



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Mr Tony O'Gorman MLA

(Member for Joondalup)

Address-in-Reply Debate

Legislative Assembly, Wednesday 2 May 2001

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

MR O’GORMAN (Joondalup) [6.16 pm]: Firstly, I take this opportunity to thank the people of Joondalup, who have placed their trust in me to represent them as their member of Parliament for the next four years. The result of the recent election serves as a warning to all politicians that the electorate is unforgiving and extremely knowledgeable about the manner in which governments affect their day-to-day lives. I congratulate all members on their election win, particularly the newly elected members. I also congratulate the Speaker on his election to office.

I thank the many volunteers who have spent countless hours assisting me since my preselection in November 1999. All these volunteers should be personally acknowledged for their individual efforts, but time does not permit. I will, however, acknowledge those who were associated more closely with my campaign. Fiona Henderson stepped in late in the campaign and took charge of ensuring that volunteer lists, mail-outs, advertisements and a multitude of other tasks were completed and met the various deadlines. Simon Mead brought his vast experience and particular knowledge of campaign strategies. Leanne Fury coordinated fundraising efforts and polling booth rosters. The following group ensured by their participation that I managed to doorknock a large proportion of the electorate and kept me going when I felt that maybe it was time to stop and head home for a rest: Gerry Hartigan, my cousin from Ireland, Tony McNamara and Tony Logan, also Irishmen, and Terry Behan - members might be forgiven for thinking that the Irish are planning to stage some sort of invasion here - and also Liz Prime and Guy Chamberlain. Another important part of the campaign was the series of morning and afternoon teas successfully arranged by Trish Sinclair-Jones. One of the most important members of my campaign team was Ken Travers, who supported me through my previous campaign in Hillarys during the 1996 election, continued to support me during the intervening years, and prompted me to nominate for Joondalup in this election. Ken contributed large amounts of his time and personal resources to ensure that Joondalup became a Labor-held seat. I thank the Australian Labor Party office for its advice and help throughout the campaign. I thank all those people and those whom I cannot mention, unfortunately, for their time, effort and ideas. I owe them a great debt of gratitude that will take me many years to repay.

No campaign can be run without money. I thank the businesses in Joondalup that contributed to the campaign, both financially and by supplying goods for raffles, displaying election materials

in their windows, and continually looking after us as we went through the campaign period. A number of unions assisted throughout the campaign. I thank the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, of which I am a long-time member; the Community Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association; the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union; the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union; the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union; and the Maritime Union of Australia. All contributed with volunteers to doorknock and deliver pamphlets throughout the campaign.

I thank my family for the many sacrifices they have made over past years and the support that they have offered me as a family and as individuals. They have been my biggest supporters and have always encouraged me to stick with my principles. My wife Bernadette has been a great motivator and has always made sure that whatever I decided to do I could do with the knowledge that she was behind me completely. This was never more true than during the election campaign when our house was turned into the campaign office, with people and materials coming and going at all times of the day and night. The continuous use of our house made it very difficult to carry on a normal family life but Bernadette, through her persistence, made sure that we were as normal as possible throughout the election campaign. The untimely death of my parents during 2000 and early 2001 made it very difficult to remain focused on the campaign. Bernadette made sure that I had appropriate time to compose myself and was ever watchful to make sure that I was coping and that I had opportunities to express my grief during that particularly bad time. Bernadette, I thank you very much and know that you are always close by whenever I need that extra bit of help or encouragement.

My daughter Jessica provided one of the greatest sources of energy for my campaign. She always seemed to be willing and able to take on any task that needed to be done, whether at short notice or prearranged and well-planned. She amazed me on election day by arriving to set up the polling booth at about four o'clock in the morning and was still light and hearty at six o'clock in the evening when she went into the tally room as a scrutineer for the booth at Ocean Reef Senior High School. It was our single biggest gain in the election campaign. Her efforts throughout the campaign are one of the reasons I sit in this place today. My youngest daughter spent many hours letter dropping throughout Joondalup and made sure that the name Tony O'Gorman was known and recognised as being the best candidate to represent Joondalup for the next four years. My foster sons Charles and Michael also made a large contribution to my campaign - Charles by putting his thoughts about me as a father on paper and being prepared to tell everyone how he felt, and Michael by his efforts in delivering pamphlets and direct mail to the areas surrounding our house. As all members would be aware, the support of one's family during an election campaign is absolutely crucial and I thank all my family for their support and hard work during this very difficult time for them.

I also thank the officers of the Parliament and of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet for their assistance in settling me into my electorate office and for their efforts in educating me in the ways of this place.

One final group of people whom I wish to thank is the other six candidates who contested the election. I know that the effort that is put into each and every election campaign takes a huge toll on candidates, their families and their campaign teams. I thank and congratulate them all for the competitive manner in which all the campaigns were run. It was a truly hard-fought campaign and the contributions by all the candidates to the community should be commended.

To the best of my recollection, my first political act was when I was about 14 years of age in Ireland. I was involved in a local youth group as an ordinary member and we were due to make a weekly bus trip to the swimming pool in a little town called Ennis. Unfortunately, the bus did

not arrive. When we contacted the bus company we were told that its bill had not been paid. The youth officer who had been operating the youth group had been involved in a couple of questionable dealings. A public meeting was called and at the meeting I was nominated to question the youth officer about why the bus company was not paid. This led to an investigation and disciplinary action. Following from this action, I represented my classmates in debating and later represented my fellow workers as a union shop steward. I learnt negotiating skills through the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union and leadership skills through the scouting movement and parents and citizens associations.

