



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VALEDICTORY SPEECH



Hon Fran Logan, MLA
(Member for Cockburn)

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

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MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services) [4.31 pm]: I rise to make probably my last contribution to the Western Australian Legislative Assembly after nearly 20 years as the member for Cockburn. Come 13 March 2021, I will reach the milestone of 20 years as a member of Parliament. On that day, I truly hope to see the re-election of an even larger McGowan Labor government. I, instead, will return to normal public life after my parliamentary service that included four years as a parliamentary secretary, nearly eight years as a minister under three Labor Premiers and just over eight years as a shadow minister. Along with membership of various parliamentary committees, I have made 2 549 spoken contributions to this house. I have been warned by Speakers probably over 100 times, and despite my strenuous efforts and obnoxious behaviour, I have never been thrown out! For this anomaly, I must thank the numerous Speakers over the years for their tolerance and good work.

Not many MPs ever get a chance to deliver a valedictory speech, due to the turbulent and cyclical nature of modern politics, so I am very, very grateful to be standing here today delivering mine. My gratitude is sincere, heartfelt and genuine to those institutions and people who have allowed me to be their representative in this Parliament for so long. Firstly and most importantly, I thank WA Labor, the party that I have been a member of for over 30 years. I know, and I remind colleagues regularly, that despite how clever you think you are, or how popular you are with your constituents or local groups, it is only the party and its organisational capacity that gets you elected into office. I am very proud to have been chosen by WA Labor to represent the electorate of Cockburn for 20 years and I hope that I have returned the party's faith in me by the work that I have contributed, both locally and in government.

My gratitude is also to the local constituents of Cockburn who in five elections returned me to state Parliament, mostly with an electoral margin of over 10 per cent and once nearly 20 per cent. I was hoping, ever since I announced my forthcoming retirement, that my constituents' faith in my work for and on behalf of them over the years was deserving of their support. But after receiving hundreds and hundreds of well wishes and thanks from local Cockburn residents over the last month or so, I feel their trust in me has been confirmed. For this outpouring by those who voted for me, I feel truly humbled.

To the local Cockburn ALP members who have worked tirelessly over my five electoral campaigns and who were key to success in winning local industrial, environmental and lobbying campaigns, I express my sincere gratitude. Members like Phil, Michele and Hunter Eva; Michelle, Dean and the whole Plozza family; Ivo and Alenka Radonic; Bart Houwen; Carl Stronmen and family; Rob and Jean Bruce; Yaz, Geri and the Mubarakai family; Marko Banovic; Peter Prothero; Les Richardson; Linda Goncalves and family; and Mick Duric are rusted-on supporters who always turn out for a local campaign or an election, be it state or federal.

I would also like to express my gratitude to and acknowledge my ongoing membership of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, a critical workers' representative organisation in WA affiliated to WA Labor. It was the AMWU members of Cockburn who pushed me towards the idea of standing for Parliament. The relationship between my union, WA Labor and the local ALP members in Cockburn has been of significant benefit to the creation of jobs and industrial development in the south west corridor of Perth. The concept of the Australian Marine Complex in Henderson, which I have been deeply involved with from the very beginning, came from the AMWU. Labor policies and Labor in government supported the union idea of a common-user facility that is based around three industries with overlapping skillsets—shipbuilding and ship repair, both commercial and naval; modular engineering and fabrication for mining and resources; and oil and gas work, especially subsea. The AMC CUF has now grown into Australia's premier shipbuilding and engineering hub and has generated billions of dollars' worth of work for WA, with a state-of-the-art technical college and a workforce measured in the thousands. It just shows that great things can come from the ground up.

