



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Mr Yaz Mubarakai, MLA

(Member for Jandakot)

Legislative Assembly

Address-in-Reply

Thursday, 25 May 2017

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 18 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.

INTRODUCTION

MR Y. MUBARAKAI (Jandakot) [2.54 pm]: Mr Speaker, thank you, and please let me congratulate you on your election to the position of Speaker of this house.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Whadjuk Noongar people, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to their elders past, present, and future.

To Mark McGowan, Premier of Western Australia and proud leader of the Western Australian Labor Party, I say thank you and congratulations! It was your clear vision for this state, and your strong leadership and tireless efforts that led to the formation of this new government in emphatic style, and I am honoured to be part of a team that will roll up its sleeves and work to deliver that vision for all Western Australians.

I would also like to acknowledge Hon Sue Ellery as the first female Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, and Hon Kate Doust, who has been elected as the first female President of the Legislative Council. Congratulations. This is a win for diversity and equality!

I look around this chamber today, and I know that I am amongst an unprecedented number of new members, each of whom I would like to congratulate, along with my colleagues who have been returned for another term and are now in government. I am confident that although we begin our parliamentary work together in the midst of challenging economic circumstances, the next four years will set a new course of positivity for the state and people of Western Australia. I would also like to acknowledge the former member for Jandakot, Joe Francis, and wish him and his family the very best.

BACKGROUND

This is a proud and extraordinary occasion. In forty days' time, it will be the twentieth anniversary of my arrival in Western Australia as a migrant from India. I have lived in and around the seat of Jandakot for the past 20 years. I have raised my beautiful family. I have created businesses, made lifelong friends and served in local government. I have been welcomed into the citizenship of this amazing country, and I know how blessed I am to be an Australian. So to stand here today as one of two Indian-born members of an Australian Parliament and dedicate myself to the service of the Jandakot community and the people of Western Australia, it is like a dream.

I come from a farming family in the district of Dahanu, 130 kilometres north of Bombay, on the western Indian coast. My family still farms chikoo, a tropical fruit known here as a sapota or mud apple. Those once successful farms helped support my education in Australia. However, now in India the revenue from farming has fallen sharply. Indeed, my family earns far less now in real terms than it did 40 years ago. My great-grandfather's heart and soul was in growing fruit and vegetables and he won many awards for agriculture from the then British Raj. My family is most proud of the Kaisar-i-Hind, also known as the Emperor of India medal for public service, which was awarded to my great-grandfather for advancement of the public interest in India. My father, Yezdi, who is here today in the public gallery, is wearing that medal. I am proud of you!

An energetic man, my great-grandfather was also the founding member and chairman of the Dahanu Road Janta Co-operative Bank. As there was no electricity in the village at that time, he started a successful movement for establishing a power house. I am glad to say that we do not have these issues in Jandakot! My grandfather was the Deputy Mayor of Dahanu for 16 years. At this time there was no prayer hall to carry out our Zoroastrian customs and rituals. The religion of my family and me is Zoroastrianism. It is an ancient Persian religion. We worship fire and our mantras are very similar in vibrations to that of the Hindu mantras. The people of Dahanu had to undergo great hardships to travel to the nearest prayer hall, so my grandfather and great-grandfather bought a small piece of land and built a fire temple, which still stands and is used to this date. My grandfather was also responsible for establishing the first English secondary school in Dahanu with the help of the Bishop of Bombay and, subsequently, the first college. My father has carried forward the rich cultural legacy and tradition of our family, continuing to manage and develop the farming and other businesses. Along with other farmers, my father, with his sharp business acumen and philanthropic nature, started an auction house where chickoos, brought in by small farmers, are auctioned to the highest bidder. Farmers who previously struggled to make a living due to middlemen are now earning good money for their produce.

As I have said, it will shortly be 20 years since I first arrived in Perth. I remember the day I left Mumbai as a naive and fresh-faced 21-year-old commerce graduate on 4 July 1997 to start the 10-hour journey to my new home. I left a colourful and fast-paced public relations role with the MTV music television station in India. I thought WA would be the perfect place to continue my post-graduate studies. I knew Perth had beautiful beaches and a strong club cricket culture. Being the cricket tragic that I am, I was of course lured by Perth's historic cricket ground, the WACA.

