

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration - Motion

Resumed from 21 March on the following question -

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

DR J.M. WOOLLARD (Alfred Cove) [11.42 am]: I am pleased that the Minister for Health is in the chamber, because yesterday during debate on this question I asked about dates for the building of the new Fiona Stanley hospital. I put a question on notice to the minister to try to get those dates and the proposed number of beds on the record. I also asked whether the government would reconsider its decision not to install a toilet facility at the Canning Bridge train station, which I believe would be of great advantage to the elderly, disabled and parents with children. Not during the course of this debate, but during the course of this parliamentary session, I also intend to follow up on the question of a crossing attendant for St Benedict's Primary School, which still does not have one. Some 43 000 cars pass through that stretch of road each day. Since the minister has taken away a crossing attendant, several nasty accidents have occurred. If a child is killed at that crossing, that child's death will be on the government's hands.

Apart from some local issues, I also wish the government to consider the use of the title "honourable" by members of the upper house. The history of this title can be traced back to New South Wales and to 1893, when a letter referred to the title of "honourable" appertaining to members of the executive and Legislative Councils in colonies possessing responsible government. This title, which has been given to upper house members, is some 150 years old. I believe it is a hangover from the nineteenth century and is archaic, out of date and artificial. In this day and age it shows that Council members believe that they have some form of elitism and are superior to backbenchers in this house. They may think that. This house should look at the term "honourable" and consider its removal, although not perhaps from members who currently have the title or who had that title in the past. I believe we should be writing to the Governor saying that as of the next election the title "honourable" should be discontinued. Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek an extension of time.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: In 1863 Governor Daly of Adelaide wrote to the Duke of Newcastle in the following terms -

I have been applied to by the Members of my Council upon the subject of the prefix of Honourable, which by Her Majesty's permission is attached to their names during their occupancy of seats in the Executive and Legislative Councils, a distinction which they are desirous of retaining after they shall have ceased to hold office.

2. They are aware of that privilege having been conceded in Canada and other Colonies . . .

They basically asked for the same thing. I believe that at that time the Governor would have been writing on behalf of South Australia and Western Australia. That was in April 1863 and in August 1863 a response was received from Downing Street that read -

I have received your Despatch . . . upon the subject of the prefix of Honourable, which you assume to be by Her Majesty's permission attached to their names during their occupancy of their seats . . .

In reply I would point out that the retention of that title by an ex-Member of a Legislative Council is without precedent, so far as I am aware, and would be wholly incongruous . . . I consider nothing as unimportant which tends to attract the leading Colonists to the Public Service of the Colony, and, therefore so long as this title is an object of ambition to such persons, it would be very desirable that it should remain a reward of political eminence . . .

Those days have gone; times have moved on. High Court judges discarded their wigs in 1988 and Speakers have shed their wigs and gowns. I believe that members of this house and the other house are accountable to their communities. Our acknowledgment should be based on the quality of our work and our respect for one another, which I admit is a bit tenuous at times, but most of all it should be based on our regard for the public and the public's regard for us. We are equals. I cannot see any equality with the elitism that still exists when people who are elected to the upper house are given an out-of-date title.

Other countries and states have already looked at this issue. In fact, Italy moved to abolish such a title in 2002. They said that it gave parliamentarians the image of belonging to a caste. In 2003 the Victorian Parliament moved to take the honorific title away from upper house MPs so that the community could see that there was equality with members of Parliament. In fact, the Speaker of the lower house at the time, Judy Madigan, said that she had "dumped" the title and just signed documents as Judy Madigan and that, in this day and age, the title

had no relevance for her. She and many other ministers and members of Victorian government said that the title was anachronistic and made it harder for them to relate to the community. The then Victorian Minister for Finance described the term as a vestige of a bygone era. I believe that it is time that we in Western Australia considered this issue. It is time for the title to be removed from the start of the next Parliament for new members. I know that I am not alone in this house in supporting that suggestion. I thank the member for Nedlands, who has just made some supportive comments in support of the removal of the title.

Mr M.P. Whitely: I support both of you.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Thank you, member for Bassendean. I hope next week to move a motion to discuss this issue. I also hope that the member will speak to the motion and give his support.

I have a newspaper article from 11 October last year in which the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Mr Fred Riebeling, comments on this issue.

It states, in part -

Legislative Assembly Speaker Fred Riebeling said he was not averse to dropping the phrase but doubted that he would act unless there was a push for it. Some MPs still enjoyed the title.

