



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Ms Hannah Mary Beazley, MLA
(Member for Victoria Park)

Legislative Assembly

Address-in-Reply

Tuesday, 4 May 2021

Reprinted from Hansard

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 29 April on the following motion moved by Ms L. Dalton —

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

To His Excellency the Honourable Kim Beazley, 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.

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park) [7.02 pm]: I am humbled to rise this evening for the first time in this place, as the member for Victoria Park. I acknowledge that we are on Whadjuk Noongar boodja. My thanks to Noongar elders Neville Collard, who guided the smoking ceremony at the opening of Parliament, and Dr Richard Walley, who conducted the first-ever Welcome to Country in this Parliament. Having Dr Walley welcome all those who serve here in what was traditionally the House of Lords was incredibly gracious. His Welcome marks a watershed moment in this Parliament's history. It was also a powerful act of reconciliation as we walk together in our shared commitment to the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution and in realising an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly congratulate you on becoming our first female Speaker and I thank you for your ongoing support of me in my journey to get here. The significance of having our Parliament's first female Speaker appointed on the centenary of Edith Cowan's election is not lost on anyone in this place or outside of it. It is also not lost on me that within both of these contexts, Parliament House sits on the matriarchal songline that exists between Kaarta Gar-up, or Kings Park, through Boorloo, Perth, and onto Matagarup, Heirisson Island, where Noongar trailblazer Fanny Balbuk was born. Fanny walked this important songline. She lived through the British colonisation of Perth and was the granddaughter of Yellagonga and the niece of Yagan. Fanny was a resistance fighter who fiercely defended her values, traditional rights and country while maintaining a clear rapport with many of the newly arrived settlers. Fanny Balbuk's legacy offers a masterclass to those of us seeking to be strong female voices for, and leaders of, our communities.

It is right that she is remembered today at the beginning of a Parliament that sees a record number of women elected to its benches, including two powerful Aboriginal women and the first-ever Aboriginal woman in the Legislative Council.

I congratulate also Premier Mark McGowan, his ministry and government on a historic election victory, a tangible realisation of the Western Australian people's approval of your government's first term, with its focus on real action, social justice, prudent financial management, fairness and commonsense. Premier, I thank you not only for your personal support of me, but for the glow of your popularity imbuing the fantastic election results in my electorate of Victoria Park.

I love Victoria Park and its people. It is over 90 years since the electorate of Victoria Park was created. For all but eight of those years, Victoria Park has been held by the Labor Party. I thank the most recent member for Victoria Park, my friend and former Treasurer, Hon Ben Wyatt. Ben served our community with distinction, retiring while still enjoying immense popularity and respect. Ben remains much loved by the people of Victoria Park and has left big shoes to fill—as have all former members of Victoria Park. I have a whole wardrobe full of shoes to fill! Our community has enjoyed Treasurers, Premiers and opposition leaders as their local representatives.

Another friend of mine, former Premier and member for Victoria Park, Hon Dr Geoff Gallop, rang me the day after the election to reiterate the expectations of our community: they expect their member to make a difference. And I intend to do just that. For all those shoes to fill, none has been heels! I am the first female member for Victoria Park. To be the first of anything is an achievement. To be the first woman is an absolute privilege and a responsibility I welcome. I join other wonderful women in this place, many, like me, who are first-term members. At this election, 11 seats changed from being represented by men to being represented by women. All of those seats are now held by Labor women. Of these 11 new members, six of us represent electorates that have never been represented in this place by a woman. From Geraldton in our north to Albany in our south, our ascendancy is the result of societal change forged by the vision and action of generations of women before us, together with our own determination, hard work and, in so many cases, pure perseverance. I congratulate and support you all.

