, would have bumped into him on many an occasion. I told his family this morning that every time I saw him, he harassed me about superannuation and in particular superannuation changes that may or may not have been made by the former Premier known as Alan Carpenter. It was also during this period that he married his second wife, Patricia Carboni, in 1996.

It is true to say that Jim Brown was a stalwart of the Labor party in the regions. The late Hon Kim Chance described his advocacy of country people as "having few peers". In Jim's obituary, Hon Peter Dowding described him as —

... a true Labor man. He represented rural and mining communities and later in life outer suburban areas and always with the same care and concern for the common people of Australia. He was not showy but he was dedicated and he served Western Australian communities admirably.

He was described unilaterally by his colleagues as a hard worker. Even those who, in good humour, said that he could get a little grumpy were quick to say that he had a heart of gold. He was respected by his opponents and popular with his constituents. In 1991, Jim gave the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's speech, in which he told the story of how, on a parliamentary delegation to Vietnam, he found himself an accidental movie star in a film released in 1992. Describing the event, Jim said —

When we reached Ho Chi Minh City late in the final leg of our tour I was approached to take part in a movie ... I was approached on our first evening in that city to play the part of an English gentleman ...

He said that he played —

... an English gentleman with pith helmet, cravat, waist coat, pocket watch and chain, together with white coat ... black pants and white shoes, walk into the Hotel Central ... in the twilight of a damp evening ...

He further said —

The name of the film is *L'amant*, or in English *The Lover* ...

Jim went on to say —

... many members in this place are great actors ... The only difference between actors and ourselves is that we never receive a curtain call.

I am pleased, on behalf of the Australian Labor Party and the government, to give Hon Jim Brown his long-awaited curtain call today. On behalf of the state Parliamentary Labor Party and the government of Western Australia, I pass on our condolences to his family and friends.

Members: Hear, hear!

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [10.11 am]: I stand on behalf of the Liberal Party to support the motion. In doing so, I welcome Jim's family and friends who are sitting in the gallery.

Hon Jim Brown had the distinction of being the last representative of the Australian Labor Party to hold an eastern wheatbelt district in the Legislative Assembly, and the first Labor member of the Legislative Council after 36 years to hold the position of Chairman of Committees. He was a popular member for Merredin and the goldfields. Jim was born in Merredin in 1927. He finished his schooling in Fremantle and worked for the Fremantle Harbour Trust. In 1945, aged 18, Jim enlisted in the RAAF. After his discharge the following year he worked as a ship repairer and bus driver and played football for South Fremantle Football Club from 1947 until 1950 when he relocated to the eastern wheatbelt.

Jim Brown worked as a storekeeper in Muntadgin until 1955 when he became a Massey Ferguson dealer in Merredin. Later, from 1960, he became a service station proprietor and a farmer. In his community involvement, he was elected to the Shire of Merredin in 1953. He joined the Australian Labor Party in 1952. As president of the Merredin branch, he contested the seat of Merredin-Yilgarn in 1968 after the retirement of former minister and long-serving member Hon Lionel Kelly. Jim could not prevail over the combined Liberal Party and Country Party vote and was defeated by 327 votes, or 47.1 per cent. However, he was elected as shire president that year and became an executive member of the Country Shire Councils' Association.

At the 1971 election, Jim Brown raised the Labor primary vote by six per cent to 45.3 per cent, enabling him to regain the seat from the late Jack Stewart of the Liberal Party with a small absolute majority over the two coalition candidates. The capture of Merredin–Yilgarn was one of three ALP gains from the coalition that gave the Tonkin government its one-seat majority in the Legislative Assembly. A redistribution that replaced the Shires of Coolgardie and Kulin with Bruce Rock and Corrigin weakened Jim Brown's prospect of re-election in 1974. Despite winning over 60 per cent of the vote in the town of Merredin, he was defeated by Country Party candidate Hendy Cowan, having polled 42.1 per cent of the final vote.

After working for six years as an AMP insurance agent in Merredin and becoming a farmer at Warralakin, Jim Brown contested one of the two seats of the South East Province of the Legislative Council at the retirement of the late Claude Stubbs. Comprising the Legislative Assembly districts of Kalgoorlie, Yilgarn–Dundas and Merredin, this former Labor stronghold was under challenge from the Liberal Party with margins cut to below 52 per cent in both 1974 and 1977.

