

Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Terry Redman; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Fran Logan; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Joe Francis; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Jan Norberger; Mr John McGrath; Mr Ian Blayney; Speaker

CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY — RETIREMENT

Motion

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House) [3.58 pm]: I move —

That this house expresses its sincere appreciation for the distinguished service Mr Peter McHugh has given to the Parliament of Western Australia for over 28 years, serving more than 25 years of that time as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and wishes him well in his forthcoming retirement.

It is my great pleasure to move this motion and, indeed, it is an honour to do so and to acknowledge—as I am sure all members will—the pivotal role that Peter has played as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for 25 years and eight months so far. By the time he ultimately retires, after taking a period of leave commencing in two weeks, it will be well over 26 years. By my calculation, that is by far the longest period that any Clerk has served since this Assembly was established 125 years ago.

I am sure we all wish Peter well for his next stage of life and ultimate retirement in July next year. Peter, I am sure you are far too young to fully retire, but it is a case of moving to the next stage of life or your next career or whatever the case may be. This is, of course, Peter's last sitting day of Parliament. As I said, he will be leaving in two weeks so it is entirely appropriate that we make some comments today.

The role of Clerk, as any member who has been here for more than five minutes appreciates, is central to the orderly and smooth functioning of the house. As elected members, we have a substantial responsibility and, indeed, a significant right to act on behalf of members of the public who elect us to represent them in this Legislative Assembly and this Parliament and to create and change legislation, to make laws and to perform all the other functions the Parliament has to keep the government and the executive accountable by asking questions and raising issues of importance to the community. Those responsibilities and rights can be discharged effectively only if the Parliament operates in an orderly manner and according to the agreed upon and well-established rules and precedence and procedures that have been in practice for many years in this Parliament and that were around prior to this Parliament being established, having been based on the Westminster parliamentary system in the United Kingdom. That can all happen only if professional, timely and effective advice is provided to the Speaker and all members. Since January 1990, Peter has had that role as the primary adviser to the respective Speakers over many years and to all members. As I will mention in a little while, he had other roles prior to assuming his current role of Clerk. As Clerk he has also had the responsibility of overseeing the administration of the Assembly and the Parliament more widely, in the latter case together with the respective Clerks of the Legislative Council. I think it is correct to say that Peter has fulfilled his responsibilities in that role with distinction and professionalism and all the diplomacy that is essential to discharging the responsibilities of a Clerk in a fair and balanced manner when dealing with all members of Parliament, whatever party they may represent and whatever their points of view may be. I am sure that all members would clearly say that they have had that experience.

There is a need for quick thinking, adroitness and calmness in the role of Clerk, and all the supporting roles of course. There was probably no better example of that than the debate we had on the motion moved about the TAB last week. It was not the world's or the state's biggest issue, but with regard to the parliamentary process and finalising a motion that the house agreed on, it was a matter of dealing with four amendments to the original motion. Most members in here were at best not very clear and quite confused about what exactly was happening and what was necessary. We certainly saw Peter's skill and professionalism on display in clearly explaining the order in which the amendments needed to be dealt with and in finalising in an orderly and calm manner a resolution to the issue. There is also a need for all those sitting at the Clerk's table to keep a straight face for most of the time, even when some pretty humorous activities are going on in the form of comments being made or antics being displayed, which various members have done over the years. I am sure I can say that that has been displayed by Peter with almost absolute perfection over all of his time, but I suspect it must be very difficult to maintain a straight face on many occasions.

It is appropriate to put on the record a little more information about Peter's history and contribution to this Parliament and the Legislative Assembly in particular. Prior to working for the Western Australian Parliament, Peter McHugh was a barrister in New South Wales and previously worked for the New South Wales Parliament in a number of roles between 1972 and 1987. He moved to Western Australia in 1987 and was appointed Clerk Assistant in the Assembly in July of that year, Deputy Clerk in 1989 and subsequently Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in January 1990. In the time that he has been Clerk, he has worked with six Speakers and five different Presidents of the Legislative Council, and by the time he retires he will have worked within the Western Australian Parliament for 29 years. As I mentioned earlier, he has been a Clerk now for 25 years and

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eight months, and for well over 26 years by the time he fully retires. As ninth Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, he commenced work in the thirty-second Parliament and will finish in the thirty-ninth Parliament.

Peter has had a very close involvement with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, having served as the honorary secretary and assistant honorary secretary of the WA branch continuously for 25 years. He has also been very much involved with the Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table since 2001 when Peter and colleagues from the New South Wales and Victorian Parliaments drafted the first constitution for ANZACATT. His long involvement with that association culminated with his presidency in 2012, having served as vice president in 2010 and 2011.

