

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

*Motion*

Resumed from 24 May on the following motion moved by Hon Sally Talbot —

That the following address be presented to Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson, Companion of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the state of Western Australia and its dependencies in the commonwealth of Australia —

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Members, before I give the call to Hon Tjorn Sibma, I remind the house that this is an inaugural speech and the normal courtesies will apply.

**HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan)** [11.21 am]: Thank you, Mr Deputy President, and may I offer my congratulations on your appointment to that role, and also, through you, my congratulations to Hon Kate Doust on her historic election as President. I also offer my congratulations to all members elected to this place, especially those who, like me, have been elected for the first time. I am humbled to be elected to this chamber, and I thank the people of the North Metropolitan Region for giving me the opportunity to represent them. I pledge not to let them down.

Nothing in my family origins predetermined my presence in this place. At the end of the Second World War, my grandfathers had occasion to express thanks for their personal survival and to embark on separate journeys that would deposit them half a world away on a wharf not far from here. My grandfather William Hay served as a Royal Navy submariner in every operational theatre of that conflict. It was on shore leave in Perth that he met his future wife, Bernice Berry. It was love that eventually brought William to settle in Perth and raise five children, among them my mother, Susan, who is in the gallery here today. Frederik Sibma, my other grandfather, spent the war in Germany as an indentured labourer. He was spared the worst of what happened at home in the Netherlands. My grandmother, Elizabeth, who is still with us today at the age of 93, survived the Nazi occupation, married Frederik, had three children in quick succession, and then moved to Perth. Only in their later years did my grandparents begin to open up about their wartime experiences. This was not unusual for a generation who collectively kept their own counsel and who had, as children of the Great Depression, developed a level of resilience and gratitude that will always keep me humble. What I will say is that each suffered a terrible loss, no less than the loss of their youthful innocence. But they were brave, and they continued to be brave their entire lives.

Australia in the early 1950s beckoned as a place in which enterprising people could easily get work, put the past behind them and forge new and prosperous lives. My father, Sjoerd, who is also here today, came to Australia as a boy with his parents, brother and sister. Legend has it that he spent the majority of that long sea voyage tethered to a railing, or some other fixed object, due to his mother's mortal fear that he and his two siblings would be washed overboard. Providence ensured that the family arrived safely. Frederik's renowned impatience determined that their journey terminated at Fremantle rather than Melbourne as originally planned, and I thank him for his foresight.

I come to this place with the intention to honour their memory. As working-class migrants, I hope they will be proud of their eldest grandson for making it here. My father was, until February this year, an engineer with the Water Corporation for 45 years. He has worked on just about every major initiative and project undertaken by the Water Corporation since the mid-1970s. In his final years at the Water Corporation, he was responsible for commissioning our two water desalination plants. I respect my father's concrete contribution to this state and the depth of his technical knowledge. He was rightly proud of what he did for a living. I still to this day hear an echo of his admonishment, "There's nothing wrong with the water I make, son", whenever I open a bottle of water.

My mother is a woman of many talents. There was not a job she could not do well. For more than 20 years she taught just about every piano student who lived north of Scarborough Beach Road. Coming home from school each day, we were greeted by a wall of sound, as well as a set of precise instructions regarding when and how we were to assemble the dinner that she had prepared earlier in the day. In middle age, mum was finally convinced that she had a good brain and enrolled at university. She is now a clinical psychologist and businesswoman. We are all immensely proud of her achievements and example.

My brother, Kurt, sister, Liesl, and I enjoyed a happy and supportive childhood in Carine. We each attended Carine Primary School and Carine Senior High School, which were then, and remain, excellent schools. My teachers nurtured a love of learning in me from an early age, and I am grateful to them all. At the time my parents bought the land, Carine was still a relatively new subdivision, full of young families aspiring to make their way. The

suburb very quickly became established, benefited from good roads, thriving small businesses and a vibrant community and sporting life, and soon exuded a steady, suburban and mainstream character.

Those qualities continue today in the broad constituency of the North Metropolitan Region. I am here to represent the interests of that mainstream constituency—regular people who want to be given a fair go, have access to reliable services and live their lives without bureaucratic interference. I am here for families who worry about paying the mortgage and keeping food on the table. I am here for young people who are worried about how they will get jobs. I am here to represent the interests of our seniors, who want to feel safe in their homes. I am here to help all my constituents preserve the Western Australian way of life that they love.

Seventy-five years ago this week, Sir Robert Menzies spoke about Australia's forgotten people. They were the honest, hardworking and law-abiding people who were neglected by the powerful political interests of the day. They had no-one in their corner. Menzies changed that. The idea of a "forgotten people" might strike us as anachronistic, but it will be my guide here. I will assess every piece of legislation I see in this place against these simple questions: How will it affect today's forgotten people? How will it benefit families?

The people of the North Metropolitan Region prefer deeds to words. They are practical and decent people who demand that we in this place get on with our jobs so that they may get on with their lives. I therefore come here as a determined pragmatist who will draw on my skills and experience to serve my electorate and this state so that they both might have a bright future.

As a young man with an honours degree in philosophy, upon graduation I was confronted with an unsurprisingly low number of local job prospects. Throughout my studies I was confronted with the same question: how are you going to get a job with a degree like that? It did eventually dawn on me that local employers were not particularly intrigued by my dissertation on comparative models of consciousness, or the fact I had wrestled for 12 months with Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and survived—a tome that was single-handedly responsible for reducing the size of our graduating honours class from nine to just three students.

At the end of my studies, I left Perth for Canberra as part of the Department of Defence's graduate intake. If I had not taken that journey, I very much doubt that I would be here today. At the Department of Defence, I undertook a broad range of demanding roles, including the development of the Timor Leste Defence Force; monitoring the Lincoln Agreement on Peace Security and Development on Bougainville Island; managing Australia's defence cooperation relationship with Malaysia; and participating in the Five Powers Defence Arrangements.

I will speak very briefly of my time on Bougainville Island. Bougainville was, prior to its civil strife, home to a population of the most highly educated and skilled population of the small islands that comprise the South Pacific. In very short order, it disintegrated completely and bore witness to every imaginable war crime. Our job over there was to drive a weapons amnesty between the two ex-combatant groups, which still had every reason to despise and mistrust one another. We found that we had inadvertently slowed down the peace process by negotiating exclusively with the old enemies. Only when we started to speak with the churches, women's groups and other civic associations, did we begin to see progress. There I learned a lesson about negotiation and the importance of broad stakeholder consultation that I will not forget. The uniformed officers and civilian officials I worked alongside at Defence are among the most outstanding colleagues I have had. The example set by then Chiefs of the Defence Force, Sir Peter Cosgrove; Sir Angus Houston; and the Secretary of the Department of Defence, and home-grown Western Australian, Mr Ric Smith, have set for me the benchmark for leadership in any organisation.

My time in Defence coincided with the September 11 attacks, the Bali bombings, and our campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. The threat of terrorism at home and overseas has informed my global outlook and has shaped my view of what constitutes a united and healthy society. The sickening terrorist attack in Manchester just three days ago has, sadly, reinforced my perspective. I am the son of a migrant and my wife is the daughter of migrants, and so I am no opponent of immigration. But I can and will continue to take a deep interest in the success of the national migration program. Everyone in our Western Australian community has a stake in it. To my mind, the successful integration of new arrivals and encouraging their cohesion within the mainstream are the only rightful objectives of immigration policy. Our very welfare depends upon it.

