



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Ms Emily Hamilton, MLA

(Member for Joondalup)

Legislative Assembly

Address-in-Reply

Wednesday, 17 May 2017

Reprinted from Hansard

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 16 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.

MS E. HAMILTON (Joondalup) [3.17 pm]: I would like to congratulate the Speaker, Peter Watson, member for Albany, on his position, and extend congratulations to all my colleagues who have been elected to this Parliament. I would also like to thank the parliamentary staff for their support and guidance in the past weeks.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Whadjuk Noongar people, and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.

In what has been considered by some to be a historic win by the Labor party, it is an honour and a privilege to have been elected to represent the Joondalup electorate. I want to thank the local community for placing their trust in me and I will work to ensure that they are represented in this Parliament.

What has motivated me to be standing here today is the want to be part of the machinery that is able to make change—a positive change to improve our community—and to provide a voice to those who do not have one. I am motivated by the want to represent the community that I call home and to address the issues that they are facing today, that we are all facing today. The current challenge is jobs. People are finding themselves out of work and unable to provide for their families. I will be addressing this issue to ensure that we deliver local jobs.

Joondalup is a young city by any comparison. It used to be a far extension of the Perth metropolitan region and has its roots in the Aboriginal culture. “Joondalup” is an Aboriginal word of the Noongar people and means “lake that glistens”. This refers to Lake Joondalup that sits to the eastern side of the electorate, separating the Cities of Joondalup and Wanneroo. The 1980s and 1990s saw a community begin to emerge in Joondalup, and this was in line with the corridor plan for Perth that was adopted by the state government in 1970. This plan was rooted in the idea of establishing subregional areas outside the CBD. Thirty years ago the road that went to the suburb of Mullaloo was a dirt track. I was at a Mullaloo surf lifesaving awards dinner just the other week and heard a story from a gentleman who has been volunteering for the club for the past 35 years. He told a story of the lengths he had to go to, to access Mullaloo Beach each weekend for patrol. It was no mean feat. It was the end of the line, and look how far we have come.

We are home to over 27 000 electors and that number is growing. The Joondalup of today is a magnificent city. Although still considered relatively young in age, it has proven itself as the second CBD of Perth. The growth that it has experienced, and will continue to experience, is overwhelming. Directions 2031 names Joondalup town centre as one of two primary centres of the Perth metropolitan region. Considered to be the second CBD of Perth, we have world-class facilities on our doorstep. We are leaders in innovation and the sciences, and home to the education precinct of Edith Cowan University, North Metropolitan TAFE and the police academy. We have Joondalup Health Campus, a leading hospital. To top it off, we have the largest shopping centre in the Southern Hemisphere. We will become an innovation hub, and I am excited to see this emerge.

We have a lively, inclusive and active community. People are largely invested in the areas surrounding their homes, and high participation rates in community, sporting and school groups and organisations illustrate this. Volunteers come from all walks of life and there is a dedicated and committed number of people who donate their time to these groups. I commend people for getting involved.

Joondalup has always had great local representatives, and I have big shoes to fill. I would like to take a moment to reflect on the contribution of Tony O’Gorman, who served three terms as the member for Joondalup, from 2001 to 2013. I know that the electorate valued your hard work and dedication and that your intricate involvement locally, resonated. I also acknowledge the work of my predecessor, Jan Norberger. Although we differed on the direction for Joondalup, it was clear to me that you were invested in the local community.

Western Australia has experienced unprecedented growth and prosperity in the past, but the failure to embrace this and plan coherently for the future has seen the current state of affairs unfold. We could not sustain the path that we were on, and the McGowan Labor government has been elected. We now have a mandate to follow through with our election commitments, and for us, in Joondalup, this means the Ocean Reef marina development, the rail line extension to Yanchep, the upgrade and expansion of the Joondalup Health Campus and varied local projects that will benefit many and stimulate the jobs market. I want to see opportunities for people living in Joondalup. We need local, secure and sustainable jobs; meaningful paths to employment for our young people; affordable and accessible training and apprenticeship opportunities; quality health care close to home; as well as investment in our local schools.