Peter McHugh's career as Clerk has spanned a period during which the Parliament has focused on developing the Parliament and, in particular, overseeing the twinning of the WA Parliament with the Parliament of the Cook Islands. It has built a strong relationship with the Cook Islands Parliament and provided significant support, advice and training to the members and staff of that Parliament over many years. As members would be aware, Western Australia has a sister-state relationship with the Zhejiang province in China, which commenced in 1987. During Peter's term as Clerk, he has ensured the goodwill of the relationship with the Western Australian Parliament by not only facilitating delegations travelling to Zhejiang, but also showing the appropriate level of hospitality and friendship to visiting delegations and diplomatic visitors. In relation to Japan, Western Australia has a sister-state relationship with the Hyogo prefecture, which has been in existence since 1981. During Peter's time as Clerk, there have been regular exchanges and parliamentary visits with the Hyogo prefecture and his knowledge of the country and customs has been essential in developing that parliamentary relationship. In relation to Canada, Peter's close involvement with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has also led to closer parliamentary ties with western Canada, and his friendship and goodwill with various Canadian Parliaments has given rise to a formal understanding with the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. Due to the similarities between our two Parliaments, it was agreed that a mutually beneficial relationship could be established, which has led to significant parliamentary exchanges. Peter has also arranged and participated in exchanges with India, South Africa, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates. In the Speaker's corridor there is a photo board—for anybody who has not seen it—reflecting some of Peter's experiences and travels over the years. Unfortunately, when I was involved with parliamentary committees in my first term here, I do not recall undertaking any travel with Peter; therefore, I do not have any really incriminating information to record in *Hansard* about Peter's travel experiences, but probably most of the other members who might have had that information have now left this place.

Mr M. McGowan: What happens overseas stays overseas.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: A good reminder!

I will just come back to some of the changes within the Western Australian Parliament in the time Peter has served as Clerk. He has led the Legislative Assembly through a period of substantial change, including many changes in technology, security and improved operations of the Assembly. Some of the more significant events that have occurred over the last 25 years include the introduction of computerisation, the introduction of regional sittings, an extensive review of the standing orders in 1999, the introduction of the current standing committee system in the Legislative Assembly in 2001 and the refurbishment of the Legislative Assembly chamber here in around 2004 or 2005. For members who were not here then, the seating was substantially different from what it is now. Other changes have been the development of an educational program and an educational outreach program to remote schools, the establishment of the Parliament's Aboriginal art collection, the installation of broadcasting facilities in the Legislative Assembly committee rooms, the further development of induction training for new members and the implementation of ethics seminars for members. Peter has also been a driving force for many years on the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee and the work that committee has undertaken. As Leader of the House, it is my pleasure to acknowledge and thank Peter McHugh for his long commitment and service to the Legislative Assembly and the Parliament of Western Australia, and I wish Peter very well for his retirement.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [4.11 pm]: There is a rare spirit of bipartisanship in the chamber today!

On behalf the opposition—I am sure other members will speak—I acknowledge Peter McHugh and thank him for his long service to the Parliament of Western Australia. I will not go over all of the achievements that the Leader of the House did, but I will say a few things. His parliamentary career began in 1972 when he started work in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, where he stayed until 1987—a period of 15 years. I remark that there is nothing wrong with coming from New South Wales, is there, Clerk? And I do not think you

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should have to go back either! Peter has often commented to me that in the predominant period he was in the New South Wales Assembly chamber Neville Wran was the Premier of New South Wales and apparently Neville Wran had a very interesting turn of phrase. That was the beginning of his career.

He came across here in July 1987 as Clerk Assistant, he became the Deputy Clerk in 1989 and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in 1990; so 25 years ago—a quarter of a century—he became Clerk of the Parliaments of Western Australia. As members can see on the photo board outside, he has accompanied many delegations overseas to China, Tuvalu, Japan, the Cook Islands, Canada and all those sorts of places. It is particularly important to maintain that strong ongoing relationship with China and Japan. I am sure the Clerk has been to many more places over that time. I note from the photographs that at that time he had a moustache. I assume he was not always travelling in November, and fortunately that moustache has disappeared as the years have transpired! He is now the longest serving member of the chamber, the father of the house in some ways, and upon his departure the Premier becomes the longest serving member of the chamber. That is quite an extraordinary record. He is the longest serving clerk in the history of the Parliament.

He is always great for advice and, as members know, they can go and see the Clerk to get a form of words or a motion drafted. There could be something or sneaky or tricky drafted that they might want to move or some sort of an amendment to a bill that would be very difficult for the government to vote against. He is very, very good at all those sorts of things. He assists opposition members in drafting those forms of words and then no doubt assists the government in combating that form of words in his next meeting! Like a player playing chess against himself, he always knows how to beat himself! That is a very good skill and I always found the advice very effective and very good in relation to parliamentary procedure. Personally, I do not think last Wednesday's matter of public interest was your finest hour, but I do think that over 25 years you have done some great work for the Assembly! Managing this place is not an easy job. There is a whole range of personalities and difficult things to understand. In my view the standing orders are somewhat contradictory and incomprehensible in places. You have managed to provide advice to five or six Speakers over that time, which has been very, very good, and you have certainly done a very good job in that regard for members of the house as well.

