

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 25 May on the following motion moved by Ms J.J. Shaw —

That the following Address-in-Reply to Her Excellency's speech be agreed to —

To Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson, AC, Governor of the State of Western Australia.

May it please Your Excellency —

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before the member for Kimberley rises, I advise the house that the member for Kimberley has already sought permission from the Speaker to deliver part of her speech in her first language, Gidja. The Speaker has agreed to this on a one-off arrangement, as it is appropriate to make all speeches in English so that other members can understand what is being said and the Chair can ensure that it is both relevant and appropriate. The member for Kimberley has been asked to commence her speech in English and, when she wishes to speak Gidja, seek the permission of the Chair to address the Assembly in Gidja, and to give an undertaking that there is nothing unparliamentary in her speech. After the member makes a short part of her speech in Gidja, she will repeat that part of the speech in English so that it can be properly reported by Hansard.

MS J. FARRER (Kimberley) [12.35 pm]: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise today to add briefly to those comments already made in response to our Governor's address. I would like to seek permission to use my language, which I have done.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Ms J. FARRER: Thank you, and there will not be anything bad or unparliamentary in it, I can assure you!

In Gidja, I would like to say the following —

[*Words spoken in Gidja language —*

Kilingen —

Which means today —

ngeeningka jarrak-jarrak ngenarn taam-pe purru Oombulgarri ngarrem warringarrim manamparrem, ngali-ngalem ji-jilem-pe wanyanyakem-pe nymbilo-m julam-pe thu-thum-pe bulbam nguwan purru-ku. Kilingen linga-linga purrun warren-pe purren-pu.]

And it still goes on. I would like to explain to members in English. I have written it down, but I would like to explain to members what I have said —

Today I rise to speak at this place.

I am speaking about the home country of the Oombulgurri people. Plenty of people lived out at Oombulgurri—manamparrem, which is the older group of people; ngali-ngalem, all women; ji-jilem-pe, men; wanyanyakem-pe, children; and nyimbilo-m, babies. Not forgetting julam-pe, which are the dogs that belong to the people. Thu-thum-pe, everything that they had, bulbam, their property—in the end nothing was theirs, nguwan purru-ku. Today, Kilingen linga-linga purrun, they are still remembering and they are still thinking. Warren-pe purren-pu—they still ache in pain from the trauma that they have had.

And it still goes on. Thank you. That is all I wanted to say in my language.

I am proud to be part of a government that is dedicated to standing firm in its commitment to the people we represent. They are some of the people that we represent. I am glad of the Premier's commitment to not forcibly close remote communities. Unfortunately, there is a legacy of the previous Barnett government that I would like to draw to members' attention, and that is the sad and cruel treatment of the Balangarra traditional owners and other people who knew Oombulgurri country as their home.

I would like to acknowledge Tammy Solonec, who wrote an opinion piece in *The Guardian* of 27 November 2014, titled "The trauma of Oombulgurri's demolition will be repeated across Western Australia". I have used this in preparation for this speech.

Oombulgurri lies on the banks of the Forrest River across the Cambridge Gulf from Wyndham. This community once had a thriving community of strong people. It had a clinic, a shop, a police station, a school, an office,

a power station, about 60 homes and large water tanks. Removing people from Oombulgurri was a gradual process—but for what? The truth is that Oombulgurri has always been a site of trauma. It has seen massacres to the stolen children brought from there to the mission and the more recent issues of drug and alcohol abuse and community dysfunction. At one time the community was peaceful and dry, but along the way that changed. The negative culture was known by people in different levels of government, departmental staff, the police, welfare—you name it. They all turned a blind eye. They swept those serious destructive issues under the carpet and ignored their responsibilities and duty of care. They used the excuses of child abuse, alcoholism, suicide and domestic violence, which was highlighted by a police sexual assault task force and resulted in the conviction of three individuals—three people from a population of over 100. When Oombulgurri was closed in September 2011, the official line was that the community was unviable. Communication from the Western Australian government to Amnesty International states that Oombulgurri was closed due to severe dysfunction and to ensure community safety. “Unviable” was the term used by the Barnett government to start justifying closing another 150 remote Aboriginal communities. However, as I have seen firsthand—it has happened to me—there is nothing more unviable for Aboriginal people than for them to be forcibly evicted from their traditional lands and assimilated into white townships. To this day, access for me and many others to traditional lands is blocked or restricted. I have been told by people who should know better, “Josie, you need to learn to share your land.”

