



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Mr Dean Nalder, MLA
(Member for Alfred Cove)

Legislative Assembly

Address-in-Reply

Tuesday, 16 April 2013

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

MR D.C. NALDER (Alfred Cove) [7.49 pm]: Madam Deputy Speaker, I add my congratulations on your election as Deputy Speaker and wish you every success in the role.

Premier, fellow members of the Legislative Assembly and Council and family and friends in the gallery, I stand with great pride and humility in this house as the member for Alfred Cove. I have the privilege to stand before you because of the trust and hard work of so many people, and the support of my local community. I come to this place to represent the interests of people who live in Alfred Cove, Applecross, Ardross, Attadale, Bicton, Booragoon, Melville and Mount Pleasant.

My family and I have made our home for many years in the area I now represent. My children spent their primary school years at Applecross Primary School and went to high school in nearby South Perth and Bull Creek.

Our weekends are spent catching up with family and friends and keeping up with my children's many pursuits and their stream of friends who always seem to end up back at our place. The country and community feel of my Wagin childhood is well and truly alive in the electorate of Alfred Cove. Alfred Cove is characterised by natural beauty, demographic diversity and a thriving local economy. We are also an active community. Service clubs, religious organisations and community groups are passionately committed to helping others. The breadth and number of grassroots organisations is one of Alfred Cove's greatest strengths. These groups are inspired and founded not by the hands of government but by the people themselves. This spirit sees many doing so much for others and it is enormously satisfying to work with the people of my community every day.

No-one comes to this Parliament without the support and foundation of those around them. Importantly, I come here as a proud member of the Liberal Party whose values of hard work, smaller government and individual enterprise I share and promote. I pay tribute to my family, to my mother, Janice, and my late father, Cambell, to my loving wife, Colette, and my three wonderful children, Cambell, Alette and Christopher. Your support, along with my faith in God, provides the balance and strength in my life. This is a shared journey and I would not be here without you. In this place I follow in the footsteps of my grandfather, Sir Crawford, and my father, Cambell. I am the third generation representing the needs and wishes of the local community. While my grandfather and father represented rural districts and mine is suburban, my memories of growing up on a farm, putting in and harvesting crops, along with the noise and smell of the shearing shed, are still vivid and strong in my mind and reflect who I am and where I have come from. The important issues of all Western Australians, such as law and order and health and education, will connect the work I do with the work of those who came before me in this place. To my friends and family in the gallery, and to my campaign team, thank you for your friendship and for sharing your wisdom over so many years. Through countless hours of hard work and sheer determination, you secured my election, person by person, vote by vote.

For many years I have been called by the opportunity to represent the community that has contributed so much to my life and the lives of my family. While I found much satisfaction in

the corporate world, I am privileged to head in this new direction where I am sure the challenges will be even greater and the reward of helping others in Alfred Cove more fulfilling. The chance to develop ideas and policies for the betterment of all Western Australians is a challenge I am also eager to accept. I look forward to contributing to the development and implementation of government policy that promotes prosperity here in Western Australia and therefore across our nation.

It is now my job to make more perfect what is already one of the best places in the world to live. Prudent government has the responsibility to not only govern for the day but also lay the foundations for the future. Demands of a state bristling with activity means government is seldom afforded the opportunity to stop and reflect, assess and critique and to look beyond the current cycle with an eye to developing policies for decades to come. Policies that work across cycles and across party lines will be the ultimate success for Western Australia. We all share a number of goals for our government—steady economic growth and prosperity, low inflation and low unemployment, law and order, first-class health and education, opportunities for everyone to succeed to their potential, and respect for individual freedom. Achieve this and we have good government. A bold vision with longer range planning to adequately address the needs and wants of Western Australia with careful consideration of where we want our state to be in a decade, in 20 years and perhaps even half a century down the track—take this approach and we have best government.

Our state is moving at lightning pace, driven greatly by mineral wealth, which is playing foundation to the national economy. It is important that this government leverage the benefits of the situation we find ourselves in to ensure our state enters the next decades in even better shape than we are today. Our vision for this state must not come at the expense of our fundamental philosophies of lower tax, of leaving businesses with more of their own money and of not burdening future generations with debt to fund expedient policies today. While focusing on our strengths we must also be aware of those parts of the economy that are not doing as well, such as farming, tourism and many small retail businesses. Security of supply for food, energy, water and finance are challenges being faced the world over and we must ensure continuity of supply in our state for generations to come. But this is not a call for greater government intervention. We need to get away from the idea that big government makes our lives better. I believe that one of the most important things a government can do is understand its own limitations. I come to this place as a Liberal member because I stand firmly by the guiding beliefs of our party. Most importantly we say that wherever possible, governments should not compete with an efficient private sector. Businesses and individuals, not government, are the true creators of wealth and employment. When a government decides to step in and legislate, we must consider every consequence of our actions and stop and think about whether we should act at all. As members of Parliament, we should always ask ourselves: is this something that needs to be done by government or are we simply contributing to government growth and doing something the private or not-for-profit sector could do better?