I once served with Ted Cunningham, who was here for some years and retired in 2001—he has unfortunately passed away. He would always sidle up to you at the end of the year and come back to me to report that there would be crayfish at the end-of-year party in the members' rooms. Ted was always very excited by that particular development! I will probably close on this: one thing I have always appreciated is that as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly you have always been friends to everyone in this house and you have always understood who the real enemy is—the Legislative Council!

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [4.16 pm]: I just want to make a couple of very brief comments. I wish to thank Peter McHugh for the service he has provided to this Legislative Assembly, to the Parliament and, indeed, to the state of Western Australia. As has been said, you have been Clerk for all the time I have been here and I have always appreciated your advice and your good company. There have been many highs and lows of combat, I guess, in this chamber. From my own perspective, I had been in Parliament for only a couple of years when the Liberal government won the 1993 election and almost by default as deputy leader to Richard Court, I found myself as what was then described as Leader of the House, and I did not know much about it. All I had learnt in a couple of years prior to that was from listening to Bob Pearce who would sometimes talk about procedures in the house and things like the executive council; I had absolutely no idea what the executive council was. I found myself as Leader of the House, a position that was much envied by Hendy Cowan, but the politics of the Liberal and National Parties meant that Hendy could never be Leader of the House. The good thing about that was that when I wanted to goof off on my responsibilities, I could look across to Hendy and say, “Hendy, are you available?” And I would be out of here in a flash! It was great, because I could sort of nick off a fair bit!

My greatest debt of gratitude to you, Peter, was me knowing so little and being in what was probably seen as a more prominent position than it is today—that is, the Leader of the House —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: I don't know about that!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I think it is like a default position today, but in those days it was actually sought after!

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I found myself in what was seen as a very exalted position as Leader of the House, and not knowing much about the standing orders or the Parliament itself, it was only with Peter's assistance that I was able to bluff my way through that role for eight years, so I thank you for that, Peter. I wish you all the best,

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whatever the future may hold, and you should feel very proud and very satisfied with the role you have played as Clerk of this Parliament.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood — Minister for Regional Development) [4.18 pm]: On behalf of the National Party we would like to thank you for your time in the Parliament. As has already been represented by the speakers so far, your advice is always sound. When we come in here as new members of Parliament, we are ill-armed to use the tools of the Assembly to deliver to our constituencies, and right the way throughout in building up our skills and knowledge, you have been able to arm us with those skills to be able to do the right thing in this place and to look after the people we represent. That advice has always been quality advice and we have never, ever missed out on being able to get that advice and to use it as the tools of our trade.

One area that has been talked about already is the parliamentary delegations. They are one of the two areas of true bipartisanship of Parliament, with members of all sides of the house going away, with the other area being, of course, parliamentary committees. I am a very strong supporter of parliamentary delegations. I think as representatives of Western Australian communities, we need to be armed with a level of international knowledge and exposure to ensure that we can best represent good decision-making in this state. I think parliamentary delegations are excellent. I have been on only one delegation, with the Speaker at the time, Fred Riebeling. I think the member for Victoria Park was also on that delegation and the Minister for Health as well. It is when a lot of friendships are built on both sides of the chamber, and those relationships are maintained. I think delegations are a really valuable contribution to democracy in Western Australia. Peter, you certainly helped to open doors and pave the way for us to access a level of exposure that we would not otherwise get access to. I think that is something that needs to go on. I know there are different views about parliamentary delegations outside this place, but in my view they are very sound and certainly something that you promoted.

When I was first elected, Hon Monty House said to me, “Terry, you would probably be really surprised who votes for you, and really surprised who doesn’t vote for you.” I remember him saying that to me. When I am back in my electorate doing my duties, I always assess people as to who I think they vote for, and I have always wondered who the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly votes for. I tell you what, there is no-one better placed in Western Australia to assess the game; you are right in the middle of it and you see action from all sides and you have been here for 29 years and seen a number of Premiers, a heap of Speakers and I am sure that you are in a really good position to assess the merits of all arguments put. But I know there is one party you do not vote for, and that is the National Party. I am pretty certain of that. On behalf of the National Party, thank you very much for your contribution and we wish you all the best in the future. I am certain that this will not be the last time that I catch up with you. Thank you, very much.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [4.21 pm]: I want to make a few personal remarks on the retirement of Mr Peter McHugh. Peter, I am one of the few people here who can remember the black hair and the moustache. Whilst I might have arrived in this house in 1984, I first met Peter in 1987, which I believe is the year that Peter arrived at Parliament. In that year, I took up a job in the Department of Parliamentary Services as the executive officer in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. That was my first experience of Parliament. I do not think I knew that you were brand-new back then, so I took all the advice that I could get from you and the other characters who were around at the time, such as John Mandy, and some members may remember Barry Whitehorn who was the aide to the then Speaker. They were interesting times, and the Leader of the House has already alluded to some of the changes that have taken place since then. I remember in the early years that we did not have microphones in the chamber and there was no amplification and certainly no recording and video equipment as we have now. We also saw a furore about whether female Hansard reporters could wear trousers rather than skirts or dresses in the house. Fortunately, we got over that. With a lot of those controversies, from the outside, people do not necessarily understand that in your role as Clerk it is about not just the pomp and ceremony and doing things in the house, but it is a much broader role of the joint running of the Parliament with the Presiding Officers of the Assembly and the Council.