On the evening before the Western Australian Electoral Commission declared that I had been elected as the sixth and final member of the North Metropolitan Region, I learned that I had been appointed as shadow Minister for Community Services; Youth; Seniors and Ageing; Volunteering; Government Accountability; and Veteran Issues—quite a bag. I intend to make a remark about one of those shadow portfolios, veteran issues, not to the exclusion or detriment of any of the others. I would like to work constructively with the minister, whose military service I greatly respect, to ensure that the needs of Western Australia's veterans are at the forefront of our considerations. I am energised to meet the needs of our younger veterans, particularly in the areas of mental health support and employability. In my 40 years, I have worked as a cleaner, market gardener, kitchen hand and

tutor. I have worked in the public service, for a mining company, a family owned property development company, and a university.

I also spent time serving a political apprenticeship. Amanda Vanstone gave me my first job in politics, for which I am ever grateful. Amanda was then, and remains, the definition of political authenticity. She knew her own mind and spoke it often, even at personal cost. She gave me some of the most important political tutelage that I have received: be a straight talker. Working for the member for Cottesloe, Hon Colin Barnett, was a study in contrasts. It was a privilege to work for him. His integrity and political credibility were the reasons the Liberal and National Parties were able to form government in late 2008. He is doubtlessly among the most significant Premiers this state is ever likely to see. The Western Australian Museum will open its doors to the public in 2020. If not for the passion of the previous member for Kalamunda and Minister for Culture and the Arts, Hon John Day, whom I served as chief of staff, the sod-turning ceremony on Monday would not have happened. The Liberal election victory in 2013 secured that project's future. It will be the jewel in the crown in the Perth Cultural Centre precinct, create needed jobs and be a tourism drawcard.

I joined the Liberal Party because I am a conservative. To my mind, conservatism is not an ideology that pursues causes, or seeks the attainment of impractical ideals. My working definition is that conservatives apply commonsense and shared values to preserve a cherished way of life. Conservatism is founded on the collective wisdom of what has been proven to work. It is a guide to ensure that although our circumstances will change, that our values will continue. Conservatism establishes the necessity of personal responsibility and the obligation of individuals to one another, and of individuals to the whole. It demands service beyond self. Foremost, our obligations to love and protect one another are enacted through the family, the most cherished and important social institution we have. If the purpose of my parliamentary service can be reduced to one objective, it is to ensure that future generations of Western Australians and their families inherit a higher standard of living than my generation enjoys.

I am therefore committed to ensuring this state's continued economic development, and especially to the continued delivery of critical infrastructure and jobs in Perth's northern suburbs. My starting premise is that Western Australia's future success is not guaranteed. In spite of our abundant natural resources and skilled workforce, there is always the risk that we will slip into decline. We have no-one to rely upon but ourselves; my hope is that Western Australia's best days are ahead of it, but we will only get there by our own striving.

We are being buffeted by financial, economic, cultural and technological changes. The residential electricity sector is a prime example of where fundamental changes are already taking place. A proliferation of affordable generation and storage technologies has now upended the century-old model of centralised electricity generation, transmission, and distribution. This means that we cannot avoid giving serious consideration to the wisdom of retaining in perpetuity state-owned electricity utilities, the asset values of which will only decline.

I also want to mention of the disruption of technological change and how this bears on the delivery of education in this state. What was once science fiction is now science fact. A proliferation of technologies encompassing artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, 3D printing, and autonomous and integrated systems are changing our lives already. Industries are being broken, made and remade. All I need do is remind people of Uber to give a sense of how rapidly change has occurred. I do not take a position on whether all this change is inherently for good or bad; I suspect it is partly both. What matters is how we respond.

My son, who is only seven months old, will enter a workforce marked by heightened global competition for skills and where human-machine interaction is the norm. A failure to prepare him for that future, and indeed all our children for that future, will be a dereliction of duty. We have an excellent education system in this state, much of it due to the hard work of my colleague Hon Peter Collier. The task remains for us to build on this strong foundation and emphasise the need for comprehensive science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in all our schools. Future generations of school students are going to require a combination of fundamental mathematics and science knowledge, and advanced vocational skills, to thrive in the new world. That means that we will need to do more to encourage students to take hard maths and science subjects in years 11 and 12. To fail in this will be to consign our children to the status of global academic and economic also-rans. We cannot drop the ball on this. If there is but one achievement I wish to make in my time here, it is to ensure that future generations of Western Australian children receive the world's best STEM-oriented education so that they are ready to work in the smart service industries and niche manufacturing sectors that will provide the next tranche of skilled jobs.

The Liberal Party went to the recent election with a \$30 million pledge to replace the old state Quadriplegic Centre in Shenton Park with a new 28-bed facility consistent with modern standards of care for people with spinal injuries, as well as an additional \$13 million to provide for the construction of suitable at-home accommodation for those who wish to maintain their independence. I would like to take this opportunity to urge the government to match that commitment.

My mother's uncle, Paul Berry, was a permanent resident at the old paraplegic–quadriplegic rehabilitation hospital in Shenton Park until he passed away in 2005. In the late summer of 1956, Paul, then aged 27, was felled by the polio epidemic that had gripped Australia. Paul survived, but did so at great personal cost. He forever lost the use of his arms. The muscles in his torso atrophied to the point where he could not breathe unconsciously. Paul slept every night of the next 49 years in an iron lung; without its help he would have suffocated.

I often think about the promise of his youth, which was cut down by a disease that we now have little occasion to remember. He was a gifted athlete, dancer, and competitive sailor. He drove fast cars and had a promising career in the family building business. All of that was taken from him, but he was gifted a strong mind and a sense of humour. Gradually, Paul rebuilt a life for himself, including teaching himself to type and to paint with his toes, and eventually teaching an art history class at tech. He never drew a pension, instead relying on the proceeds of a land sale in which he invested wisely. He also supplemented his income through selling his paintings. He maintained a connected and active life, attending mass and watching West Perth play whenever he could. He was often seen dashing across Selby Street in his motorised wheelchair on the way to the Wembley bottle shop, which was quite a sight, I can tell you! He was dearly loved by his family and he was probably the most remarkable person I have ever met.

I tell this story in part to honour his memory, but also as a warning about the dangerous propaganda of the modern anti-vax movement. Modern communication has brought with it many positives, but pseudoscientific fallacies travel quickly, too. We need to be on guard against that. Parents who do not vaccinate their children are not only putting the health of their children in jeopardy, but also endangering those whose immune systems are still underdeveloped. Reports of the under-vaccination of children, even in the more affluent suburbs of the North Metropolitan Region, are cause for serious alarm and serious action. I therefore very much support the principle of the commonwealth government's "no jab, no play" policy and its implementation in Western Australia. I pledge to work with colleagues in this place and with health professionals in this state to arrest this decline in vaccination rates.

I would like to briefly acknowledge the quiet and groundbreaking research undertaken by our scientists. Perth is home to some truly world-leading researchers and specialists in the field of medical science. We must never take them for granted. Although it may be unfair to single out just one team for their work, it is my opinion that the more people who know about the University of Western Australia bioengineering team responsible for the "microscope in a needle" invention of a few years ago, the better. That invention uses advanced optics to detect previously undetectable pathogens. The capacity to identify and locate minute cancer cells will save lives and reduce the need for follow-up surgery. The potential benefits for women with breast cancer are very promising.

This kind of wonderful work goes on every day in this state. Although it is the disposition of our adversarial system to focus on the problems and shortcomings in public life, I will also use my position here to bring focus to those truly remarkable innovations from which we all will prosper and benefit.