My business experience reinforces that excessive regulation creates unnecessary bureaucracy, stifles innovation, restricts decision-making ability and ultimately hinders growth and prosperity. Let us leave people to run their own lives and let government do only what individuals cannot. I stand for focused government, not big government. I stand for government that opts for the future and faces the hard decisions. I stand for government that backs families with real policies and not just platitudes. I stand for government that is streamlined and effective.

For 18 years in the banking industry I was compelled to focus on the efficient and effective allocation of resources. We spent time analysing productivity and looking for new opportunities and innovative ways of doing things that lead to best practice. My corporate experience taught

me that to lead incremental improvement it was my responsibility to provide an environment that engaged staff in a shared vision in what our team needed to achieve together. It was my responsibility to provide an environment so all of us could be the best we could be, to enjoy and gain satisfaction from our work and to work towards the greatest success we could achieve. It was my responsibility to restrict the growth of unproductive resources and bureaucratic processes in the head office to allow the staff dealing directly with the customer the opportunity to get on and do what they do best—provide competent value-for-money service. Should we not apply this same approach to government? As members of Parliament, it is our responsibility to utilise the resources bestowed on us by the taxpayer in the most efficient and effective ways possible. This discussion is not about just saving money; it is about driving best practice to free up capital otherwise lost to bureaucracy and red tape and to invest in the future of our state and ultimately get a better outcome for the community.

Our state is currently operating at full capacity and supporting the entire Australian economy with growth, jobs and investment that is critical for the federal budget. Western Australia has just 11 per cent of our nation's population but produces 16 per cent of Australia's gross domestic product and 46 per cent of the nation's exports. Given this federal responsibility, our relatively small population and large geography, efficiency is an imperative for Western Australia to maintain the high quality of life and opportunities for everyone to succeed to their potential.

I was surprised when taking an executive role in the federal public sector that a number of head office staff of my new employer were classified as "unallocated". This meant they had no specific role. Many of them had been in this position for a number of years. These employees were not happy. They were not challenged or valued and did not feel they could add value to the business. At the same time I witnessed staff at the front line—those charged with delivering the service to the community—under pressure to work quickly to meet demand, forced to complete unnecessary paperwork to legitimise the job of head office bureaucrats. We need to make sure limited resources are being allocated to where they are really needed. Should we not be reviewing the mix of frontline versus central office staff across all departments to ensure we have found the optimum allocation of our people capital to best meet the needs of the community?

Being the best we can be is an ethos that we strive to instil in our children. Is this not a standard that should apply to the provision of government services? As a Western Australian, I want government services that strive to be the best they can be, and for the benefit of all, not just a few.

Placing sole power into a central government in Canberra will not guarantee this greater efficiency nor the correct allocation of resources to meet the needs of local communities. The balance between state and federal governments is extremely important to protect the interests of all Australians, and I believe that a great part of the bipartisan work of this Parliament will be to negotiate a new and fairer relationship with our federal government. We must set out an agenda for our aspirations in this Federation that resonates with our community and is a catalyst for change to the status quo. I would like to acknowledge the work of our Premier, the former Treasurer and the Treasurer in taking on this challenge for Western Australians.

The zero-sum game of goods and services tax redistribution is simply pitting Premier against Premier as they are forced to fight for their states; and this is not a discussion of parochial self-interest but of the underlying structural problems of the current system. A healthy federal system must balance fiscal equalisation with fiscal autonomy so that our state has sufficient revenue to meet our constitutional responsibilities. For it to work, we need a federal government that supports state initiatives, facilitates cooperation among states and encourages innovation and best practice. The method and logic by which GST payments are allocated by Canberra to

the states is not allowing this. This year WA's share of GST revenue will fall well below 50c in the dollar, leaving WA with the lowest share of GST of any state—ever.