It was very clear that the people of Joondalup wanted to see progress on the Ocean Reef marina development. It has overwhelming public support and local residents have a keen interest in seeing construction begin. I am proud to be part of a government that in 2004 committed funding to the feasibility study on this project. Led by the then minister, Alannah MacTiernan, Labor showed that we were going to focus on this project. It is disappointing that the previous government did not make this a priority, and, rather, focused its efforts on the CBD. I am looking forward to being able to take my family down to the marina to enjoy a world-class public amenity that will not only be a key economic driver in the region, but will open up the northern corridor to an array of tourism opportunities and ongoing employment for local residents. The marina will also become home to the Whitfords Volunteer Sea Rescue Group, amongst other clubs, groups and associations. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge their work. Run by volunteers every moment of every day, they serve the northern coastline. Their efforts are second to none, and we thank you. Being an avid fisher and diver myself, and recognising that a large part of our community enjoy ocean-based sports and recreation, I know that people value the job that you do. Our pristine coastline makes Perth a unique tourism destination. The marina will bring people to the area.

It will boost tourism. It will be well utilised by local residents and the wider public, and provide local employment opportunities.

On another note, Labor has a proven track record when it comes to building public transport and infrastructure. We will again see this in action with the construction of the rail line extension to Yanchep as part of Metronet.

It is true, we, the people of Perth, have an affinity with our cars, and this is going to be something that will be difficult to change. But it is something that can be done over time. It is something that governments have been aware of for a very long time. Congestion is an ever-increasing issue, and it is one that needs to be addressed. Continuing to increase the ability for people to access quality, reliable and frequent public transport options is just one way that we can start to take cars off the roads.

Joondalup is a dynamic city, but we need multiple city centres in the metropolitan region. This will further ensure that people can live and work locally. Timing is very important in the early stages of new developments. Timing of key public transport infrastructure projects is fundamental in orchestrating the best integration of a new satellite city. We need to ensure that appropriate planning is undertaken, and an example of this is what happened in Joondalup. We have a train station in the heart of the city centre that provides a transport link for people to access the city centre with ease. Our commitment to provide a rail line to Yanchep is fundamental in terms of timing, as that city centre is just beginning to come alive. Extending bus feeder services into the suburbs to provide a faster, more efficient way for people to reach the local train station will also get cars off the roads locally. The widening of Mitchell Freeway is a consideration that needs to be made, with the construction of three lanes heading south from Joondalup Drive to Hepburn Avenue.

Access to quality health care close to where people live was a pivotal focus in our Putting Patients First policy. The northern corridor of Perth for a long time has been considered one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia. We need to make sure that the health care needs of everyday Western Australians in the outer suburbs are still being met. We have a great hospital in the Joondalup Health Campus, but it is the case that it is at capacity. It has the second-busiest emergency department in Australia and needs to grow to keep up with demand. I am particularly pleased that a stroke support unit will be located at the Joondalup Health Campus. The clinical services framework highlights the need for a tertiary hospital in Joondalup. I am confident that in time that is what the Joondalup Health Campus will become.

We have seen schools struggle over the past two terms. Our children are the leaders of tomorrow and they need access to quality education. As a mum with two school-age children, I know the conversations that are happening about what the future looks like for our kids. We will equip our schools with teaching staff and give them the tools necessary to support our children with the skills they will need to navigate a new and ever-changing employment market. Parents are telling me that they are looking forward to education assistants going back into classrooms and that our focus on science and coding in schools is well met. Many primary schools in Joondalup are already teaching science and coding, and our commitment will provide extra support. On a separate note, I would like to acknowledge all the hard work and dedication of parents who have been involved in their local school P&C or school boards. I look forward to working with you.

On the topic of education and employment opportunities, investment in TAFE and ensuring that it is accessible and affordable is a statewide issue. Ensuring the North Metropolitan TAFE headquarters remains in Joondalup will be important and something that I will advocate for. With youth unemployment rates in the northern suburbs at significant levels, we need to make sure that there is a genuine path to employment so that when our young people leave school,

they can become contributing members of the community. This, in turn, will ensure that we build a strong, solid workforce. I do not for a second believe that the high youth unemployment rate is wholly due to unwillingness, but it is the case that youth unemployment creates social issues and barriers that are wide-reaching—homelessness is an example.