I do not think that we are here for enjoyment.

Mr M.P. Whitely: But what about dropping it for ministers?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: No, I am talking about dropping it for backbench members. Ministers in Victoria have decided to not keep the honorific title. However, I am more than happy for Parliament to discuss this issue and possibly for ministers in both houses to retain the title. I do not believe it is a title that should be given to a member just because he or she is a backbench member in the other house. The article continues -

He -

That is, the Speaker -

could not see any significant reason for keeping it. "I can't see any real reason for taking it away either but I'm pretty neutral about the whole thing," he said.

Ms S.E. Walker: What about if a minister is sacked in disgrace?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I stand to be corrected but I believe that, when a minister is appointed, he or she has to stay a minister for a certain number of years before he or she can keep the title permanently.

Ms S.E. Walker: What if a minister is sacked, like some have been? Are they able to keep the title?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I believe it goes back to the time served. I hope that the member for Nedlands introduces that point into the debate.

The last part of the article states -

"If it goes, it goes and I certainly wouldn't object to it."

I think the time is now right to hold this debate because we are 18 months away from the next election.

I refer now to section 7 of the commonwealth Australia Act 1986, which states -

Powers and functions of Her Majesty and Governors in respect of States

...

- (2) Subject to subsections (3) and (4) below, all powers and functions of Her Majesty in respect of a State are exercisable only by the Governor of the State.

...

That being the case at the next sitting of the house I will give notice of the motion I intend to move. It states -

That this house calls on the Premier to advise His Excellency the Governor that the conferring of the title "Honourable" on members of the Legislative Council by virtue alone of being a member of that house should be discontinued.

The reason I will do that at the next sitting of the house is to give me an opportunity to discuss this issue with colleagues so that we can have a fruitful debate on the issue next week. As I said, use of the title is archaic and out of date and retains a perception of elitism. I will not go into whether members in this house believe that they do more work than members in the other house or vice versa.

Ms J.A. Radisich: I think we all know the answer to that.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I believe that there are some very strong opinions in this house. Many members believe that lower house members provide a far greater service to the community. However, this is not about that. This is about the use of a term that should have reached its expiry date many years ago. We should be looking to ensure that the perception of elitism is discontinued at the next election.

I will mention briefly a few other issues that I will pursue this year. I am very disappointed in the Parliament in that smoking is still allowed in the courtyards of Parliament House. I am pleased to receive support from members because, although not many members smoke, a number of staff smoke. This is a workplace and we have colleagues in Parliament who are afraid to speak up about smoking because they may lose their positions. Unlike other workplaces outside Parliament House where smoking is not allowed, it is still allowed in the courtyards. I ask all members to support a ban similar to those in other workplaces and the community so that there is one standard for all.

Mr P. PAPALIA (Peel) [11.59 am]: I start by extending my thanks to members from both sides for the very kind welcome I have received. I was particularly touched by numerous concerns for my wellbeing conveyed to me from both sides in respect of the manner in which I received my baptism of fire. I note that Benjamin Hames, the son of the member for Dawesville, is currently operating in isolated areas of East Timor with the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, pursuing rebel forces. That puts our baptism of fire into perspective. I extend my best wishes to Benjamin and his unit, and also to the member for Dawesville and Stephanie for what will probably be a very challenging time for them. They should take heart, because I know that the 3rd Battalion is a very professional unit. It is over-represented in the Special Air Service Regiment as a result of the quality of the personnel serving in it.

Referring again to my entry into this house, I found the whole experience quite reassuring rather than incredibly confronting. The Premier confirmed my faith in him as he showed himself to be a strong, honest and sincere leader in the face of a great deal of criticism of the government. What I saw confirmed that I had made the correct decision, and that the government is continuing to move in the right direction.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Peel, the one thing you will very quickly learn in this place is that it is up to you whether you wish to accept interjections or just plough on. Members on my left should know better.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As a fresh set of eyes observing activity in the chamber, I witnessed torrents of feigned indignation, and perhaps real indignation. I even heard a quote from the eighteenth-century Irish lawyer John Philpot Curran from the member for Merredin and other Nationals, telling us that evil prospers when good men do nothing. In response to those criticisms, and those directed at the government back bench, speaking for myself in particular, if action was demanded, I believe I have taken the action. That is why I am here. I sacrificed a normal life and immersed my family and myself in the experience of political life because I was concerned, like members on both sides of the house, by the activities of lobbyists we have come to know and resent. I felt I had to make a commitment to supporting the Premier and his good government. That is why I became a member. I do not see any point in demanding any further action or meaningless statements from other backbenchers.

