



**PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**INAUGURAL SPEECH**



**Mrs Jessica Stojkovski, MLA**

**(Member for Kingsley)**

Legislative Assembly

Address-in-Reply

Thursday, 18 May 2017

*Reprinted from Hansard*



# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 18 May 2017

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## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

### *Motion*

Resumed from 17 May on the following motion moved by Ms J.J. Shaw —

That the following Address-in-Reply to Her Excellency's speech be agreed to —

To Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson, AC, Governor of the State of Western Australia.

May it please Your Excellency —

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

**MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley)** [9.16 am]: Mr Speaker, may I congratulate you on your election to the role of Speaker. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and may I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I would like to thank the former member for Kingsley, Andrea Mitchell, for her service to the people of Kingsley for the last eight and a half years. I am proud to follow her as the fourth member for Kingsley, all of whom, since the creation of the electorate in 1989, have been women. I thank the people of Kingsley for their faith in me and I am humbled to stand in this place as their local member. I will endeavour to represent them to the best of my ability and be a strong local voice for local issues.

I start by acknowledging friends and family in the gallery today, particularly my husband, Siljan, my children, Nadija and Kristijan, my parents, Bernadette and Tony O'Gorman, my in-laws Zivka and Blagoja Stojkovski, my brother, Charlie, and his wife, Rachel Colombera, my sister, Samantha McMullen, and my aunt and uncle, Myra and David Browne.

### **MY JOURNEY TO THIS PLACE**

It is my firm belief that a number of people saw my path to this place at my feet long before I did. However, I am not sure that many would have predicted it would happen so soon. I am filled with pride to stand in this spot to address you today as it is almost 16 years to the day that my dad, Tony O'Gorman, former member for Joondalup, stood in relatively the same spot to make his inaugural speech. My parents raised my brother, Charlie, sister, Samantha, and I with some very strong values—Labor values—particularly related to one's ability and, in fact, one's responsibility to speak up and stand up for those who cannot speak up and stand up for themselves in our community. These values can best be summed up by this saying, "If you are more fortunate than others, it is better to build a longer table than a higher fence."

From an early age I became aware that just one person standing up for what they believe in can make a difference. Although it is true that one person cannot change the world on their own, they can change their own world and have an effect on those around them. My first political act that I can remember was at the ripe old age of 10. Being a big fan, as most 10-year-old girls are, of cartwheels, handstands and hanging upside down from the monkey bars, I was unhappy that the boys at my primary school were allowed to wear shorts while the girls were forced to wear skirts. Not happy with the hand I had been dealt just because I was

a girl, I decided I would reshuffle the deck. I saw the principal, Mr McFarlane, who told me I would need to show that I had the support of others for my request that girls be allowed to wear shorts. I spoke to some of my friends and we put together a petition of the names of all the students who supported our request. I will not pretend that it was easy and I vividly remember a number of the older students laughing at us and teasing us because we wanted to wear shorts, but we persevered and finally presented the petition to Mr McFarlane. The staff and parents acknowledged the request of the students and the following year a trial of what we call skorts was offered as part of the girls' uniform in addition to the traditional skirt. I graduated from Eddystone Primary School in Heathridge 24 years ago, but on my recent visit to the school I was filled with immense pride to see that although it had undergone some amendments and updating over the years, the skort that my friends and I petitioned for is still available and worn by female students at the school. This event showed me that with the right tools and determination things that seem impossible and improbable when you start can be achieved.

I took this knowledge and determination with me into adulthood and I used them to help me work for and deliver in my various communities. In 2010, shortly after having my first child, Nadija, I realised that the subdivision I was living in, in Landsdale, did not have any connecting footpaths, which meant that I was cut off from the shops, the child health nurse and community facilities. As a mum pushing a pram, this was very important. If I was cut off, then other people would be too. Together with the member for West Swan, Rita Saffioti, who was my local member at the time, we reformed the Landsdale Residents Association and began campaigning to have a connecting footpath built. After we were successful at having the footpath built, the residents' association turned its attention to other issues within the community that we felt should be addressed. And so began my role in community activism, fighting for what I believed in and for those in my community.

### **EDUCATION**

As a mum with a daughter now in primary school and an 18-month-old who will start attending school in a few short years, education was a strong driver of my decision to stand for election. I was dismayed and appalled when the former government cut funding to education assistants in our school. This was a harsh attack on some of the most vulnerable people in our community—our children. Having been in my daughter's class as a parent helper on a number of occasions, I have seen just how much work and value those education assistants contribute to our classrooms and how much support they offer the school, the students and the teachers. The focus of this Labor government on education will have long-lasting effects. Putting education assistants back into the classrooms will ease some of the pressure on our teachers who are increasingly dealing with more than just education issues. Investing in and nurturing and mentoring new teachers and providing personal development opportunities to all teachers will allow for personal and professional growth. These types of investments have positive impacts on teachers, which in turn impacts on the students' quality of education.