I return to Oombulgurri. The Barnett government first closed the services in Oombulgurri. It closed the shop so that people could not buy food and essentials. It closed the clinic so that the sick and elderly had to move. It closed the school so that families and children had to leave or face having their children taken away from them. The police station was the last service to be closed, and then, eventually, the electricity and water was turned off. Finally, the 10 residents who had stayed to the end were forcibly evicted. They were given just two days’ notice of eviction and were allowed to bring only one box of belongings each. They had to leave behind cars, whitegoods, tools and personal possessions. The whole time the government told these people that they could stay if they wanted, but it was a lie. Community members were asked to provide receipts for all their property; if they could not find them, they were told that the property must belong to the community and it was confiscated. Members, ask yourselves: Do you have receipts for everything in your house or yard? How do you think you would go if you were in these people’s shoes? The government claimed that the prescribed body corporate was dysfunctional and, so, created another board. The government filled it with people whose understanding of the English language and governance was poor, and tricked them into disposing of essential community infrastructure, like the barge that was used to travel across the Cambridge Gulf from Wyndham to Oombulgurri to deliver all their food and carry people. The barge was needed to move people across and allowed access to suppliers and services in Wyndham and Kununurra. If those lies and that deceit were not cruel enough, the government promised housing for every Oombulgurri resident when they left. Today, Oombulgurri people are still living in the Wyndham mangroves and parks or, if they are lucky, sharing a house—but it is in secret so that the Housing people do not evict them for overcrowding.

The circumstances leading to the closure of Oombulgurri were unfortunate, but the really sad and cruel aspects of closing that community were the feelings of the people who lived in that area, which, indeed, the Kimberley felt. Aboriginal people have a connection to country; an undeniable association of belonging to the land. The Oombulgurri people felt as though they were failures. They were afraid and they also felt hopeless. It is not easy to rebuild in or to belong to an area that you simply do not belong to, but that is what was expected. People in the rest of the Kimberley were also afraid that they would be removed from their homes. The Barnett government was dangerous in that it had power over people’s lives and the power to oppress an already oppressed people. Forced displacement also creates dysfunction in the communities where those people are relocated to. The Wyndham community, for example, is annoyed with the Oombulgurri people because they have nowhere to live or they are living in residences that do not have any room.

What can be done? Changes have already started to happen with the election of a new government, a government I am proud to be a part of. There is a difference in this chamber, which is more than the obvious change in numbers; it is in the shared values that we all heard from the new members of this government. For example, the members for Kingsley and Burns Beach come to mind: one spoke passionately about her disbelief that in this day and age our children are still haunted by racism and the other gave us a timely reminder that questions we consider in this Parliament can be life and death questions for others. Members, the land of the Oombulgurri settlement is owned by the Western Australian government’s Aboriginal Lands Trust, extinguishing native title. That is what enabled the Barnett government to forcibly evict traditional owners from their community, and the results we see are people still camping under trees in the mangroves or on the marshes. In saying that, I am very pleased to be able to work with Minister Ben Wyatt in starting discussions with traditional owners and stakeholders to look at the divestment of ALT land so that it benefits people through opportunities in business and through security in land and culture. Perhaps, finally, there can be a new start for Balangarra people in Oombulgurri and throughout Western Australia.

In conclusion, I will be seeking an inquiry into what really happened with the closure of Oombulgurri, either through this Parliament and its committees or by some other means. Like every member in this place, you will hear from me on suicide, jobs, education, traditional owners' access to government-leased lands, chronic diseases and much more. I would like to congratulate all new members elected to this place. Remember, our work is to fight racism and understand that sometimes we do make life and death decisions.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [12.48 pm]: I rise to make a few comments in the Address-in-Reply debate. It seems as though it has been 12 months since the election, but it is only three months. This is my first opportunity to thank those people in my electorate who helped not only me but also the Labor Party at the election. Members know that some of the most important people in their electorates are their staff, so I now take the time to say thank you to Kristy Smith and her husband. He was very patient and helpful during the election period. He welded signs, and put up with her crankiness at times and smiled a lot when she was yelling at me. Bevan, thank you very much for doing that. I also acknowledge another staffer, Ross Verne. I feel like a bit of a dad to him. I educated him a fair bit. He came down to Collie as a new journalist and was with the *Collie Mail* when I offered him a job and showed him the pay rates of a research officer compared with those paid by Rural Press. He could not get in the door quick enough and then wished to Christ that he had not. We shaped him and tidied him up along the way. He learnt very quickly and has become an important member of my staff. At the same time as the election campaign, his now wife was organising their wedding. I think it was lucky that he could stay down our end and did not have to get too involved with that. Just before the wedding, it was finally all dumped on him and he had to get very, very organised. Ross, in between the election and your wedding, you have done a great job and thank you.

