



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VALEDICTORY SPEECH



Hon Colin Holt, MLC
(Member for South West Region)

Legislative Council

Address-in-Reply

Thursday, 6 May 2021

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 5 May on the following motion moved by Hon Pierre Yang —

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Honourable Kim Beazley, Companion of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the state of Western Australia and its dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia —

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our most gracious sovereign and thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

HON COLIN HOLT (South West) [2.23 pm]: That is a bit of a bugger, really, because I find that interjections spur me on!

Hon Simon O'Brien: I will defy the chair; don't worry!

Hon COLIN HOLT: Thank you.

I actually have extensive speech notes here, which is quite unusual for me. I think there have been three occasions on which I have written extensive speech notes: one was my inaugural speech, the other on the delivery of *My life, my choice: The report of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices*, and this occasion. I will try my hardest to keep to script, although I have obviously already gone off it, because there are some really important things that I want to say, and they are the thank-yous to those people who have supported me. I am not going to spend a lot of time reflecting on my time in this place because I do not like talking about myself particularly much. That is why I want to concentrate on thanking those people who have supported me throughout my time here. If members have any important parliamentary business to attend to and they want to leave the chamber to attend to those things, I would not be offended one bit.

As Wadsworth Longfellow said, we judge ourselves by what we feel we are capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done. I am sure that plenty of people in this place, in the electorate and within the state of Western Australia will judge me on what I have been able to achieve and not achieve, and on my contribution. But I prefer to reflect on my performance from my viewpoint because I am my strongest critic.

Do I think I have done some good things in this place and within the communities I represent? I would say generally, yes. I am happy to say that. I think I have helped where I have been able to and I have worked hard to deliver for the people of the South West Region. But do I think I could have done more? Am I capable of doing more? I would say, absolutely. I think there is always unfinished business when taking on roles like this. There is unfinished business in every job that we do. It is difficult to leave some of that unfinished business behind for someone else to take up the cudgel and to deliver on. Undoubtedly, although I feel happy about the role I have played and my ability to deliver, I think that there have been some gaps as well; but, again, that is from my viewpoint.

When I first started in this place, a Nationals MP said to me that this job is like a never-ending flock of sheep that need drenching. As you get through one yard, the next bloody mob is right

at the entrance of the race waiting to be drenched. You get through that mob and the next mob is there. There is always a problem to solve, there is always an issue to resolve or pursue, and there are always people to help because the issues keep coming and the people keep coming through your door.

Recently, my staff and I did a bit of a farewell tour around the south west. We went to Dwellingup where I used to have a mobile electorate office and met the craft group there. I would always time my visit at the same time as the craft group because the ladies who came to the craft group knew everything that was going on in Dwellingup. We turned up for a cup of tea, cake, scones and the rest of it, as we normally would do, and they reminded me about some of the things that I had helped them with. I had not forgotten them but I had sort of put them on the backburner. In my mind it has always been about solving the immediate problem at the time, which I would work hard to do and then I could say, “You bewdy, the community is happy.” But then the next problem or issue, or the next person to help, would be coming through the door. The same thing happened when I went to the Shire of Harvey. They reminded me about the role I played to deliver their recreation centre. Again, I had not forgotten what I had done, but it was really just about getting something done and moving on to the next issue.

On Tuesday, I went to Albany with the federal Minister for Veterans’ Affairs to help solve an issue for the RSL down there and to work with the city to deliver some outcomes. The issues just keep coming.

I acknowledge that the end of my time here has come and I am quite happy about that. I made that decision, but I strongly believe that I still have something to offer the people of Western Australia. I do not know what that looks like yet, but I am more than willing and ready to move on.

As members know, the role of an MP is unique and strange and it is difficult to understand unless you happen to be in it. There is no training, there are no guidelines, there is no real way of doing it, and, if you are lucky, you may find an MP or ex-MP or mentor to help you and to give you some ideas about how to do the job. But it has always been clear to me that I have to do it my own way. I am more than comfortable with the fact that I have been able to do it my way. I acknowledge that it is certainly not the way of everybody, and some people have said that the way I do things lacks some merit or is a bit crazy, but that is the way I do it and I am more than comfortable with how I have done it.