Encouraging and facilitating science and coding in primary schools is going to be vitally important for our children as they move towards adulthood and future employment opportunities. Labor understands that we need to prepare our children for jobs that have not even been invented yet and that the promotion of critical thinking and collaborative behaviour, which is evident in scientific teaching, will equip our children with the skills they need to thrive in this ever changing technological world we find ourselves in.

My passion for education will naturally translate to the schools in the Kingsley electorate. I look forward to working with them and advocating on their behalf to ensure that Kingsley schools are not forgotten or neglected, as many of them feel they have been for the last number of years.

## **KINGSLEY ELECTORATE**

Moving to Woodvale to be closer to our daughter's school, I was struck by the beauty of the area. The electorate of Kingsley comprises the suburbs of Woodvale, Kingsley, Greenwood and Warwick. There are numerous bushlands, parks and wetland systems that are very close to the heart of the local communities. This is evident by the number of "friends of" community groups such as the Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park, Friends of Shepherd Bush Park and Friends of Warwick Bushland. One needs only to take a ride or walk around Lake Goollelal in the morning or evening and see the number of people out enjoying the picturesque setting to understand the connection many local residents have to these wonderful assets. However, the wetlands do have drawbacks, primarily, the presence of midges and mosquitos and their impact on the surrounding residential development. As the local member, I am dedicated to working with the two local governments—the Cities of Joondalup and Wanneroo—and the various Labor ministers to find a holistic and appropriate solution that not only reduces the midge and mosquito population, but also addresses the root cause of these issues.

I believe that the people of Kingsley took their decision on 11 March very seriously, and this is reflected in the close result in the Kingsley seat. The fact that I stand here today as the Labor member for Kingsley shows that they carefully considered the former government's record and found it wanting. While the electorate of Kingsley is predominantly residential, there are areas of local small businesses that are genuinely concerned about their ability to trade and employ Western Australians. I congratulate the Premier, the cabinet and my Labor colleagues for the sensible and, frankly, overdue policy that will level the playing field for businesses in Kingsley, allowing them to competitively trade for government contracts by encouraging local content and local jobs.

We are very lucky in Kingsley that we are bound by the Joondalup train line to our west so residents have access to the public transport system. However, utilisation of this public transport system requires patrons to feel safe. It is for this reason that I campaigned for extra closed-circuit television and lighting at Greenwood train station, and I am proud that we will be delivering on this important issue.

My professional background is in town planning. As a town planner, I understand that fast and easily accessible feeder bus services are essential to allowing increased patronage. In the electorate of Kingsley, east to west bus services connecting to the train line will provide the trigger for behavioural changes and attitudes towards public transport. I am very pleased that feeder bus services will be reviewed as part of Metronet.

## **PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The people of Western Australia look to this government for strong leadership, and now is our time to be brave. We as a state, nation and, indeed, global community are facing tough and uncertain times with rapidly changing landscapes and technological advances that create new and vibrant industries while at the same time rendering other industries obsolete. The management of this requires delicate balance and finesse that harnesses these new industries, enabling diversification of our economy whilst sensitively progressing the transition of workers out of other industries.

It could be observed that I came to the planning sphere by accident but for me it was a happy accident. In 2010, as a new mother with a five-month-old baby, I returned to work out of necessity, leaving my beautiful baby girl at home with my mum and mother-in-law. It was a guilt-ridden and testing time for me but I was also very grateful as this was the catalyst for me to return to university as a mature age student. Working in an administration role for a government relations firm, I was inspired by the genuine and real effect policy could have

on people's day-to-day lives. I enrolled in a Bachelor of Planning at Edith Cowan University, majoring in policy and governance. It was one of the best decisions of my life. At this point, I would like to thank my course coordinator, Tim Perkins, who is in the public gallery today, and senior lecturer Edward Andrea, who both offered me support and guidance through my four-year degree. Both these men have a passion for planning and encouraged and pushed me to extend my learning, including supervising my parliamentary internship and nominating me for domestic and international study tours. It was the culmination of these planning experiences that shaped my strong views on the holistic requirements for successful planning outcomes. I would also like to thank my former employers—the City of Wanneroo and the city growth team, in particular, Mark Dickson and Nick Stawarz, who took a chance on a mature age planning student with a child and were always supportive, especially when I found out that I was pregnant a week after starting there. I am sure the experience and lessons learnt at the City of Wanneroo will serve me well in this place and I hope my contribution to policy in general and planning policy specifically will reflect those teachings.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI:** The planning of this great state needs to be considered and it should incorporate land use, transport and planning. Only when these three important pieces of the puzzle are considered together will we see the cohesive and holistic planning we aspire to. The last piece of that puzzle needs to be a strategic focus on sustainability across government. To ensure our children inherit a better world than we did, we need to manage our impact on the environment in a variety of sectors. I will advocate for strong action on sustainability, including the exploration and commercialisation of renewable energy innovations, such as solar, wind and wave energy production, the banning of single-use plastic bags and the introduction of a container deposit scheme.