I am born and bred Victoria Park. I learnt to ride my bike along our local streets, cajoled my parents into scoring my diving at Somerset Pool, now Aqualife. I loved Brownies and jumble sales at St Joachim's hall within the grounds of my first primary school. I picked up friends on my walking group to my second primary school, East Victoria Park Primary School, and waited tables at local icon Pancho's Mexican Villa Restaurant.

At 18, I was proud to move out of home and into my first rental on Mint Street with my best friend since kindergarten, Fleur Allen. Fleur is still one of my dearest friends today and I take this opportunity to thank her and her family for a lifetime of love and support.

The Victoria Park community made me who I am and I am so proud to have the opportunity to repay the investment they have made in me. My family's history in Vic Park goes back generations. My maternal grandfather, Hon Sir Shane Paltridge, his sister and my great-grandmother lived at the Broken Hill Hotel on Albany Highway. Granddad's family owned the hotel and he managed it from the late 1920s for well over a decade and again after his return from service in the Second World War. Apparently, he was renowned for always being quick to shout the bar. He was definitely my kind of guy! Granddad had his own political life—starting as a Labor man who would listen keenly to party meetings held in the Hotel's back rooms by future Prime Minister John Curtin. Shane would eventually be elected as a Liberal Senator for WA, becoming a key confidante of Prime Minister Menzies.

My paternal granddad, Hon Kim Beazley Sr, or Pop, as I loved and called him, was the federal member for Fremantle. Pop entered federal Parliament in the 1945 Fremantle by-election. In this and the following election, Victoria Park was within the Fremantle electorate. In 1949, Victoria Park was redrawn into the federal electorate of Swan, represented from 1980 for 16 years by His Excellency Hon Kim Beazley, AC—hereafter referred to as “Dad”. Dad went on to serve another 11 years as the member for Brand. This makes me the third generation Beazley to represent the good people of Victoria Park in an Australian Parliament, and I could not be prouder or more humbled.

Like I said, I intend to make a difference. I come from a family of teachers. Dad started off as a lecturer and my mum and sister are both fabulous teachers. I, too, worked in education for almost a decade. Pop was the federal Minister for Education who made universities free of tuition fees. I know the value of education. It is the one lever we can pull to create generational

shifts in opportunity. I understand the curse of education inequality among incomes, races and locations. Western Australia has a small population; we cannot afford to waste the talents of a single person. In Victoria Park, our local schools and TAFEs are my priority. Locally, we are blessed with many fantastic avenues for quality learning, including Curtin University.

I was very pleased during this election campaign to announce, together with the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Sue Ellery, \$750 000 to upgrade classrooms to deliver STEM education at Kent Street Senior High School. The quality of STEM education is a key priority of the McGowan government and this is a fantastic investment in our current and future Kent Street Senior High School staff and students. This investment is in addition to the maintenance funding boost it received last year as part of the McGowan government's \$200 million school maintenance blitz.

Kent Street needs this funding. It is now more than 80 years old. Kent Street is a high school with excellent and dedicated staff and wonderful specialist programs, including aviation, fashion and design, and cricket. However, due to its age and the demands of servicing a growing population—a population that deeply cares about quality education—it is a school that also needs attention.

I am committed to giving Kent Street Senior High School the attention it needs and deserves. My aim as the member for Victoria Park is to successfully secure further investment in Kent Street Senior High School that would see this wonderful school reach its full potential and provide an exemplary learning institution to local families for generations to come.

Running through Victoria Park is the oldest train line in Perth, the Armadale line. I cannot tell you how many times I have jumped on that train to take me around our great city. It is a gateway for our community and for others to visit us. I also cannot tell you how long I have waited in my car at our level crossings or how many times I have been woken by the honks of passing trains and the bells of boom gates. When feeling nostalgic, I find these sounds quite comforting, but when in a hurry, I do not appreciate the significant time being stuck at a level crossing adds to my commute. As one of my top priorities, I look forward to working with the Minister for Transport, Hon Rita Saffioti, as this government raises the rail line through Victoria Park, removing local level crossings at Mint Street, Oats Street and Welshpool Road and connecting our neighbourhoods for the first time in almost 130 years. I am committed to helping the minister ensure that this project is a success and that our Victoria Park community has both input into, and benefits from, the improved connection, amenity, security and aesthetic this almost half-a-billion-dollar project can create.