I am reminded of a poem by Shel Silverstein called *The Perfect High*. I encourage members to google it, because I cannot read it into *Hansard* as it has some expletives. It is really a poem about being happy within yourself and being confident and comfortable in how you act—do not always keep trying to look for the next high, because the next high is found within yourself. I encourage members to look at that. I do not want to be accused of having some sort of midlife crisis Zen yoga thing—although that is kind of me and I am kind of at that point! The point I am trying to make is that I am fairly comfortable in who I am, what I have been able to achieve and the way I have gone about it, but I totally acknowledge it is not for everybody.

I came into this place pretty unexpectedly, perhaps a lot like it has been for the people who will be sworn in the week after next and for some who were sworn in last week. It probably happened a little unexpectedly for them, too, but there is nothing wrong with that. At the time, back in 2008, I was asked to run by the then Leader of the National Party, Hon Brendon Grylls. Wendy Duncan, who was the president of the party, said, “We’ve got no-one. Can you put your name on the south west ticket, because the preferred candidate pulled out?” I had been involved with the party for about three years and I was actually vice president at that time. She said we needed someone who knew a bit about the royalties for region story who could at least stand up and string a few words together—which, of course, I could not!—and I accepted the challenge. I was happy to, because, as I have said, I had been involved in the party since 2005.

I came to the party when I was running a community development company, and our work was almost exclusively with regional communities. I took the decision that I wanted to contribute more to those regional communities in whatever way I could. I did not really have any ambitions of representation or leadership; I just got involved and said I was willing to help where I could, and I became vice president, then president and then a member of Parliament. But I never took that step until one of my business partners, Lee, who is very, very good at poking people in the ribs, suggested it was time for me to step up and take a place at the table that we kept saying other people had to sit at. I was more than happy to do that. I put my name on the ticket. It was on the back of the call by Premier Carpenter for an early election.

It could have been called an unexpected result, but perhaps not as unexpected as the result we have seen this time. The people of the South West Region had not elected a National Party MP for eight years. Wendy and Brendon said to me at the time, “Don’t worry, mate, you’re not going to get elected. You can go back to your day job. It’s no good; we just need someone to put their name on the ticket.” We have heard plenty of those stories, and I bet members opposite will have heard plenty of those stories in the last couple of weeks! As it turned out, royalties for regions was a new policy and a new concept for country people. At that time, we had also very much become an independent party. I think on the back of that and preference flows, by which you get elected to this place when you are in a minor party or you never quite get to a quota, I found myself elected. The good people of the South West Region have elected a Nationals MP three elections since—never with the full quota, but always relying on some overflow, generally from our good friends in the Liberal Party. The electorate has embraced the Nationals royalties for regions policy and our independent stance.

I have to say that I am probably a strident anti-coalitionist within the National Party. I strongly believe that when one vote, one value was introduced in the Legislative Assembly, the power of independence helped us rally against that tide and delivered us not the expected result of one or two members in the LA, but 10 members, which grew to 12. It is clear in my mind that our independent stance was a major factor in that result. I remember being president of the party and having to go to Canberra quite a bit to talk to our federal colleagues and management. Of course, if you have studied anything about National Party politics in Australia, you would have found that every state implements a different model. The federal guys have their own as well, which is a coalition. There is the coalition in New South Wales and the coalition in Victoria, but there are no National Party members in the South Australian or Tasmanian Parliaments. Over in the west, we are seen as the rump that tries to break the rules and do things differently. Then there is the Liberal National Party of Queensland.