In the light of the eloquent explanation provided by the member for Riverton last night, I believe that no good will come of people from either side dipping large brushes into buckets of mud and slapping that mud across any number of members, treating everyone as if they had committed the same act or error. Clearly, they have not. There have been no findings by the Corruption and Crime Commission; there have only been observations. I recommend that we wait until the findings have been made.

Ms S.E. Walker: What do you think?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is the point; it does not matter what I think. It is not up to me or anyone else to make observations until the findings have been made. That is the best course of action for all members of Parliament, because it instils trust in the Parliament into the community.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members know the correct way in which to seek an interjection. I suggest that they use it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Returning to the Premier's Statement, I find it equally reassuring that some specific comments were made in the statement about the government acting in the best interests of Western Australia's future. One feature that was considered controversial, particularly by the member for the Vasse, was that the government considers nuclear power to be unsustainable. I agree with that observation. The Premier suggested that legislation would be introduced to prohibit construction and operation of nuclear power stations, and regulatory approvals for nuclear facilities, enabling them to connect and transfer power to any electrical network.

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[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 22 March 2007]

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Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Paul Papalia; Deputy Speaker; Mr Ben Wyatt

That was met with howls of derision, particularly from the member for Vasse, not about nuclear power, but about the need for uranium mining in Western Australia. I am a pretty simple old diver, and I am probably easily confused, but the people in my electorate have not raised with me the desperate need for the mining of uranium. I do not know whether the electors in Busselton have done so, but they certainly have not in Peel. When I was doorknocking in my electorate, people raised the issue, which is also constantly raised in the newspapers, that they do not want nuclear power stations sited in their electorate. That is an issue that my electorate has raised with me.

Mr A.D. McRae: Do you know what the federal member for Canning, the colleague of members opposite, has suggested?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do know what he has suggested, actually. Do members know why it has been raised in my electorate? It is because Sir Charles Court had already pinpointed the location for a nuclear power station in Western Australia at Port Kennedy. My electors are naturally concerned about whether the federal or state Liberals, if they get the opportunity, will stick a nuclear power station in their electorate; in their backyard. I must represent their views. Both the Kwinana Town Council and the Rockingham City Council have called in the local press for the state government to back their calls to prevent nuclear power stations in their region. I am very pleased, in the light of the Premier's Statement, to be able to assure my constituents that this government is listening to them. It will back the Rockingham and Kwinana councils; it will not support nuclear power stations in their region. Maybe it should be moved to Busselton; maybe that would be a good site. The concern about nuclear power stations and nuclear waste in Peel extends across the demographic. During my campaign I had the pleasure of meeting with some retired people residing at the Bethanie Waters lifestyle village.

Mr T. Buswell: Half your members support the mining of uranium.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am waiting for them to contact me, because they have not done so yet.

During my election campaign I was able to visit some residents of the Bethanie Waters lifestyle village in Port Kennedy. It might be considered that that demographic is quite well off and they have been around for a while, so they might have raised the issue of uranium mining with me, but they did not. Considering the demographic, it is also pertinent that they did not raise the issue of land tax with me either. However, they did raise their deep concern for the environment.

Mr T. Buswell: They do not pay land tax on their own homes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: They are not in their own homes.

Mr T. Buswell: Whose homes are they in?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am talking about the people in the lifestyle village. They are quite well off; they have investments. They raised with me their concerns about the environment, and in particular nuclear power.

Speaking of Bethanie Waters leads me to another issue of interest in my electorate that has received quite a deal of local media coverage. Bethanie Waters is not only a lifestyle village, it also has an adjacent aged care facility. It has an excellent manager, Trish Carpenter, and before members accuse me of making ingratiating remarks, I point out she is not related to the Premier.

Ms S.E. Walker: Is she related to his wife?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. She is from Harvey, and she is a lovely lady. The facility is hospital standard and includes a security ward for severe dementia sufferers. On 19 February, after my election, I attended the facility, representing the Premier and Hon Kim Beazley, and was fortunate enough to attend the one hundredth birthday party of Ivy Saunders, one of the residents. Her family had travelled from Kalgoorlie. Ivy is a dementia sufferer and her awareness comes and goes. On that day she was particularly aware because I gave her one kiss on the cheek and she demanded another one.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a wonderful facility, but it is not enough. In light of the wave of baby boomers moving through the population demographic, our hospitals will be overwhelmed unless we have many more aged care facilities. That leads me to the issue I want to raise.