I think the greatest single lesson I have learnt was from my parents. They taught me about social justice and a fair go for all. The incident that prompted this lesson is still vivid in my mind. An uncle of mine lived about four houses away from my family. He put his house up for sale and accepted an offer from a Pakistani family. As one can imagine, 20 years ago in Ireland, it was a fairly unusual event. The Pakistani family had only recently moved into the area. Some of the local residents were outraged when they heard about the sale and they promptly circulated a petition objecting to the sale because the Pakistani family would not fit in with the area. When the petitioners knocked on our front door and requested that my parents sign the petition they were met with a curt comment, "Isn't the colour of their money the same as yours or mine? Further, what has the colour of their skin got to do with whether they are suitable neighbours?"

The Pakistani family did move into the house and to the best of my knowledge they still live there and are very active members of the local business and civil communities. Throughout their lives my parents displayed great tolerance and support of all people, no matter from where they came. I think this is the reason that I enjoy living in Western Australia and Joondalup so much.

In general, the people are accepting and happy to be part of a multicultural society. They work together to build communities that are inclusive and recognise each other's strengths and weaknesses. This is demonstrated by the fact that I am here today as a member of the Western Australian Parliament representing Joondalup, having emigrated here from Ireland a mere 20 years ago.

During the building of my first home I had occasion to visit the City of Wanneroo offices. I was given directions and found myself on a beautiful scenic road; it is now Joondalup Drive. I was convinced that someone was having a joke on the new boy and had sent me bush. I eventually reached Wanneroo Hospital and I checked to see if I was lost. Armed with fresh directions I found the council offices and completed my business. It was not long after that first adventure into the bush that the new suburbs of Heathridge, Ocean Reef, Beldon and Edgewater sprang up north of Craigie. It was about this time that I heard of plans to build the second central business district of Perth. From my understanding, the idea had been around for many years but little progress had been made. I returned to Ireland for two years and on my return to Perth I discovered that the concept of a second business district had suddenly been given a life. The then Joondalup Development Corporation had been set up by the Labor Government to bring this long-held dream to reality. I built my second home in the suburb of Beldon and was soon involved in the community through the parents and citizens association at my daughter's school. I quickly realised that while Governments can build roads, schools, police stations and the associated infrastructure that is necessary to service a new city, it would be people that would eventually give heart to the city.

We built our current home in Joondalup in 1990 and formed the Joondalup Residents Association to make sure that the community was represented and that its needs were addressed. In 1992 the Labor Government commissioned the northern suburbs railway line to Joondalup and the new regional shopping centre was opened. In just eight short years the Joondalup central business district has grown to be home to Edith Cowan University, the North Metropolitan College of

TAFE Joondalup campus and the Australian Institute for University Studies - which has a presence from Curtin and Monash universities. The Western Australia Police Academy is due to open in February 2001. The explosion of higher educational institutions in the area is significant and will be significant in the future development of the Joondalup area. The district has many varied shops, restaurants, night clubs and entertainment venues as well as offices for federal and state government services. It is a true achievement for all concerned in such a short period, but our work is not yet done. The City of Joondalup is only now starting to realise its potential. Through the foresight of the administration and academics of Edith Cowan University, Joondalup is to become the university's main campus. This can be achieved only by selling some of the other campuses and retaining the funds to rebuild in Joondalup. The close proximity to the university of the police academy, the Joondalup Health Campus and the Joondalup TAFE college places Joondalup in a unique position to become an educational as well as a business district. It was a Labor Government that first breathed life into the Joondalup City project. We now have an unprecedented opportunity to take the project to the next step and reset the vision for what Joondalup could and should be. There have been suggestions of building a performing arts centre in the city and these should be closely considered in conjunction with the city council and the educational institutions in the area. While Joondalup has developed rapidly over the past eight years, it is starved of cultural amenities and events. The city now needs attractions that will bring people into the city not only for business, but also for entertainment. This will ensure the future prosperity of the city.

The railway line to Joondalup has been the lifeline from the south. It is now being extended by the current Labor Government to Clarkson and Butler to make Joondalup a true regional centre. Connecting the outer northern suburbs with the city will create demand for more state and federal government offices to be located within the business district. Planning for this must take place now to ensure that the demand is met. RUN ON

Water Corporation services, vehicle licensing and Medicare and Homeswest offices are some of the services that spring to mind immediately.

So far in my speech I have dealt with the Joondalup central business district. Of course, the Joondalup electorate extends far beyond the business district. The western boundary is the Indian Ocean with what are arguably the most beautiful beaches and dune systems in the metropolitan area. The eastern boundary is Lake Joondalup, which is part of the Yellagonga Regional Park, sometimes referred to as the Kings Park of the north. Burns Beach Road is the boundary to the north and Ocean Reef Road and Craigie Drive are the boundary to the south.

Within these boundaries are many areas of bushland that are protected and revegetated by the many volunteer environmental groups such as the Joondalup Coast Care Forum, Yellagonga Catchment Group and the Friends of Yellagonga. The Yellagonga Catchment Group was formed to combat the midgie plague that has been dogging the Wanneroo and Joondalup electorates over the past few years, mainly due to the development in the area. The Friends of Yellagonga was established many years ago and has done much work to revegetate and dispose of weeds that have been introduced to the area. Myriad small groups look after their areas of bushland throughout the Joondalup electorate. These volunteer groups must be commended for their efforts in revitalising and protecting our bushland, usually from ourselves. Many more volunteer groups operate throughout the electorate of Joondalup, such as netball, basketball, scouting associations, guides, martial arts, resident associations and junior football associations to name only a few. This year is the International Year of Volunteers, and all these volunteer groups should be commended for their efforts in building our communities. I look forward to working with members as we develop this great State that is the best place in the world in which to live and work.

[Applause.]