I used to have to go over to Canberra quite a bit. I often went with Tony Crook, who had been elected as the Nationals member for O’Connor after the 30-odd-year career of Wilson Tuckey. We left the poor bugger with the unenviable task of prosecuting the independent stance of the Western Australian Nationals in the federal sphere. What a great challenge for him! I stood in that federal management office and got yelled at quite a lot of times by federal MPs and state presidents. They said, “You Western Australians are going to be the ruin of every government.” I turned around and said, “I think you guys in Queensland, the conjoined model, are going to be the ruin of the Nationals.” I will stand by that every time. In my mind, Tony Crook is a bit of a political hero, probably unsung, in that we just sent him over there with the support we could give him, but we were never on site to help him prosecute that argument. I think he deserves great accolades from the party for what he did. I have to point out that he was ably supported by the Acting President, Hon Martin Aldridge, who worked with him very closely during that time. Happy birthday, Mr Acting President! Marty and Tony Crook did a sterling job in prosecuting our argument. It is a pretty lonely old job trying to prosecute something by yourself, and I am sure the crossbenchers understand that perfectly. The new incoming Greens member is going to understand that perfectly. When they are here by themselves, it is very difficult.

I have completely gone off script, of course, as I knew I would! I will try to pick some of it up. Since coming to this place, I have been very fortunate to play a number of roles. You cannot take on those roles without the support of your National Party colleagues, especially in this place. The National Party Legislative Council team has been working together very, very well. In my 12 years, we have had members come and go, but I think we have always worked very well together. We are all different people. We all come with different viewpoints, backgrounds and opinions, and that is how it should be. If we want to represent the people we do, we need to be as diverse as them. We have been able to demonstrate that through robust debate and argument about our viewpoints and rigour in our thinking, we could get to an outcome that everyone could work towards. I feel very confident that the members of the National Party who have served in this place, and also more broadly, have done that. I honestly thank them for their support and comradeship over that time, because like I said, you cannot do it by yourself. Every member of a major party would know that, and crossbenchers from minor parties with very few members would know how hard it is to deliver by themselves. I thank all my National Party colleagues, both past and present, for their support over time. They have all had an influence over me in some way.

This may not come as a surprise to anybody, but I am probably the most left in the Nationals WA party room. I have no problem with that at all. After my inaugural speech in here, someone from the Labor Party said to me, “Are you sure you’re sitting on the right side of the house?” I am, because I strongly believe that if a person wants to influence the culture of an organisation or a party and they want it to reflect their values, they had better get involved in it. That is what I have done. I have inserted myself into the Nationals political party and I hope that during my time, some of my values have been reflected in the culture of that organisation. I have no doubt that once I leave, others will come in and influence it in other ways, but that is okay too because everyone has their time and they contribute as much as they can when it happens.

I would especially like to acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition, Mia Davies, who was elected into this house at the same time as I was. I remember when she was a Legislative Council member and we used to sit up the back and share stories and support each other. I have seen her grow into an extremely hardworking Legislative Assembly member who is completely committed to the people of Western Australia and completely capable of doing a fantastic job as the Leader of the Opposition. I know that her father would have been very proud of her, her family is very proud of her and I am pretty proud of her, too. She is doing some amazing stuff, so keep it up.

I also served two terms on the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. It would seem strange to most people, but I actually requested to go on that committee. It is the committee that is the most democratic and engaging with the people of Western Australia. It is based on the petition system, which allows members to engage with the community and the people whom they represent. It provides a fantastic conduit for those community voices to be heard in Parliament. I will continue to be a strong defender of that committee as long as I possibly can.

I encourage the ongoing members to think about the fifty-fourth report of that committee, which has a longwinded title but I will read it out anyway: *The functions, processes and procedures of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs — Are they clear for petitioners and do they reflect its core petitions role?* I encourage members of this house in the next Parliament to look at that report and implement the changes. I notice a motion on the notice paper in Hon Simon O’Brien’s name that is a little in conflict with this report, so I look forward to hearing that debate and how it might shake out in terms of what that standing committee will look like into the future. I am really proud of the good work that we have done as a committee. The committee system in this Council is seen as really valuable. That system has probably done some of the most valuable work across this Parliament and in other Parliaments that probably do not value it in the same way.