Other people I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to are my colleagues who I have worked with over the years here in Parliament and in government. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Dr Geoff Gallop and Hon Clive Brown who not only showed honest, true and ethical leadership in politics, but also personally helped me adjust to being an MP and then a minister. I acknowledge also the ever-diminishing class of 2001 Labor MPs. With the member for Collie–Preston and the Speaker leaving with me next year, it means if re-elected, there will be only six of our 2001 cohort left when Parliament returns in 2021. It has been a terrific experience working alongside my 2001 colleagues, with a variety of ups and downs, good times and sad times. And, of course, I would like to

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acknowledge my current WA Labor colleagues here in Parliament and wish you all the very best in the forthcoming election. I thank and acknowledge also my current ministerial colleagues, who have been sensational to work with—collegiate, dedicated and hardworking, and one of the best cabinets in WA ever. To Premier McGowan, whilst you have been in Parliament one term longer than I have, we have worked closely together as parliamentary secretaries, committee members and ministers. It has been fascinating and a pleasure to see you grow into the leader you are today. You have carried with you into the Premiership all the hallmarks of the really great leadership I saw in Dr Geoff Gallop—honesty, smart political but ethical decision-making, and true humanity towards those less fortunate. Working with and for a leader who you know is in that position for all the right reasons makes it easy to give more, to try harder and to achieve. I have had the pleasure of working with successive ALP Premiers who have been just such leaders.

I would now like to touch on some of the things that I have been most proud of and believe have made a difference to the lives of the people of WA.

Spending over 20 years and two terms of government as a minister means that you have been involved with many things, some of which relate to implementing party policy and others that are just matters that arise and need resolving. Within the electorate of Cockburn, life and the suburbs themselves have changed dramatically since I was elected. Back in 2001, the suburbs of Cockburn actually smelt—and they smelt bad! Meatworks, sewage plants, foundries and cement works all gave off really bad odours. Locals had got used to the smells, but development was inevitable and complaints grew louder. Today, apart from the odd drift of caustic from Alcoa, there are no odours around Cockburn. Successive campaigns that I led to fix up Woodman Point sewage plant, forcing Cockburn Cement to install baghouse filters and the moving of meatworks and foundries have cleaned up the place completely. These changes, along with the massive industrial development at the Henderson Australian Marine Complex, which I touched on earlier, have transformed Cockburn. New estate developments such as Beeliar, which I kicked off as Minister for Housing, along with the creation of totally new centres such as Cockburn Central and Cockburn Gateway Shopping City, have created a totally new living environment in the south west corridor of Perth.

Can I thank my colleague the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, for continuing this transformation by picking up on the road congestion campaigns that I ran with the member for Jandakot prior to 2017, and delivering on widening the freeway, building the North Lake Road bridge, developing the Armadale Road dual carriageway and creating the first east–west metro link from Cockburn Central to Thornlie. These major infrastructure projects will continue to change the social environment of Cockburn and surrounding suburbs.

In government, under Premiers Gallop and Carpenter, I held various portfolios and was involved in helping to deliver many amazing projects such as the design of Perth Arena, as Minister for Housing and Works, and the redevelopment of Broome power station, which along with Looma and other Indigenous towns, became the first electrical energy plants based on LNG. Along with the wind farms in Hopetoun, Geraldton and Augusta, these were some of the 12 new power plants I signed off as Minister for Energy, yet it is some of the small but life-changing projects that make public service so meaningful. As the Minister for Industry and Enterprise, the delivery of fibre-optic cable to the Central Desert communities of Warburton, Kiwirrkurra, Blackstone and other remote towns meant that I could help some of WA's most isolated people access technologies that are available to the rest of the state.

As minister in my current role, I must admit, initially—Premier!—I was left aghast at being given Corrections and Emergency Services.

Mr M. McGowan: I remember.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: After all, what could go wrong in these portfolios? I quickly realised, given the shocking state of the departments that I inherited, that the only way was up, and there are many good things that could and should be done in reforming these critical areas of government. Reform, however, begins by talking to those you are asking to accept change. During this term I have spent my time travelling the state, visiting every prison and every career fire station numerous times, including meeting with thousands of volunteer emergency services workers, encouraging them to embrace change and reform. This approach to doing things differently I put down to my experience as a union organiser and being off the tools, when I can talk to people and not down to them.