Jim Brown's popularity in his former electorate gave him a convincing win at the 1980 state election with a 3 100 vote margin—58.2 per cent—against the Liberal Party, having increased the Labor vote from 34.4 per cent to 45.3 per cent in the now staunch National Party district of Merredin. Within the town itself, he polled 66.9 per cent of the vote, which was a swing of 14 per cent from the 1977 election. Later that year, in his first speech in the Legislative Council, he raised as significant issues the price of electricity in the goldfields, the value of the Kalgoorlie campus of the Western Australian School of Mines, and the sometimes abusive behaviour of the then Road Traffic Authority, which was then a body separate from the Western Australia Police Force. He was to serve on a number of select committees and after 1983 was a trustee and member of the Parliamentary Superannuation Board.

By 1986, when Jim Brown stood for re-election, the boundaries of the South East Province had contracted to the goldfields, consisting of the districts of Kalgoorlie and Esperance–Dundas. He won a majority by 3 975 votes—a comfortable 60.1 per cent. When the 17 provinces were replaced by the current six regions at the 1989 election, he resumed his connection with the eastern wheatbelt by heading the Australian Labor Party ticket for the Agricultural Region. This ticket polled 25.6 per cent, a percentage that was not exceeded until 2005.

When the Legislative Council met in August 1989, Jim Brown was elected Chairman of Committees, despite the 18–16 majority held by the Liberal and National Parties. He was the first member of the Australian Labor Party to hold this position since Hon Bill Hall, who was Chairman of Committees from 1953 until his death in 1963.

In 1992, at the age of 65, Jim Brown resigned from the Legislative Council and was succeeded by the late Hon Kim Chance. During his retirement, from 1999 he served as honorary secretary of the Royal Commonwealth Society and as an executive member of the Western Australian Parliamentary Former Members Association. He was secretary of the association from 2003 until 2009.

We extend our condolences to his daughter, Kerry, to his sons, Richard and Bill, and to their partners and families.

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural) [10.16 am]: I rise to also contribute to this condolence motion for Hon James McMillan Brown on behalf of the Parliamentary Nationals WA. I acknowledge Jim's family members who join us here today for this important occasion.

Hon James Brown—Jim, as he was better known—was one of a handful of members of Parliament who held a seat in both chambers during his years of service to Western Australia. In fact, Jim was one of only two Labor members to hold the seat of Merredin–Yilgarn from its creation in 1950 to its abolition in 2008.

Like many of his parliamentary predecessors and many who followed, it was not Jim's first tilt that saw him elected to Parliament. He first ran for Parliament at the 1968 state election to replace Lionel Kelly in the seat of Merredin–Yilgarn but lost to Liberal Jack Stewart. Recontesting the seat three years later, he was elected to the other place, with a two-party preferred vote of 52.7 per cent. Three years on, he was defeated by the National Party's Hendy Cowan, who went on to be the member for Merredin right up until 2001. But Jim's contribution to Western Australia's Parliament was not finished at that point. He went on to be a great servant to the wider Agricultural Region, serving for 12 years in the Legislative Council, representing the Southern Province from 1980 through to 1989 and the Agricultural Region until March 1992.

At the time of his lower house election in 1971, Jim's electorate covered seven local government areas—Kulin, Kondinin, Narembeen, Merredin, Westonia, Yilgarn and Coolgardie. I am proud to say that as one of the six members of the Agricultural Region in this place, I also represent those towns and the district in which Jim was born and lived most of his life.

I will talk briefly about Jim's contributions to his community before he left and then moved back to Merredin from Perth in 1950. Information regarding some of his earlier years has been taken from the book "The History of Merredin", published in 1962, and I acknowledge the author, F.A. Law.

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 12 November 2020]

p7837b-7843a

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Darren West; Hon Simon O'Brien; President

Jim was born at Merredin District Hospital in 1927, son of William McMillan and Susan Brown, who were well known as proprietors of the Merredin Coffee Palace in Bates Street, which later became Raphael's. After spending some years at Merredin state school, the family moved to Fremantle, where Jim attended John Curtin High School and played league football for South Fremantle Football Club. After serving in the RAAF he went into business with his brother George at Muntadgin general store and soon after, in 1953, he was elected as the representative of Totadgin Ward on the Merredin Road Board. Aged 25 years, he was one of the youngest men in local government in the state. His representation continued on the board until 1960, including a stint as vice chairman. He later served on Merredin Shire Council from 1960 to 1972.