My arrival in the suburb of Leeming and studying my Masters in International Business at Edith Cowan University marked the beginning of the first decade of my life in Australia spent living in the Jandakot electorate. My first job in Perth was as a night shift attendant at a service station in O'Connor. I remember a colleague bought me a fair dinkum book of Aussie slang. The first two phrases I learnt were "ripsnorter" and "Get me a tinnie." Of course, I have learnt a lot more colourful Aussie slang since, but none appropriate for this chamber. I then worked as a food picker at Woolworths and then went on to work at Telstra and Centrelink before I was finally able to realise my dream and buy my first business, the Success Post Office, in 2005. I have been business-minded since I was a child. My grandfather had a dairy farm and I used to take a lot of interest in counting the cows and how many were being milked, and the number of employees. During the school holidays I used to put on magic shows and sell tickets to the parents. We used to pull mangoes from the trees and sell them to the local markets to make some pocket money. I am trying to impart to the members in this house that my life trajectory has followed the common path of the many hundreds of thousands of migrants who have seen the benefits and

opportunities that Australia has to offer. I have seen a lot change in my local community during the past 20 years and it brings me back to the seat of Jandakot. I would like to share with members some of the history of the area, founded by migrants, based on market gardens and food production, which resonates strongly with my migrant history and experience.

ELECTORATE HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

As members would be aware, significant population growth in this state and particularly in the southern corridor of Perth during the past decade has created the need for many redistributions of state electoral boundaries, including mine. A relatively young electorate, the new state seat of Jandakot was created in 2008. Comprising 94 square kilometres, it includes parts of five local government areas—the Cities of Armadale, Canning, Cockburn, Gosnells and Melville. Jandakot’s suburbs include Canning Vale, Forrestdale, Harrisdale, Jandakot, Leeming, Piara Waters and Treeby. According to the iconic local history text *Cockburn* by Michael Berson, Jandakot was settled in the late 1890s off the back of a series of gold rushes to Western Australia. The state’s first Premier, Sir John Forrest, set about creating agricultural areas for the new settlers to farm, and in 1890 a market garden precinct was declared at Jandakot. The challenges those pioneers faced in making a sustainable living working the area’s characteristic heavily leached grey sands is worth mentioning, as those who were successful are credited with establishing the market gardens that provided the main source of nourishment for Perth’s growing population over many years. I admire the optimism, resilience and determination of those early settlers. Those men and women were not afraid to try, fail and try again until they succeeded. They are the character traits that are also commonly found in today’s Jandakot community.

This enterprising attitude is reflected by recent statistics published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which show that business growth is booming in the Forrestdale–Harrisdale–Piara Waters region, with a 57 per cent increase in microbusinesses between 2014 and 2016—the fourth highest growth rate of a region in Australia and the highest in Western Australia. This growth is set to continue throughout the next decade. Further similarities can be drawn between the issues facing the Jandakot communities of then and now. The need for connectivity and access between settler’s farms, and Fremantle and Perth, was the catalyst for the establishment of the Jandakot Roads Board District in 1891. The Roads Board’s first project was building Nicholson Road. By the turn of the century, it became clear to the settlers that in order to make the most of their farmlets, the district would need a railway. A vigorous campaign saw the Fremantle to Jandakot line open in 1906 and extended to Armadale in 1908. The Armadale–Jandakot Railway closed in 1964 and road transport once again influenced development.