Removing the level crossings and connecting our neighbourhoods will also help our local small businesses grow and prosper. Victoria Park has always been a place of growth and opportunity for small business.

Our local businesspeople define vision, optimism and energy. I consider it one of my top priorities to advance and amplify their activities. Our local small business owners, who in turn train, skill and employ our local community members, are the beating heart of Victoria Park. Anyone looking for a great coffee, a good feed, a reliable car, wonderful homewares, a satisfying book, the weekly groceries or a friendly beer at knock off need look no further than Victoria Park. Our strips along Albany Highway and Archer Street, as well as pockets all around the electorate, are the epitome of endeavour and enterprise.

I am a former small business owner. I understand the anxiety of making payroll. I know the inevitable sacrifices made when paying yourself last. I also understand what our businesses are going through in these uncertain COVID times. I navigated my business through the uncertainty and revenue hits of the global financial crisis, and I know that government can make a real difference when businesses operate during challenging times. During the GFC, cash injections into people's back pockets and asset depreciation relief made a real difference to my bottom line.

During the COVID pandemic, the McGowan government's support measures for small business have done the same, from relief on electricity bills to licence fee and payroll tax waivers. The Small Business Lockdown Assistance Grants announced last week will also be a welcome support to many.

What COVID has starkly revealed is something the Labor Party has laboured on for the length of my lifetime and longer—that Australia needs to be a manufacturing nation. Not being so is a threat to our security, relevancy and sustainability. By virtue of our rich natural resources, WA has long been considered the engine room of the nation. There is no reason why we cannot also be the modern factory floor, whether that is in digital innovations, value-adding to our primary resources, tourism, commercialisation of tertiary research or being at the vanguard of optimising the outputs of our natural environment.

For the last two years, I held a senior position at Western Australia Return Recycle Renew Ltd, a local non-profit charged with delivering this government's container deposit scheme, Containers for Change. It was a herculean task getting the scheme off the ground. The scheme covers the largest distances, as well as the most remote refund points, in the world. Under the guidance of the Minister for Environment and WARRRL, whole regions of that refund point network are being run by Aboriginal corporations. Containers for Change started as an election commitment, became policy and then legislation and is now a reality—a reality that has, since its launch in October last year, seen over 318 million containers recycled, many of which would have ended up in landfill, as litter or in our oceans. Over 600 Western Australians are now employed through the scheme, with many of those jobs awarded to the long-term unemployed, Aboriginal people and people living with disability. It was a privilege to help lead Containers for Change and make it a reality. It is a professional legacy I am proud of and a reflection of what can be achieved by a government that cares and is committed to both our environment and the diversification of our economy. I share this commitment to a strong and diversified economy—one that embraces local manufacturing in its many potential forms and protects and enhances our natural environment.

This government's view to manufacture wind turbine components here in WA is a perfect example of its commitment to the economy and our environment, and to creating green jobs. It is a project that capitalises on our natural resources, from the steel to the wind. It utilises our skilled labour force, which is being further developed by our investment in vocational education and training and TAFEs. It engages local industry and ensures local procurement. Procurement is the key that unlocks policy and turns it into positive, tangible outcomes. It makes the difference. When my dad became the Defence Minister of Australia, 70 per cent of Defence's equipment budget was spent overseas and just 30 per cent was spent in Australia. When he left the defence portfolio, those numbers had been reversed. Those active procurement decisions have made a difference in local defence equipment investment, advancement and output for generations, not to mention the effect it has had on strengthening our national security. Support for business can come in many forms and I am committed to supporting my local Victoria Park businesses, their staff and families, in all the ways I can.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: Just like our small businesses rely on the support of their community for their success, so have I. It has been a long journey for me to get to this place. And, honestly, not because it took me three times of running in elections to get here but because I was not supposed to live this long. Twenty years ago, when I was in my early 20s, I became very ill. I could not walk more than 10 or 20 metres without having to rest. I intermittently lost the use of my legs. The blood vessels in my fingers would burst and haemorrhage, rendering me incapable of picking up a pencil or using a phone. There was a time my heart doubled in size in the space of a week. I was the youngest person by about 50 years in the hospital's coronary care unit. Nobody could decipher what was wrong. I was put on medication that mitigated some of my