I had numerous conversations throughout the election campaign with community representatives and I am proud of the local projects and local jobs commitments that we were able to make in Joondalup. This will benefit so many local groups and organisations, and the wider community, and will also create jobs.

Participation in community sport will continue to grow in the area with the upgrade of the western side of HBF Arena. This will benefit four sporting codes in netball, rugby, little athletics and triathlon. Local sporting clubs, the Joondalup Lakers Basketball Club and the Joondalup Women's Football Club, will receive funds for new singlets and jerseys. Support for our Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park environmental group will continue. It will receive funds to provide environmental projects, such as seedling planting, clean-up days and bird boxes. The Joondalup Men's Shed will receive a small grant for upgrades to its equipment. With over 180 active members, I know that this is welcomed. The Northern Suburbs Stroke Support Group, of which I need to make special mention of Sally Allen, will receive a grant for new T-shirts and also for equipment to provide community support for stroke victims and their carers.

Youth Futures WA, a youth support organisation in Joondalup, with CEO Mark Waite, will be able to continue to provide much-needed support, with a grant towards its NEST project. I have been aware of the good work of Youth Futures for many years, but on hearing about this project, I was pleased to be able to advocate for many young mothers and their children who now will be able to receive support. Otherwise at risk of losing their child or children to social services, the NEST project works with women to help them begin their lives again, to provide support in gaining further education or employment, while teaching them about how to save and plan for their futures.

The Patricia Giles Centre operates in Joondalup and surrounds, providing assistance and support to victims of domestic violence. With the increasing number of people living in the northern suburbs, it is unfortunate that demand on services is growing. At the helm is Tillie Prowse who I know has a lot to offer this sector. A grant will be provided to assist the women and children and also provide funds for a family holiday camp. I am proud to be part of the first government to appoint a Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence. Several local school parents and citizens associations will also be able to invest back into schools with funds provided for things like shade sails over playgrounds, smart boards and classroom recourses to mention just a few of the projects that will be delivered. The Fathering Project is established in several school communities around the state. One operates in Currabine and several other schools in Joondalup would like to implement the program. With the aim of promoting positive fathering and providing events and activities for fathers to interact with their children, I look forward to seeing these groups flourish.

I am a member of a number of groups. One is the Joondalup Business and Professional Women's Association that strives to promote equal pay and equal representation for women in the workforce. This is something I strongly support and will continue to advocate for. Another group is the Joondalup Rotary Club, a dedicated group that meets on a weekly basis. It has solid values and supports projects both locally and internationally. The suburbs will flourish and communities will thrive under Labor. Under a Labor government, this will be done in a well-thought-out manner that takes into account the current economic and social climates that we need to live in.

I am the eldest of five children. My father, David, is a small business owner and my mother a spinal trained nurse. We have a big family, for sure, but mum is one of nine and dad one of seven children, so this number seems just right. Growing up in the northern suburbs, we were just like any other family. Mum and dad worked hard, both professionally and with us at home. We were always involved in community sport and activities and for years, mum even drove the school bus to excursions. We were all very involved in the family business, helping from a very young age, and I played a role in it while studying at university. Dad has a catering and a canvas manufacturing business, and today my three brothers all work there with dad. I graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Politics and Law. I enjoyed studying and the interest I found in the political and legal systems at high school was furthered at university. Although I am not the first member of Parliament to have graduated from that university, I am, to the best of my knowledge, the first female graduate to become a member of Parliament. Upon graduating, with a young daughter, I secured part-time employment with the local member for Joondalup at the time and really relished the opportunity to interact with the community. I continued in that role for the following 10 years for various members of Parliament in the northern suburbs. Here, I developed an understanding of the need to participate in the structures that govern our state. Being the forty-first member of the government in itself is something that I will cherish, but I will never forget being the thirtieth woman elected to the fortieth Parliament. I want to be a strong role model for my daughter—for the young and emerging women of today. Women still face many issues. I am excited to be part of a very diverse and representative Parliament, but do not get me wrong—I think we still have some way to go, but we are truly on track to reflecting here, in this house, the communities we represent.