TRANSPORT

The challenges of transport and the battle between road and rail continue to be matters of great importance today within the seat of Jandakot and, to a large extent, this was the platform upon which my campaign was based. I am proud to be part of a government that is serious about achieving tangible improvements to transport and reducing congestion in Jandakot, and that has committed to five long-overdue transport projects that will improve travel times and safety. The Thornlie to Cockburn rail extension, with two stations in Canning Vale, will seriously alleviate congestion on Ranford Road. This was the number one complaint I heard from residents whilst I door-knocked and phone-called during my election campaign. The duplication of Armadale Road from Anstey Road to Tapper Road, with provision for future light rail, is another major project that will overcome serious congestion and lead to the creation of 850 jobs. The connection of Murdoch Drive to

Kwinana Freeway and Roe Highway will benefit my constituents with access to Fiona Stanley Hospital and Murdoch Activity Centre, which is expected to be one of the biggest employment centres outside the Perth CBD, accounting for 35 000 future jobs. The \$217 million Armadale Road to North Lake Road bridge, the widening of the notoriously congested Karel Avenue in Leeming and the extra lane north on the Kwinana Freeway from Russell Road to Roe Highway are serious congestion-busting investments that will create thousands of jobs and help traffic flow around the southern suburbs.

The seat of Jandakot is well known for its airport, which has been operating since 1963. Initially established for light plane training, helicopters, charter planes and maintenance, the airport precinct is now a large base for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and has expanded to include a commercial and industrial park occupied by high-calibre tenants.

Population growth in Jandakot has been significant. Today, approximately 28 000 residents call Jandakot home. We enjoy a melding of the old and new. Rural and semirural landholdings have been transformed into the newer greenfields developments in Treeby, Piara Waters and Harrisdale. Treeby, named after the pioneer family headed by Joseph and Emma Treeby, was excised from a former sand quarrying area of Banjup north of Armadale Road. Three of the Treebys' sons and one grandson served in World War I, with one son killed in action. The suburb was named in the family's honour. Calleya Estate is the first stage of a new urban development in Treeby, which will eventually contain approximately 4 000 new residential dwellings, a town centre and two new primary schools. I was privileged to be an east ward councillor for the City of Cockburn that resolved to create this exciting new suburb.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As a former councillor, I cut my political teeth in the local government sector from 2011 to 2015. The experience has allowed me to truly appreciate the hard work and dedication of mayors, councillors and staff. Just last week I was honoured to attend the opening of the \$109 million dollar Cockburn Aquatic and Recreation Centre, which is a shining example of how local government can take the lead in providing an outstanding piece of community infrastructure. I am proud that I was part of the council that initiated this project, especially now that it is open to the public. We expect a million visitors a year. Aside from rates, roads, rubbish, and, of course, vital infrastructure, local government is a significant enabler of the successful operation of local community and sporting groups, and performs vital work in community development. Our resident groups and sporting clubs are the heart, soul and backbone of our community.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

I am extremely proud that the McGowan Labor government also recognises the importance of our grassroots organisations and has committed to investing millions in community infrastructure and projects in each electorate of the state.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: In Jandakot, through WA Labor's Local Projects, Local Jobs initiative, I am working with Leeming Bowls Club, Piara Waters Junior Football Club, Harrisdale Primary School, Chung Wah Chinese School, Armadale Soccer Club, Australia-China Youth Business Foundation, Forrestdale Sporting Association and ARKS Rugby Club to deliver important upgrades. Particular areas of challenge for local government in which I hope to make a difference during my term include rates disparity within growth councils and a lack of youth centre facilities for our younger generation.

MIGRATION

Western Australia is a state of migrants. We are a relatively young and diverse state with a bright future. WA is home to people from more than 190 countries, a fact I am happily reminded of at each citizenship ceremony I attend. Recently, at a City of Armadale ceremony, I watched people from Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the US, China and 78 other countries around the world take the proud pledge to become Australian. I talk to migrants every day. They are optimistic and aspirational and they want to contribute to their communities and to the success of the Australian economy. Members, think back 40 years about the make-up of this Parliament and consider the progress that has been attained for Western Australians in the time since. We are here today as the fortieth Parliament of Western Australia and I want us to take a moment to imagine the next 40 years and what we would like to impact upon in that time.

As parliamentarians we are in the privileged position to be able to make decisions that will influence not just the next four years, but the next 40 years of the state's future. I believe that working toward true multicultural integration is a worthy goal and one I am committed to advocating for. My electorate of Jandakot is punching above its weight when it comes to migrant populations. In Canning Vale, Piara Waters, Forrestdale and Harrisdale, in 2011 the quota of migrants was 50 per cent higher than the state's average with more than 42 per cent born overseas. Other suburbs are not far behind. I want the migrant community to know that with hard work they will get a fair go in Western Australia. As a migrant and a member of Parliament, I want to help multicultural communities understand how to integrate well.