pain and symptoms but it could not deal with the source of my illness. I was told I had five years to live without this medication and maybe 10 years to live with it. Fast-forward a year or so and I finally had a diagnosis; a rare blood disorder—hypereosinophilia. Back then, it was also a potential death sentence but because Western Australia is the best place in the world to live, world-leading research into this disorder was happening right here at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Dr David Joske and his team at Charlies saved my life. The drugs that they helped to develop and administer saved my life. I am alive today due to our strong public health system, the people who make it so, and the commitment of successive governments to medical research. Today I have a beautiful family because of our public health system. I can alter my course from fighting for my life, to fighting for my community because of our public health system. That is why, underpinning all of my priorities for Victoria Park will always be my commitment to a strong public health system that offers top-quality health care, medicine and services to each and every one of our citizens, regardless of wealth or geography. You do not have anything if you do not have your health.

The fact that I stand here today is not only due to life-saving health care, but also the support of a community for which I will always be grateful and to whom I will always strive to fulfil the trust and faith they have placed in me. Of all the people I thank who brought me here, I thank the people of Victoria Park. Those who voted for me and those who did not; I represent you all. My door will always be open, and I will always do what I can to help. I know that I work for you. When I was little and my dad was the member for Swan, he would often take my sister Jessica and I to Miss Maud on the weekend for a treat. I remember people coming up to him all the time for a chat, for help, or to impart some sage advice. On one of these trips, Jessica and I were getting very annoyed with the interruptions and made our displeasure known to Dad. Although sympathetic, Dad simply said, “These are the people who put food on our table”. It was a valuable lesson about who you serve in this place and one I have never forgotten.

I thank the labour movement. Strong unions mean a strong democracy. It cannot be overstated—a strong democracy in the workplace is the foundation for a strong democracy overall. I thank particularly Peter O’Keeffe and Ben Harris of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association of WA, the union that represents workers across retail, fast food and warehousing. Thank you to my local Labor Party members and branches, including Victoria Park–Carlisle branch president Ryan Harte, secretary Jeremy Gilchrist, membership officer and star volunteer, Christine Miller and fundraising officer Jan “JJ” Jermalinski. JJ is unwell at the moment and I send him my prayers for a speedy recovery and good health. To my many friends who have been the family I have been lucky enough to choose, thank you. It is true that you cannot make old friends and please indulge me while I thank a few of them. I mentioned Fleur Allen and her family earlier. I also thank another schoolfriend, Kelsey Schwabe, who flies my flag in Broome. I thank Alison and Darren Devenish who keep my husband and I sane and loved. As a nurse at Fiona Stanley Hospital, Alison has been on the front lines of dealing with COVID and is one of the reasons that I have such faith in our hospitals. I would also like to thank Craig Goulder and Wendy Palmer. It is a source of pride for me that I purposefully do not live in an echo chamber. I surround myself with people of different persuasions, opinions and passions, but sometimes you just need the quiet support of old, like-minded friends who still have the intelligence to challenge you to do better—that is Craig and Wendy. To new friends, Sarah and Robin Trotter, who jumped in straightaway with supporting the campaign and our family juggle, thank you. To the woman who, a decade ago, invited me to rethink how I served the Labor Party and our community, encouraging me to nominate as a candidate, Lenda Oshalem, the then assistant state secretary of WA Labor, thank you. I also thank the current state secretary of WA Labor, Tim Picton, and assistant state secretary, Ellie Whiteaker, for their guidance and leadership of the party.