I mention a couple of other special groups. I acknowledge the 80 booth workers in my area. The region I have to look after has been extended and the number of towns has increased. I think we had to man 16 booths and every one of them was manned for every hour of the day, so special thanks to the booth workers. Along with that, there was a couple of other what I would call action groups. We did not always agree, but certainly they put Collie at the forefront whether on TV, in newspapers—the whole lot. The women's action group made some very, very good comments about the impact on families who are attacked by companies because they are part of the union movement. The issue is still not resolved with 40 per cent and 50 per cent wage cuts still being offered today. It is disheartening to say the least that small businesses are really suffering because people are not sure of their futures. It has been a protracted dispute over nearly two long years. It was disappointing that a commissioner, who probably could have helped out, resigned halfway through because he found it too hard; he probably ran off to spend his pension. Those sorts of things have not been sorted. If anyone believes Fair Work Australia is fair, they should follow the case of the Griffin Coal workers. The way they have been treated is appalling. I will provide a specific example. If someone has a sickie on a Saturday, they do not get paid, but if they do not put in a sick leave form for that Saturday, they get the sack. Do members think that is fair? I do not think that is fair in any way, shape or form. I am not talking about wages. I am talking about the pressure put on workers to conform and be puppets and not have a view. Many of the women in the action group, whom I will name shortly, were also active on Facebook. Their husbands were threatened with the sack because they were commenting on what was happening in the community and the effects the changes were having in the community.

Collie has long prided itself on being not only a union town but also a fair town. It has gone 20-odd years without a strike. In 20 years, in what we call a very hard union area, there have not been any strikes because they negotiate before it gets to that the point. That is now all gone. As soon as overseas companies were involved and people were flown in from around not only Australia but the world, the attitude to the workforce has been absolutely disgraceful. People in this house have had a go about the union connection to politicians on this side. I did not see the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia or any of those groups supporting the workers. Not once did I see that—not at all. I was disgusted to see the CCI's booklet about drug testing. Did that booklet have any recommendations for rehab? No; it stated that workers who tested positive should be sacked and got rid of. The CCI does not worry about the individual or their family; it wants to get them off the books so companies are not liable. I have had a go at the CCI about that. It was going to come back with some other program. It did not. It went to ground. That is disgusting behaviour from what I will call the boss's lead group. It shows us why we must have people with a union background in Parliament.

I pride myself on my background and its very strong union influence; I have worked with my hands, including 12 and a half years underground, while some members on the other side would not know what a shovel is. I stand here with great pride and say thank you to the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, the Collie mineworkers, the Electrical Trades Union, the Australian Services Union and a couple of other smaller unions that offered support and told me to stand up and be counted. I intend to do that inside this government. The change is already evident, with discussion being held on this side. It is not always pretty and it is not always kept internal, but we will have that discussion. We will not impose on workers straight down the line, like Liberal governments have done previously, and reject the rights of workers. We have only to look at the federal government to see that.

I go back to the women's action group, which is composed of Jane Beauglehole, Leonie Scoffern, Rhoda Roberts and Carys Golding, and which puts the real side of what happens in families. Sometimes that has been dismissed, but it was great that this time the press picked up the issue of what happens in families. What happens when kids say, "Does dad have a job?" I just cannot fathom some of the actions that have been taken down at the coalfields.

I also make it very, very clear that although we talk about the miners as a group, there are 3 000 direct jobs on what people in the south west call the hill, which extends from Worsley to the Collie A power station. That is half a power station, as the former Premier knows. He built half a power station. He pulled the other half off. We have Collie A, Bluewaters Power, Muja and Worsley power stations, and two coal mines. The impact of those 3 000 jobs extends beyond Collie. A lot of people tend to think it impacts only Collie, but problems are also felt in Don Punch's electorate of Bunbury and in the Harvey area. Most of the contractors come from the coastal strip and live in Bunbury, Eaton, Australind, Harvey and those areas and travel on a daily basis. For anyone who wants to get up early enough and go on the Coalfields Highway at six o'clock in the morning, the traffic is not much different from what it is in Perth.

Mr C.J. Barnett: A lot safer than it was though.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The former Premier pushed them all down the hill and got rid of them. He should hang his head in shame.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You didn't do a thing in the Coalfields Highway. We basically rebuilt it.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Let us have a go. This is why the former Premier's government got into trouble. It is still being built. It started five years ago and it is still being built. That shows us where the member for Cottesloe has been; it has not been the south west. The member for Cottesloe should not worry about what he has done and has not done. It is like everything else. It is like a dunny with a door still swinging, as I have said to members before. Everything is half done.