I have a great deal of thanks to give. I thank the men and women of the Western Australian Liberal Party who endorsed my candidature last year. The Liberal Party preselection meeting for the North Metropolitan Region was a large and competitive affair, which attracted a strong field of candidates. To every single one of those people, including my two senior colleagues in this place, Hon Peter Collier and Hon Michael Mischin, and to those colleagues with whom I shared the ticket—Victoria Jackson, Sandra Brewer and Tim Walton—I give my utmost respect and appreciation. The election result belied the pipeline of young talent we have in the Western Australian Liberal Party. My hope is that this generation is given the opportunity to renew and rebuild, and I am sure that it will.

I thank every single member of the Cowan division for their support and robust advice, especially the magnificently blunt Matthew Blampey; the incomparable Colin and Hon Cheryl Edwardes who, I understand, are watching me from Ireland at the moment; Scott Edwardes; Rosemary Edgar; Scott and James Edgar; Hon Ray Halligan, a respected former member of this place, and my campaign chair who also joins us today, old warhorse John Hammond; Gary MacLean; Tess MacLean; Amanda McIlroy; Lisa Brooks; Ryan Blake; Arthur Taylor; and Fran Blampey. I would not be here without you.

Politics is a competitive and ruthless enterprise. The loss of my friends Eleni Evangel and Paul Miles bears out that fact. They are a loss to this Parliament and to their electorates. I thank them both for their friendship and support when they were in the fight of their political lives. It was a pleasure to campaign alongside you. I have also benefited from the support provided by Dr Peter Lilly, Mr Stedman Ellis and Mr Matthew Fahey, who each encouraged me to make a serious political run.

To my ex-colleagues at the University of Western Australia—Professor John Dell, Hon Dr Elizabeth Constable, David Harrison, Mark Stickells and Tim Shanahan—please know that I appreciated your candour and camaraderie over the past three years and that I carry with me here many of the ideas and opportunities we discussed for the advancement of the state's tertiary education sector.

To Jason Marocchi, Richard Wilson, Blair Stratton, Joey Armenti, Rhys Turner, James Larsson, Mike Buba, Simon Ehrenfeld—this will go on!—Aiden Depiazzi, Michael van Maanen, Eacham Curry, Brent Fleton, Daniel White, Caroline Preuss, Stephen Barton, Gin Ang, Andrew Whitehead, Liam Staltari and Anthony Spagnolo: thank you for your advice and support, even when I did not always listen! Thank you also to state director Andrew Cox, and the entire Liberal Party headquarters, for running a campaign in the most trying of circumstances. That took exceptional courage and you were professional throughout.

To my parents, Sue and Sjoerd, my brother, Kurt, and sister, Liesl, and your families: thank you for making me who I am. To the Hay, Jones, Mokdad, Monisse and extended Sibma families, thank you.

Finally, to my wife Tanya: thank you for all that you have given me, especially our beautiful baby son. Your love, advice and support are immeasurably valuable to me, but your constant reminders that there is a big world outside politics and your insistence that I continue to fulfil my domestic duties are precisely the guidance I need most. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** We now return to the Address-in-Reply debate. We have another inaugural speech to listen to so, again, the normal courtesies will, of course, apply.

**HON PIERRE YANG (South Metropolitan)** [11.49 am]: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. Congratulations on your election to this high office, and I would like to also congratulate Hon Kate Doust on her election as the first female President of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia.

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people and pay my respect to elders, both past and present. I would like to begin my first speech with the Lord's Prayer —

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done on earth,  
As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

Madam President, I thank the people of the South Metropolitan Region and WA Labor for their trust and support in electing me as a member of the Legislative Council. As a matter of fact, my presence here today is pretty unlikely. I am only the second Chinese Western Australian, and the third Asian Western Australian to be elected to the Legislative Council of Western Australia in its entire 186 years of history. Hence, it is an extraordinary privilege and honour for me to be able to speak on the floor of this historic chamber.

Madam President, I am a migrant. I was born and spent the first 15 years of my life in China before coming to Australia as an overseas student. Chinese culture goes back 5 000 years; it puts a lot of emphasis on respect for one's ancestors and seniors and on self-restraint, moderation, family and collectivism. I am proud of my Chinese heritage.

My mother and father decided to send me to study in Australia because they heard that Australia was a beautiful country with a very strong and excellent education system. I must thank my mother and father for their foresight. When I came to this great nation in 1998, as a person with a non-English speaking background I never thought that one day I would be elected by the people of Western Australia as a member of the Legislative Council. As it has turned out, Australia is indeed the land of opportunity and the land of the fair go.

Some three years after I came to Australia, on 3 September 2001, I joined the Australian Labor Party because I was attracted to its core values. The Labor Party believes in a fair and compassionate society where a fair day's work will return a fair day's pay and the most vulnerable of our community are supported and protected. The Labor Party believes in giving voice to the voiceless and creating jobs for the jobless, and the Labor Party believes in giving people a fair go.

After completing high school education in Sydney and Perth, in 2002, I went on to study law, political science and philosophy at the University of Western Australia. After my study, I was trained as an articulated clerk by my mentor, Mr Raymond Tan, for about a year. He spent the next few years training me to be a competent legal practitioner. Mr Tan helped me tirelessly and patiently to improve my verbal and written English skills. I owe Mr Raymond

Tan and his wife, Ms Annie Sim, a debt of gratitude. Without their support and training I could not have set up my own practice in 2013 and become self-reliant. During my 10 years in the legal profession I mainly practised family law and frequently dealt with violence restraining order cases. I experienced firsthand how inadequate the system can be when it comes to protecting the most vulnerable. In one extreme case the former partner of a woman breached the VRO protecting her more than 200 times. She was genuinely fearful for herself and her children's lives. I believe the system should be more responsive and more efficient in protecting the most vulnerable.

I mentioned previously that Australia is the land of opportunity and the land of the fair go. I was not only accepted to study law and later welcomed into the legal profession, but able to join the Australian Army Reserve as a general service officer. I must admit that at the beginning, it was not easy. During the early part of my training, some doubted how a Chinese immigrant who could not even speak English properly could possibly be of use to the Army. Lieutenant Colonel John Fisher and Sergeant Max Doogood were willing to give me a go at the very critical junctures of my Army Reserve time. I thank them for their trust and faith in me, and I am glad that I did not let them down. I also would like to thank Lieutenant Colonel Mike Stewart, Commander Michael Pounder, Major David Graham, Major Shaun Fenn, Major John Liston, Captain Jim Patterson, Captain Brenton Just, Captain Jo Harper, Captain Demelza Newlove, Captain Charlotte Woollard, Lieutenant Matthew Papalia, Warrant Officer second class Callan Ford, Sergeant Matt Erkens, Sergeant Marc Drew and Sergeant Peter Darch and many others for their friendship and support during my Army Reserve years.

I served in the Australian Army Reserve for more than 10 years. The Australian Army is one of the most egalitarian and multicultural institutions I have ever been involved in since my arrival in Australia. The Army's four core values—courage, initiative, teamwork and respect—are instilled in me. The Army has changed me forever. It trained me to be a leader, to be a more resilient and a more resourceful person and, in the end, a better person. I am very glad that I have served Australia and my fellow Australians on Operation Southern Indian Ocean and contributed to the effort for the search of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370.

