

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

*Motion*

Resumed from 24 May.

The PRESIDENT: I remind members that this is an inaugural speech and the appropriate courtesy should be extended to the member.

**HON ROBIN CHAPPLE** (Mining and Pastoral) [7.34 pm]: I am honoured to stand here today on Nyoongah land to deliver my inaugural speech to this Chamber. I congratulate you, Mr President, on your election to that position. I believe your rulings will provide fairness, tinged with the necessary degree of humour. I also extend my congratulations to Deputy President Hon George Cash on his election. His former role as an impartial President befits him well for this office. I extend my congratulations to all parliamentarians on their election to this Chamber, and I look forward to working closely with them over the next four years.

I must preface my speech with an observation. I accept and commit to the oath I gave on 22 May, but feel I need to explain that I would much rather have sworn allegiance to the people of this country than to a foreign monarch. As a republican, I hope that by the end of my term I, or whoever follows me, will be able to swear allegiance to the people of this great country.

For a number of years I have been a social and environmental activist throughout the north west and Western Australia generally. I see my election to this Chamber as a new plateau in that activism. I now face a significantly greater challenge if I am to lift the level of support for social and environmental issues in the Mining and Pastoral Region within this, the parliamentary arena. The challenge that now faces both my electorate assistants and me is to lift the representation of the region to new heights and to provide those communities with a genuine conduit to this Chamber. My two newly appointed assistants, Rebecca Park and Scott Ludlam, will join me in the toil to represent our massive electorate.

First, I must thank all the Greens (WA) candidates, helpers and friends who assisted me in achieving election to this Chamber: Scott Ludlam, the No 2 candidate on my ticket; Scott Ryan, our Burrup candidate; Andrei Nikulinsky, our Kimberley candidate; John Blinkhorn, our Ningaloo candidate; and Deb Botica, our Kalgoorlie candidate. I also wish to extend my congratulations to Deb, who has just been re-elected for the third time to the Kalgoorlie-Boulder City Council with the highest vote of the poll.

Many people have supported me in my campaigning efforts over the years and during the last election period. Although I cannot mention them all, I express my thanks to some special people: my daughter Sara, who from her teenage years has helped me in all local, federal and state government elections I have ever contested; my friend Annie for all the reality checks and support she has shown me over the past few years; Stewart Jackson for always providing the right political advice; my mate Cliff for being my greatest sounding board and my mate Steve for just being excited; and Jo Vallentine, a friend who has been, and always will be, a magnificent inspiration to me. Finally, I thank two people for whom I have had the privilege to work; both have provided me with guidance and true friendship. The first is my colleague Hon Giz Watson, whose standards I will seek to emulate in this Chamber. The second is Hon Tom Helm, a previous MLC for the Mining and Pastoral Region, a former proud member of the Labor Party, and a person who in my eyes epitomises the phrase "a true believer". Lastly, but most importantly, I thank all the regional voters who had faith in our green agenda.

My journey to this Chamber has evolved socially and politically over time. It might surprise many members on the other side of the Chamber to learn that I actually started, so to speak, on their side of the floor as a junior stockbroker in Threadneedle Street in the City of London. I then worked in motor racing manufacturing with the late Bruce McLaren; and in industrial farming industries in England; and I then did some global adventuring before arriving in Western Australia in 1974. In Australia, most of my time has been spent in the north of this State and, to a lesser degree, in the Northern Territory. I had the privilege of working for a number of Aboriginal nations before spending 12 years in Port Hedland, seven of those as a town councillor. I am now proud to stand here as an elected member of the Greens (WA) to represent from a green perspective the future needs and responsibilities of the Mining and Pastoral Region of Western Australia and our planet. The representation I will give to these areas will be based on the four pillars of the Greens (WA) structure, which form the basis of our visions for the future: social and economic justice; participatory grassroots democracy; peace, disarmament and non-violence; and environmental sustainability.

We have not inherited the earth from our parents; we are merely borrowing it from our children - these words come from a Kenyan proverb and were reiterated often by a champion of mine, the late Jacques Cousteau. I hope this saying will help guide my thinking during my time in this Chamber, and may in time become the focus of many other members here. During my term as a member for the Mining and Pastoral Region I hope to remain true to these visions and not be distracted or consumed by the minutiae and game play of this Chamber. With

these words in mind, I will now address my hopes and concerns for the areas I represent. The Mining and Pastoral Region covers many bio-regions, industries and social groupings, and as such has many diverse problems and needs. Unfortunately, the social and environmental history of the region has been inconsistent, seesawing through pluses and minuses based on the various political wills of the day.

Those of us who have been working in the mining industry in Western Australia believe that the mining industry of this State has attempted to lift the level of its game significantly. Here in Western Australia companies work towards presenting a good image, but the truth about what happens on the ground at their mines overseas in Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Nevada and Montana et cetera is very different. I urge any Australian or Australian-based international mining company that operates in other countries to apply the same, if not better, conditions to their mines operating overseas as they would in Australia. On 10 May 2001, the Chief Executive Officer of Placer Dome, Jay Taylor, in discussion with non-government organisations said Placer Dome was not interested again in working in Indonesia. On the same day of that discussion, Placer Dome announced to the media that it was going back into Indonesia in association with a number of joint venturers, partners in goldmining explorations in South Kalimantan.

Mark Twain often called a mine a hole in the ground owned by a liar - unfortunately, that seems true again. Placer has over time abandoned several projects in Indonesia as a result of those projects not being viable. Most of these projects have had significant negative impact on the environment and the communities of Central Kalimantan, South Sulawesi and West Kalimantan. At issue is the fact that in Western Australia Placer operates one of the best mines on environmental and social grounds. Why can the company not do that overseas?