Jim accumulated office-bearing positions, becoming foundation president of the Muntadgin Golf Club in 1955 before he and George moved back to Merredin to take over a stock and agency business. His interest in football had not waned and he quickly established himself as president of Merredin Football Club in 1956 and played with the team in 1956 when the club won its first premiership in 30 years. Ironically, it was the same year his old club South Fremantle went down to East Perth in the Western Australian National Football League grand final in front of 37 630 people at Subiaco Oval. Jim definitely made the right choice that year. At the Lions, he played with the late Paddy Crook, father of former Nationals member for the federal district of O'Connor, Tony Crook. Incidentally, when Tony's parents shifted the kids from the farm back into town, their house backed onto the Brown's. Tony and Jim's son Richard used to walk to school together, and play cricket and golf—after all, their back fences were touching. For all its vastness, Western Australia is indeed a small place.

Jim's name features in the *Merredin Mercury*'s sports section, including the 17 May 1951 edition, which recalls a game of the previous Saturday against Bruce Rock in front of 1 000 spectators. A pacy centre man, Jim's two goals that day helped reverse Bruce Rock's half-time lead and hand his side the win. To quote from the article in the *Merredin Mercury* —

After half time Merredin made a number of changes in the position of their team. McGinniss to centre, Jim Brown centre half forward, Vickers to ruck, Jack Brown half back flank and Crook centre half back ... Merredin went further ahead when Jim Brown drove the ball right into the teeth of the goals and Arthur flew high to take a nice mark and bring up Merredin's seventh goal this giving them a 14 point lead on the game ...

Bruce Rock were battling hard but were no match for Merredin who had settled down as a team and were playing fast open systematic football.. Jim Brown put the issue beyond doubt when he dropkicked a lovely running goal.

Jim might have liked putting on a clinic in front of the 1 000 spectators out there, but truth be told the numbers were there to watch Subiaco take on Eastern Wheatbelt—the Merredin–Bruce Rock game was just a curtain-raiser!

Sporting prowess aside, and as illustrated by Jim's early foray into the general store, Jim was a businessman and for some time he ran a local garage and machinery dealership—Massey Ferguson, I believe it was.

In his inaugural Address-in-Reply in this place on 19 August 1980, Jim canvassed many issues affecting his constituents and regional Western Australians in general. Concerns around the cost of electricity for regional consumers and around education were discussed at length. In particular, I would like to quote from the *Hansard* record of his Address-in-Reply a particular passage that I am sure will resonate with every regional member in this place. Around the issue of energy costs, Jim made these comments —

It is suggested that metropolitan users subsidise the energy requirements of country users. However, all our resources are used for the development of the whole country. Members who represent the goldfields region are gravely concerned at the division between country and city residents. This division will be exacerbated by the differential rating for country users. It certainly will not be in the best interests of my constituents.

I am sure all members who represent country areas will do their best to ensure that the problem of the division between country and city residents is alleviated.

My fellow regional members of this place would agree with Hon Jim Brown that it is indeed a part of our role in this place to do what we can to, as he said, “alleviate that division” that exists between city and country.

The resilience of the communities Jim represented and those that my colleagues and I represent today is up there with the greatest I know. I was pleased that the *Merredin Phoenix* ran a tribute to Hon James McMillan Brown on 19 June, and today, on behalf of the Parliamentary National Party, I pay my tribute to the former member for Merredin–Yilgarn and Southern Province.

I again acknowledge Jim's family who are here today in the President's gallery and extend my condolences on behalf of the Nationals WA. Jim lived a rich life, contributing much to his community, and I hope you share many fond memories of him and his impact in helping to shape regional Western Australia.

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Darren West; Hon Simon O'Brien; President

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [10.22 am]: I would like just briefly to add my voice to the curtain call and to acknowledge Jim Brown, who was such an interesting character and a powerful advocate for regional Western Australia in all that he did in his life and certainly in this Parliament.

Of course, I join Jim as part of that exclusive club of people who have been on both the teal and the red seats in this Parliament. It is a unique experience. I got to know Jim in my very first term in Parliament. I would often do my shadow ministry work on a Friday from my office in Parliament House. That was the day when who I used to call the old gaffers would have their weekly lunch. They would then repair to the parliamentary bar after that, and I would often run into them as I went to get my lunch. People like Tom Bateman and John Harman would be there on the stools, with their ponies. It was a lovely experience, because they were full of stories of the history of the Parliament. That really helped me understand and connect with previous generations and decades of Labor history and contextualise the issues that we were dealing with. Of course, Jim and the others, but Jim in particular, were never short of advice. What I found particularly interesting is how closely they were following the debates that had been going on in Parliament. They would frequently, but Jim in particular, help out with their commentary and contextualisation. I always really enjoyed that experience.