In that earlier time, I also had the pleasure of participating on a committee on standing orders and procedures, on which you were the chief adviser, and now on the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges. I had the pleasure of working through the revised standing orders with you in 1999. We made a lot of progress back then and I am hopeful that in the future we can go through another revision and bring ourselves a little more into the twenty-first century. As members have commented, you have been friends with people across the Parliament and certainly have kept your politics to yourself. Dare I say, if you had not, you probably would not have lasted as long as you have.

I also had the privilege of going on a Speaker’s trip to China with Peter and the former Speaker George Strickland and some others, including my former parliamentary colleague Hon Eric Ripper.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 24 September 2015]

p7052a-7060a

Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Terry Redman; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Fran Logan; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Britza; Mr Joe Francis; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Jan Norberger; Mr John McGrath; Mr Ian Blayney; Speaker

Peter and Eric certainly did their very best to enjoy themselves on that trip. In fact, we had a couple of worrying occasions. One night we were not sure where Peter and Eric were. We heard that a party was sent out to locate them, and when we went on a boat trip the next day, I was half thinking that they would not board the boat, because their sea legs were not too good. I thought it was rather unkind while we were being shown around an island in China when Eric, who is a very keen photographer and had his very expensive photographic equipment with him, was trying to take a very picturesque photo of a bird on a raft. Peter said to me, “Why don’t you ask Eric to stand on the raft with the bird and you can take the photo for him?” I said, “How about that Eric?” and he replied, “That’s very nice.” Then Peter called out, “That’s the closest you’re going to get to a shag in China!” I might add that Eric was fairly nearly single at the time. So, do not let anyone tell you that the Clerk has not on occasion got off the leash or that he does not have a good sense of humour. Despite the fact that he sits very stony faced through most proceedings, I think any of us who have got to know Peter know that he has a truly awful sense of humour. He has a wicked sense of humour.

They say the community is made up of all sorts of people and I think the same can be said for the Legislative Assembly. There are those of us who come here with knowledge of Parliament and some who come with none. Members have a wide variety of life experiences. Some members have worked for decades at getting into Parliament and others find themselves here almost by accident. Whatever members’ backgrounds, you have treated them with equal respect and provided them with advice. Some members have needed to be provided with the same advice repeatedly, and still potentially have not taken it. As you have sat there, on occasion I have thought: people say that the *Mona Lisa* has an enigmatic smile; well, I think Peter too has a very enigmatic smile. On occasions when members have done things that are either incredibly smart or incredibly stupid, you see that same enigmatic smile on Peter’s face. I think after knowing you for 28 years Peter, I can tell one smile from the other.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys) [4.27 pm]: Mr Speaker, there are three members in this chamber who have served for 23 years or more with Peter McHugh: myself, the Premier and the Leader of the House. I can say from my perspective that I have enjoyed every moment that I have spent in this place with Peter. But I think you have let us down today, Peter, because you are not wearing the wig. You wore the wig when I first came into this place and I think, as it is your last sitting day, you should wear the wig today. I think before you go today, we would like to see what you look like with your wig on. I know that when the wig was done away with in George Strickland’s time as Speaker, the relief on Peter McHugh’s face could be seen for a mile. He did not like wearing the wig; and I do not blame in—it was as hot as toast in the summertime. I know that the Deputy Clerk who also had to wear the wig was also very relieved.

In relation to the comments of the Leader of the National Party about who you voted for, I hope you voted for me—you lived in my electorate for many, many years. In fact, you lived just around the corner from me and we met on many occasions. We are members of the same Marmion Angling Club and we go to the same Chinese restaurant. We bump into each other very, very often. I have to say that I knew Peter before I came into this place in 1993, because Peter lived just around the corner on an estate called the North Shore, in which there was a country club, which was like the soul of the estate. I was president of that club for a couple of years, for my sins, and I and my committee were trying to organise a way of buying the club from the developers so that the residents owned it. It is now the only privately owned tennis club in Western Australia. I remember when we were doing all the publications to try to encourage people to invest in it, I got a call one day from somebody called Peter McHugh. He said, “I’d quite like to see your constitution.” I did not know who he was, so I took him the constitution, and he said, “Thank you very much. I’ll have a good look at that.” I obviously realised afterwards that he is a man of great integrity and a man who investigates very many things, particularly constitutions and legal documents, and he did a very good job in doing that, so our association goes back many years.