The level of injury in the mining industry in Western Australia is still far too high, with four fatalities already this year. I do not consider it acceptable that the lives of one mine worker and three contractors should be lost within a mere five months. Seven fatalities occurred last year; two in 1999; seven in 1998; 12 in 1997; seven in 1996; and eight in 1995. These figures are rattled out as a statistic, but these people were all somebody's son, daughter, husband or wife. The industry must be made safer. If in-house management of safety is not working, then the Government must take back the reins of control.

The economy of Western Australia has depended on the mining industry for more than a hundred years. Why then do we pay such little respect to the men and women who risk their lives on mine sites every day? I call members' attention to the Wittenoom asbestos mine in the Hamersley Ranges, surely one of the most tragic examples of corporate negligence in Western Australian history. The mine has been closed for decades, but the miners and their families are still dying from exposure to asbestos-laden dust. They may have expected swift compensation to help ease some of the enormous difficulties they are facing; instead, even today they are subject to delaying actions by lawyers who know that if the claimant dies before the claim is finalised in court, the family will receive a much reduced compensation payout. I will certainly be supporting moves by Larry Graham to close this loophole so that the families can receive full compensation, even though the original claimants may have passed away.

The people of the north west, who are responsible for the wealth we take for granted down here, also deserve much better. If we travel 600 kilometres south from Wittenoom we come to a remote sheep station called Yeelirrie. Not many people know that WMC Resources Ltd has left 35 000 tonnes of raw uranium ore in four large stockpiles on that station. This radioactive rubble is a known carcinogen and is blowing in the breeze right now because WMC claims it is conducting metallurgical tests. One of the priorities of my term in office is to have WMC clean up this appalling mess. I look forward to the day when I can support my colleague Hon Giz Watson in passing the Nuclear Activities (Prohibition) Bill, which will ban uranium mining from this State. There are some minerals that we have to learn to leave alone.

Over the past seven or so years the pastoral industry has come to grips with some of the historic problems created by the many years of overstocking. Many station owners and managers are now trying hard to restore these land systems. The Department of Conservation and Land Management and many mining companies are trying to destock their properties to give perennial vegetation systems a chance to recover and re-establish, but the Pastoral Board, with its head firmly buried in the early 1900s, insists that these organisations continue to stock their properties. It seems absolute nonsense that the industry wants to do the right thing, yet bureaucracy will not let it. Australia's rangelands have suffered some of the most severe damage to Australia's environments since European colonisation, including the world's highest rate of mammal extinction, threats to the survival of many rangeland ecosystems, and degradation of over half of the rangelands. Today Australia's rangelands are the most poorly represented in the conservation estate. We need to conserve and restore many of the rangeland species and ecosystems. This work needs to occur in conjunction with the rangeland residents, most notably the traditional owners.

Four main processes are threatening rangeland, biota and ecosystems: overgrazing; inappropriate fire management; feral animals and weeds; and diversion of water to industrial and urban use. Rangeland

ecosystems require management and it should be up to the Government, on behalf of the community, to provide sufficient resources. I do not subscribe to the view that pastoral production, which in association with other processes has destroyed many ecosystems, both in the past and currently, should be required to provide and/or pay for the management of rural areas. This is simply not equitable. It is basically government decree on behalf of the whole community demanding excessive stocking rates that cause the problem.

In every election the Greens (WA) have promoted regional population growth, coupled with the idea that a significant percentage of moneys raised by royalties in regional areas should be returned to those regions for local development purposes. Regionalisation or decentralisation has been a key direction of mine ever since my early days as a Port Hedland town councillor. Unfortunately, the opposite is occurring, with town after town in the Mining and Pastoral Region closing or becoming so small that it can hardly survive. Why, one may ask, when the region has most of the resources that are generating so much revenue and wealth for the State? It comes down to a number of reasons. One reason is the greed of successive Governments which have retained in the Perth metropolitan area the economic wealth of the Mining and Pastoral Region. In 1999-2000, \$776.5 million was raised from mineral and oil royalties from the goldfields and the north west; little was returned. During the establishment of the gold royalty, the Greens (WA) argued that moneys raised from the goldfields - \$33.5 million last year - should actively benefit the goldfields. Other political parties did not support our views. There are many ways in which moneys raised in the region can be used for the development and enhancement of regional communities: by greater returns to local authorities, and by the establishment of a trust from royalties, similar to the Alaskan model. I will continue to push for regional revenue return, rather than allow regional moneys to continually be squandered on belltowers and the like in Perth.

Fly in, fly out work forces do nothing for regional economies or communities, and these practices must be abandoned. Fly in, fly out work forces came about for several reasons. Certainly economics played a significant part, but there were other reasons behind this. During the mid 1980s the major mining companies realised that as technology improved, their senior administration did not need to be located at the site of their mines or their ports and that a significant saving in wages, remote allowances and housing costs could be made by returning their corporate staff to Perth. Governments, through their state agreement Acts at that time, could have intervened and stopped the move. They did not, and the rot had started.

The implementation of the fringe benefits tax in remote areas was a further impediment to regional growth, and was cited as the major contributor to fly in, fly out work forces. The original idea of a fringe benefits tax was to ensure that corporations and fat cats did not dodge their responsibility to pay tax. Instead it has become a major impost on the mining companies and small businesses in remote areas. Major companies cite fringe benefits tax as a significant reason for their support for fly in, fly out work forces on their new projects. I believe that in many cases this is merely being used as a decoy, and that the demise of union-represented work forces is one of the real agendas. Where it is clearly unacceptable to establish a new town because of the size of the project, its remoteness or environmental constraints, fly in, fly out work forces can be supported but on the proviso that the workers come from regional centres. If this is not done, the resulting contraction of local populations will have, and has had, a catastrophic effect on regional economies and the community itself. The side effect of this is more and more overpopulation, with all the accompanying social and environmental problems suffered by large cities all over the world. Decentralisation is the way to go.