During my first term in the thirty-eighth Parliament, the committee produced a report titled *Inquiry into the transportation of detained persons: The implementation of the coroner's recommendations in relation to the death of Mr Ward and related matters*. Madam President was actually deputy chair of the committee at that time. It is good to see you here, Madam President. When the committee said that it was going to inquire into how the coroner's recommendations were going to be implemented, it put a spotlight on the whole issue and bang! Things started to change. The recommendations started to be implemented and tangible changes were made to how detained people were transported. That was a great outcome. We did not even have to deliver the report because as soon as we put the spotlight on the issue, something was done about it.

During the fortieth Parliament, that committee produced its fifty-second report titled *Punitive not protective: When the mandatory registration of young people is not based on risk*. That report was only tabled in May 2020 and it was based on a petition with just two signatures; that is how powerful the petition system can be. That report was about how young people were treated within the judicial system and put on a mandatory reporting list, which is completely unfair. Everyone who was called in as a witness to give a statement agreed with the premise that this needed to be looked at.

I encourage the government members who helped to pen this report and were on the committee, to take it up with the new government. I would like the minister who represents the Minister for Police in this place, Hon Stephen Dawson, to raise that report with the Minister for Police because everyone is waiting for the change. The police, the judiciary and the community are waiting for the change and we should be making it a priority. Good luck with that. I hope Hon Samantha Rowe and Hon Matthew Swinbourn can take up that matter. I try not to be too political but I just had to shove that in there.

I also need to thank the staff of that committee who had to put up with me quite a bit. I can be annoying. They knew I was annoying and they tried to circumvent me in quite a few ways, but I stuck to my guns. They were very supportive and nice but I was a pain in the proverbial, and they know it. The work of a committee cannot be done without its committee staff working as they do to deliver the outcomes that committee members want to see, so I thank them.

I was a parliamentary secretary for a number of ministers in a number of portfolio areas and I thank those ministers for that opportunity and their support. Of course, I was a minister for almost two years in the Liberal–National alliance government. The thing about a minister's role is that they need to be fair dinkum about it, to work bloody hard and to ask their ministerial office to work very hard alongside them. In fact, a minister probably spends more time with their ministerial staff in the ministerial office than they do with their own family and loved ones. Those staff become your family for that period of time because you build up a heap of trust and respect and you know each other very well. We worked hard for those almost two years.

I owe a great deal of gratitude to those people in my ministerial office. They were all wonderful people and many of them I will always call a friend. In fact, I talked some of them into owning a racehorse with me, and you need to be good friends when you own a racehorse together I can tell you! It is mostly about non-success, really.

Karen, the Divine Miss M, Sue and Terri were willing to stay with me at Tuck Waldron's office when I took it over. I modelled myself on Tuck, including my haircut. Tuck had set the standard in that office. Everyone who knows Tuck Waldron knows that he is a very friendly, gregarious bloke. He set a culture in that office that I was very fortunate to move into. Kay rocked up with her trolley bag as housing adviser, even though I had not yet asked for an adviser. She claimed the desk and she was not leaving. She was of great value. I somehow talked Andrew, Donna and Andrea into giving me a hand for a couple of years; they gave up a lot of their life to pitch in and I thank them.

Then of course there was Alex and Ben, the chief of staff, who both really ran the show. They kept the team together and working in the same direction. They are both extraordinary young men and they saved my bacon on quite a lot of occasions, most notably on a number of small bar tours that I they insisted I do as the “minister for liquor”.

We will not mention the Varnish bar—I do not have a lot of memories of that bar—but I took my role as the Minister for Racing and Gaming very seriously. When I was the minister, we delivered some really good legislative reform to the Liquor Control Act in this place, with bipartisan support on the supply of alcohol to minors and other things. That had been hanging around for four or five years. Ben and Alex’s professionalism, intelligence and hard work is a great asset and a great credit to them and holds them in good stead for the organisations they work for now, and I need to thank them very much.