Ms J.A. Radisich: Declare your interest!

Mr A.D. McRae: He is ageing!

Mr P. PAPALIA: Careful! I want to refer to comments made by the President of the Aged Care Association of Western Australia, Mr Stephen Becsi, which were reported in the *Weekend Courier* on 19 March. I have to declare an interest here because he is an old Navy colleague with whom I served about 24 years ago. He is also the deputy chief executive officer of the Churches of Christ Homes. The *Weekend Courier* reported him as saying that the recent federal government announcement of \$1.5 billion to secure the future of aged care for

Australians was totally inadequate. The announcement was made by the former federal Minister for Health and Ageing, Santo Santoro, and was aimed at ensuring the future of the sector. Mr Becsi is a constituent of mine and he was responsible in large part for the building of Bethanie Waters. He noted that the government allocation equates to \$26.88 a day towards accommodating residents and allows borrowings to build new facilities at around \$105 000 a bed. In Western Australia the Churches of Christ appears to be one of the most efficient agencies building these facilities, and it does so for \$142 000 a bed. Across the nation, it costs between \$140 000 and \$220 000 a bed to build these facilities. Mr Becsi was reported as saying that his organisation would struggle to build a facility like the 160-bed Bethanie Waters centre under this funding regime. Clearly, it is a failure by the federal government and it is a concern for my electorate and just about every electorate.

I noted that during his speech the member for Serpentine-Jarrahdale welcomed me and then gave me a bit of a backhander. He drew my attention to media reports of the Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services-sponsored report on the distribution of disadvantage in Australia, called "Dropping off the Edge".

Ms J.A. Radisich: It is an excellent report.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is. I do not think he read it. He pointed out that Kwinana was identified as one of the sites of disadvantage in Western Australia. He did not say that Kwinana is one of 20 that have been identified in Western Australia and it is not in the top 15; it is 18, 19 or 20. Nevertheless, I got the report and read it thoroughly. It confirms that Kwinana is a disadvantaged site; however, that was already known to this government. The Jesuits did not know about, and were not able to report on, some of the actions the government is taking, or is about to take, specifically targeting disadvantage. The report recommended ways of targeting disadvantage. It suggested that early childhood and adolescent health services should be strongly represented in disadvantaged areas. It gives me great pleasure to note that the government is undertaking a \$100 million upgrade of Rockingham Kwinana District Hospital. Part of that upgrade is to provide significant improvements to maternity services in the region. There will be a refurbished maternity ward with three new delivery rooms. There are a number of improvements to health provision as a result of this upgrade, including a 25-bed mental health step-down facility; two purpose-built emergency short stay units; four new operating theatres; and an eight-bed satellite renal dialysis service. All of these services, particularly the upgrading of the maternity unit, go towards targeting the problems raised in the Jesuits' report.

The report says education must be targeted in disadvantaged areas. The government is spending \$52.9 million on the Kwinana education and training precinct, which is located in the centre of the town and includes a new senior high school.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: It includes the Challenger TAFE automotive training centre, which will open in 2008, and which specifically targets the sorts of things that this report recommends. Transport is another area that should be targeted in disadvantaged areas. It is undeniable that this government is targeting it by providing a station on both sides of the Kwinana township, which will greatly enhance residents' access to health, employment and income support agencies. Other areas recommended for targeting in the report include coordination of provision of public utilities and policing with other government agencies to ensure awareness of the impact of social disadvantage. I am pleased that the Department for Community Development has greatly expanded its operations in Kwinana. Its offices surround mine, and DCD is waiting until I move into my own electorate office so that it can take it over my office as well.

I want to thank the member for Serpentine-Jarrahdale in his absence for bringing the Jesuit-sponsored report to my attention and thereby confirming that the government is aware of the disadvantage in Kwinana and is targeting it.

Continuing with electorate matters, I know that most members are aware of the National Surf Life Saving Championships currently being conducted at Scarborough Beach. Last Sunday I attended the Indian Ocean Challenge, which was held at Secret Harbour and hosted by the Secret Harbour Surf Life Saving Club. The event was conducted as a precursor to the national championships. Most of the boat crews from all around the country that will be competing at Scarborough came a week in advance to spend a little more time in Western Australia and in particular in the Peel electorate. The major difference between the two events as far as the surf boats go is that Secret Harbour actually has surf. I met some of the competitors and they were having a great time and enjoying their stay. I commend the president of the club, Max Hannah, the director of sponsorship, Jane Le Grove, and the entire membership. They should be rightly proud of what was an outstanding event. They will be hosting the event for the next two years, in the same way that Scarborough is hosting the national championships, and I recommend all members consider attending those future events to see a great competition where there is surf.