Peter, can I say that I have enjoyed travelling with you throughout the world. You have been great company in all the countries we have gone to, and wherever we have gone, you have left your mark. I once visited the Parliament of the Cook Islands, not with Peter, but as part of a holiday. To anybody who has not visited the Cook Islands Parliament, it is a bit like a big shed and it looks as though orange boxes have been turned into furniture. It is very, very basic. When I visited the Cook Islands Parliament and asked if I could have a look around, I said, “I’m from the Western Australian Parliament.” “Come in,” they said, “You must know our Peter McHugh.” I said that I did. I have to tell you, Peter, they hold you in very high esteem in the Cook Islands, particularly those people who run the Parliament.

It was the same in the Northern Territory when I visited that very expensive building there; they said the same things. They all know you, Peter. I think everybody in the Westminster system, and others, know you very well and of the tremendous work that you do. I have enjoyed being on various committees with you and can I thank you personally for the help you offered me when I did four years as Leader of the House. I enjoyed doing

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the job of the Leader of the House—not many members always enjoy it because it means we have to stay here until the last knock, until the last bell, until the house adjourns. Not everybody wants to do that; some people would prefer to go home early. But I did four years of that. I also did it as the manager of opposition business for quite a while. I want to thank you for all the help you gave us. The best motion Peter ever gave me was the adjournment motion. He said, “This is the one you really want, Rob,” and, of course, it is the motion that is moved when the house does not sit for a week or two. The help you gave, Peter, was immeasurable; it really was. When I had problems, when I needed advice, you were always there to give advice.

As everybody knows, Peter is apolitical. I do not know whether he voted for me. I would like to think that he did as he was a neighbour and, I would like to think, a friend. But his politics are his business, and he has never, ever given me any indication which way he voted.

Peter, you are a thoroughly decent person. You have enormous integrity. You have run this chamber in the 23 years that I have been here in the most professional way. I will always hold you in the highest esteem. I wish you all the very best in the future, in your retirement, and I hope to see you at the Chinese restaurant next Sunday.

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin) [4.33 pm]: Peter, although I am going to be brief, I am very genuine in what I am going to say. I want to wish you all the best for the future and say thanks. You have been absolutely fantastic in your role over such a long period of time. I love my sport and have been involved in sport. In sport we often hear the word “champion” mentioned. But a true champion is someone who has performed consistently at the highest level over a sustained period of time. Peter, you have certainly done that over those 29 years in this Parliament and in New South Wales as well.

The thing that everyone recognises and has mentioned is that you are so helpful to any member in this place. You are accessible all the time and you give great advice. We can go to you and know that we are going to get the right and good advice. Like others, I went on a trip to China with Peter. With us were the member for Girrawheen, the then Speaker, Fred Riebeling, Jamie Edwards, and the late Paul Andrews. It was a wonderful trip early in my career and I got to know Peter well on that trip. Someone has mentioned his sense of humour, and he certainly has a wicked sense of humour.

It was a great trip, Pete. I am sorry about all the fines I gave you. I said earlier that Peter gives good advice. On that trip he gave me one bad piece of advice. We were on the Great Wall of China and Peter said, “You should give your wife a ring, Tuck, from the Great Wall of China.” I thought that was a damn good idea. My wife had always wanted to go to the Great Wall of China and so I rang Noelene, my wife, and said, “Hi, darling. Guess where I am?” She said, “I don’t know.” I said, “Before I tell you, what are you doing?” She said, “I’m hanging out the washing. What are you doing?” I said, “I’m on the Great Wall of China.” She then told me where I could put my Great Wall of China! Thanks for that, Pete. We had a great trip. You are a fantastic bloke, but, above all, everyone knows you are a really good person. You are a professional and fantastic bloke. Best wishes and good luck to you and your family.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [4.35 pm]: I would like to congratulate Peter McHugh on the great work he has done. In my second year in this job I became an Acting Speaker. I think all people who are Acting Speakers realise how hard the job is, but Peter always said to be firm and to make sure that members stick to the standing orders. I got a lot of flak from my side of the house—they used to call me the hanging judge—and I got flak from the other side of the house. Peter told me that I may break them when I am on this side and I may have broken them when I was on that side, but when I am in that chair, Peter said, “You are the Speaker.” I always remembered that. Out here I am the member for Albany and I can say what I like, within reason. I will miss Peter. I make lots of interjections, and being so close to the desk I always know if I have done a good one, because Pete kind of gives me that half smile. But if he gives me the look, I think, “Oops! I’ve stuffed up again!”