I think my approach has always been to be quite collaborative, both here in Parliament and in my electorate. I just think you get more done that way. I know it does not work all the time, but sometimes it does. That is the way I was always going to work. Even when I ask questions without notice to a minister in this place, often it is for me to raise issues to them that they probably need to look into, because I know that when one works with departments—we have mega-departments now—one just cannot know what is going on at every level. I remember when I was a minister on that side of the house and people would ask me questions, I would say, “Jeez, that’s a really good question. I want to know the answer to that. Thanks for raising it with me.” I would go back to my department and say, “What does this mean? Why are they asking me this? What’s going on?” To me, it was a great revelation, because it helped me to understand more about what the department was doing, so I think there is a great value in questions without notice if people want to treat them the right way.

When I was minister, we did a lot of hard work. The sale of the Western Australian TAB was a hot topic at the time. I know it was dear to the heart of Hon Darren West, who turned up at every community meeting I went to and argued against me, only to then flip over when he got back into government. I remember I had to rally against the member for Murray–Wellington who was out there giving out bumper stickers, “No sale for the WA TAB!” Even at the very beginning, the Racing and Wagering Western Australia board and the CEO were completely against the sale and came out and rallied against it.

I decided that I needed to be better informed about the issue, because I thought at the time that was my role. It was my responsibility to the industry to ensure that I was the most informed I could be if I was going to advocate for a particular position. I found that a rewarding and difficult situation, because I had to front up to a whole industry that would often yell at me because the old way was delivering for them. My point was that we do not know what the new way could deliver. Let us see what it can do if we test it. We never quite got there, for a variety of reasons, which probably will need another hour to explain.

It is interesting that while I was the Minister for Racing, Gaming and Liquor, regional casinos came up on the agenda. I went and visited a few of them. I went to Alice Springs, and the Alice Springs casino said, “We do it because we want to see international travel and tourism opportunities, and they’re the ones who bring in all the money.” It is not true. They have a thing in casinos called churn, and it is the local people who provide the churn. It is the local people who turn up at three o’clock in the afternoon on a Monday or a Tuesday and provide the churn. They are the ones putting the 10¢ or 20¢ in, and that is what keeps them going. For that reason, I could not back any regional casino. In my opinion, it would be a disaster for regional communities. I understand the tourism argument; it is just that the arguments do not deliver. I was more than happy to get myself across that.

In the housing portfolio, I was the minister who took the \$560 million social housing investment program to cabinet and got that approved. That changed the way we did some of our social

housing in those times. However, my time as minister was brief, and that was mainly due to party leadership change. I made the decision at the time that I was going to be the collateral damage to enable a “smoother” leadership transition, because a leadership change in the political world, as we all know here, is never easy and is almost always ugly. I thought it was pretty ugly at the time, so I made the decision that I was the one who needed to step back to make a smoother transition. But do you know what? We all move on. Just like every election, we move on. We take the medicine and we move on with it and try to contribute in whatever ways we can.

I would like to thank the staff of Parliament House and the Legislative Council, and also those in this house who have supported the Parliamentary Nationals WA team and the National Party. This is one of the strangest workplaces you would ever want to visit, but at least I have found that the people here are generally pretty sensible. They are just like you and me. A number of staff have come and gone over time, some who have endured beyond me, came here before me and are still here and will still be here. I hope that I have afforded them the respect they deserve, even though I often call them “chicken” or “brother” or “sister”. There is no offence intended; it is a point of affection. That is the colloquial language that I use. They have never shown any offence, and they have always shown me respect back, and I hope that they think that I have respected them, because there is definitely no disrespect intended in the way that I talk to them.

In fact, I have a great many friends in this place. I thank them for their friendship and support. I would like to name some of them, but I know what will happen is I will miss someone out and they will want to come and egg me later on. No, they would not! But I hope they know who they are, because I have really enjoyed our friendship. I have found interaction with the staff just as rewarding as anything. I really thank them for that. One day, I will get to play that game of golf, and I will get to have half a horse with that guy who wants to do that with me. At some point we will do that. I just want to say thank you to all of them.