Finally, I want to raise a matter that is indirectly of concern to my electorate and the rest of Australian society. I cannot overlook the fact that yesterday the Prime Minister attempted once again to justify the continued presence

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of combat troops in Iraq. Yesterday, having just returned from a photo opportunity in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Prime Minister strongly recommended that our troops remain in Iraq. He rolled out the usual rhetoric about not wanting to cut and run because such a move would see the region fall into absolute chaos. Four years ago today I was in the northern Kuwaiti desert, just south of the Iraqi border, being shaken by blasts from Iraqi missile detonation. I cannot ignore the statements made by the Prime Minister. I do not agree with his contention that our continued indefinite presence will help the Iraqis gain stability. I got to know the Iraqi people pretty well during my deployments to Iraq, particularly during my first deployment when I worked closely with Iraqis destroying nerve agent and mustard-agent fuelled munitions. The Iraqi people are resourceful and capable, but they are also very pragmatic. I do not believe that they will compromise to accommodate the different parts of Iraqi society until they are forced to do so. If it suits them to have radical insurgents causing trouble while the coalition is occupying the nation, they will allow that to occur. However, a phased withdrawal of coalition forces would force Iraqis to determine their own solution, which they are quite capable of doing. That is the only way to reach a solution. Despite the undeniable quality and professionalism of our troops, retaining them in Iraq seems to be much more about supporting the Bush Administration than about the Iraqi people or our national interests. The Prime Minister has been left behind on this issue, because he has failed to keep pace with national sentiment. I trust that in coming months he will do what he normally does; namely, shift his position after he recognises that the change in sentiment has occurred.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [12.24 pm]: It is a pleasure to respond to the Premier's Statement. Like other members of Parliament, I, too, would like to congratulate the Speaker and all those involved in the renovation of the Legislative Assembly. That was not a cheap undertaking; however, given that no changes have been made to the chamber in the past 80 years, it was obviously necessary.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: It was a long time coming.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It was a long time indeed. I dare say that another renovation will not be undertaken for quite some time.

Dr S.C. Thomas: We'll have to wait for Julian and Brian to organise the contract!

Mr B.S. WYATT: That would be a lot more expensive, I dare say.

I thank the Premier for his statement, which summaries the economic and social position of Western Australia particularly well. I will reflect not only on some particular matters in my electorate, but also matters of relevance to the broader economic circumstances of the state.

The first issue I will address is homelessness. The member for Southern River reflected on this issue a couple of days ago in his response to the Premier's Statement. No doubt all members of Parliament are aware of the increasing prevalence of people living on the streets. I recently met with the organisers of the HIV/AIDS drop-in centre in my electorate, which is having significant problems finding accommodation for its members. Many of its members end up living on the streets. Members of Parliament do not need a doctor to tell them the sorts of problems that can occur when people with such medical issues end up living on the streets or turning to the types of activities to which they inevitably turn. Half of the time I spend in my electorate is spent dealing with Homeswest or homelessness-related issues. Members of Parliament have become quasi real estate agents because of the amount of effort they put into accommodation issues. There is a 12-month waiting period for those on Homeswest's priority list. I use the term "priority" loosely. The government should consider ways to better manage that list. It must consider improved interaction with those on the list, other government departments and the non-government organisations that provide accommodation around the state in an attempt to reduce the significant waiting time.

With respect to broader home building policies, I want to reflect on the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure's Network City planning policy, which is certainly coming to fruition in my electorate. The area on the Burswood peninsula has been the topic of much discussion of late given Publishing and Broadcasting Limited's proposal to build a stadium on the site. Whether or not that happens, current estimates suggest that the site will end up accommodating 25 000 people. It may take some 20 years before that happens, but the peninsula itself will be a fine example of Network City and hopefully it will go a little way towards addressing the urban sprawl in the Perth metropolitan area.