Over the decades since Canberra assumed the exclusive power to levy income taxes we have seen glimpses of cooperation, including the creation of the Council of Australian Governments in 1992; and the ebbs and flows of mining booms and the global financial crisis have seen Western Australia's relationship with our capital strengthen and strain. But federalism in its current form is starting to lose its lustre. For problems large and small, bureaucratic solutions always seem to be the default option. With bureaucracy, partisan politics soon gets in the way and funding can be directed for political gain, as opposed to apolitical, fair and equitable reasons. Limited resources are channelled from productive regions such as Western Australia and redistributed to areas in decline. This redistribution from high to low areas of return encourages consumption over investment and discourages competition and innovation; it crowds out a capable private sector, impeding its ability to create jobs; it allows a culture of dependence to develop; and the net effect is a less productive nation.

I understand that since Federation, many social, economic, environmental and cultural challenges have presented new problems demanding solutions, some of which have been provided by governments. But I am sure our founding fathers did not intend, with change and the broad interpretation of commonwealth powers by the High Court of Australia, that the federal government would so consciously intrude on areas intended for state responsibility. It is essential that Western Australia has the resources to invest in infrastructure that will allow it to continue to grow and to provide prosperity for all Australians.

The current vertical fiscal imbalance is not just bad for this state government, but also bad for equity in our taxation system, bad for competition and bad for innovation. Further cooperation between state and federal governments will be the key to a better outcome. We must work together to develop a national approach on infrastructure requirements across Australia. We must frame this discussion in terms of sustainable national economic policy for the next 50 to 100 years, and we must be making decisions now. To do all of this, we as elected representatives must remain close to the people, must remain focused on local issues and must implement regional policies.

I wish to touch on some of the matters that will shape my work as the representative for Alfred Cove. There are now more than 1.9 million cars on WA roads—a growth of 18 per cent over the last five years alone. A \$450 million expansion of Garden City shopping centre will see an increase of two million visitors per annum. Based on current statistics, 99 per cent will visit by car. When Fiona Stanley Hospital comes online, the Murdoch area will host up to 115 000 visitors daily. Add to this the Canning Bridge redevelopment, and soon Alfred Cove and neighbouring electorates will be one of the busiest regions in Perth. Development is a great vote of confidence in our local area that brings jobs and prosperity. However, a consideration of how we move people into, out of and around our local area must be a top priority. Public transport is going to be the key to the success of our region and it must be a real alternative to the car. It is simply not acceptable that bus commuters, who have chosen to make the change, are caught in peak-hour traffic jams on Canning Highway as they are today. A fresh approach is needed. I would like to see an investigation of a secondary level interchange at the key developments about which I have just spoken that provide direct public transport access into these important centres of business and recreation, and connections between them via rapid transport links. I want public transport to be fully integrated into all future growth. I look forward to continuing my work with the Minister for Transport.

When it comes to law and order, I am concerned that local residents, business owners and particularly seniors still feel uncertain about community safety. I believe everyone has the right to feel safe in their own home and to feel safe walking the streets of their local community. The

Minister for Police's community forum in Alfred Cove gave residents a direct line to the government. Much has been done, but I commit to doing more in this area to ensure Alfred Cove continues to be a safe and enjoyable place to live.

For our younger generations, it is my desire that all students have the very best schooling opportunities we can give them. Our schools perform well by international standards, but there is always more to be done and we must promote excellence to enable all students to reach their potential. Our schools should be the ultimate hand-up in that it does not matter where you start or where you live; rather, it is what happens in the classroom that counts. I would like to see the day when a greater share of government funding goes to the front line so that schools in my electorate, such as Applecross Primary, do not have to choose between an arts teacher or a physical education teacher because both can be afforded. It should have both so it can provide our kids with the best possible start to life.

I want to be a part of creating opportunity for Western Australians in not only Alfred Cove, but also right across the great state of Western Australia. As elected members we have a responsibility to dream large, but when government does act it must be only to maximise choice and opportunity. I want to see a Western Australia in which individuals and communities, not governments, invent the future. That is why I am a Liberal, why I joined the Liberal Party and why I am here today. Under the strong leadership of our Premier our fortunes have turned and we now have many more members on our side of the house. That is no accident. It is a tribute to the Premier's discipline and leadership, to the strength of our party's message and to the people's confidence in our team's ability to deliver. We must now return that faith. I want to put my knowledge and experience, both personal and corporate, to the best use I can. I want not only to be a great representative for the families and businesses in Alfred Cove, but also to make a great contribution to the state of Western Australia. I am here to represent all the people of Alfred Cove, whatever their beliefs or political philosophy might be. I say as their member in this place, I will represent the people of Alfred Cove with humility, decency and all the ability I have to offer.

[Applause.]