The member for Cottesloe ought to be very careful when he gets onto that ground because we know what he did to the 600-megawatt power station that was supposed to be built when he became Premier. I will move on because I do not have a great deal of time. We can see the result of the Liberal and National Parties choosing not to appoint a minister from this seat at any time despite the number of times that it has been in government. It is with great pride that after 103 years, I am the first minister in the seat of Collie-Preston. I take that very seriously. I will name the main towns in my electorate, otherwise I will get into trouble—Collie, Donnybrook, Balingup, Kirup, Dardanup, Boyanup, Mullalyup—the Leader of the House knows very well that Mullalyup has the best peaches and apricots in Australia; they were that good that he even bottled some—Burekup, Capel, Australind and Allanson. Each village has a different want and many of the newer members in Parliament should take notice of that. Each suburb has a different want. We treat each and every one of the people in those towns as individuals, rather than lumping them in together and saying that one size fits all—it does not. The wants of each of those groups in those towns—they are growing—need to be accommodated, whether they be sporting facilities, job creation, residential areas, light industrial areas or heavy industrial areas. It does not matter; they have to be treated as individuals. This is something that the other side of politics forgot, and that is why there was a rout in the last election. I am not sure that "rout" is the right word, but six months out from the election I was very concerned and considering my future. The boundary changes had put me once again back behind the starting block, at minus three. I was thinking that the then Premier might take that up to plus five per cent. Was I surprised at a 17 per cent swing? Yes, I was, but it just shows how on the nose the previous government was.

I must relate a story that I have told many times to my colleagues. I was doorknocking in Donnybrook, and a very sprightly 80-year-old lady came out and said, "Mr Murray, you'll be pleased to hear what I've got to say. It's the first time ever I'm going to back the red side." At 80 years of age, she changed her vote. I asked why she would change her vote at this time of her life. She said, "That Premier has gone and done a deal with Pauline Hanson. I cannot stand her politics. It's only grandstanding and trying to gather a few votes." Doing a deal with Pauline Hanson was one of the biggest mistakes the Liberal Party made, because it gave people an excuse not to vote for it. Solid Liberal people walked away because the previous government got into bed with dirty politics. I make no apology for saying that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You can have a go at me but —

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will have a go all right. I have never backed off, and the member for Cottesloe has never frightened me. With all the star jumps and things that he has done over the years, all he has done is make me laugh, because he has put me in the position in which I am today. If it were not for the former Premier, I would not be here, so thank you very much.

Let us have a look at this house. We still have the remnants of Pauline Hanson on the other side, with the shadow Treasurer saying that we should not allocate more education assistants to schools to help the students who most need help. That is what he said, and it is along the lines of Pauline Hanson saying that autistic kids should not be

in mainstream schools. That is the same as the shadow Treasurer saying that kids should not get support in the classroom. What a disgrace that is! What a disgraceful Liberal Party we have!

Mr C.J. Barnett: You ignored the inclusion of children with disabilities; we did it in the 1990s.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: What does the shadow Treasurer say now? Did the member not read the *Hansard*. Did he not listen, or was he just out there counting his pension? I am not sure what he was doing. I can tell him what the shadow Treasurer said, because I went back and had a look in *Hansard*. It was a damned disgrace, and every person with a child with a disability or learning problem should never forget what the shadow Treasurer said. Pauline Hanson in disguise—that is what he is.

Mr C.J. Barnett: If you did half of what we did —

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Half of what you did! I am not going to send the state broke like you did.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): Member for Cottesloe, I call you to order for the first time. Minister, can you speak through the Chair, please?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will move on and say that on the industrial front in the Collie–Bunbury region, change is afoot, and people recognise that. They recognise that the world is changing. There is recognition of climate change and the different views on how we can go forward with that. I am very proud to say that we are going to manage that, and money has been put aside to manage that. In the future, people will not be frightened about where they are headed. That is where they are at the moment. They are not sure whether they will have a job every Monday. With the position that Lanco is in at the moment worldwide, it could be shut down sooner rather than later. We will manage that change, and we will make sure that people have a say. We will make sure that they are consulted about other industries that can be brought into the region. I am talking about the region because, let us face it, Bunbury has stalled and jobs have been lost at Collie. I walked up Blair Street, which is the main light industrial or shopping area in Bunbury, and I was waved down by four or five business owners, asking what we could do to get people back into the shops in Bunbury. Regional people are not coming in; they are not shopping. The business owners were worried about their future. I can say that we will work through it.

As always, the last people I want to thank are my family. It is always difficult at election time; we are not easy to live with. But we got through, and my wife still lives with me, so I suppose that is a bonus, but I do not know whether it is for her. The last thing I will say is that we have had some very long-serving members, including Arthur Alan Wilson, who served the electorate of Collie for 39 years. I will tell the Premier now that I might try to break his record.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms S.F. McGurk (Minister for Child Protection)**.