I want to make one addition to the story of Jim's contribution. This was given to me by Hon Tom Stephens, who likewise is a person who has been in the exclusive teal-red club. Tom has reflected that Jim was not only a member of Parliament, but also a justice of the peace. In around 1978–1979, laws were introduced to change the Electoral Act to require electoral enrolment claim cards to be witnessed by a JP. Of course, that would have a particular impact on the Aboriginal vote in northern Australia. Coming up to the 1980 state election, at which Ernie Bridge was contesting the seat, a group of activists decided to do an enrolment draft. However, they were not JPs, so there was a real problem in determining how they would address this voter suppression. Jim very generously made himself available to travel extensively throughout the Kimberley to witness the electoral enrolment rights, which were pivotal to Ernie Bridge finally coming into power and being the first Aboriginal representative in this place.

In that process, Jim, working with others like Ernie, Tom, and Peter Dowding, came to understand those remote communities and areas in the Kimberley. That was probably his first experience of the Kimberley and it drove an acute awareness of the Aboriginal population. Jim became a very willing ally of people like Ernie Bridge and Peter Dowding as they were developing policies to respond to the needs of Aboriginal people. That was a pivotal and perhaps often unsung piece of work and contribution that Jim made.

To Jim's family and friends, I pass on my condolences and my deep regard for the wonderful character that was Jim.

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.28 am]: I, too, would like to make some comments about the late Jim Brown and my involvement with Jim. As Minister MacTiernan has said, Jim was a great country character; there are many in our part of the world.

I would also like to make special mention of Jim's family who are here today. I have a list of names, and I will not read them all out, but it is great to have you all with us today to share this sad occasion but also a celebration of Jim's life and his many, many achievements and his many, many great attributes.

As has been mentioned, many of us who came across Jim felt that we had a lot in common with this man. I was one of those people. It turns out that we were both Aries, the star sign that generally thinks that they are always right! When Jim and I discussed politics and disagreed, the arguments were fairly robust and sound. I learnt later that, as a fellow Aries, that might be why.

As has been mentioned, Jim attended a school in Merredin and then the family moved to Fremantle upon the death of his father, William McMillan Brown, who is described in the parliamentary biographical register as a "picture theatre exhibitor, farmer, bookmaker and billiard saloon proprietor". It is little wonder that Jim had such a broad array of skills in his early years, growing up in the environment of what must have been a very colourful man who was prepared to take on just about anything, and, of course, his mother was Susan Godridge.

Jim was the first Labor member for the Agricultural Region. I did a little bit of thinking about that. There have been only five members of that club—Labor members for the Agricultural Region—with Jim being the inaugural member; the late Hon Kim Chance; Hon Matthew Benson-Lidholm; Hon Laurie Graham and myself. A small but enthusiastic group have been Labor members for the Agricultural Region, which is a large electorate that covers hundreds of communities right across the state, with its diversity and range of issues. Jim loved every person in that electorate and he often referred to them when we would speak as "our people". Jim was a man of his people and worked tirelessly and fearlessly on their behalf over many years.

Jim was also President of the Shire of Merredin and today I have worn my Shire of Merredin tie to befit the occasion. He was elected to local government at the age of 25, so, if we think that through, it is no wonder that he went on to bigger and better things, serving in both houses of the Western Australian Parliament.

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Darren West; Hon
Simon O'Brien; President

Upon my preselection to contest a seat in the Agricultural Region, one of the first phone calls I received was from Jim. He offered his support, guidance, advice and good ideas, and we spent much time talking on the phone and travelling together. One day we travelled out to Merredin and we had a fantastic day. Jim introduced me to many people whom he worked with and knew, including the late Jim Medlen, who was a Labor stalwart in the area. We helped to rebuild the wheatbelt branch and get people whom Jim had worked with over the years but had drifted away re-engaged in the Labor Party. We began to rebuild the Labor presence in the Agricultural Region, and I thank Jim very much. He was always available to me to offer advice. As Minister MacTiernan has said, he helped me reconnect with the Labor identity and culture of years past, which help me firm my way into winning the right to represent the Agricultural Region, and contribute to my knowledge and understanding of being a member of Parliament.