I was lucky to be Acting Speaker in the early days. We went on quite a few trips. We went to China, Japan and India. Pete’s sense of humour was sensational—to Peter! My kids have suffered because I pass his dad jokes on to them. Peter, I always knew with you up in the chair that you had our backs. It is a really hard job being an Acting Speaker. You always gave us the right information and you always encouraged us to do the job and stick to the rules. I see your lovely family is in the public gallery and they are very proud of you. We are very proud of you too and we wish you all the best for the future.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [4.37 pm]: I rise to also put on the record my thanks to Peter McHugh for his long service to the Assembly as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and wish him all the best in his retirement and his future endeavours. As an adviser to parliamentarians, you have always been discreet and sober in your counsel, unlike some of the advice we get from other people in the chamber. What a lot of people do not realise is that Peter is a very fine judge of people’s characters—all of our characters. Peter can sum up very, very

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p7052a-7060a

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quickly our strengths and weaknesses. Peter might sit there and say nothing whatsoever, but he certainly knows the strengths and weaknesses of every single person in this house. But of course the discreet nature of the work that you do, Peter, means that you would never, ever say that to anybody.

I have certainly enjoyed your company as a travelling companion to South Africa on the only Speaker's trip I have been on, Mr Speaker. Do not worry; I am not bitter and twisted about that! Peter is a great travelling companion and has a wicked sense of humour. After Peter tried his sense of humour on the Afrikaners at dinner, I am surprised we actually made it back; his humour did not seem to translate into Afrikaner humour at all.

Your depth of knowledge about the Australian and the international branches of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and particularly the internecine politics of the African and Asian branches and who is who in the zoo and what they are likely to do to you when you go on a CPA general trip, which I did recently to Cameroon, and your advice and general explanation over the years of how the CPA works, certainly stood me in good stead, and I was able to go there and realise exactly what was going on as a result of your advice over the years. That has been absolutely fantastic.

I certainly enjoyed our time together on the Procedure and Privileges Committee and was absolutely impressed by your depth of knowledge of parliamentary procedure, not just here but also in other Parliaments, and the advice that you gave to the PPC, even though we may not have agreed on certain things. There is an outstanding matter that I still disagree absolutely with you on, Peter. Members will remember the article on the front page of *The West Australian* following the 2008 election when there was a hung Parliament and negotiations were occurring between Labor and the Liberals, and the Nationals, who, as everyone knows, had the balance of power and were negotiating for their best interests. People will remember that the whole front page of *The West Australian* had a picture of Parliament House with the headline "Welcome to the best little whorehouse in Australia". I argued with Peter on the PPC, "Pete, charge them with contempt of Parliament. Haul that editor in here and let's jail him." For some reason, Peter, you did not really want to go down that road; I do not know why. I still disagree fervently with you. It would have been absolutely superb if we had had the editor of *The West* in to front the PPC and locked him behind bars as a result.

DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre) [4.41 pm]: I take this opportunity to thank you, Peter. I have been in this place for 10 years and I remember the first day in Parliament and how helpful Peter McHugh was in my induction and introduction to this place. However, Peter, I want to talk about the Speaker's tour we went on to Japan in 2011 with the member for Morley, the member for Victoria Park, the member for Mirrabooka and the then Speaker, Grant Woodhams. The Peter McHugh I know in this place and the Peter McHugh I got to know on that trip were very different. Having said that, Peter McHugh is a very knowledgeable person, wildly and widely travelled, very educated and extremely open-minded. He knows how to enjoy himself and is a bit of a connoisseur of wine. He is a person who has—these are very rare people, but I am sure that members in this place know them—a joke for every occasion. There will almost be a little segue in conversation and he will start his joke, which we think is a real story, but it actually ends up being humorous fiction.

Peter, you will remember Craig Peacock from the WA government office in Japan. I want to finish with a little story about Peter's knowledge and how frustrating that can be to people who think they are right, as I did, when, in fact, Peter McHugh was right. It was a discussion over the word "proboscis". I do not know where this came from; we must have been talking about elephants or something. It was the issue of "proboscis" versus "proboscos". I think this conversation took place at a ninja restaurant or something in Tokyo. There was a debate between me and Peter McHugh about how we spelt and pronounced this word—whether it was "proboscis" or "proboscos". Peter McHugh said that it was "proboscis", because he is well educated, and I said that it was "proboscos"—a truncated nose, trunk or whatever. Anyway, Peter McHugh was right and I was wrong. What Peter McHugh does not know is that after that discussion, in a quiet time, Craig Peacock took me aside and said, "Graham, I was hoping above hope and wishing that you were right and he was wrong. Damn it, McHugh was right again!"

Thank you very much, Peter, for your balanced advice in this place and for your support for us. I hope we will see you in this place at other times. I wish you and your family all the best for a retirement—I am sure it will not be a retirement during which you do nothing—that is fruitful for you. Thank you again.