I would like to thank the good people of the City of Gosnells. I began living in Langford in 2005. We are blessed with many good neighbours. We experienced firsthand that the people of the City of Gosnells are happily living together in a multicultural community. The annual Multicultural Food Fair in Langford, which is organised by the City of Gosnells, is attended by thousands of people, and more and more attend each year. After living in the City of Gosnells for eight years, in 2013 I decided to put up my hand to serve my local community as a councillor. Of the 25 candidates in that election, I was elected with the third highest number of votes. I thank the 5 358 people who put their trust in me. That number never escapes my mind. With their support, I became the first East Asian-born councillor for the City of Gosnells. I believe that result is a testament of the people's support for multiculturalism. I would like to acknowledge Councillor Olwen Searle, the Mayor of the City of Gosnells, and former Councillor Ron Hoffman for their friendship and mentoring during my time as a councillor.

I would like to thank the WA Chinese community. In particular, I would like to thank Dr Edward Zhang, JP. I met Dr Zhang shortly after I arrived in Perth. He advised me, encouraged me and supported me on my journey to become a parliamentarian. Dr Zhang is like an uncle to me, and I am privileged to have known Dr Zhang. I would like to thank also the following people from the Chinese community for their encouragement and support: Ah Hong Lai, Eddie Kwah, Fei Zhi, Xu Yi, Wang Xiaoxiang, Lin Xiang Pei, Ben Pan, Huang Fengzhuo, Tom Wang, Fang Yun, Kevin Zhang, Tim Song, Leon Zhu, John Hong, Bruce Sun, Mark Sun, Yang Qun, Lv Liang, Yuan Jianwen, Zhang Ting, Simon Yan, Lin Zi, Qian Guiyuan, Zhou Wei, Peter Zhao, Herbert He, Wu Ming, Sophia Tang, Ding Shaoping, Chen Ting, Su Li, Sun Xiaoxing, Yolanda Wang, Yuan Haobo, Chen Jie, Fan Linqun and many friends of mine in the Chinese community.

The Chinese community has existed in Western Australia since the early 1800s. In the nineteenth century, there were two waves of Chinese immigration to this great state. The first wave of Chinese immigration was mainly indentured coolies, which literally translates as hard labourers, who were organised by the colonial government in the 1840s and 1850s. The second wave of immigration happened in the 1880s and those Chinese were mainly free settlers who set up small businesses such as market gardens, Asian grocery stores and laundries. At its peak in the nineteenth century, Chinese were the second largest non-Indigenous group in Australia, but the overall proportion of Chinese in the total population barely passed three percent.

In the second half of the nineteenth century community support for Chinese migration, which was originally built around economic reasons, gradually lost momentum. Many pieces of legislation were passed by this very Parliament with the aim to limit, among other ethnic groups, Chinese migration. For example, the Act to Regulate and Restrict Chinese Immigration 1886 imposed a limit on how many Chinese a ship could carry into Western Australia and how much poll tax Chinese had to pay before entering; the Goldfields Act 1886 excluded Chinese from obtaining any licence to operate on any goldfield; and the Chinese Immigration Restriction Act 1889 required all Chinese and only Chinese who intended to enter WA to obtain a permit beforehand. Legislation that did not specifically refer to Chinese people was also used to disadvantage the Chinese in practice. Such legislation included the Sharks Bay Pearl Shell Fishery Act 1886 and the Immigration Restriction Act 1897. At Federation, these sentiments culminated in the commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act 1901, which was one of the first

pieces of legislation passed by the new federal Parliament. This act marked the beginning of the White Australia policy. In the following decades, Australia gradually moved on from the White Australia policy and eventually abolished it. Multiculturalism was adopted as its official policy in the 1970s. Forty years on, Australia is the most successful multicultural nation in the world.

I believe that mutual respect is one of the fundamental pillars of multiculturalism. It is human nature to be fearful of the unfamiliar and the unknown. But instead of being fearful and resentful towards unknown and unfamiliar cultures, Australians have shown great warmth and respect to all newcomers. Australia and Australians have done so much more than merely tolerating immigrants. In my humble opinion, tolerance is not the right word to describe the relationship between communities and cultures. Immigrants are not only tolerated; we are embraced and accepted as equals by our fellow Australians. In comparison with the Chinese Western Australians who lived here a century ago, I am lucky to live in a modern Australia that is inclusive, harmonious, generous, respectful and multicultural. This is to the credit of my fellow Australians and I am proud to say that I am an Australian too. Multiculturalism is the right way for us to move forward as a nation, a state and as a people. Our Lord has created us in his image. We are of many diverse ethnicities and it is his wish that we look the way we look. We should follow his teaching to love and care for one another, irrespective of the way we look or the colour of our skin. Like Dr Martin Luther King Jr, I also have a dream. I dream that when my two young children and all children of today grow up, they can live in an even fairer and more respectful society where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, or their ethnicity, but by the content of their character and deeds. I will do all I can to strive to achieve that dream.

Talking about multiculturalism, no party supports multiculturalism more than the modern Australian Labor Party. I have the greatest admiration and deepest respect for Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, who were instrumental in the establishment of multiculturalism in Australia. The Labor Party advocates for the dreams and aspirations of everyday Australians, including new Australians. The Labor Party believes that all Australians deserve a decent life, and its deep support for social equality originated from the labour movement and was later heavily influenced by the traditions of Catholicism. While on this topic, I would like to thank Father Timothy Corcoran, the priest at Thornlie Sacred Heart Catholic Church, who brought me to the Catholic faith many years ago. The more I learn about Catholicism, the more I realise the similarities between the Labor Party's values and the Catholic traditions. I am proud to be Labor and I am proud to be Catholic.

I would also like to especially acknowledge Carolyn Smith, the secretary of United Voice. Carolyn is a great friend and has been a great inspiration since we met many years ago. She is a person of great integrity and talent and I thank her for her unwavering support for multiculturalism and diversity in politics.

I also would like to thank Mark McGowan, Sue Ellery, Roger Cook, Alannah MacTiernan, Steve McCartney, Christy Cain, Simon Mead, Chris Tallentire, Amber-Jade Sanderson, Terry Healy, Mark Reed, Sheila McHale, Yvonne and Ray Omacini, Jack and Mary de Groot, Brian and the late Agnes Wright, Emma Roebuck, Sarah Seymour and many, many others for their friendship, help and guidance over the years.

I would also like to thank those who have helped me during my campaign: Patrick Gorman, Lenda Oshalem, Caitlin Goddard, Sarah Keegan, Alysha Anderson, Matt Kavanagh, Kay Hallahan, Marion Boswell, Yew Han Hee, Judy Zhu, Simon Wu, Bruce Zhang, Mickey Sun, Chris Chen, Liang Xiao, Kevin de Souza, Wang Jia, Tom Beyer, Kevin Drake and the hundreds of people who supported me and volunteered their time during the campaign. Without the help and support of those I have mentioned, I would not be standing here today.

Australia is known as the Lucky Country and many of us are doing very well in this free country. Yet, some are doing it very tough. More and more Australians have become homeless and it is estimated that over 105 000 Australians are homeless on any given night. This is a real human tragedy, especially so because Australia is one of the richest countries in the world. I am passionate about fairness and social justice and I am proud of the Labor Party's achievements and history on these issues. One of the first things I did after knowing that I was elected as a member of the Legislative Council was register for the St Vincent de Paul Society's 2017 CEO Sleepout. I have donated to Sleepout for many years but I hope by participating in this year's CEO Sleepout, I can help to raise more awareness about this very sad social issue and to make a small contribution. We, as a nation, will be judged by the history of how we treat the most vulnerable among us, and we parliamentarians are duty-bound to do more.