Similarly, the area between Cannington train station and Westfield Carousel Shopping Centre, which is at the other end of my electorate, is another area with a large expanse of vacant land and a large expanse of land owned by governments, both state and federal. I am on a task force that is seeking to rationalise the government's use of land; or, if the government does not need it, the task force will encourage the government to sell that land to the council to develop a city centre area that will accommodate, under City of Canning plans, another 5 000 homes along the train line and within a very short distance of the city. These types of proposals for the metropolitan area will help address the significant sprawl and the various downsizing advantages that flow from that.

The last time I spoke to the Premier's Statement was my first speech in Parliament. Since then I have had time to reflect upon other areas of interest in my electorate. One of the biggest areas of interest is the redevelopment of Victoria Park train station. Thankfully, the redevelopment has reached the stage at which the contracts have been awarded. I am not yet privy to who has won the tenders; I am waiting to be given that information. Victoria Park train station will be moved about 300 metres. It is currently located on a bend and is not particularly safe because when a train stops, there is a significant gap between the platform and the train, and that creates obvious safety issues. The station will be moved 300 metres east to accommodate a larger station on the straight. It will also accommodate members of the Association for the Blind of WA. The Association for the Blind's centre in Victoria Park has recently undergone major redevelopment.

I will also comment on proposed reforms to prostitution laws; if anything, I mean the government and police approach to the way in which prostitution laws are enforced. There are a significant number of unofficial brothels in my electorate. The council cannot deal with them in a sensible way. The prostitution legislation that will be introduced into the house this year will be a significant and timely - I should say well overdue - approach to reforming that industry. It will acknowledge the fact prostitution is a part of society regardless of what governments may try to do. The industry must be regulated in such a way that citizens have a say in where brothels are located. The government, through the Minister for Health, has put significant resources into mental health. Mental health is a problem that seems to be growing each day. I am lucky that a number of cluster homes for people with mental health issues will be built in my electorate. Until now, Western Australia has not had an intermediate facility; it has been either Graylands Hospital or nothing. Like Victoria, we are building that infrastructure to enable people with not-so-significant mental health problems to live in the community in a supported way, so that they do not end up on the street and thereby become a police issue, which is not appropriate.

Further to the issue of health facilities, I am delighted that the Gambro Healthcare renal dialysis unit opened in Cannington in my electorate the other week. The Minister for Health opened that dialysis unit, which is part of Royal Perth Hospital. It will have 12 chairs. I have seen a number of different dialysis units across the state, and this is quite a spectacular unit for what is an intrusive, uncomfortable and lengthy procedure. It will enable patients to remain in their community, receive their treatment in a comfortable and dignified way and then return home without having to undertake the extensive travelling that many people in my electorate go through to get such treatment.

I am sure that there is not a metropolitan electorate that does not have hoons. Last night the member for South Perth referred to road safety. That is another significant issue. The Road Traffic Amendment Bill 2006, which will remove the need for a police officer to witness an offence in order to impound a vehicle, is a great leap forward. It will bring the community into law enforcement in a sensible way and will allow for community ownership of these issues. I encourage the Legislative Council to deal with that bill as a matter of priority.

Not long after I was elected, my electorate realised quite rapidly my legal background. I got lots of calls and requests from community groups asking me whether I had colleagues or friends with a legal background who were willing to sit on the boards of various community organisations. Those requests became more and more frequent, so I wrote to all the large law firms in Perth seeking expressions of interest from lawyers who were willing and able to offer their time to sit on the boards of community groups and, thankfully, I had an amazing response. I am now in the process of finding community groups that are looking for board members. That has been wonderful because it gives lawyers from those large law firms, who spend six or seven days a week at work and rarely get out and about, an opportunity to practise law in a community-based organisation. Certainly, I have advised a number of members of Parliament, not just those on this side of the house, to let me know if community groups in their electorates are seeking people to sit on their boards or management committees, because I have a large list of names of lawyers that I am keen to allocate before they lose interest in this area.

Perth Football Club at Lathlain Park has been a long-term fixture for the people of my electorate. I lived next door to it for 12 years. When the Demons play at home -

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Member for Bassendean, we do not need to talk about the history of the premierships of Perth Football Club. I will not reflect on that because it has not been a happy 30 years for the club, but things are certainly looking good for us this year. Unfortunately, the Demons tragically and unexpectedly lost Brian Lawrence, a former president of the club. He was at each home game. I knew Brian for only 18 months, but he had an amazing impact on me. His personality, intentions and goodwill were incredible. Unfortunately, he passed away recently. It was certainly a surprise to me; I did not expect it. His funeral service was a reflection of the man. The church was packed and Brian was given the due honour he deserved for his many, many years of hard work for Perth Football Club since he finished his playing days. I note that Peter Kennedy, a very strong

Perth Demons supporter, is in the media gallery. He also went to the funeral service and, like me, he appreciates the significance of the loss of Brian.