During the 1980s many of the major mining companies had moved towards supporting and developing stable communities in the north west. This was done by encouraging family units to move with their partners to company housing in the towns developed by the corporations. It was done to provide a stable work force for the companies, following high staff turnover in the 1970s. I joined the mining companies at about that time. In the early 1970s the average time a worker stayed with BHP was 27 days - hardly enough time to train a person on the job.

By the end of the 1980s stable townships and a sense of community had developed all through the Pilbara. This unfortunately posed a problem for the major mining corporations because when a dispute developed between a company and the unions it involved the whole community. There was no social distinction between workers and staff; they were all community members. Invariably disputes involved the community versus the company, rather than being restricted to a section of the work force. It was not uncommon to see families on the picket line, rather than union representatives. Quite often wives working in corporate administration were asked to go home by their companies because their husbands were outside the gate. The mining companies had to break the community spirit in order to break the union movement. Corporations found an answer to their desires in the fringe benefits tax. It gave them an out, an excuse to move to fly in, fly out programs, thereby diminishing the population in the north west, where shift members and work force hardly met and families were kept separate in any dispute. I believe that a sense of community must be returned to the regions. Fringe benefits tax must be altered to reflect the needs of regional communities and fly in, fly out programs must, in most cases, be stopped.

The plight of Australian indigenous people has now become an international disgrace. With broad support in the community for the process of reconciliation, this process must come from the people and not the bureaucratic organisation. However, how much do we really know about the first nations of this country? We must recognise that at the time of colonisation there were over 600 nations in this country. Over time we have lumped all these nations - Pintubi, Indjibandi, Kariara, Wanambi, Nyoongah and so on - into one European identity of Aboriginal. Would anyone else be allowed to amalgamate all the nations of South America, Europe or Africa into one culture based on landmass? Austrians are proudly Austrian; Croats are proudly Croatian; and Peruvians are proudly Peruvian. As I have already stated, I had the privilege of working for a number of these indigenous nations, each of which has its own distinct individual culture and history. I hope to be a conduit for the aspirations and stories of these people, who rightly feel that their needs have been neglected and opposed by distant government departments here in Perth.

I move now to the global scene, which is also of significant concern to us: overpopulation has often been seen as the root cause of many kinds of social and environmental deterioration. Rain forest destruction, desertification, many pollutants and the spread of disease are linked to an expanding population and increased pressure on limited resources. Because rapid population growth exacerbates many environmental problems, it is intimately linked with all our efforts to protect the environment. However, it should be remembered that the richest 20 per cent of the world's people consume 80 per cent of the world's resources. The massive imbalance hidden in this statistic means that a child born in Australia or the United States of America will consume up to twenty times the energy and resources of a child born in the industrialising world. For those of us in this so-called first world it is a simple matter to condemn the practices of other peoples but, really, our own societies need to change. The rate at which we are consuming natural resources is jeopardising our planet's health and threatening the availability of water, fisheries and forests for our children and future generations.

This brings me to the issue of free trade or fair trade. The concepts of sustainable environments, social development and free-trade policies are fundamentally in conflict with one another. In India, for instance, trade liberalisation in the form of tariff reduction and liberalisation of foreign investment in the automotive sector helped increase automotive production by 136 per cent. That was good for India's gross domestic product but it contributed to the doubling of urban air pollution levels between 1991 and 1997. In Uganda, trade liberalisation in the form of industrial privatisation and tariff reductions on fishing technology contributed to the overfishing of Nile perch in Lake Victoria. Export revenues increased in the short term but led to the overexploitation of Lake Victoria, causing a 20 per cent reduction in catches and a degradation of the lake's ecosystem, which then led to negative impacts on water quality and a reduction in community health. In Argentina, virtually the same thing happened: trade liberalisation and the promotion of fisheries exports led to a fivefold growth in fish catches in the decade 1985 to 1995. The profits gained by international fishing firms from that liberalisation are estimated at \$US1.6 billion but the resulting depletion in stocks ultimately led to a net direct cost to the country of about \$US500 million in damage to the populations of the most exploited fish species.

The total value of global exports has grown from \$US350 billion in 1950 to almost \$US5.5 trillion in 1999, all of which involves massive mobilisation of transport, rather than transport minimisation, at huge environmental costs. The present means of calculating the worth of nations fails to recognise that not all economic growth is good. The Greens (WA) support sustainable development, not malignant growth. Why? Because local industries, regional economies and entire ecosystems are failing as a result of unfettered, global competition.

Rather than developing policies to raise the working conditions of developing nations, we are required to lower our costs to compete with nations whose opportunities for social equity are continually held in check by global corporations and international money lenders. Even Klaus Toepfer, the executive director of the United Nations environment program, said that trade liberalisation contributes to economic growth, yet the benefits have not been fairly shared between countries and, in some cases, have led to greater environmental degradation and increased poverty.

In March this year the Howard Government gave the United States the impression that there is a growing interest in free trade in Australia. A WA Australian Labor Party Senator, Hon Peter Cook, mirrored this impression when he committed to supporting free trade in principle. Australian diplomats and free-trade lobbyists have been working with the local American companies in a bid to secure a free-trade deal. I believe this is a continuing sell-out of the Australian way of life for all - workers' rights, health care and education - leaving just a few who can afford private education and health services.

With bipartisan support from major parties for free trade, where does this leave the Australian people? It is clear there is growing disquiet among Australians from all walks of life over the issues of corporate globalisation, the activities of the World Trade Organisation and the covert development of the multilateral agreement on investment. The continuing garage sale of Australia's human and natural resources must be stopped.

A new round of trade liberalisation talks will be launched at the World Trade Organisation ministerial meeting in Qatar in November this year. We clearly need a new direction at that meeting. Corporate globalisation, if it is to exist at all, must be geared towards sustainable and social global development, not to the ethos of profit at all costs. It is interesting to note that at a meeting in Germany in March this year, ministers and officials from more than 70 countries identified that environmental considerations must be much more taken into account in Qatar. We must be vigilant to ensure that does not amount to more cynical green washing.