All people are created equal. I am especially proud that Mr Mark McGowan and WA Labor promised to expunge historical convictions for LGBTI people convicted of crimes that would not be illegal today. Now Labor has been elected and Mr McGowan is our new Premier, I look forward to being a part of the legislative process which will carry through that commitment.

If all people were created equal, it should be self-evident that in a modern democracy all votes should be given the same weight when voters are selecting their representatives. However, a non-metropolitan vote for the Legislative Council at the 2017 state election was weighted, on average, at three times that of a metropolitan vote, and some non-metropolitan votes are worth almost six times. Hon Dr Geoff Gallop, AC, once said —

It does not make sense either logically or ethically to establish the right of a person to vote and then diminish the value of that vote in relation to the votes cast by others.

Hence if you believe that all people are created equal, you have to believe it all the time. Electoral reform about the method used to elect members of the Legislative Council is needed in order to achieve that equality.

Having lived in China for the first 15 years of my life and then in Australia, I hope I can put my experience in both cultures to good use and help to foster, in addition to the strong trade relationship, a better people-to-people and culture-to-culture relationship between Western Australia and the greater Asian region.

Last, but not least, I would like to acknowledge my beloved wife. Although having little interest in politics, Hazel has always been willing to help the Labor Party and me. She started letterbox drops and volunteering her time for the party soon after we began our relationship some 13 years ago. She even stepped up to be a booth captain on 11 March 2017. It is not easy for my wife to look after our two boys—Pierre Jr, who is five years old, and Malcolm, who is two years old, by herself, as I was often absent from home. The good thing is we now have two extra volunteers who have already started letterbox drops for the party! I feel so privileged that I have always had Hazel's fullest support in whatever I have pursued and I will strive to earn her continued support and trust. I also would like to thank my extended family for their help and support, especially my parents-in-law, my mum, my cousin Nick and his wife, Joyce.

Madam President, Confucius once said (correction: it was said by Lao Tzu) —

千里之行，始于足下

That means: a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. I am ready to serve the people of Western Australia and the journey begins now.

[Applause.]

**HON ADELE FARINA (South West)** [12.14 pm]: Unfortunately I am not feeling the best today, so I may actually seek leave to continue my remarks at a later time.

I rise to give my Address-in-Reply contribution in response to the Governor's address at the official opening of Parliament. I want to put on the record my appreciation of the efforts of Her Excellency the Governor. She has been doing an extraordinary job serving the people of Western Australia. Her efforts in regional Western Australia are greatly appreciated.

To those members who left us last week, friendship and respect developed across the chamber regardless of our political differences. They made a significant contribution to the state and will be missed in this chamber. I wish them the very best for their future endeavours and I thank them all for the great relationships we developed over the time that they were here.

To the new members, I warmly welcome you to the chamber. Your inaugural speeches have provided an insight into your values and what drove you to take on what is often a very difficult job in representing the people of Western Australia. A number of inaugural speeches were very moving and I think touched a lot of us in this place. I look forward to getting to know you better and to working with you in the advancement of our great state.

I take this opportunity to apologise to Hon Steve Thomas. I will be away on urgent parliamentary business when he gives his inaugural speech later today. I will be in our electorate serving our constituents, but I would like to congratulate him on his re-election to the Parliament of Western Australia and, on this occasion, to the house of review. I wish him all the best and look forward to working with him to serve our constituents in the South West Region. I promise to read Hon Steve Thomas's speech with keen interest later, when it becomes available in *Hansard*.

I join with my colleagues on the government benches in congratulating Hon Mark McGowan and the Labor team on its stunning and convincing victory at the election. It is not my intention to lecture the Liberals on the reasons it lost the election but, rather, to reinforce in my colleagues that having won the election, we must not stop listening to the voters who put us on the government benches. The consequence of doing so is a return to the opposition benches. We must always listen to the voters even when it is not convenient to do so and we must listen to all members on the backbench regardless of whether they are Legislative Assembly members or Legislative Council members. We all represent the people of Western Australia and bring something to the table. I am confident that the McGowan Labor government will heed the lesson of the last election and will continue to listen to the voters of Western Australia.

I would like to thank the voters of the South West Region for their faith in me to continue to represent them in this place. I am genuinely humbled by their support and assure them that I will continue to represent them to the best of my abilities. As a member of the government, I hope to be in a better position to address the needs of the South West Region. I assure the voters of the South West Region that I will be as diligent in advocating for the needs of the region in government as I was in opposition. I will be diligent in calling the government to task if the needs of the south west are being ignored. I am confident, however, that this will not be the case. I welcome



Hon Mark McGowan's acknowledgement during the election campaign that the South West Region did not get its fair share of royalties for regions funding under the former Liberal–National government and look forward to redressing this throughout the region.

Having been asked to relocate my office into the seat of Bunbury and having worked the seat over the last eight and a half years effectively as a lower house member to best position Labor to win the seat of Bunbury, no-one is happier than I am with the resounding swing to Labor obtained in the seat of Bunbury. I congratulate Don Punch on his win. I welcome him to the team and look forward to working with Don to ensure that the seat remains a Labor seat well into the future. Don's knowledge and experience make him a valued addition to the team.

I would also like to acknowledge Robyn Clarke's stunning win in the seat of Murray–Wellington. As a non-target seat, Robyn did not receive the additional resources put into winning the seat of Bunbury. Although her margin may be smaller than was achieved in the seat of Bunbury, in many ways Robyn's win was all the more stunning. It was a grassroots campaign, fought on a shoestring. I congratulate and warmly welcome Robyn to the south west team, and I look forward to working with her. I also congratulate Peter Watson, Mick Murray and David Templeman on their re-election. They are hardworking local members, and this is reflected in their wins at the last election.

I was pleased to see Labor's plan for Bunbury incorporate many of the issues I have been fighting for on behalf of the people of Bunbury over the last eight and a half years. It has been a long wait for the people of Bunbury to get a commitment on these issues. I first raised the need for additional beds at Bunbury Hospital in 2009 on learning that the average occupancy rate was higher than was considered ideal, that people were being discharged from the hospital earlier than would otherwise be the case to free up beds and that adults were being put in the children's ward, and vice versa, when no appropriate beds were available, and maternity patients were being put in the general ward when there were no beds in the maternity ward. The government denied this was a problem and resisted calls for additional beds to be made available, yet the incidents continued to occur. Some said that the pressure on Bunbury Hospital would ease with the opening of the new Busselton Health Campus, but that was not case. Almost every week I hear a story of a local resident attending at Busselton emergency, only to be told that they need to go to Bunbury Hospital, or of a local resident needing surgery and being told that the surgery must be performed at Bunbury Hospital as it cannot be performed at Busselton hospital.

The problem of a lack of beds at Bunbury Hospital has persisted since I first raised it in 2009, yet the former Liberal–National government refused to fund much-needed additional beds at Bunbury Hospital. In stark contrast, Labor has committed to fund an increase in the bed capacity at Bunbury to 200. The previous government did nothing to fill the vacancy left in Busselton when its resident surgical doctor retired, resulting in residents having to travel to Bunbury for surgeries previously performed at Busselton hospital. If we do not act to fill this position, I expect a 200-bed capacity at Bunbury Hospital will not be sufficient to meet the growing demand. It makes little sense to build a new hospital in Busselton, only to have many Busselton residents having to travel to Bunbury for their surgeries. This is an issue that we will need to address now that we are in government.