I started my office in Albany and it was there for about four years, and then I moved it to Eaton. I have been very lucky to have had a fairly stable staff in my electoral office over that time. If you ever go to Albany, you will still see the signage on my office wall there, even though I left there seven years ago. They move quick down there! They have not been able to rent the office out, so I kind of have free advertising there. I now kind of regret taking off the really big sign; when I left, I thought I might be able to put it up in Eaton, but I have not been able to.

I think one common thread with all the electorate staff I have worked with is that I am not quite sure who was the boss; in fact, I am pretty sure I was not. I am pretty sure most of them were. As all country members know in this job, the people in the office are your frontline, your point of contact in the community, and they carry your reputation as much as anything. I think, in this sense, I have been very, very fortunate. I would like to touch on a few names. Sam started with me as a fresh, enthusiastic 21 or 22-year-old. We both had no idea what this thing was about, but I know one thing: he taught me more than I ever taught him. He was a great help. Roxy is a wonderful, generous spirit who was a great asset to me. She never pulled any punches and was not afraid of telling me, “That’s a pretty dumb idea, that’s not going to work.” If you ever know Roxanne, you will know what I mean. She did not say it that way, I can tell you!

Then there is Michelle, who joined my office around 17 months ago. She hit the ground running and is an amazing woman who knows how to get things done. It has been a great start to her electorate office career and I hope it continues for many years to come, because she will be a great asset to any office. Then there was Jules who stuck with me for quite a long time. What can I say? She was a tireless boss who drove me all the way. She is a smart and savvy operator who is totally committed to the community and its political representation. She always went above and beyond the call of duty, not because I asked her to but because she wanted to. She was enrolled in it. We had some fun and we had some tears. We had the odd angry face, which she would remember, and we had some wine. I have to tell members that she is the best at

picking wine. In fact, at lunch, she did it again and picked the best wine on the menu. She is quite extraordinary at it. Jules, I am not sure how I can thank you enough for your friendship and support. Relationships are established on shared experiences, and we have had a lot. When I look back on it, we have done a lot. We still have things to do, so thank you!

I want to quickly mention Codee-Lee, who came to my office for some work experience. She is a remarkable young woman, who is starting out on her career and her family career. She really brought a spark to the office with her kindness, her personality and her willingness to have a go, and she taught us a fair few things. I would like to say good luck to Codee-Lee.

Finally, I had better talk about Vicki. Vicki signed up for four years not knowing it would be 12! Our friendship started way back in Carnarvon, 15 years before I was elected. By my reckoning, that is 27 years of working together or knowing each other through, I have to say, some pretty stressful times for us both. She has been on her own journey. She is the most tolerant and understanding person I know, who is just the ideal face of the office. We probably should have had her photo on the office window, not mine. It would have been much better if people had been looking at her picture, not my picture every day. She is everything I am not. She is well organised, meticulous and good at detail and I am none of those things; I freewheel way too much. I reckon I must have driven her mad with my kind of organisation—it is a kind of organisation, but not her kind of organisation—and my idea of detail. Vicki, I could not have done this job without you. In fact, I would never have done it without you; I would have pulled up stumps a long time ago. Thanks for signing up for what has been a great journey with me.

I have always tried to be well grounded and to keep a well-grounded viewpoint while I have been in this position. I think the bubble of Parliament is a very dangerous place. It is my family and friends who have kept me well grounded. There is so much more to life outside this place. We talk for hours in this place—I am doing that now and I apologise—while all the time life and the world go on around us, and I have tried not to be distracted by the bubble that we exist in.

I want to mention the Spinifex crew, the squealers mob, the Jody and Gaz group of friends and the boys from the Harvey Golf Club, who really did not care whether I was an MP, a minister of the Crown or the feather duster I am about to become, because they would rubbish me anyway, as they always have. That is what I like and that is how it should be. They should see me for who I am, not the title I hold.