SMALL BUSINESS

Small business represents around 97 per cent of all businesses in Western Australia. This is significant as they are a major source of employment and economic activity in this state. As an experienced small business operator I understand why it is vital to have someone in Parliament who has experienced what it is like to actually be a business owner. There are people in political parties who have come into this chamber saying they know about business and that they represent business, but they have never actually run a business. I want small business owners to have a genuine voice in Parliament. I want them to know that I am here with an understanding of their experiences, their hopes and ambitions, their desire to create something and that I am aware of the risks they take and the obstacles they face.

People often wrongly define what a small business is and how it works. Small business is families; it is mums and dads who take on immense risk in following their lifelong dreams and seeking out financial security for their families' futures, and contributing significantly to the economy at the same time. They are the nervous system of our community. If people speak to politicians about small business and ask them what the pain points and the issues facing small business owners are, some will say penalty rates and restrictive work practices. This is what conservative discourse would have us believe. But I can tell members, honestly, as a small business owner, those two items—penalty rates and restrictive work practices—are well down the list of problems. Cutting penalty rates is not going to make any significant difference to small businesses; yet, this issue is monopolising the entire debate around problems facing this sector. For many small businesses, the husband or the wife themselves or perhaps a team of two staff are the ones working and therefore will simply not be impacted in any meaningful way by penalty rate cuts. Furthermore, often for small business, staff are like family and small business owners understand that penalty rates are a fundamental part of compensating their workers for the time they miss out on spending with their families when they have to work on the weekend. We need to be very

clear in our understanding that the debate around penalty rate cuts has been set up to benefit big businesses with significant numbers of employees, which in reality are the ones that can most afford to pay them.

As small business owners we know what it is like to get hurt in the retail downturn. We can deal with this and remain optimistic. What we cannot deal with are the layers of unnecessary constraints imposed upon small business owners for no tangible benefit. In fact, what we see is the stifling of small businesses from growing, expanding and even just operating day-to-day with bureaucratic red tape from all three tiers of government. I believe a balance must be achieved so that we have an enabling environment within all tiers of government that encourages small business to thrive—not to create death by paperwork, not death by delay, and not death by the imposition of unnecessary and burdensome regulation that small businesses experience on a daily basis. The issues I am talking about today are not new, in fact, they were raised to the previous Liberal–National government, which did very little to help reduce red tape for small business.

Currently, small business is defined differently by regulators in Australia depending on the laws they administer. For example, the Australian Taxation Office defines a small business as one that has an annual revenue turnover of less than \$2 million. The Australian Bureau of Statistics characterises a small business as one that employs fewer than 20 people. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission and Fair Work Australia have different definition again. If four federal agencies cannot agree on the definition of a small business, how can government effectively service the sector? How can small business owners clearly understand which rules and regulations apply to their business? People are confused. This sentiment is supported by Western Australia’s underrated Small Business Development Corporation, which provides crucial services to small businesses throughout Australia and WA. I would like to thank the Small Business Development Corporation for its continuing advocacy and hard work in this long overlooked sector.

At the local government level, different councils have different sets of rules for small business. A food truck owner I know has a business registered with the council in which she lives. Every time she wants to operate her business in another council area she must apply for a temporary food permit and fill out a form to show that her business is compliant with the Food Act and with national food standards. This can take up to three weeks. I have to ask the question: why in 2017 do we have a situation whereby a business owner is providing identical information over and over again to different councils? The same applies for building approvals that differ from one council to another. We could be using available technology to optimise efficiencies by creating a centralised database for this information, which state agencies and local governments can tap into and update. We must remember that small businesses are not big businesses. They simply do not have the resources or time available to deal with many of these issues, and they certainly should not be disadvantaged or penalised because of this. In my time in Parliament, I want to see more centralised, streamlined processes, as well as some consistency in regulation amongst the three tiers of government to make it easier and smoother for small business owners to meet the compliance requirements and to thrive.