On the positive side, in early April 2001 a gathering of most of the world's green parties met in Canberra. The Asia-Pacific federation was represented by 21 countries; the European federation by 28; the African federation by eight; and the American federation by nine. More than 700 people - about half from overseas - held the planet's first ever official meeting of the greens from around the world. The successful aim of the conference was to establish a global charter and to articulate the principles and values of the greens at an international level. The charter is a work-in-progress and will continue to evolve. The greens are the only grouping of political parties that are establishing a global network in response to the global threats of climate change and multinational corporations.

The Greens (WA) often concern themselves with the difficulties of entering the political arena. Any difficulties we might have pale into insignificance when compared with the adversities that face many of our global green compatriots. I was privileged, while in Canberra, to meet the Colombian green's presidential candidate, Ingrid Betancourt. Ingrid is an inspiring young woman who has a significant chance of winning the Colombian presidency; but at what cost? She is permanently surrounded by 10 bodyguards, has had numerous death threats from corporations and drug lords, and has had to move her whole extended family to New Zealand for their safety. With this in mind, the barbs that may be thrown around this Chamber from time to time seem rather less threatening.

Western Australia is a dynamic and progressive State, which has developed its own culture and direction and, as such, has embraced green thinking seemingly more readily than any other State in Australia. As we have seen, the people of this State acknowledge its beauty, rarity and environmental values, and work tirelessly to protect them. I remind the current members that any Government that forgets this State's values does so at its peril. Hopefully, the new Government and the potential passage of legislation through this Chamber will lead to the development of a package of truly progressive, social and environmental legislation.

I look forward to my term in this Chamber, proudly representing the future of the Mining and Pastoral Region, Western Australia, Australia and our planet. I commit my time in this Chamber to representing the needs of the community, the environment, a healthy and sustainable future for all future generations and to my grandchild in the gallery, Tailor Jack. That is why I am here.

[Applause.]

**HON JOHN FISCHER** (Mining and Pastoral) [8.10 pm]: Mr President, I join with other members in congratulating you on your election as President, although I suspect that, in the circumstances, your colleagues would prefer Hon George Cash to be in the Chair. I am sure your deliberations will be wise and fair.

I also take this opportunity to thank the 103 543 people of Western Australia who voted for One Nation in the Legislative Council election. In particular, I thank the people who voted for One Nation in the Mining and Pastoral Region. I wish to thank Pauline Hanson, the national President of One Nation, for the incredible courage and tenacity she has displayed in establishing a third political philosophy in this country. It is an honour to have her here tonight.

In preparation for the privilege afforded this, my maiden speech, I opened the doors and consulted widely without restriction. The opinions and facts I proffer are a result of that process. After careful consideration, I have selected information that exhibits clearly both my own and One Nation's viewpoint.

The election of three One Nation members to the Western Australian Legislative Council has in many respects broken the crucible of politics in this State. It is the first occasion in many years on which a political party has been elected to the State Parliament that is not to the ideological left of the Labor Party. Of particular significance is the manner in which the three One Nation members were elected. Two of our members were elected without the need of preferences from other parties, and I obtained 0.86 per cent of a quota. I should perhaps record with some pride, but with an equal dose of disappointment, that not one member of this Parliament contributed to our success. However, I did receive the preferences of Hon Mark Nevill, who made a great contribution both in this Chamber and in the Mining and Pastoral Region. I regret that it was Mark Nevill that I replaced. In spite of the fact that we did not receive preferences from the Greens (WA), One Nation was responsible for the election of Hon Robin Chapple and Hon Dee Margetts. Having said that, I would be less than honest if I did not confess that those members have the leadership of the Western Australian Liberal Party to

thank for their august presence in this Chamber. No doubt Hon Murray Nixon and Hon Greg Smith will contemplate that irony in their retirement.

In helping to elect Hon Robin Chapple and Hon Dee Margetts, One Nation delivered control of the Legislative Council to the Labor Party and the Greens. However, as Mr Peter Walsh, former Labor senator, long-serving minister and guardian of the morals and integrity of the Labor Party, wrote in the March edition of *The Institute of Public Affairs Review* -

If One Nation is illegitimate, surely a government elected on its preferences must also be illegitimate?

I shall observe with interest how the Labor Party exercises this alleged illegitimacy in the passage of legislation that comes before this Chamber.

The three One Nation members were elected in spite of and in the face of a campaign of vilification and deception by the two major political parties in particular. Both political parties have adopted a policy of placing One Nation last on their how-to-vote cards. It is not a decision they make on the basis of an informed or objective judgment having given consideration to the competing policies of each candidate and party standing for election; it is not even a decision based on philosophical grounds; it is a crude, pragmatic decision based on political expediency. To justify this decision, regrettably both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party have at various times undertaken a campaign of hate and prejudice against One Nation. One Nation is not vilified for what it stands for, but for the threat it poses to the two major parties. At a recent meeting of the state council of the Liberal Party, Mr Ron Birmingham, the senior vice president of the Western Australian branch, described the people behind One Nation as evil and told the delegates they should read *Mein Kampf* to understand our policies. What disgraceful, disgusting and dishonest allegations to make, all in the name of Mr Birmingham's defending his disastrous part in the decision to place us last on the Liberal Party's how-to-vote cards. Mr Birmingham claimed that One Nation is a racist party and that is why the Liberal Party placed it last on its how-to-vote cards. That happened in spite of the fact that just 24 hours before the state election, the State President of the Liberal Party, Mr David Johnson, was soliciting our support. If the Liberal Party genuinely believes that the One Nation party is racist, Mr Birmingham might well explain to Liberal Party voters why its senior members held numerous meetings with One Nation in the earnest hope that the two parties could enter into an arrangement that would provide for the swapping of preferences ahead of the Labor Party. The obscene comparison between the policies of the Nazi party and those of One Nation may offend me. They are no doubt deeply offensive to the 100 000 people in Western Australia who voted for One Nation at the last election. The insults and smears are not cast only on members of One Nation; they are also cast upon tens of thousands of good and decent people who chose One Nation ahead of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party.