Nearly four years later, our prisons and correction facilities in Western Australia are now less crowded, more humane and better staffed than ever before. The shame of WA being the second worst state for the rate of incarceration of Indigenous people is being redeemed through the gradual reduction of the prison population using smart but effective programs and interventions. Only last week at Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women, I launched an Indigenous languages program that will be available across all WA prisons. Incarcerated First Peoples and others such as prison staff now have an opportunity to learn the world's oldest and WA's original languages as part of a new culturally appropriate rehabilitation process. Along with including skin grouping on the offender management computer system so that prisons recognise relations under traditional law and the amazing success of Australia's first alcohol and drug rehabilitation prisons, built and opened in this term of government, WA corrections now has a completely new approach to prisoner rehabilitation and is world leading in many areas.

Today, Western Australia has fewer children and young people locked up than ever before. Our prison capacity has increased dramatically without the need for building a new prison. We have improved security against the smuggling of drugs and contraband and weeded out more bad officers and staff than have previous governments. In concert with the transformational laws and policies introduced by the Attorney General such as fine default legislation, family and domestic violence offender monitoring, violent and sexual offender legislation and the custody notification system, I am pleased to state that over the term of the McGowan government, we have created a safer and more just WA with better policing, secure prisons and greater monitoring of offenders in our community.

In achieving these outcomes can I thank all the extraordinary officers and public servants in Corrective Services in the Department of Justice, who, along with the unions, have put in long hours and a massive effort in reforming the agency. I specifically want to mention Mr Tony Hassall, who is retiring as Commissioner of Corrective Services. Without doubt, Tony has been the best commissioner the state has ever had and we have been lucky to have his wise, humane and capable leadership over the last four years. I wish Tony and Gerry all the very best for their future.

Fire and Emergency Services under the McGowan Labor government is now a modern, holistic agency that can prevent, prepare for, respond and recover from a wide and diverse range of hazards that may befall WA communities. During this term of government, the agency has grown from basically a fire and rescue response organisation to a body that is fully inclusive of career and volunteer emergency service workers, the leading contributor to mitigation action around our towns and vital infrastructure, and the key coordinator of recovery actions following natural or human-induced disasters. Under the leadership of Commissioner Darren Klemm, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services has overcome the poor relations that existed between the agency and volunteers under the previous Liberal–National government. The commissioner and I have travelled over 100 000 kilometres around Western Australia meeting volunteers from all the emergency services, listening to their views and considering their needs and aspirations. The result of these efforts has been the creation of a more cohesive and unified organisation with a far greater level of respect for the contributions made by both career officers and volunteers alike.

In addition, during this term, we have finalised and implemented the Ferguson report recommendations, two outcomes being the creation of the Rural Fire Division and the building of Australia's first Bushfire Centre of Excellence at Nambeelup. We have concluded the long-running vehicle replacement program that will see all future fire trucks built here in WA, many of which will be constructed in Collie, bringing new jobs and a new industry to the south west. After nearly four years of the McGowan Labor government, emergency services in WA is now better prepared for serious natural disasters, better equipped and better governed. Can I reiterate for one last time for all those thousands of volunteers across our state: thank you! Thank you for giving up the many, many hours of your time, in taking you away from your family and putting your lives at risk to help our fellow citizens in their time of peril.

The lessons I have learnt over the years in government as a minister and parliamentary secretary are that no matter what portfolio you are given, you can do not only good things but also amazing things for the people of WA. You cannot, however, do these things on your own. You are always part of a team and you are reliant on good people around you. Can I express my sincere thanks to the people who have been around me for the last four years and to whom I owe such a debt of gratitude. In particular, I would like to put on record my thanks to Tom Palmer, my chief of staff; Rebeka Marton and Mia Onorato-Sartori, my senior policy officers; Ryan Emery, senior media officer; Clair Berry, parliamentary liaison; Sarah Seymour, policy adviser; Tina McDonald, executive officer; Ellyce Shaw, appointment secretary; and Suzanna Golo and Leah Hayward, admin and correspondence officers. These wonderful people, along with all those who have moved on to pastures new—including you, Ben, up there—are some of the most hardworking, loyal and dedicated staff I have ever encountered. I thank you so much.

At the electorate office, I could not have done my job without the support and help of Phil Eva, Michele Eva and Michelle Plozza over the years. Organising community campaigns, liaising with constituents and running a very busy office, these three great hardworking people have been the backbone of Cockburn's political representation.