Carson Street School, which is in my electorate, is the state's only junior education support school that caters for students with such disabilities that they cannot be suitably supported in the regular system. They often require extensive therapy and educational services. It is an amazing school. I was delighted when the Minister for Education and Training, Mark McGowan, visited the school on 21 February and provided funding for a new hoist to lift the children in and out of the pool that is used for therapy and education. These children will now be able to access the pool in a much more dignified way than previously. Although the previous hoist was effective, it was crude and these children, who face incredible circumstances, should not have had to put up with it. I thank not just the staff and the parents of the children at Carson Street School for the amount of work they have contributed to the operation of the school, but also the minister for the state's generosity in that regard.

On 22 February this year, Holyoake moved its premises to my electorate. Its facilities were previously located in Northbridge, and no doubt many members visited those facilities. However, they were completely and utterly inadequate for the services that had been provided for a long time. As everybody knows, Holyoake focuses on alcohol and drug addiction rehabilitation. Interestingly, 70 per cent of the people who go to Holyoake do not have an addiction; they are family members seeking assistance for people with a particular addiction. It must be recognised by all members that this problem affects the family just as much as it affects the person with the addiction. Holyoake has amazing facilities that provide much more extensive services to many more people who are afflicted with alcohol and drug addiction. I congratulate the chairman of the board of directors, Marylyn New, and her chief executive officer, Margaret Jackson, for their persistence. A large Lotterywest grant enabled Holyoake to purchase the building. Although Holyoake still has significant debts, which it is endeavouring to reduce, it is certainly having a massive impact on drug and alcohol addiction problems in our community.

The Carlisle branch of Retirees WA will have its fiftieth anniversary this year. This branch is enormously effective. It has always had good turnouts and has provided me with a lot of input and education on how state government policy and federal government policy affect its members.

Another matter that is dear to the hearts of many people in my electorate and in the bordering electorate of Belmont is the Orrong Road-Leach Highway flyover. Someone from Main Roads WA once told me that it was the most dangerous intersection in Perth due to the number of crashes and deaths that have occurred there. I note that the member for Murray is nodding his head in acknowledgment. No doubt he would have had a great deal of experience with that intersection in his former profession.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr B.S. WYATT: The flyover is due to be finished in April 2007 at a cost of \$21 million. That is an amazing amount, but it is a reflection of the current costs of construction. I will mention a number of broader issues. Recently we heard Jeff Kennett reflecting on Perth in a speech that he gave at a Creative Capital Visioning Workshop. I was invited to attend the workshop and found it interesting. The member for Cottesloe also attended, together with people from not only a political background, but also the government and private sectors. No doubt Jeff Kennett had a motive for saying certain things about Perth. However, some issues do need addressing. Members of Parliament of all political persuasions have given, and will continue to give, consideration to this issue. Perhaps the many issues raised by Charles Landry are matters we need to think about. We should not deal with those issues in a critical or parochial manner, but reflect on how we can make our city a better place in which to live.

On Tuesday morning I attended a breakfast to launch the Inventor of the Year awards, which have been a great initiative. The function was held at Fraser's Restaurant and there was a great turnout of Western Australians from a broad range of industry backgrounds. The event was an acknowledgement of the effort that goes into developing areas of the economy that may not be directly related to the resources sector. I have given a number of speeches reflecting on the need to broaden our economic base and consider our economy beyond the current commodity price cycle. The Inventor of the Year awards are a great acknowledgement of that. Certainly, John Moore from Lathlain, in my electorate, is working hard on developing a couple of initiatives that I think will have potential for great commercial success.

On 21 February I attended the Western Australian Music Industry awards night. I dare say that all members of Parliament would have been invited. I accepted the invitation and it was a fantastic evening.

Mr T. Buswell: Are you ever home?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have a home; I never see it. The WAMI awards night showcased the talents of those in the music industry in Western Australia. I congratulate all the bands and performers who won awards that evening.