To my volunteers, many who have stood by my side for almost 10 years now, first supporting me when I ran for Riverton, home to my businesses’ distribution centre, back in 2013, then

for the federal seat of Swan, which saw us campaign heavily in Victoria Park and surrounds for two years in the lead-up to the 2019 federal election, and now in Victoria Park, which has felt like a homecoming since the beginning of this campaign—countless volunteers, too many to name and many whom I now consider my personal friends, they know who they are. There is nothing more humbling than being the beneficiary of your hard work—thank you. To my campaign teams, too often the unsung heroes of any election campaign, please allow me to sing their praises now. What a bunch of incredible people. I cannot name them all, but I will name a few. Hon Sue Ellery, Samantha Doran-Bryce, and Julie Kroeber in Riverton. Hon Kate Doust, Hon Samantha Rowe, Ally White, Fran Laine and Greg Roberts in Swan. Tim Hammond, Alison Cook and Sarah McBride in Victoria Park. A sincere, enormous and heartfelt thank you to my campaign manager for both Swan and Victoria Park, who knows where all my bodies are buried, whose counsel I will always seek, and who has one of the sharpest strategic minds I have ever come across—Adelaide Kidson. I now add to my Victoria Park story with Russell McFarlane who, together with Alison Cook, have become my left and right hands in the community through our electorate office. Thank you both.

I learnt the power of women from the women in my family. To my mum, Mary Ciccarelli, my stepmum, Susie Annus, my sisters, Jessica and Rachel Beazley, thank you for your ongoing love and support of me and my boys. We have gone through a lot together and the ride is not over yet. Your combined strength and support formed the springboard from which I jumped into this journey and I thank you for being both my jumping off point and my safe place to land, even if my sister Jessica remains perplexed by my desire to be in this place. In addition to Jessica, I thank her husband, Philip Cormack, and my three nephews for their support but also for simply being wonderful and a constant source of joy for my boys. I thank my cousins: Claire O'Malley, her husband, Ben Sudlow and their girls; Justin O'Malley and his wife, Natalie, and their pigeon pair; Anton Wasson and his wife, Sarah, and their beautiful cherubs; my extended Canion, Wasson, O'Malley, Ciccarelli and Annus families, many of whom get roped into helping on election days, thank you.

To those I have loved deeply and I wish could be here today to witness this moment but have departed this world, my grandma, Lady Molly Paltridge, and my nanna and pop, Betty and Kim Beazley, I feel your love today. I hope I am doing you proud. To my dad, Kim Beazley, whose love is the foundation on which I built myself and who is a constant source of inspiration to me, thank you.

Finally, the people I left for last so I could keep it together for the rest of this speech: my husband, Andrew Canion, and our two beautiful boys, David Beazley Canion and Benjamin Beazley Canion. They have sacrificed much to get me here and I know will continue to do so. Politics is a family sport and I very much could not do this without them. This year will mark 22 years of love with Andrew—just over half my life. We have gone through terrible ill health, small business ownership, the death of loved ones, career changes, three election campaigns, the birth and raising of our boys, and the challenges of having a son with a disability, and we have endured. Thank you, Andrew. Words will never do you justice.

To my boys, who may one day read the transcript of this speech: know that I love you. Know that I know what this life means for you, and I thank you in advance. Know that I know you are going to make this world a better place in whatever way you choose.

My sons have often asked me over the course of the last 10 years why I keep running, why I want to be in this place, and why I keep asking people for their vote. When you are explaining such a complex idea to two small kids, it helps you to clarify exactly why you want to be here. My simple answer has always been: to help people. And that is what I intend to do. Thank you.

[Applause.]