### MULTICULTURALISM AND DIVERSITY

The electorate of Kingsley comprises 10 per cent of people who were either born in Ireland or claim Irish ancestry. There is a long, proud history of Western Australian Irish parliamentarians with 30 being born in Ireland and many more claiming Irish ancestry. I am the daughter of Irish immigrants who, like many before them and since, came to Australia seeking a different life from the one they knew in their homeland. In 1981, recently married and expecting their first child—me—my parents, only 22 and 23 years old, arrived in Perth. At that time, no-one could have foretold the life that they would be able to build for themselves and their family here in Western Australia. For a mechanical fitter and a recently qualified teacher, Australia was a land of opportunity and hope, although not everything was smooth sailing. Overwhelming homesickness saw them return to Ireland only to realise that their hearts were in Australia, resulting in journeys across the world and back. My parents, like many other migrants to this country, assimilated and contributed to the community of their new home. Both my parents were heavily involved in the local residents associations, our school parents and citizens associations and other organisations, such as the 1<sup>st</sup> Joondalup Scout Group. This community involvement and genuine concern for the welfare of others shaped our lives and contributed to the understanding of our social responsibility. My parents thrived on the multicultural nature of Western Australian society and the concept of many cultures combining to create one culture.

Those of you with a keen eye or ear for names will have noticed that Stojkovski is not an Irish name. As I am the daughter of Irish immigrant parents, my husband, Siljan, is the son of Macedonian immigrant parents. It is my understanding that I am the first female Macedonian-named Western Australian parliamentarian. This is an honour I will wear with pride. The Macedonian community in Perth is strong and passionate and I know I carry with me the hopes and expectations of many in this community. I hope I will work with the

Macedonian community to fully represent them in this place. One of their hopes is that Australia will acknowledge Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia and not the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This is something very close to my family's heart and I will engage and work with my federal colleagues to progress the discussion about this very important issue.

Having created our culturally blended family, it is no surprise that a number of our friends are also from a variety of cultures being immigrants or first-generation Australians from immigrant parents. They come from Italy, Spain, India, Singapore, England, Germany, Romania, Vietnam, Greece and Russia. I find that the multicultural nature of our circle of friends enriches our social lives with food, dancing, customs and festivals, and teaches our children to celebrate things that make us culturally unique and connect over things that we have in common. So, it was with great sadness that I recently sat with a friend of mine as she told us that her and her husband were going to be pulling their children out of school because they were being bullied. I believe that any time a child is bullied, whether at school, in sports or in the playground, it is a failing of our society. However, when my beautiful Indian friend relayed to us that the bullying was racially motivated, I was simultaneously heartbroken and furious. I cannot believe that in Western Australia in 2017 a child would face such bullying because of the colour of their skin. As I look around at my Labor colleagues and see the diversity of culture, ancestry, sexuality, religion, gender, marital and family status, I hope that we can bring all those things that make us unique to this place so that we can represent the people of Western Australia and consider them in all the decisions that we make that impact on their lives.

### **UNIONS**

As many of my fellow members have spoken to in this chamber, there is a group of people who work tirelessly for the community and for the benefit of others in the community. I am talking of course about the union movement. Although many people have their first interaction with the union movement in their early 20s when they start working or attend university, I was much younger. My most vivid memory of unions is when my dad, who had been working for many years as a mechanical fitter, began having issues with his supervisor. Essentially, they had a personality clash. These issues continued on until one day my father's supervisor attempted to fire him. The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union stepped in and protected his job. In fact, the AMWU organiser who assisted that day now sits in this place as the member for Fremantle. So, growing up my knowledge of unions was that they protect people's jobs and protect people when they are on the job. I find it very fitting now that much of the recent visible union work has been around protecting jobs—Western Power jobs. It is with much gratitude and pride that I worked with the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, the Australian Services Union and the Electrical Trades Union throughout the election campaign to protect the jobs of Western Power workers in Kingsley and across the state.