I would like to give my perspective of my time in this place. This is what has happened in a personal sense over the 12 years I have been here.

My father died a year before I was elected. When I first signed up he said, “What the bloody hell do you want to do that for?” He never lived long enough to see me as a member of Parliament, but I reckon he would have been saying the same thing now. I am pretty sure his opinion would not have changed; he would have said exactly the same thing.

My mother is now almost 94. She has gone from being an active senior, living independently, to now being in full-time care. She has really had enough of this life. She wakes up every morning and asks, “Am I still here?” and when she realises she is, she says, “That’s a bugger!” She really is ready to go.

My daughter, Ebony, was 19 when I was sworn in. She is the most wonderful, remarkable and determined young woman you would want to meet. She bought and ran her own cafe in Harvey when she was just 22. She is now a mother of two ratbag kids, Sienna and Niamh—spelt the Irish way; good luck with that!—and is completely supported by her brilliant husband, Matt. Even though he is from Victoria and is a Collingwood fan, we have still adopted him.

So I came into this place as a father and I leave as a grandfather. Back in 2009, when I was sworn in, our eldest son Zeke was 16. He had left home the year before that to tread his own pathway to an apprenticeship. He has been a fully qualified heavy diesel mechanic for eight years and is

now an operator for Woodside, working alongside his partner, Meghan, whom we absolutely adore. He is a son I am very proud of, not just because of his work ethic but also because of the person he is. He cares about people and will always help when needed.

Then we have Denzel and Frazer. The boys were 12 years old when I first got here. We would bring them to dinner dressed in their oversized suits and shiny shoes. They are now 24-year-old men, bigger and stronger than their father, which is not hard—I understand; I am only five feet seven and three-quarters! They are both forging their own pathways in life and making their own decisions in this world. To grow through their teenage years and high school stresses when their father was stretched between south west communities, parliamentary roles and ministerial duties is a testament to the people they are. Floss and I even went away for six weeks during their year 11 exams, leaving them to fend for themselves. The fact that they survived that and did well at school is a real testament and a great credit to them. I am not sure why we did that—probably due to our own selfishness. They have brought into our family Shelby, whom we have truly adopted and love, and Caitlin, who has recently been inducted and we have not scared her off yet! There are a few tests to come. I want to thank all my children for your love and support.

I wanted to spend a little time on that 12-year journey from my family’s perspective because I think it is a perfect demonstration of why we do this job. It is not about what we get from the role, but what we can achieve for people and the community whom we serve: the ageing parent in need of increased medical support; the young businesswoman willing to take a risk and work hard; the young man wanting to get a trade and contribute to our industries; and young adults working through their education and looking for opportunities that we, in this place, can help create. That is what I reflect on and those are the things that motivated me the most to get out of bed every day to try to achieve, obviously not just for my family but for all those in the south west and the rest of the state. That is what has driven me and that is why I wanted to be connected to the community rather than just rely on the bubble.

I have been very fortunate to be able make the decision to leave this place on my own terms, I believe. I do so with the knowledge that I have worked very hard and I have done some good things that I am proud of, but it is time for someone else to have a crack at this political arena. I leave also knowing that I am leaving with plenty of energy, capacity and passion to keep contributing to the WA community and its people in other ways. What that looks like I do not know yet. I am a great believer also in what you do in your past prepares you for the next stage of life or the next work you do, and I must say I feel well prepared for that next path.

Finally, I must make my last words today about my wife of 30 years, Floss! Firstly, I will apologise in advance: I am going to be under your feet and annoying you for some time while we both adjust to this new phase in life—sorry about that. I know you are already regretting it. But can I say that no gift will ever be enough, no words will ever fully convey and no actions will ever express how much I love you and appreciate you. Thank you for your unwavering support, especially over the last 12 years in this role, a role I was 100 per cent committed to but only because you were 100 per cent with me all the way!

And with that, Madam President, I thank the house for listening and I wish you all well.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Hon Colin Holt; you will be missed.