

RUDD LABOR GOVERNMENT - BENEFIT TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA

738. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Premier:

Will the Premier please explain to the house how the historic and emphatic win of the Rudd Labor government on Saturday will benefit Western Australia?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for Peel for the question. I am happy, as he is, to congratulate Kevin Rudd and his team on what was and is one of the great victories in Australian political history.

If I may be indulged for one moment before I respond more broadly to the question, I would like, I think on behalf of everyone in the house and certainly those who knew him, to reflect upon the fact that there was one very deep note of sadness over the weekend. That was the passing of Matt Price in the early hours of Sunday morning. Matt Price worked here in the Parliament as a reporter for Channel 9 and, I think, Channel 10. Over several years I believe he was one of the best journalists that Western Australia has produced, and Western Australia has produced many good ones. He was a person of the highest integrity; a person of great wisdom and wit; he was gregarious, warm, open and generous; and he will be sadly missed. I believe that his move from television to *The Australian* truly liberated his creative spirit. He captured a whole new audience around Australia with his columns in *The Australian* and his appearances on national television. I am sure that everybody in the house would wish his wife, Sue, and their three children, Harry, Jack and Matilda, all the warmest support in what must be an extremely difficult time. Typically of Matt, late on Saturday night I received a text message from him wishing everybody the best. Matt passed away early Sunday morning.

Having said that - and I am grateful for that small indulgence - may I say that the weekend's election result was I believe a great result for Australia. The Liberal Party's negative scare campaign did not work. As Kevin Rudd said in his victory speech, the people of Australia looked to the future. We now look to the future as well and, I believe, a whole new era. We can secure the support rather than the hostility of a federal government in dealing with the critical issues of education; health, because it is so important that we get better financial support and structural support on health; training and developing our productive capacity as a nation; the huge issue of climate change, which can be tackled only with the support and cooperation of state and federal governments; and the removal of the unfair WorkChoices legislation, via which so many Australians have been exploited in a way that probably people would never have anticipated, but that is what came about. We look forward to a fairer industrial relations system, and, of course, support for the absolutely critical infrastructure in Western Australia. It was a great win. Whatever way we look at it, it was an astounding victory and speaks volumes -

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: - for the capacity of the Australian people to make the right decision.

Before I close, and perhaps risking the ire of some of my colleagues on this side, I would like to wish John Howard the best in his retirement. He served as a member in the Federal Parliament for 33 years. Few people do that and, obviously, even fewer reach the highest office in the land, namely, the prime ministership, which he managed to hold for eleven and a half years, second in longevity only to Sir Robert Menzies. Wherever one sits on the political spectrum, one has to recognise that that is a considerable achievement and deserves acknowledgement. I did my best to establish a good relationship with John Howard to the benefit of Western Australia. I always got on with him very well personally. I recognise the contribution that he has made to Australian public life, and I genuinely wish him well in his retirement.