### **THANKYOUS**

My journey to this place was not a solitary one and there are many people to thank. To my volunteers, you are a small but mighty band. You were also positive in the face of our Herculean task and often it was your kind and encouraging words that gave me the drive to continue our campaign when I was feeling down. To AMWU secretary, Steve McCartney, who is an old friend of my dad's, who protected me, promoted me and encouraged me more like an uncle, I thank you for your support and that of the AMWU. I would also like to thank Wayne Wood and the members of the ASU, and Les McLaughlan and the ETU members for the early-morning wobbleboarding on the side of Wanneroo Road. I would like to thank Rob Knox, who is here in the gallery today, who had the unenviable task of managing both Burns Beach and Kingsley. I appreciate the time and effort you put in for me. I would like to

thank Patrick Gorman and Lenda Oshalem. In my 21 years of election campaigning, I have never seen such a professional and supportive campaign for all electorates, including Kingsley. To my electorate staff, Ashley Buck and Karen Mann, thank you for the professional and efficient way you have set up our electorate office. I am so grateful to you looking after me, so that I can look after the people of Kingsley.

I am fortunate to have so many strong female role models in my life and it is with their help and support that I have arrived at this place. First, Hon Sally Talbot, a constant friend and mentor who gave so much of her time to a nervous would-be candidate and talked through the possible consequences for a mum with a young child and new baby. To Dr Anne Aly, Hon Alanna Clohesy, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, Hon Laine McDonald, member for Girrawheen Margaret Quirk, member for Mirrabooka Janine Freeman, member for West Swan Rita Saffioti: you have provided me with advice and support on how to be a member of Parliament, how to be a female member of Parliament and how to be a mum in Parliament. Your advice and support is much appreciated.

To my EMILY's List mentor, Liddy Clarke: thank you for being the voice on the other end of the phone. You were a calming and wise voice during a hectic and emotional time. Even though we have never met in person, your exuberance and excitement at my unexpected win was truly appreciated.

To Senator Louise Pratt: what can I say about you? You are a strong, proud, trailblazing woman of indomitable spirit. I have seen you suffer professional and personal setbacks over the years, but you have always held yourself up with grace and determination. You are my mentor, but more importantly you are my friend and I thank you for that. Thank you also to Bec, Amy, Ellie and Jon in your office who were always there with words of encouragement and direction.

I think all members would agree that none of us could have achieved our success and sit in this place without our families. To my brother, Charlie, and his wife, Rachel; my sister, Samantha, and her husband, Michael; my in-laws Blagoja, Zivka, Lubica, Goran, Gordana and Vince; and my Uncle David and Aunty Myra: you have all contributed to my life, making me the person I am today. You all also contributed to my campaign, from making Australian Labor Party-themed cupcakes for fundraisers and election day, to spending countless hours, with young children in tow, putting together election material, and of course working on polling booths and emotionally supporting me.

To my sister, Samantha: you have always had unwavering confidence in me. You are my best friend, and I could not ask for a better sister.

To my mum, Bernadette, you often say to me that I am the strongest woman you know; well, I say to you here today that you are in fact the strongest woman I know. While raising Sam and me with dad, in the face of some criticism of working mothers at the time, you pursued your passion for teaching. Knowing that although we were never well-off or wealthy, you opened your heart and our home to numerous foster children. For that I thank you. Because of that I have a brother; a brother who is kind, funny and an essential part of our lives. Charlie, I thank you for being my big brother and always backing me.

To my dad, Tony: when you sat in this place as member for Joondalup for 12 years, you inspired me. I saw the impact one dedicated and passionate member could have on a community. Even when you were no longer a member of this place you took that dedication and passion to your new adventures. I only hope I can be even half the member you were.

My dearest children, Nadija and Kristijan: you are my inspiration and my driving force, and I am a better person for being your mum. I stand here in this place today because of you—because of my need to see a better world for you. Nadija, you are my little ray of sunshine,

always with a smile on your face and a spring in your step. I urge you to follow your dreams, wherever they may take you. Kristijan, you are much too young today to understand what is going on; however, you are a gift we hoped for and thought would never come. I am eternally thankful for your cheeky disposition and the rock star welcome I get every time I pick you up from day care.

Lastly, to my wonderful husband: Siljan, you are my steadying hand and my rock. We have been through some joyous highs and crashing lows, but always come through with smiles on our faces and closer than ever. I thank you for supporting me in achieving my dreams, including supporting me financially and emotionally through university and then through this tiring election campaign. I hope I can make you proud in my new role as the member for Kingsley.

[Applause.]