The former Liberal–National government promised to build a step up, step down mental health facility in Bunbury at the 2013 election, yet never delivered on its commitment. For four years I regularly held the government to account on its failure to honour its election commitment. Towards the end of the four years the ministers had spun so many mistruths about the implementation of this election commitment that they got themselves caught up and caught out in the tangled web that they had woven. Over those four years, people who needed this service were not able to access it. I was pleased to see Labor commit to delivering this much-needed facility during this term of government.

Perhaps my biggest fight over the last eight and a half years was for a residential rehabilitation facility in the South West Region. I first called for such a facility in 2009, when it became clear to me that we had a great need for a residential rehabilitation facility in the region. The then Minister for Health said that I did not know what I was talking about and that there was insufficient demand for such a facility in the region—views echoed by the Minister for Mental Health. However, it was not long before the South West Community Drug and Alcohol Service and others working in the field joined the call for a residential rehabilitation facility, citing the difficulty of getting people into the few places available in the metropolitan area, the long wait times, and the additional burden on patients of having to relocate to Perth for treatment. Nevertheless, the former government continued to deny that such a facility was needed. Despite the repeated calls for a residential rehabilitation facility in the region and the growing evidence of a deepening drug and alcohol use problem in the region, with methamphetamine tearing many families apart, the former Liberal–National government remained in denial, saying there was insufficient demand for a residential rehabilitation facility in the region.

Finally, in 2015, the former government released "The Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015–2025", and with it came the first public acknowledgment by the former Liberal–National government of the need for a residential rehabilitation facility in the South West Region. The plan committed the

government to commence the development and implementation of the 36-bed residential treatment and rehabilitation service in the region by the end of 2017. However, with no funding commitment, and comments from the former Minister for Health in 2016 pulling back from this commitment, it was clear that the Liberal–National government had no plan to deliver within the stated time frame, if at all.

In the run-up to the state election I provided the then shadow Minister for Mental Health, Hon Stephen Dawson, a list of needs for my region within his portfolio responsibilities. I told him that if he could deliver on only one of these requests, the residential rehabilitation facility was the priority project. He did not need convincing. Hon Stephen Dawson understood that a residential rehabilitation facility was needed in the region, and as shadow minister he played a key role in ensuring the project became a Labor election commitment at the last state election. I want to put on the record my sincere thanks, and that of my constituents, to Hon Stephen Dawson for his strong support in delivering this election commitment. We are sincerely grateful.

From my first meeting with the dynamic trio and driving force behind Doors Wide Open, I was committed to helping them achieve their objective of opening a meth crisis support centre in Bunbury. Mothers Lina and Julie were living the experience of parents with children with a methamphetamine addiction. Lina’s daughter, Courtney, had to see her brother, Taylor, at death’s door due to his meth addiction. With two young children, she is as determined as her mother to ensure that Taylor has the support that he needs to stay clean. They volunteer their support to other local families dealing with the impacts of a loved one with a meth addiction. However, demand for their support quickly grew beyond a volunteer capacity and they needed funding to open a crisis support centre in Bunbury. From our first meeting I knew these women had what it took to make this a reality; they just needed a little support and I was happy to provide it. Among a number of others, I set up introductions with the South West Development Commission for support and assistance with the preparation of a business plan, and with the south west police district superintendent. Despite preparing a detailed business case as requested, the group was let down terribly by the Liberal–National government in its request for funding. I arranged an introduction of the group to Don Punch, who quickly lent his support to its cause. The result of our efforts was a \$100 000 funding commitment by Labor towards realising its business plan. Although it was not the full amount that it needed, it enabled it to get started. I am hopeful, now we are in government, that the funds may be found to provide Doors Wide Open with the balance of funding it needs to realise its plan to open a kitchen and become self-funded down the track. There is a strong demand in Bunbury for the services provided by Doors Wide Open, and it would be disappointing if the service could not be sustained because insufficient funding was made available to the group to establish the kitchen and become self-sufficient.

Members will be aware of my strong advocacy on behalf of St John Ambulance paramedics and volunteers against the toxic and bullying nature and culture within St John, and my concern about the high number of suicides of St John Ambulance paramedics and volunteers over a short period of time. I experienced some of that bullying culture firsthand when I went public on this issue and St John senior management tried to silence me and publicly said that I did not know what I was talking about and that the claims I was making were baseless. After much pressure, St John Ambulance agreed to establish an inquiry. I thank the media for their role in exposing what was happening within St John Ambulance, and the brave paramedics and volunteers who spoke out at the risk of losing their jobs, and the families of those people for speaking out as well. The independent oversight panel found that the St John Ambulance workplace was toxic and had a culture of bullying, and made numerous recommendations, including the establishment of an independent body to oversight the implementation of the panel’s recommendations. St John Ambulance responded by saying that its board would oversight the implementation of the recommendations—a wholly inadequate and unacceptable response. After much pressure, the former Liberal–National government, in an equally inadequate and unacceptable response, said that the WA Ambulance Standing Committee would oversight the implementation of the panel’s recommendations.

I am sure members will be as concerned as I am to learn that I continue to receive calls from paramedics and volunteers saying that little has improved since the panel’s report. I want to take this opportunity to reassure St John Ambulance paramedics and volunteers that they have not been forgotten and that I will continue to champion their cause until there is real change and improvement. To this end I have written to the new Minister for Health asking for a briefing on the status of the implementation of the panel’s recommendations, and I stand ready to take up the fight again if real progress has not been made. I will continue to monitor the implementation of those recommendations.

I also called for a public and transparent review of the country ambulance service. The need for such a review was first identified in 2009 in the report of the inquiry into St John Ambulance, and in 2013 in the Auditor General’s report “Delivering Western Australia’s Ambulance Services”. The independent oversight panel also recommended a review of the country ambulance service. After a barrage of questions from me, both on notice and without notice, the former government relented by consenting to the development of a country ambulance strategy. This wholly internal and secret process was also an inadequate response by the former government.

In stark contrast, the McGowan Labor government has committed to a public and transparent review of the country ambulance service. I have written to the Minister for Health asking for a status update on the development of the country ambulance strategy that was promised by the former government and the establishment of a public and transparent review of the country ambulance service. In view of my knowledge of the issues with the country ambulance service and strong advocacy role in securing this review commitment, I hope to play an active role in the review; if not, I undertake to closely scrutinise the review outcomes and speak out if the review fails to meet expectations. I want to reassure St John Ambulance paramedics and volunteers that I will continue to be a strong advocate on their behalf in government, as I was in opposition. They provide a critical lifesaving service in our community, and we need to ensure that stark improvements are made in their workplace.

After the significant funding investment by the Gallop and Carpenter governments in improving road infrastructure in and to Bunbury with the construction of the Perth–Bunbury highway, the port road and one stage of the Bunbury outer ring-road, progress on completion of the Bunbury outer ring-road stalled under the former Liberal–National government. Labor’s commitment during the election campaign to progress the completion of the Bunbury outer ring-road has been warmly welcomed by the Bunbury community.

My strong support for a Perth–Bunbury fast train is detailed clearly on the public record, including in my inaugural speech. Former Premier Alan Carpenter shared that vision when he committed during the 2008 election campaign to a feasibility study for a fast train and ensured that allowance was made in the Perth–Bunbury highway road reserve for a rail line. The feasibility study and planning stalled under the former Liberal–National government. However, I am pleased that intense lobbying by me has seen land set aside for a future train station at Koombana North, which is probably the closest point to the CBD for a station without the need to incur massive land resumption costs.