A senior member of the Liberal Party recently wrote to a daily newspaper claiming that One Nation was racist and xenophobic. That man is a close associate of the endorsed Liberal Party candidate for the federal seat of Canning. No doubt that candidate will, in due course, approach One Nation and ask for our preferences. The endorsed Liberal candidate for the federal seat of Stirling also spoke strongly at the Liberal Party state council meeting in favour of putting One Nation last on how-to-vote cards. Presumably he will also be in the queue.

It may not have dawned on the Liberal Party that the vast majority of One Nation voters at the last election were dissatisfied and disaffected coalition voters. This is one election in which it was remarkably easy to identify the move in primary votes. Is it any wonder that the Liberal Party is now in turmoil about the decision by its leadership to place One Nation last? It came as no surprise to learn that since the election the overwhelming majority of members of the Liberal Party state council have indicated that they are against placing us last on how-to-vote cards.

The Labor Party's campaign of vilification and its decision to place One Nation last on how-to-vote cards, irrespective of the policies of any other candidates, has manoeuvred the Liberal Party, and the Prime Minister in particular, into following suit. Prime Minister Howard is vulnerable to allegations of racism because of his well-documented excursion into the proposal in 1988 that Asian immigrants be selectively restricted. The political imbroglio into which he plunged is well documented in Paul Kelly's book *The End of Certainty*. When Labor announced it was putting One Nation last, it turned to Mr Howard and challenged him to do the same. Given what he saw as his political baggage of 1988, Mr Howard buckled at the knees, fell into line and followed suit. The Labor Party now enjoys the benefits of having inveigled the Liberal Party into unwittingly placing One Nation last and consequently losing both the lower and upper House of this Parliament in the last election.

In *The Institute of Public Affairs Review* article, Mr Walsh observed -

Labor has manoeuvred itself into an incredible position where it picks up moral acclaim for vilifying One Nation on the swings and gets One Nation preferences on the roundabouts.

I take this opportunity to expose once and for all the myth that One Nation is racist. One Nation's policy on multiculturalism refers in item 1 to the acceptance and integration of migrants into the mainstream of Australian

life, as Australians. It states that One Nation will focus on government activities that enhance the fellowship and assimilation of all citizen as Australians. Item 2 refers to the abolition of the current concept of multiculturalism. It states that One Nation will abolish funding for multicultural programs, while at the same time upholding the principle that individuals or groups are free to preserve their cultural heritage using their own resources. Item 3 recognises the need for all Australians to speak English. It states that One Nation will endorse the programs that formally establish the ability of the population to be able to communicate -

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The PRESIDENT: Order! Visitors, we respect your right to hold a view and to let your view be known; however, members must be allowed to speak in this Chamber free of intimidation and free of the threat of their voices being drowned out. I ask you to respect the rights that are accorded to elected members and to our operation as a democracy. I ask that the member continue his speech.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: The policy also states that One Nation will formally establish the ability of the population to communicate in English, regardless of the languages that may be spoken by choice. The One Nation policy on immigration states that inappropriate high levels of immigration combined with the policy of multiculturalism have led to a serious breakdown in the social cohesion of Australian. The One Nation policy states that for many reasons, such as the problems of unemployment, a lack of integration of fellowship among the population, increasing costs of infrastructure, services and environmental impact, the issues of immigration and population must be urgently addressed in the interests of our future as one people, under one flag and with one set of rules.

Essentially, the thrust of the policy is that with all due fairness, we must have an approach to immigration that will benefit, not burden the existing population. In particular, it must be imparted to and accepted by immigration applicants that if they wish to migrate to Australia, they must want to be Australians and not simply people from somewhere else who now live in Australia.

Mr President, that is the essence of our policy on multiculturalism and immigration, which apparently is the reason that invites both major parties to place One Nation last on their how-to-vote cards. Contrary to the voting intentions of 103 543 electors of Western Australia who supported One Nation, John Howard and Kim Beazley have both openly claimed that One Nation played no part in the outcome of the election and that Labor's win was due entirely to the preferences of the Greens (WA), induced by the Labor Party's decision to ban all old-growth forest logging.

I have no particular wish for One Nation to take credit for the election of the Labor Party nor do I wish to gloat about One Nation's role in the defeat of the coalition; however, I do wish for the record to set down the truth: I believe that One Nation's preferences were responsible for the election of the Labor Government. That view is apparently shared by a former secretary of the Labor Party Mr Gary Gray. In *The IPA Review* article Mr Peter Walsh exposes the myth created by the Prime Minister and Mr Beazley. Mr Walsh observed -

Having demonized One Nation for five years and denied its political legitimacy, Labor won the election with the assistance of One Nation preferences.

He goes on to say -

. . . seven of the seats that Labor won from the Coalition were seats in which the One Nation primary vote was greater than the final two-party-preferred margin.

Mr Bruce Stone a professor of the University of Western Australia. in his article in the *Australasian Parliamentary Review* titled "The Western Australian election of 10 February 2001: more a case of protracted suicide than of assassination", states -

At most eight or nine seats might possibly have been delivered by One Nation: five in the non-metropolitan zone . . . and perhaps three or four in the metropolitan zone . . .