Life up here in Parliament is always made easier for MPs due to the fantastic work put in by staff. I would like to recognise all the workers here in these buildings. In particular, I would like to thank the silent and often overlooked Hansard staff, who make even the most dull, incomprehensible speeches readable. You are a wonderful group; you know that! I specifically mention and thank Lance and Basil, Anthony in the bar, Roger, Mark, Anna, Deb and all the staff in the dining room, Preston and the team down in the kitchen who never get a mention and to whom we all owe a great deal—some more than others! I thank Kirsten, Isla, Liz, Anne Day and all the staff of the Legislative Assembly. I thank Sammy and the team down in the gym who have kept me fit. By the way, there are still some targets on the whiteboard in the gym that need to be overcome, Minister for Health! He still has not overcome those targets.

Mr R.H. Cook: I'll take care of those in the morning!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will leave them as posterity for the next government.

I thank the wonderful education people in Parliament House, who sometimes we forget. Finally, I thank Enno and Rob Hunter, who still have not agreed to expand the new gym or put in new equipment. That is a task for the Minister for Health in the next government.

Even before my arrival in this place, I worked for many years in getting the Labor Party elected at both state and federal level, with terrific officers and staff of the AMWU. Indeed, many people in this chamber, including myself, have only been elected because of the AMWU loyalty and commitment to our party. For this support, I thank my former shop steward, organiser offsider and now state secretary Steve McCartney, Glenn McLaren, Pearl Lim, Alex Cassie, Owen Whittle—now at UnionsWA—Alan, Vince, Madi, Jade, Simon, Renee and all the other organisers and admin staff and, in particular, the indomitable Ann Di Giuseppe, who transferred my union membership from the United Kingdom to Australia 40 years ago.

On a much broader level of gratitude, can I put on the record, as a migrant, my thanks to Australia and the state of Western Australia for giving me a life that I could only once have dreamed about. The member for Collie–Preston and I, hopefully, are the last of the MPs to come to this place from a background of real poverty. We grew up in conditions experienced only by those from the last century. For Mick, it was a wooden slat hut near Darkan. For me, it was a tiny terrace house south of London, with no heating, an outdoor toilet and tin bath. Australia has not just been good to me; it has been a life-changer. I have had well-paid jobs as a tradesperson. I received a sensational higher education at the University of Sydney. I had the most remarkable work life with the AMWU and 20 years as an MP. My experience is unusual for most Australians, but for a Pom from my background, it has been nothing short of a miracle. For that, I thank this wonderful country and its people.

Mr Speaker, nothing can be done in parliamentary life without the support of friends and family, and I have been lucky enough to have had such support over the last 20 years. I have friends who have had to endure my recruitments during elections including Terri Riley, Anne Barblett and Don Inglis; the crazy gastro doctors Digby, Colin and Lindsay; and surfing mate Andrew Telford. Family recruitments include my brother-in-law Paul Burnham and the mother-in-law everyone should have, because I do no wrong in her eyes—do I Doris; no, I do not!—Doris Burnham. Finally, I acknowledge that I owe everything to my long-suffering family: Henry, who is here with Lizzie, thanks for all your love and support, particularly recruiting your mates during elections; Alexandra, who is in London with her husband, Angus, for all her love and unflinching commitment to all my work and campaigns; and, of course, Vivienne, the backbone and anchor of our family, whose love and unbelievable hard work has kept us together, focused and loyal to each other. Thank you so much; it would have been impossible without you.

Mr Speaker, that is it for the seat of Cockburn! It is now over to my colleague David Scaife, who has been endorsed to run in 2021. I wish David and Ellie all the best in their new life in the electorate. A huge thanks to you, Premier McGowan; my fellow cabinet ministers; colleague MPs; and all my comrades. It has been an amazing and phenomenal 20-year political life. You can all now breathe a sigh of relief that I will not be around to put forward strange and questionable people for preselection anymore! To all the ALP members standing in March 2021, work hard; go well. Bring back more Labor members to this chamber to continue the fantastic and historic work of the McGowan Labor government. Thank you.

[Applause.]