Jim was a kind and wise man and he always wanted to help and that is the way that I will always remember Jim. He was a great guy and really did want to help everyone who sought it. But I was especially touched when upon being elected to represent the Agricultural Region, I made the decision to move the office out of the city up to Geraldton. I was so pleased that Jim made the effort—I think he would have been approaching his 80s—to drive all the way to Geraldton on his own and be present at that office opening, which re-established Labor back in the City of Geraldton. The office was opened by former Premier Geoff Gallop in the presence of former member for Geraldton Jeff Carr. That relationship had been strained, so it was great to have those three former members back in one place at the same time. I really appreciated Jim coming up; it was just so good to have him there.

Jim was always willing to pass on a good idea. He was a deep thinker; he thought things through and had good ideas about the future for regional Western Australia. As Hon Colin de Grussa mentioned, and this has become topical, he passionately fought for the retention of the tariff subsidy arrangements that ensured that regional people pay the same price as people in the metro area pay. These were the things that Jim fought for—equality for regional people.

In the members' lounge, there is an honour board that honours the life members of the Western Australian Parliamentary Former Members Association. There are only four names on that board and Jim's is one of them. He is held in very high regard by all the former members. We would often see Jim in the members' lounge and he would say, "Come over here, young fella. I've got something I want to talk to you about." We would always have a discussion with him and his mate Ron Leeson, who is also a life member of the former members association.

I had the great pleasure of being invited onto Jim's bowls team down at the Maylands Bowling Club to play against some very good bowlers, as I learnt. Jim was very helpful with his advice to a new bowler. He would virtually stand with you on the mat and tell you exactly where this bowling ball should go. I can distinctly remember the very audible groan from Jim when I released the bowl and it was obviously not going where Jim had ensured that it should. I played with him on a couple of occasions and we had some great days. Jim was a very competitive man and a passionate skipper, and we did come up with a couple of wins thanks to his very good bowling prowess as skipper of our four.

Jim was a great sportsman, as has been indicated before. There is that link between country people, especially those who are driven in their communities, and sport. In the regional areas, we do punch above our weight. He played footy for South Fremantle in the late 1940s when South Fremantle was a powerhouse of the WA NFL, as it was in those days. He got a few games for South Fremantle, and carried himself well in what was a very strong team. He then moved to Merredin and became a country footy champion there as well, playing in the first premiership for Merredin in many years.

Jim was a great bloke. Jim Brown was a country legend. I am really proud to have known Jim. I am really proud to be his successor in the ag region. I made a promise to Jim that we would do whatever it took and work as hard as we needed to get those railway lines open again in the eastern wheatbelt, and I am very pleased to say that we are making some progress on that. I know that Jim will be very proud of the day that we can get those open. I know that Jim was particularly proud when for the first time in history we had two Labor members elected to represent the Agricultural Region, and Jim called me to offer his congratulations. He was so excited that we had rebuilt Labor in our area and he felt very much a part of that, because he was.

Vale Jim Brown. My condolences to all his family and thank you very much for coming along and being part of today. It is a celebration of Jim's many, many achievements. They have been outlined and I will not run through them all again, but he was a terrific guy, a country legend and I am very proud to have known him. My condolences to the family and everyone who knew the late Jim Brown. Vale.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [10.37 am]: Madam President, I join in support of this motion today, with twin perspectives in mind. Such occasions as this give us an opportunity to extend our condolences and our esteem to the memory of Jim Brown and very much extend our thoughts and sympathies to his family and loved ones, and I certainly want to take the opportunity to do that. It also gives us an opportunity to reflect on what fine members have contributed to this place, and provided us with a legacy that is worth embracing and, to the greatest extent that we can, emulating. Someone once said to me at a time when I was considering my furniture, sorry, my future—I am just part of the furniture!—that sometimes in this game we find that there are players and there are

stayers. That remark, to me, was at one time an encouragement but it was also a challenge. Are you going to be a player, and come and go, or are you going to be a stayer? Jim Brown, as we know, was very much a player, but, by gee, he was also a stayer. He had setbacks along the way, but each time he bounced back. He did more than just be a stayer: he was a contributor, and a long-time contributor. We have heard about his record in all sections of the community during the debate so far today.