MR M.J. COWPER (Murray-Wellington) [4.45 pm]: I would like to pass on my thanks to Peter McHugh. From the time I came to this place in opposition, his advice has been impeccable and invaluable in preparing private members' bills and learning the ropes, so to speak. As other members have mentioned, it is not until we get away from this place that we get to know people. It occurred to me that Peter McHugh has a special talent for taking members of Parliament right around the world. I would like to apologise for the trauma caused on a number of occasions after taking me, along with the member for Albany and others, to Japan, particularly the

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engagement we had on a ship with the yakuza at Awaji Island. We got stranded there and, of course, Peter had his trusty camera and was taking photos of the yakuza. When the honourable Peacock-san pointed out that what he was photographing was the yakuza and was probably not a recommended practice, he found himself in close company to me and a number of other members. There was also the occasion on the front steps of the Nagoya train station when he had to deal with members who had had a very enjoyable evening. There was an electronic samisen player and there was a bunch of members of Parliament who were enjoying themselves—I think that is enough said about that particular matter! Of course, he also almost went into panic mode when he almost lost a member of Parliament while trying to catch the shinkansen at the very same train station the following day. They were memorable times, Peter. I thank you for your commitment to this state, the Parliament and members. I wish you the best for the future.

MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley) [4.47 pm]: As a relatively new member but also an Acting Speaker, I have always received your words of advice and counsel, Peter. I happen to be one of those people who enjoy genuine critique. When I have made a blue in the chair, I have pretty well always gone knocking on the door and asking, “Could I have a critique of the last hour, please?” Your comments have been excellent. I have made more than one blue, but I want to refer to one blue I made in my—I do not want to say “excitement”—desire to do the right thing in the chair. I reluctantly called the member for Warnbro for the third time and everyone just shut up and there was no response. I thought, “Oh, my God; that was pretty good” and the proceeding went on, and after about three minutes, the Clerk turned around beautifully and said, “Mr Acting Speaker, that was his first call”, for which I then had to apologise. I have taken every genuine criticism—we rarely have that in this day and age; criticism comes with such a barb and we get defensive when we are genuinely criticised—you have made of me so that I can be a better Acting Speaker. Every criticism has been positive and I want to say thank you for allowing me the freedom to receive it. I want to say well done, Sir, and I trust that you will have a wonderful journey ahead of you. A positive thing is that your wife has a wonderful name.

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Corrective Services) [4.49 pm]: Peter, it is never too late to get into *Hansard* certain words to meet the challenge you gave me a couple of years ago. I trust your dodgy knee gets better and I hope your juicy toaster serves you well into the future. Can I firstly say sorry for not always taking your advice—I agree with the Leader of the Opposition: I think what happens overseas should stay overseas—in the fact that you actually told me, “Don’t speak to the Japanese about whaling.” I do not think I have ever been kicked so hard under the table, but deservedly so. It probably hindered my career in some ways. I think the Premier still wanted me to go back and apologise to the Japanese and take some koalas with me, but no doubt it would have been better if I had followed your advice. Lastly, as a newly minted father, I thank you for the inspiration and the dad jokes that are now coming into good use. Thank you very much, Peter.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [4.50 pm]: I was not going to speak because I would have repeated what everyone else has said, but I need to make two amendments to what has been said. People might get the wrong impression that Peter was never here. I want to say that Peter was here on many occasions and certainly in my recent role as the chair of a committee, I found his advice to be invaluable and I want to, shall we say, balance the record on all the travel stories. Having said that, I also need to add to what the member for Wagin said. As we have heard, Peter gave advice to the member for Wagin to ring his wife. Actually, I heard that Peter had rung Penny from the Great Wall of China and had gotten a similar reception to that of the member for Wagin, in which case I advised him that he had better buy another cashmere jumper! Another thing that occurred on that trip to China was that Peter would do the introductions when we went to various places and met various people who were there to meet the delegation. Peter would introduce himself as the secretary general, so we asked him why he was doing this and he said, “Well, if I say I’m the Clerk, people will think I have something to do with insurance.” Needless to say, on that trip it was only appropriate that he got the nickname “Boutros Boutros-Ghali”. Enjoy your relative leisure. It is quite extraordinary that you have been able to put up with us collectively for so long, and I imagine that even when federal Parliament comes on television you will be changing the channel!

MR J. NORBERGER (Joondalup) [4.52 pm]: As an even newer member of Parliament than the member for Morley, I would like to thank you, Peter, for the advice that you have given me—I am sure I speak on behalf of some of my other colleagues in the class of 2013. The first time we met you was fairly soon after the 2013 election. I remember coming into the house with some of my colleagues and having a two or three-day induction. I am sure we all looked very bright eyed and a bit bedazzled at what lay before us, so thank you very much for trying to ease us into the running of the house. It would have been nice if you could have discussed divisions a little bit more with us, which would have been perhaps a little more helpful for me, but we do really appreciate all the advice you have given us. Obviously, I have not been in the position of requiring advice on motions and whatnot, but even for advice on our disclosures and the like you have always been there for us and we wish you all the very best in your retirement. That said, nothing actually would have pleased me more than to

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be able to stand now and recollect some wonderful experiences whereby I may have gotten to know your sense of humour. However, before the member for Cockburn complains about having been on only one trip, might I say that I never had the opportunity to get to know your funnier side, and I shall certainly regret that. However, with the new incoming Clerk, I just say to Mr Speaker that my calendar is available and I am happy to look at my available schedule! I think it is important that in due course we should be able to build up a repertoire of war stories and travel stories with the new Clerk! I am afraid, therefore, that I cannot share those experiences, but I thank you for the advice you have given me in the time I have been in this place. I am happy to meet with you later, Mr Speaker, to have a look at the travel schedule and calendar! Thank you.