Since being elected, I have pulled back from the family business in order to put all my energy into my work as a member of Parliament, and I am pleased to be able to continue following my passion by providing representation and advocacy in this space. I am proud to be part of a Labor government that makes current and future small business a priority. “WA Labor: Plan for Jobs” sets out the strategy to achieve this, and includes initiatives such as enabling small business to compete for government contracts and increasing support to microbusinesses, which make up nearly 87 per cent of WA’s small business sector; removing

inappropriate, excessive and costly regulation; and taking measures across the board to increase levels of local content. I am confident that by implementing Labor's plan for jobs, small businesses will be made a priority and will be supported to grow and prosper.

THANKYOUS

The journey to becoming a member of Parliament cannot be undertaken alone. The outcome of a single election day is the result of many hours, days and years of hard work, assistance and input from friends, family and colleagues. I would like to take some time to show my gratitude to all the people who have helped me along my journey. To my long-time friend and campaign director, the member for Cockburn, Fran Logan, thank you for your friendship, guidance and mentorship. Philip Eva, I have more appreciation than you can imagine for your ongoing support, knowledge and assistance, thank you. To Lenda Oshalem, Patrick Gorman and the WA Labor Party office, without your continued support and hard work, this campaign would not have been successful or created history, congratulations and thank you.

To my campaign team, Deana, Ben, Despa, BJ, Cory G, Cory F, Kiv, Dani, Luke, Santu, Yaso, Naresh, Ashton, Amar, Klara, Janet, Eve, Tarun, Peter, Hunter, Rob, Raj Salvender and Shiju Mathews, you have been pillars of strength. Thank you to my electorate officers and staff, Michelle and Lyndsey, for helping me navigate my first few weeks on the job. Thank you, Josh Wilson, federal member for Fremantle, for your friendship and guidance over many a coffee—there have been many. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance and support of the former federal member for Fremantle, Melissa Parke; member for North Metropolitan Region Hon Alannah MacTiernan; the federal member for Burt, Matt Keogh; and the member for Armadale, Dr Tony Buti. To Barry Urban, Terry Healy and Pierre Yang, I am very grateful for your friendship during the campaign. Thank you.

Particular thanks must go to Steve McCartney from the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, as well as John Welch from the Western Australian Prison Officers' Union, Brendan Reeve from the Electrical Trades Union, and their respective staff—thank you.

To Kirsten Robinson, Rob Hunter and all the parliamentary staff, thank you for welcoming us.

I would like to acknowledge the Consul General of India in Perth, Amit Mishra, and his wife, Meenakshi, as well as my sister's childhood friend Parul Vedak, who has come all the way from India. To my family, especially Lynn Holiday, Bianca and Andre D'souza, Merzin and Delnaz Ghadiali, and Rayan and Zenobia Dubash, thank you.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: I thank them for helping me through the tough times as well as providing invaluable campaign assistance.

I would not be standing here today if it were not for the unyielding support of my best friend over 20 years, my rock and the love of my life, my wife, Jeri. Today, alongside my wife and my father, Yezdi, in the public gallery, sits my mother, Shahnaz; my sister and my better half, Farizia; her husband, Mehrab; my children, Zyshawn and MJ; and my niece, Suraiah—and not forgetting the one, the only, my nephew, Tyreez, who will be forever be by my side in spirit.

CONCLUSION

I come to this place with an open mind. I come here to absorb and learn and work hard for the people of Jandakot and the people of Western Australia. I come here as there is no other country in the world where I could grow and establish myself in the way I have been able to in Australia. I come here with hope—hope that a farmer's boy from a village in India can be embraced in Australia; hope that an Indian boy with a surname that no-one can pronounce can fit in. I also commit to bringing to this place the values upon which I was raised, summarised by a Zoroastrian maxim “Good thoughts, good words, good deeds”.

I would like to conclude with a William Ernest Henley poem *Invictus*. This is a poem that Jeri and I read to our children and that embodies the characteristics of bravery, resolution and strength in the face of adversity. It states —

Out of the night which covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeoning of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

Thank you.

[Applause.]