It would be impertinent of me to claim why all these people moved away from other parties - the coalition parties in particular and voted for us. However, there are some self-evident reasons. As I travelled around my electorate during the campaign I was struck by the overwhelming number of people who feel isolated from the major parties, and who feel a sense of alienation and helplessness in a storm of political and economic change. People feel that the system of government is no longer relevant to them, and that it is no longer designed to accommodate or satisfy their needs. There is a sense of frustration and anger that their voices are no longer being heard. The process of Government to them bears no semblance of relevance to their daily lives. Government is now intimidating; it brings with it a sense of foreboding. The rush to change which consumes all modern Governments in the name of the collective greater good holds no apparent place for the individual's wellbeing.

Governments, both federal and state, in the past decade and a half have been frenetic, and in some respects schizophrenic, in their economic approach to society. Grand and lofty words such as globalisation, internationalisation, rationalisation and privatisation may be compelling to an uncaring, desensitised and antiseptic world of bureaucrats and government ministers who see them as the route to a brave and bold new future. To people in rural and mining towns and centres, they are the cold and clinical prescription for the destruction of their quality of life and their social fabric. One of the profound effects of economic rationalism and economic efficiency, as it is euphemistically called, has been the destruction of small Australian towns and communities. These towns are in many respects the social fabric of Australian society. They have helped develop and mould the quintessential Australian character. The notions of self-help, self-reliance, community participation and voluntary service are the inimitable qualities intrinsic to small towns and communities - all having sprung from individual and collective need, and all of which have shaped the nature and character that is uniquely Australian. It was the self-reliance, the mateship and the rugged and reckless indifference to outside authority, which springs from these qualities that personified the character of Australian soldiers in two world wars. This strength has been the core of Australia's development, and it continues to be the fabric that binds society in Australian country towns. It is this that is lost with the demise and destruction of these communities. It is apparently the price that successive Governments of both political persuasions reckon is worth the benefits of economic efficiency.

As we all know the first elements of decimation of these towns is the removal of their infrastructure. Invariably it begins with the closing of government agencies and services. In pursuit of greater efficiency, countless towns have seen their hospitals reduced to nursing posts, post offices reduced to agencies, and Main Roads' depots, Telstra technicians' and linesmen's depots closed and moved to regional centres or to the metropolitan area. In the past we have witnessed the closure of rail services, the sale of Stateships and, more recently, the privatisation of rail freight. The residents are invariably informed that this is the price of progress and that reducing or removing services will reduce the cost of those services for all consumers. In some obscure and perverse way, this economic efficiency is deemed to be in the best interests of those who are most affected.

The federal Labor Government embraced the mantra of privatisation and sold off the one great Australian icon that stood as a symbol of security, certainty and stability of country life: the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. The new managing director, on his multi-million dollar salary, with promises from the board of a great deal more if he increased the share price, immediately placed profits before people and shareholders before customers. The result was the closure of bank branches in country towns across Australia. The Commonwealth Bank's behaviour in private hands was no different from that of the other major banks that brutally and uncaringly closed hundreds of branches. The response of the Government to these appalling corporate citizens was muted approval. Greed is good.

The federal Liberal Government has been no better, and in fact the rate of acceleration of country branch closures has increased. Howard came to office, liked what he saw and promptly sold off 51 per cent of Telstra. Services and facilities rapidly departed from remote and rural parts of Western Australia. As staff and their families streamed out of towns, school numbers dropped, schools were closed, and the teachers followed the bank staff. Police stations soon closed, and more families were transferred away. Many of those towns are now just shells. Little remains except the memories of what used to be. Many other towns exist without basic facilities. If residents have to travel away for banking and other services, the temptation is to buy goods elsewhere, so the shops and other outlets also close. The logical consequence is that the Government's services are relocated in either major centres or metropolitan areas. The loss of towns and the dislocation of the population are the necessary and acceptable cost.

The end result of economic rationalism is intended to reduce costs and to use the savings by either lowering taxes or providing national infrastructure. Governments, of course, rarely reduce taxes and charges, because rather than allow the taxpayers to spend their money as they wish, Governments prefer to spend the money for them on their favourite projects, and look for thanks from a grateful electorate.

In the last term of the Court Government, the citizens of Perth were endowed with a belltower, the partial construction of a maritime museum and the promise of a convention centre. These monuments to the folly of government epitomise the inequity of the relocation of services and resources. How often does the Government imagine that the voters of the Mining and Pastoral Region are able to visit these grand edifices? As with the well-equipped hospitals and high schools, they are for the indulgence of city folk.

The tragic consequence of the demise of country towns does not visit just one generation of Australians but very often affects three. Often people retire to these towns so that they can be with their children and their grandchildren. If young couples are forced to move away because of job opportunities, it means that the grandparents are either left isolated in the town in a home they cannot sell or forced to move somewhere else.



Economic rationalism is about efficiency; it is not about equity. For those Australians who live outside large population centres, economic efficiency invariably comes at the price of social equity. The obvious question that must be addressed is, what obligation and responsibility does government accept for the maintenance of social and economic infrastructure in regional and remote Australia? What rights do the people in those areas have to the same quality of life that is available to the voters and taxpayers in suburban Perth? By what criteria are their entitlements judged? The question is not rhetorical. No Government has set out what it sees as the tangible or intrinsic values of country communities, save for the normal platitudes that are invariably a substitute for real commitment. I have dwelt on this matter at some length because it goes to the heart of the practical consequence of the obsession of successive Governments of pursuing dry, uncaring economic policies in the name of efficiency and rationalism.

I have already touched on the effects of privatising the Commonwealth Bank. In many respects we can expect the same result with services and facilities if the federal Government fully privatises Telstra. While the directors of Telstra are boasting about record profits and massive cost cutting, many people in my electorate do not have a decent telephone service and do not have access to a mobile telephone service or a fast facsimile transmission service.

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon JOHN FISCHER: With that as the consequence of a partial privatisation of Telstra, what might we expect with full privatisation? The only improvements that have been made in some parts of the country regions have been brought about in the form of inducements to those federal country members to convince them to vote for a full sale of Telstra. It is not without significance that the federal Government has dropped the complete privatisation of Telstra from the political agenda leading up to the federal election. The country people know what its sale will mean to them.

