

HON MALCOLM JOHN BRYCE

Statement

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [6.19 pm]: I want to say a few words about the passing of Mal Bryce, former Deputy Premier of Western Australia. I know that my colleague Minister MacTiernan is going to say a few words as well. I did not know Mal all that well, although I was involved in the Labor Party when he was Deputy Premier. I grew to know him much better in recent years because he was a constituent. His house, where his wife, Liz, still lives, is around the corner from my electorate office. In the last couple of years that we were in opposition, Mal would send me a text or ring me and say that Liz was making sandwiches and soup and I should come around because he had a few ideas that he wanted to share with me. He had lots of ideas. Sometimes he would bring people along that he thought would help me in a policy sense. There is a message on my phone from about two weeks ago. He wanted to talk to me about policy matters that he had been thinking about. He was a big thinker. He was a big thinker when he was Deputy Premier. Members will recall that he was Deputy Premier when there was the odd controversy from time to time. There was none around Mal Bryce. He was an honourable man, a really smart man, an innovative thinker and a great family man. Although his death was not unexpected over the last couple of years because of his illness, it did happen really quickly and I know that his family—Liz, his children and grandchildren—will be devastated by his passing.

Mal was an outstanding leader of Western Australia. He led the way in so many areas with his ideas on education and technology. He loved the science, technology, engineering and mathematics debate. He saw all the things that he had been talking about for the last 40 years coming to fruition. He absolutely loved ideas. He loved debate and he loved to sit around his dining room table and talk about ideas and different ways of doing things. He always did so in an unfettered way. He did not have crazy “out there” ideas; he had really sensible practical ideas about how he could continue to improve our society, improve education and particularly improve the lot of those people who were disadvantaged. He was always willing to push the boundaries and say, “If we push that little bit harder on this issue, if we can lead in this area, we will make our society better.”

Mal had been unwell for years but I was shocked that his passing happened so quickly. I will certainly miss the conversations. I will miss Liz’s sandwiches and soup, which he would sometimes pretend he had made himself by heating the soup. He was a lovely man. They were a lovely family. Western Australia is the poorer for his passing.