

HON BRENDON GRYLLES

Statement

HON COL HOLT (South West — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.44 pm]: I would like to read to the house an extract from a maiden speech, if I may, and then I will add some comments —

In conclusion, my electorate cannot afford bandaaid solutions to the issues I have raised here today. My constituents have asked me to lobby hard on their behalf to find long-term solutions, rather than quick fixes. Unless we are prepared to look outside the square and find innovative solutions to their problems, we will continue to see a decline in rural Western Australia. We cannot afford to allow this decline.

They are the concluding remarks of Hon Brendon Grylls' maiden speech in 2001. I mention him briefly, although I am sure that my words will not do justice to the man or to the contribution he has made to regional Western Australia, but I would like to at least have a go and add my bit to his accolades.

When Brendon took on the leadership of the Nationals in 2005, he quickly realised he was the custodian of the National Party of Western Australia. He often talks about a plaque that sits in our party room that states "The Country Party formed in 1913", which is 100 years ago this year, and an honour board that started in 1914 when the first elected members of the National Party of WA, although not called that at the time, were elected to this place. He saw it as his duty as custodian and leader of the party to ensure that he did not have to unscrew those plaques from the wall and take them to the JS Battye Library of West Australian History. I think every night when he went to bed, he thought of the challenges ahead of him the next day, the fight as the country MP that he took to Parliament, to his constituency, to cabinet, or to the ministry. I am sure he went to bed every night thinking about how he could do things better and deliver an outcome. Every morning when he rose from his bed re-energised, he was prepared to take on a fight, no matter what it took, to deliver an outcome for Western Australia. I am absolutely confident that during those years of his leadership, his time as Minister for Regional Development and his first years here in Parliament as a member in opposition, what drove him at the core was a better outcome for the people he represented and regional Western Australia generally. I do not think he was driven by personal motivation; it was about delivering a better deal for the people he represented. To do that, he was taken places that he might not have thought he could go.

Knowing Brendon, he is a very self-confident young man, and self-confident for a very good reason. In my mind, he has displayed incredible leadership at a very young age. He has understood and read people and audiences and people he has worked with the right way and been able to work with them. He has quickly grasped the issues and the challenges in any situation, and, unlike many people I have met, he has quickly and succinctly found a solution to go after. Everyone in regional Western Australia and Western Australia generally should acknowledge and celebrate his achievements during his time as minister and as Leader of the National Party.

I have no doubt that when history writes itself and the National Party clocks up 200 years in existence, he will be remembered as a cornerstone figure that turned around the fortunes of our party. During the debates of one vote, one value, many expected the National Party to disappear or to become a party of one or two, of which he would be the leader. I think from that moment on, his steely resolve was to ensure that he never saw that happen and that he would never have to take the screwdriver into the party room to remove the plaque and the honour board. Against all those insurmountable odds, he has been able to forge a new policy, a new direction and a new leadership for the National Party that has formed a really solid foundation but, more importantly, delivered outcomes for regional Western Australia.

Much has been said about the royalties for regions program and that it was an idea formed back in 2006. At that time, the funding level was about \$360 million. Today, the funding is probably about \$1.6 billion a year into regional Western Australia. It is a policy that has captured the imagination of many rural and regional Western Australians. I know from my work in regional Western Australia that it was not about just the money and the programs introduced; it was the fact that regional Western Australia mattered. It had a champion in Hon Brendon Grylls to make sure that regional Western Australia mattered. People in regional Western Australia had aspirations, dreams and visions, and this was an opportunity and a way and a means of making those dreams and aspirations come true.

In conclusion, I would like to pay my respect and give my accolades to Hon Brendon Grylls for what he has done for regional Western Australia, for Western Australia generally, for the National Party of Western Australia and for me personally. There is no doubt that he has left regional Western Australia in a fundamentally better place.

House adjourned at 9.51 pm