Before I leave the issue of globalisation, I wish to address two other areas. The first is the consequence to the Mining and Pastoral Region of globalisation, or internationalisation as some wish to call it. Internationalisation is not restricted just to the transfer of finance, goods and services. It includes the transfer of sovereign power. This, of course, has occurred through the formation and ratification by sovereign states of international treaties, covenants and conventions. The federal Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade report entitled "A Review of Australia's Efforts to Promote and Protect Human Rights" observed that there has been a tendency for the United Nations to limit national sovereignty. This evolution, therefore, increasingly demands a reconsideration of the principle of national sovereignty. United Nations conventions, now covering a wide range of activities, inevitably change the character of domestic institutions, affect domestic legislation and extend accountability beyond the usual domestic constituency.

In other words, as the internationalisation of law increases, so the strength of domestic law is subjugated and weakened. Perversely, while international conventions interfere with domestic law, they arm the federal Government with the power to override state laws.

It should not be forgotten that the signing and ratifying of these conventions, treaties and covenants are not subject to parliamentary approval or scrutiny, and some have been entered into on behalf of the Australian people without even the consideration of Cabinet.

The High Court of Australia has developed a doctrine that the external affairs powers allow the Parliament to legislate for the implementation within Australia of any international obligation to which this country is a party. This extends to anything of international concern in which Australia takes an interest. Not only do international agreements provide the federal Government with power to legislate in areas over which it would otherwise have no jurisdiction and for which the Constitution makes no provision, but also Australian legislation shall be interpreted in accordance with the principles and intentions of the international instrument.

Justice Kirby, the then President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal, confirmed the direct influence of international conventions when he stated that several of the trailblazing decisions of the High Court in 1992 were influenced by the fact that what Australian courts decide can now be scrutinised and criticised by the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

It is perhaps worth observing that the committees of some of these conventions, to which the High Court of Australia has deferentially begun to fashion domestic common law, are made up of members of countries with totalitarian despotic leaders. Those members of the United Nations committee on the elimination of racial discrimination who have graced the committee, include members from Romania, China and Cuba. By any measure, having delegates from these countries sitting in judgment on Australia's compliance with the terms of that convention, is, to say the least, bizarre.

The effect of the intrusion of international conventions, to which neither the Parliament nor the people have agreed or approved, is to be starkly found in the Mining and Pastoral Region. The problems of both unlawful immigrants and native title are in many respects the product of international conventions.

The four conventions which apply to immigration legislation are: the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; the international Convention Against Torture; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The enormous number of boat people who are coming ashore on our north west coast is the direct cause of the various courts' generous interpretation of these conventions. The clear message right around the world is that Australia is a "soft touch". Six thousand boat people this year paid people smugglers to smuggle them into Australia.

Boat people entering Australia have six levels of application and appeal. Following their international departmental assessment, asylum seekers have access to a special merits review body, the independent Refugee Review Tribunal, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, the Federal Court of Australia, the Full Federal Court and the High Court. Asylum seekers may also appeal to the minister's discretionary power. As a point of interest, illegal immigrants often have more access to the law through aid than ordinary Australians. That situation is bizarre. Technically, access to the courts is supposed to be only on matters of law; however, in recent rulings the High Court has extended access beyond matters of law.

Illegal refugees also have access to the International Convention Against Torture. That body, made up of members of other countries, sits in judgment on whether, if the refugees are returned to their own country, they are likely to be subject to torture. To add to the protracted time it takes to deal with refugee applications, this body meets twice a year and has a long backlog. Need we wonder why the Derby and Port Hedland immigration detention centres are bursting at the seams? In 1999-2000 the cost of illegal immigrants in Australia was \$200 million. The cost of the 2 000 refugee applications this year is projected to be more than \$15 million. The cost of the Refugee Review Tribunal is about \$14 million per year. The 2000-01 budget allocated \$52.1 million over four years to establish two new detention centres in Darwin and Brisbane. The total expenditure on detention centre infrastructure last year was \$24.4 million. The cost of upgrading the Port Hedland detention centre over a number of years was \$12.5 million. The cost of upgrading Curtin detention centre was \$5.5 million. At the same time, the people of Derby do not even have a decent and reliable electricity service.

Sadly, this is one of the growth industries of my electorate. It is also a boon to lawyers who vehemently oppose amending the laws to restrict access to the plethora of tribunals and courts to which the illegal migrants can appeal, armed with their lawyers. This lucrative avenue of the law is now second to that of the native title bonanza.

The human tragedy of the very generous interpretation of the various conventions by our courts is that it is sending exactly the wrong signal to those people overseas. The result is the flood of fare-paying illegal migrants who are stealing the places that have been allocated to the refugees living in appalling and atrocious refugee camps around the world. As the federal Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs points out, Australian tribunals and courts have granted refugee status to 97 per cent of Iraqi boat people, compared with between 10 and 15 per cent of those whose cases were heard by the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Jordan. It is interesting to observe that the very same illegal Middle East migrants, who claim to be escaping harsh and brutal regimes, are now threatening and assaulting Australian citizens in Australian detention centres.

The fact of the matter is that successive federal Governments have enthusiastically embraced these conventions, which are invariably not needed by those who signed them and ignored by those who do not. Our proactive and interventionist High Court has taken it upon itself to reinterpret domestic law on the basis of these conventions, treaties and covenants, and the consequence has been the diminution of domestic laws and the transfer of sovereign power to international bodies.