The rapid population growth in the greater Bunbury area makes a strong argument for the need to invest in a fast train now to guide the resulting development driven by the rapid population growth. However, the dire state of the state’s finances, the need to address the congestion issues in the metropolitan area and the lack of advancement with the planning work under the former government means this is not possible. Labor has nevertheless committed to improving the *Australind* service as an interim measure and to progress planning for a fast train. Whenever the people of Bunbury are surveyed, they list a Perth–Bunbury fast train as their key project. I therefore put this government, and future governments, on notice that this project is not going to go away and cannot be deferred indefinitely. The benefits of a fast train from Perth to the greater Bunbury area and the South West Region cannot be overstated. I am confident that, once built, a Perth–Bunbury fast train will enjoy high patronage numbers, as are being experienced with the Perth–Mandurah train. I give my commitment to the people of Bunbury and the South West Region that I will continue to keep working towards a Perth–Bunbury fast train, noting that, all things being equal, it is now a medium to longer term project.

Having been approached by the Withers Action Group in about 2011, I have been actively championing the cause of urban renewal for Withers. In 2011, through my work with the Withers Action Group, I led a delegation of the shadow cabinet, under the leadership of the then Leader of the Opposition, Hon Eric Ripper, MLA, on a visit through Withers so that they could see first-hand the issues of concern to Withers residents and hear from community representatives. The group secured a small funding commitment from the City of Bunbury, and through my introduction of the group to the South West Development Commission and our lobbying efforts, \$1.5 million in funding was committed by the South West Development Commission in 2013 to progress the Withers urban renewal. Although there have been a couple of footpaths built, upgrades to a few parks and installation of CCTV cameras, the major urban renewal issues are yet to be addressed. Those issues are the high proportion of public housing tenants, which is higher than the Department of Housing’s stated policy; redesign of the suburb to design-out crime; activation of large tracts of undeveloped land; upgrades to the department’s old housing stock; enforcement of the requirement by the Department of Housing that tenants maintain their properties to an acceptable standard; closure of the remaining laneways that have been identified for closure; and implementation of traffic management measures. The community strongly supports the urban renewal of Withers and is frustrated and disappointed with the lack of progress under the former Liberal–National government. Four years after that \$1.5 million in funding was committed by the South West Development Commission, a little over half of the allocated funds has been spent—approximately \$896 205. The people of Withers deserved better from the former Liberal–National government and they deserve better from the City of Bunbury.

The commitment by the former Liberal–National government of millions of dollars of funding for stages 1 and 2 of the Bunbury waterfront project, when it had failed to progress the Withers urban renewal, was not well received by Withers residents, who again felt that their real needs had been ignored in favour of a more glitzy project. I welcome Labor’s commitment to progress the urban renewal of Withers. However, based on past experience, I am not convinced that involving LandCorp will deliver the outcomes sought by the community. I also caution the government not to follow the most recent City of Bunbury Withers local area plan. The consultants used a divide-and-conquer approach and it appeared that the limited consultation that was undertaken was guided

towards predetermined outcomes. I remain to be convinced that the Withers community has been properly and adequately consulted on the content of that plan, much less supports it. The stakeholders who were consulted and who have spoken to me say that their concerns and comments are not reflected in the final plan and the promised further consultation did not take place. That is not dissimilar to my experience. Urban renewal is never easy, but it is achievable, with very positive results, as is evidenced by the urban renewal projects undertaken in a number of metropolitan suburbs by former Labor governments. However, as with those projects, government investment is required. I look forward to working with Don Punch and the Withers community to deliver urban renewal for Withers of a nature, scale and form supported by the Withers community.

The former Liberal–National government’s massive increase in TAFE fees put study at TAFE out of reach for many in the South West Region, with enrolment numbers decreasing starkly. Significant staff reductions and a reduction in contact hours have impacted significantly on the standard of education and training offered by TAFE. This is an issue on which I have shone the public spotlight throughout the electorate. I welcome Mark McGowan’s announcement to freeze TAFE fees, meaning that the increases projected by the Liberal–National government will now not occur. This is a welcome relief for many in my community. I understand that the dire state of the state’s finances has made it impossible to consider cuts to TAFE fees at this time. However, it is important to note that even though TAFE fees have been frozen, TAFE still remains out of reach for some people in my community.

Over recent years I have highlighted differences between the fees charged for courses at metropolitan TAFEs compared with the same courses at South Regional TAFE. The starkest of these differences was that students at the south west TAFE were being charged \$3 000 more than students at metropolitan TAFEs for the same beautician course. There can be no reasonable justification for this disparity in fees for the same course. I ask the minister to undertake an annual review of fees charged by the various TAFEs for the same course to ensure regional TAFE students are not disadvantaged by higher fees than those paid by metropolitan TAFE students completing the same course. This would go a long way to making the courses more affordable for my constituents.

Labor’s “Plan for Jobs” identified the need to diversify the economy, create jobs, maximise the number of apprentices and trainees employed on government projects and strengthen Buy Local guidelines on the use of local businesses and workers on regional projects, and addressed key concerns held by many of my constituents. It delivered a clear message to voters that Labor had a sound plan to address these concerns.

Labor’s commitment to put education assistants back in the classroom and to invest in our schools was also a vote winner. During the election campaign I was outside a school in Busselton, talking to a group of parents. A mother who was sitting in her car by the side of the road was listening intently. She got out of her car, walked up to me and said, “I’m a mother of two children with learning disabilities. Voting Liberal all my life has got me nothing. My children need the support of education assistants and the Liberals have removed them from the classroom. When I sought assistance from the local member, she did nothing. This election I’m voting Labor.” Those sentiments were echoed by many who have experienced the impact of the removal of education assistants from classrooms.

I want to raise a number of other issues, but with limited time I might need to race through them. I apologise if I do not do them justice. I refer to mental health. Members will be aware that I am a patron of Lamp Inc, a not-for-profit community organisation that provides support services for people with mental health problems. In her inaugural speech, Hon Alison Xamon said most of what needs to be said about mental health and what needs to be done. We are very privileged as a Parliament to have someone with Hon Alison Xamon’s wealth of experience and knowledge in this area. We have an opportunity in this Parliament to take on the matters raised by Hon Alison Xamon and put right all that is wrong in this area—there is much to be done in this area.

I remain unconvinced that the National Disability Insurance Scheme is adequately addressing the needs of people with mental health problems. Mr Bonyhady, the former chair of the National Disability Insurance Agency, noted that people with a psychosocial disability and those in rural and remote areas were among the participants who were not benefiting as much as others. His evaluation report found that funding individualised support services, instead of group-based services, had negatively impacted on the social participation of some NDIS participants who no longer attended programs in which they had previously mixed with a range of people. In addition, he found that the NDIA’s current funding for community inclusion programs was not sufficient. That means that one of the key foundations on which the NDIS is being built is weak. The inconvenient truth is that a significant number of people with mental health problems are deemed ineligible for NDIS funding because they fail to meet the permanent disability requirement. Nevertheless, they have significant mental health problems and require support to live in the community. The supports that they have received have been provided by community not-for-profit groups through block funding provided to those organisations—previously referred to as tier 2 funding.

With the rollout of the NDIS, this block funding is being cut. This means that people with mental health problems needing support to live in the community but deemed ineligible under the NDIS will soon be unable to access the

supports which they have received to date and which they need to manage day-to-day living in the community unless they are able to pay for those services, and most do not have the finances to pay for the services. Hon Alison Xamon addressed this issue in her address, and probably a lot better than I am doing. With no register kept of the people deemed ineligible for the NDIS and no monitoring of these people once their supports have been withdrawn, they face a potentially very bleak future. We need to ensure that measures are put in place to monitor these people and that tier 2 block funding continues to be provided at some level, if not to the full level. If we do not do this, the ramifications will be significant for the people concerned, and the cost to the state and society will be far greater than the cost of continuing this block funding.