Recently, I have come across concerns about the Building Disputes Tribunal. I have written to the responsible minister on this issue because, in light of the rapid increase in property prices, it is something that we need to

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reflect upon. According to the Building Disputes Tribunal's website, the tribunal is an independent quasi-judicial body separate from the Builders Registration Board and provides a straightforward, inexpensive forum for adjudicating building disputes between owners and builders. It was set up pursuant to the Builders Registration Act 1939. Section 38(4) of that act states -

In any proceedings costs are not to be awarded to any party to the proceedings for the services of any legal practitioner or other person representing or assisting in the representation of that party unless, in the opinion of the Disputes Tribunal, it is fair to do so . . .

It sets out a number of circumstances in which it is appropriate for costs to be awarded, mainly those circumstances in which the litigation is vexatious, inappropriately delayed etc.

On a couple of occasions a trial has taken place for builders to attempt to incorporate the principles of *Calderbank v Calderbank* into the disputes tribunal process. If this is successful, my concern is that it will reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of that tribunal. People who are constructing homes will be reluctant to bring proceedings through that process and will not have that quasi-judicial voice that the tribunal currently brings to matters. I look forward to a positive response from the minister on that matter.

Secondly, the jurisdiction of the tribunal involves two areas: contractual complaints and workmanship complaints. The jurisdiction pertaining to contractual complaints needs urgent and serious amendment. Currently, the tribunal can determine contractual complaints relating to a lump sum home building contract valued at between \$6 000 and \$200 000. Not many people can build a house of any significance for less than \$200 000. As the price of property construction has increased it has effectively priced the jurisdiction of the tribunal out of relevancy. We need to consider the contractual complaints jurisdiction.

I will reflect on a couple of issues that I initially raised in November last year about regional development. It seems that for a long time there has been a palliative economic approach by all levels of government to regional development within Western Australia. I previously quoted Professor Eric Reinert's paper that he had prepared on the United National millennium goals. He said that all the millennium goals do is to treat the symptoms of poverty in developing countries. He was very critical of those goals, regardless of the fact that at face value they are hard to argue against. It is interesting that he considered it further and came up with the following recommendation -

As was the case with the Marshall Plan, financial funds must be matched with the establishment of industrial and service sectors that profitably can absorb both the physical and human investments. A diversification out of raw material production is absolutely indispensable in order to create a basis for both democratic stability and increased welfare. Initially these sectors will not be able to survive work market competition. As this process always has required, since England's first ascent to industrialisation starting in 1485, this incipient industrialisation needs special treatment of the kind the Marshall Plan afforded after 1947.

Whilst the Marshall Plan was obviously focused on postwar Europe, we now have to consider not only the failed states to the north of the country, but also areas in Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia that have the same statistics and internal problems that are evident in the failed states but that the existing government structure is perhaps no longer capable of adequately responding to. We have always had the traditional state and federal government structure as a result of Federation, and it may be time to consider how to restructure that so that when we develop public policy in Canberra or Perth we have the ability to deliver on those initiatives. We are seeing this played out now with the Prime Minister and his water plan. He can see that he needs to do something, and he can say what he likes about his initiative, but unless he is willing to provide the government infrastructure, which is effectively what federalism is - the machinery of government - quite simply it will not matter what Canberra or Perth says. If we do not reform that structure accordingly, we will not be able to respond to those issues. In a speech I gave recently to the Fabian Society - it is an area of discussion -

Mr T. Buswell interjected.

Dr G.G. Jacobs interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member for Roe will appreciate what I am about to say but perhaps the member for Vasse will not. The Council of Australian Governments is committed to addressing indigenous disadvantage, and my argument is that we must consider it in the context of the broader regions in which a lot of Aboriginal communities operate. What we have now is an approach based on partnerships and shared responsibilities with indigenous communities, program flexibility and coordination between government agencies with a focus on local communities and outcomes. COAG has been saying that for years. The only problem is that people realise that it does not matter what it says, the struggle is the delivery on that issue. Regional partnership agreements are being entered into between not only the federal government, but also Aboriginal communities and councils

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based not on state boundaries but across many state boundaries. RPAs have some significant problems, but they are an acknowledgement by the federal government that the existing structure to deliver public policy is not working. We need to consider a regional government structure; not an additional one, but a merger of two levels of government that will enable the regional areas to develop beyond the current capacity. To cover that subject would require a lot more than the three minutes I have left in my contribution to the Premier's Statement.

I want to reflect on the previous 12 months. Being the member for Victoria Park has been a learning curve of immense proportions. No doubt the member for Peel will find that to be the case, as all members will have experienced. Members of Parliament can be effective only through the help of their staff, support groups and community groups in the areas in which they operate. I thank all those people who have helped me for their support.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

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