I first encountered Jim, as did quite a few of us I think, in his capacity as a former member. Indeed, he was a life member of the Western Australian Parliamentary Former Members Association, and rightly so. He welcomed me into this place some years ago, and I do not think I ever received anything from him but encouragement to achieve all I could as a member. I think that is an experience that would be shared by others in this chamber who had a similar association with Jim. For that, I thank him very much. He was a great institution in Parliament House, whether you were a new member being greeted by him, more often than not in the company of his great friend Hon Ron Lesson, but also his family. I hope that they gain comfort from my words of tribute and from all our remarks this morning in acknowledging a very fine Western Australian and a very fine parliamentarian. He was not only beloved in his family and community, but also he has left a great legacy. I would elevate him to the title of elder statesman of this place. I do not think there is a higher complement that I, or we, could bestow upon him and his wonderful memory.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) [10.40 am]: Members, I also would like to rise to add some comments to support this motion. We have already heard about the wonderful life Hon Jim Brown had. He was a man with a very strong work ethic, demonstrated prior to coming into this place with the diversity of occupations he held, which obviously held him in good stead for the work that he did not just in this chamber, but also the Assembly. We know that he immersed himself in committee work in this chamber, on both select committees and royal commissions. He was elected to the very senior and significant roles of Deputy President and Chair of Committees in this chamber, and, as we understand, continued to provide support even beyond his departure from this place.

I was very fortunate to meet Hon Jim Brown in the 1980s, when I was a young organiser. He used to do my road trip up the highway through to Kalgoorlie every couple of months. When Hon Jim Brown shared an office with Ian Taylor in Kalgoorlie, I used their office as my drop-in point, so I would see him every few months. He was always very friendly and very supportive. He was probably a bit bemused that a young woman was wandering around the bush trying to recruit union members. Not too many women were doing that in those days. Then later on I would see him in Merredin. It was always a very, very positive experience. By the time I came into Parliament, along with the Leader of the House, Jim had retired, and we would see him as part of the Western Australian Parliamentary Former Members Association. When my husband was the secretary of the Labor Party, he dealt with Jim. We talked today about how Jim was always one of those really positive individuals. I cannot recall any negative comments from Jim. It was always something very uplifting, helpful and supportive. You always came away from any interaction with Jim feeling quite happy. That is not always the case with everyone you come across in life but I think that was just the mark of the man.

One of his previous periods of employment was in the superannuation industry with AMP. I also had worked in superannuation with National Mutual, so I think we had a bit of common ground. I became the chair of the Parliamentary Superannuation Board, and because of Jim's great interest in superannuation, we had a lot of discussions with Hon Jim Brown and some of his colleagues about looking after the interests of former members. He continued to be a very strong advocate for former members of this place because he understood the detail and kept himself up to date with changes around superannuation. We always had very detailed discussions, and I would be sent off with tasks. We would meet again and I would provide feedback about what the Parliamentary Superannuation Board had taken up on his behalf.

My husband told me the story that upon his retirement Jim was a frequent visitor to the Labor Party office. He was always very good to the staff in the party office. He would come to Parliament House for former members' functions—I know Hon Simon O'Brien will like this story, because he is a big supporter of the sausage rolls in this place—and collect up the sausage rolls and take them back to the party office to provide morning or afternoon tea for the staff in the Labor Party office. They always appreciated his support for them as well.

Hon Jim Brown has made a remarkable contribution to both houses of this Parliament. Certainly to his party, he was a man who was not afraid to take up a challenge, to demonstrate his passion not just in politics but for his party, and to take on the difficult tasks of trying to win and hold seats that were not traditionally Labor seats. I think that has put the Labor Party in good stead to, as Hon Darren West said, not just hold, but also expand upon those opportunities. The fact that he continued his engagement with new members as they came into this place, offering positive support and advice, demonstrates the strong character that he had. We will certainly miss him. As a member I always looked forward to seeing Hon Jim Brown. It was always a very positive experience. I just think he was a really, really decent man, who worked hard for his community and worked hard for his party. He made a contribution in this place that sets a good benchmark for members coming in here. We should be very proud of his contribution.

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 12 November 2020]

p7837b-7843a

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Darren West; Hon Simon O'Brien; President

I thank his family very much for attending today in the President's gallery. I offer my condolences to you. Although not many people in this chamber would have worked with him when he was a member, some of us were fortunate to know him during his time as a member and as a former member. We will certainly miss him and we offer you our condolences for your loss on his passing.

I ask members to rise and support this motion by observing a minute's silence in memory of our esteemed former member of this Council Hon Jim Brown.

Question passed; members and officers standing as a mark of respect.

The PRESIDENT: I advise that in accordance with custom and practice, a copy of the *Hansard* transcript of this condolence motion will be forwarded to Hon Jim Brown's family in due course. Thank you.