I have already seen community not-for-profits in the lower south west cut staff and services because of the reduction in block funding, and I know that they have had to turn away clients deemed ineligible under the NDIS and without the funds to pay for the organisation's services despite having previously provided services to those clients. We need to address this as a matter of urgency if we want people with mental health problems to remain functioning and living in the community. I understand that in the lower south west, the mental health service agencies will no longer perform psychiatric assessments of people with mental health problems for the purpose of their NDIS eligibility assessment. I am told that the cost of a private assessment is about \$2 000. Many people with mental health problems cannot afford this cost and the not-for-profit organisations providing mental health support services are not funded to cover these costs. This is a significant problem. I have written to the Minister for Health; Mental Health seeking confirmation that what has been reported to me is in fact accurate and, in case it is, calling on the minister to reverse the decision. I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage of this day's sitting.

Leave granted.

**HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary)** [12.47 pm]: We are moving around the house, but it is important that we keep this important debate moving along. Before I start, I am not sure whether members are aware, but there is a birthday in the house today. It is Hayley Brown's birthday today. Many happy returns, Hayley. There she is over there. I hope you have a wonderful day.

I remind members that when I spoke yesterday, the focus of my contribution to the address-in-reply debate was the historic occasion that we have before us with not only our first woman President, but the first woman Leader of the House and, indeed, the first woman Governor to read the Governor's speech. I touched on that. I forgot a fourth one, and I must say that the lady's name has escaped me, but last weekend we saw the very first woman to umpire an AFL football match. There has been some fallout, sadly, and it is somewhat embarrassing that it has come from the Agricultural Region; I think that fallout was quite ordinary, but my congratulations to her. I believe her name is Eleni. If I have that wrong, I apologise. That is another groundbreaking role. Might I say that over the course of the year, the male umpires have left a little bit to be desired at times. I wish her well in her career and I will watch with interest as she continues that very important and difficult job of umpiring AFL matches.

When I suspended my remarks last time, I was talking about Labor's fantastic showing in the recent election. The McGowan Labor government was emphatically elected by the people of Western Australia and a collective sigh of relief was breathed around the state as the Barnett Liberal government was defeated and removed from office after eight torturous years in which we saw the state's finances totally trashed. We had the best set of books in Australia in 2008. We had state debt at about \$3.6 billion. We had a AAA credit rating firmly intact. We find ourselves coming into government, after having restored the AAA's credit rating during the Gallop years, having to repeat that task again. It is becoming a bit tiresome, members opposite, when a Labor government has to come in and fix the mess, do its eight years and get the books in order. Then we have a change of government and the finances are trashed again. We are a very long way away from those heady days of a secure AAA credit rating.

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I can barely hear Hon Darren West and he has the call.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Fancy that! Fancy being able to drown out my voice. That is what we have to do sometimes—talk over interjections. I know that from time to time I have been somewhat guilty of throwing in the odd interjection; it is part of the debate. I welcome constructive, well-thought-out and sensible interjections, but not all of them!

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Members! Hon Darren West, please do not invite any interjections when you are on your feet. I suggest you direct your comments to the Chair and not to the other members.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** I shall do just that.

I was talking about how tiresome it is for Labor governments to come into office and have to clean up the mess. The state is a long way from a secure AAA credit rating. We anticipate that our whole first term will be spent on

budget repair and trying to right the ship from the financial and economic mess left to us by the cabinet members and all members of the Barnett Liberal–National government. Blame should be laid equally on both coalition parties. It is not fair to say that our friends in the National Party were lilywhite in their handling of the state's finances, so my comments are not purely directed at the Liberal component of the coalition. The National Party has a lot of questions to answer for the people of Western Australia. Not only are we a government, we are here to manage the state of Western Australia and do the right thing by its people. When the Liberal–National government increased state debt by 10 times over its eight years, it was not doing what is best for the people of Western Australia.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** What's the point of these remarks?

**Hon DARREN WEST:** It is my contribution to the Address-in-Reply. I look forward to the honourable member's contribution.

We have had a thumping win and it is just great. The people of Western Australia think it is great too. Here is a concept, members: the McGowan government has come in to office and it has started to fulfil its commitments. It has been a long time since the state has had a government that fulfilled the commitments it laid out before the election. Earlier in my remarks I referred to commitments such as Geraldton Hospital. I will talk about some of those broken commitments later. It was quite torturous to sit in opposition for four years and see the train wreck of the Western Australian economy appear before our eyes. We are now the worst performing state in Australia. Go figure! We were the powerhouse of the Australian economy. In terms of minerals and gas resources, we were the jewel in the crown—the envy of much of the Western world. We are now performing behind Tasmania. I remember the former Premier Colin Barnett saying that when he got out of that job, he would go down to Tasmania and teach it how to run an economy. I do not think he would be welcome there anymore; Tasmania does not want its economy run like Western Australia's economy has been run for the past eight years. There has been a collective sigh of relief and the Western Australian people have looked to us, the incoming McGowan Labor government, to sort out the mess, straighten up the ship and set sail on a more productive and progressive course over the next four years. It was hard to watch the poor economic management, but we knew that the day of reckoning was coming when someone would stand up and say that some hard decisions had to be made, that the budget needed to be repaired and that we had to put some real pressure on our conservative representatives in Canberra to fix up the unfair GST distribution. I remind members that the GST arrangements were signed in 1999 by then Premier and Treasurer Richard Court against the sage advice—plenty of debates in *Hansard* can be looked up—of the then shadow Treasurer Eric Ripper, who went on to become Western Australia's first standalone Treasurer and finest economic manager. The then Labor opposition could see that it was not a good deal for Western Australia in the long term. It is true that for the first years Western Australia received over 100 cents in the dollar, but everybody could see that as the economy grew and Western Australia's iron ore exports continued to grow, which they inevitably would because we had some of the finest resources and most secure conditions for companies to operate in the world, that our receipts would grow and our GST share would diminish. The Court government signed the deal anyway and now we are left with this mess that needs to be fixed. I hope that our conservative friends in government in Canberra will have some pressure applied to them by Western Australian Liberal members of Parliament. Some of them might be a little bit nervous about the next election. I hope that they take action and correct some of the imbalance.

I will talk about Labor's campaign in the regions. What a campaign it was! The regional people of Western Australia turned to the Labor Party to steer them out of the mire. As a regional MP, it was very humbling for the electorate to give us this mandate. I am not sure whether members opposite are aware, but there are 34 regional seats in the Parliament of Western Australia—18 in this place and 16 in the other place—that are decided at each election. Labor now holds 13 of those 34 seats—more seats than anyone else. The National Party, which contests seats only in the regions, holds nine seats. The Liberal Party holds seven seats. The other parties combined hold five seats. Labor holds 13 seats; that is by far the biggest make-up of regional MPs in one party in the Western Australia Parliament. I do not know whether that has happened for a while. It may have been the case after the 2005 election but it is certainly a first under the one vote, one value system.

**Hon Col Holt:** As a regional MP, do you rule out changes to the way we elect regional representatives?

**The PRESIDENT:** Hon Darren West, before you respond to that interesting interjection, I offer you the opportunity to seek leave to continue your remarks at a later stage of today's sitting.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** I seek leave to continue my remarks at the next sitting of the house.

Leave granted.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Ken Baston**.

[Continued on page 600.]

*Sitting suspended from 12.57 to 2.00 pm*