The second matter which greatly affects the Mining and Pastoral Region is the native title legislation. This legislation springs from the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. This convention provided the mechanism for the Racial Discrimination Act, which in turn effectively ultimately led to the present native title legislation, and more particularly the gridlock that presently exists. Enormous sections of the Mining and Pastoral Region are locked up and cannot be explored for minerals or metals. The consequence has been that exploration in Western Australia has declined and remains at a very low level. The granting of tenements has ground to a halt. In 1993-94, 805 leases were granted, and in 1999-2000 fewer than 200 were granted. In 2000, 10 500 mineral title applications were in process; 16 000 mining leases were in the right to negotiate process; and merely 180 mining leases were granted. The level of expenditure in mining exploration has declined from \$175 million in 1975 to \$100 million in 2000. I do not blame that all upon native title problems, but it is in large measure due to them.

There has been a very significant increase in the budgets of major Australian mining companies for overseas exploration. It has not been possible to quantify how much this shift from domestic to foreign exploration

expenditure is due to the uncertainty of tenure of mining leases in Australia. However, from the public comments of these companies, it is significant. Mining companies use three criteria when considering exploration in a country: a stable political system; a stable economy; and security and certainty of land tenure. Clearly, Australia has the first two but, equally, it does not have the third.

It is not my wish on this occasion to visit the issue of Aboriginal land rights. However, neither the social engineering by the judicial activists who sit on the High Court, who produced the Mabo decision, nor the legislation which followed, has served the best interests of Aboriginal people or the wider community. The conventions to which I have referred and the consequences flowing from them show the profound impact on Australian domestic laws of the globalisation of sovereignty.

As I said from the outset, globalisation is not just about the transfer of capital, goods and services; it is also about the transfer of national sovereignty. The four conventions relating to immigration, refugees and human rights significantly diminish both the Commonwealth's and the State's sovereignty. One Nation has frequently spoken out about this loss of national sovereignty. The response of both major parties to our concern has been to condemn us for displaying what they describe as xenophobia.

One Nation is reflecting strong and growing community sentiment, to which the federal coalition has, with its decision on the takeover attempt of Woodside Petroleum, apparently partially awoken. I have no doubt that our calls for greater control over our own natural assets and collective destiny played no small part in the recent decision by the federal Treasurer in rejecting Shell's takeover bid of Woodside. Does anyone seriously believe that if the bid had been made just two years ago, this gung ho, let it rip federal Government would have rejected the offer? I think not. As almost every informed political commentator has observed, the decision clearly reeked of political considerations. The Treasurer has had to keep a straight face. However, the Prime Minister in particular has exploited the decision for political benefit at every opportunity. To some short-sighted, brain-washed lemmings in the major parties and to economic purists, nationalism may be xenophobic; however, to the great majority of the public, it is economic realism and practical, healthy patriotism.

Given the present disastrous state of the Australian dollar, a number of our major companies are at risk of foreign takeovers. The great Australian mining house, WMC Resources Ltd, which has many of its assets in this State, is vulnerable, as the directors are well aware. To our opponents, economic opportunism may simply be just one of the hazards of the new world economic order. To One Nation, resting our long-term economic strength and fate on nothing more than the whims and foibles of each economic breeze that drifts past is national, social and economic heresy.

One Nation does not espouse reactionary economic policies and it does not stand Canute-like before the waves of inevitable change that modern communications, transportation and electronic transfers provide to an ever shrinking planet. What One Nation does oppose is the view of both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party that efficiency is more important than equity, that economic theories are an end in themselves and that the notion of a greater good, automatically subjugating and subsuming an obligation to the individual, is a morally defensible imperative. There can be no greater good if it is not a good collectively, for all individuals.

I do not claim that my views are novel or new and I am sure that they have been more eloquently put by others. However, I believe they are views that deserve to be restated. Each of the items I have addressed goes to the question of who controls our economic, social and political destiny. Are we to export control over the levers which dictate how we live and in what sort of community and country we live? One Nation makes no apology for being nationalistic in its outlook and conduct. It is an essential ingredient in the formation of our policies. One Nation does not as a principle accept the international transfer of judicial authority from our courts, and it is opposed to the transfer of legislative authority from the legislators to the courts. It does not accept the High Court as a social arbitrator.

I hold the very strong view that laws are best made by those closest to the people that they are to affect. I am a federalist and not a centralist and therefore I support the devolution of authority and the One Nation policy of citizens initiated referendums.

If the federal Government wants to hand over authority for decision making in Australia, or if it wants to take unto itself new and greater authority over the States, it can seek approval from the electorate by way of a referendum, not by use of international treaties. I hold the view that conventions should be signed and ratified by the federal Government only with the approval of both Houses of the Parliament.

I have taken this opportunity to address these issues because the changing balance of power and authority at a state, federal and international level is, in my view, fundamental to the future economic, social and political direction of Australia. These are not just federal issues; they are also state and local issues. These matters particularly touch the daily lives of the people of my electorate.

What has in many respects become an international laissez-faire economy has dramatically changed the attitude of all levels of government towards the provision of services and social infrastructure. It most certainly has seen Governments stand by and allow national and international companies to become delinquent corporate citizens.

The use of international conventions has not only seen a significant shift in political authority, it has also allowed the High Court to become a participant in the political process. I believe the fact that ordinary people feel disempowered and alienated was in considerable measure reflected in the vote of the two major parties at the state election. There is no evidence in the Labor Party's vote that the public has any belief or faith in its reflecting the wishes of the electorate. The dramatic collapse of the coalition's vote speaks for itself.

One Nation does not claim to have all the answers, it does not offer a panacea, but it does claim to listen to and to understand the hopes and aspirations of ordinary Western Australians. One Nation does claim to reflect the voice of those who no longer feel they are heard by the major parties. One Nation does claim to represent those who no longer believe their interests are paramount in the plans of either a Labor or Liberal Government.

Mr President, if the votes received and the members elected by One Nation at both federal and state elections force Governments of either persuasion to address the matters that One Nation speaks out about, I will feel we are making a significant contribution to the wellbeing of those we represent.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I congratulate those people in the public gallery who extended the right of freedom of speech this evening.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon E.R.J. Dermer.