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.54 pm]: I want to make a few comments in support of the motion and to speak about the fantastic contribution of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. In doing so, I want to recall the day I was summonsed to appear before the Corruption and Crime Commission. The matter ultimately went nowhere, but I will never forget walking into that hearing not knowing what to expect. I was a fairly new member of Parliament and I walked into the room and was confronted by a battery of legal people, including a QC who I soon found out was going to put me through the grill. I later commented to the media that I thought I had walked into the Nuremburg trials. One of the journos said, “I think you’ve taken that a bit too far, John, considering what happened in the Nuremburg trials.” However, I looked around the room and knew no-one. Suddenly, I spotted the Clerk, our Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. I have never been so happy to see a friendly face in all my life. It was my personal experience that reminded me of the role that the Clerk plays in supporting us as members of the Legislative Assembly. It is a role that in some areas goes a little unrecognised. From a personal point of view, Peter, I thank you for your support and for being there on a day when I felt fairly helpless. When I saw your face there, I thought: there is at least someone here from the Parliament who I can turn to and I know that I am going to have assistance when I need it. Thanks very much.

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [4.56 pm]: When I was first elected to Parliament, I was frequently asked two questions. One was, “What’s Alannah like?” She seemed to have quite a following in my electorate. The other was, “Does Sir Humphrey exist?” I said, “Yes, I actually met Sir Humphrey. He’s not a bureaucrat. He actually runs the house.” I meant that in a very complimentary sense, because you, Peter, are completely professional, and you always know how to fix things with a minimum of fuss. As members, of course, we should consider that you are completely confidential; and, as I said to you when I had the pleasure of a trip with you earlier this year, in my experience you always were, which is, more than anything, incredibly important for members. Likewise, when I was Acting Speaker—a job I did not enjoy very much—I have to say again that your advice was very good. You have the ability, as we saw the other day, to see a path through chaos, which is much appreciated. It is good to have a cool head when everyone around you is losing theirs, as the poem says. Like others, I genuinely enjoyed travelling with you to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman earlier this year where of course excessive alcohol consumption was not really a problem! One thing you tried to instil in us more than anything, and I think you were successful, was respect for this house and for the institution of Parliament. For us as parliamentarians that is the most important thing of all. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland): Peter, we just want to congratulate you on finishing off after some 29 years of service to the WA Parliament. You beat the previous longest serving Clerk, A. R. Grant, who served from 1911 to 1931 in this house, and the previous five years in the upper house, for a total of 24 years. For all of us who are elected, the first face we see when we come to Parliament is that of Peter McHugh. In fact, his is the first voice that everybody hears as they get a call saying, “My name is Peter McHugh. I’m the Clerk. I want you to come in and see me.” I am a little bit superstitious and when I was first elected, I said to my wife, “They haven’t even finished counting the votes. How do they know that I’m elected?” We met Peter in the office and he took us through a few things. The induction course that he put together that we all go through is very helpful, although it can be a little overwhelming. People mentioned various other things that Peter has instituted in the Parliament, such as the staff development course that gives many staff members an opportunity to come into the chamber and be rotated through the chamber; the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which Peter has supported very loyally, and which, as the member for Cockburn said, is not always run as it should be run; the great support he has given to the Cook Islands, which need assistance from more settled Parliaments; other committees of the house; and the management committee. People think that we act and do things only here in the chamber, whereas many tasks are done behind the scenes.

Of course, I think your career ended on a high note with those amendments last week. Peter is a very wise man. He said to me that we were really fortunate in making Kirsten the Clerk of the house, and not a number of other members who thought they knew the answers to dealing with the amendments. Peter, thank you for your assistance. I think the member for Geraldton has hit the nail on the head when he said that you have always

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 24 September 2015]

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upheld the dignity of the house, and you have always encouraged the Speakers, the Deputy Speakers and the Acting Speakers to uphold the dignity of the house.

As for photographs, people have not mentioned that Peter is an avid photographer. I think you used to be a wedding photographer in your youth, is that not correct? As we know, when he goes away, he always has his camera at the ready to take photographs. What members do not know is that there is a stash of photographs in his office, and sometimes he will come up and say, “Mr Speaker, do you know who this one is in this photograph?” and we have a good chuckle about some trip from many years ago when someone looked totally different from the way they look today. We always have a good laugh. I encouraged Peter to put up a display, which is out the back. In fact, I brought a much bigger board in for him to use, which he declined to do. Peter, well done on your service, good luck in your hobbies. We know that you are an avid woodworker, along with your photography, and you like to travel. All the very best to you, and we wish you well from the Parliament. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Question put and passed.