I am proud to be able to show my children that if you set your mind to something, there is no stopping you. If you remain true to what you believe, you will achieve it. As a local representative, I see a part of my role to be a connector in Joondalup and the northern suburbs more widely. We have an amazing community and by bringing people and resources together, we can achieve great things whether it be from interactions with local P&Cs or the sharing of information between groups or the residents associations that have chairs who are beginning to meet to share ideas. This sense of information flow and sharing of ideas will truly allow us to strive. Such value can be achieved by communicating with like-minded individuals and organisations that will then have a flow-on effect and benefit for so many.

I did not take lightly the decision to run for a seat. I have always had a keen interest in the political system and the ways in which people are able to interact with it—or fail to be able to do so.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms E. HAMILTON: This was reinforced 12 months ago when I was preselected to run for the seat of Joondalup and I began getting out and speaking to people on the phones and doorknocking. People were not happy with the government. They did not feel like they were being represented and they were not happy with the focus on the CBD at the expense of the outer suburbs. I talked to traditional Liberal voters who were giving me their vote. People want secure futures, cost-of-living pressures addressed and the knowledge that their children will have opportunities. I have a drive and passion that has led me on a path to where I stand today. I have relished the past 12 months, and I very much look forward to the next four years in this house. This is not a path that I have walked by myself and nor would have I got here without the guidance and support of so many, both professionally and personally.

I do not think there is any way to explain to an 11-year-old daughter and an eight-year-old son, at the time, what it means to say you are running for a seat in the WA Parliament. On face value,

Mya thought it would be cool to have a mum who was a politician, and Ryan thought it would be fun to be able to go to the dining room. They thought the car being signed up was embarrassing and that all the corflute in gardens scattered around the electorate was funny. However, my children can be deep thinkers, at times, and also be very perceptive and considerate. Mya, you are a beautiful young woman. I loved reading your unprompted cards with words of support. Ryan, on each and every day of the five days it took for Joondalup to be declared, your “Mum, you’ve got this” comments kept me focused. To my children Mya and Ryan, just remember, if you set your mind to something, trust that you will get there. I love you.

To my dad, David, and my mother, Angela, who could not be here today, thank you. The same goes for my four brothers and sisters. Family means everything to me, and although not all of you are political in nature, you have supported me and my young family in ways I can never thank you enough for. To my close friends who have supported me, thank you. To my personal mentor, Liz Prime, your words of encouragement and advice provided me with a stability and sense of comfort throughout the months. I want to thank EMILY’s List for supporting me, and for all the work it does to ensure women receive representation in our Parliaments. To have an organisation that provides not only a mentoring role but also a network of women supporting women ensures that women win, and, more than that, the community wins.

To the members of Parliament who I have worked for, Tony O’Gorman, Ken Travers and Laine McDonald, thank you. They carved a path and showed me what it means to be a local representative. To my fellow electorate officers who I have worked with over the years, June, Julie, Chris, Emma and Alex, it was great working with all of you. To the current MPs who provided me support and kind words of wisdom, thank you.

A campaign is always run by a dedicated team that contribute so many hours and personal time. To my director, Laine, my manager, Alex, my finance manager, Walt, the field team, Marcus and Emily, thank you; words cannot express my gratitude. To the WA Labor team, headed by Patrick and Lenda, thank you and congratulations on a well-run campaign. To the union movement, United Voice and the Burgundy Wave, thank you. We need to continue to ensure that working Western Australians are represented. Now more than ever, with the trend towards casualisation of the workforce and underemployment, we need the union movement. Thank you to the unions that supported the campaign.

We built something in Joondalup over the past 12 months. We built a movement of a core group of dedicated volunteers who engaged with local residents one on one. They spoke to them about the issues they face and Labor’s positive set of policies as an alternative government. The Joondalup Community Action Network will be ever known as the engine room of our campaign and I would like to thank each and every person who joined me on the phones, the doors, letterboxing and attending community events, and more generally for being active in the community. The tireless effort and countless hours that were put into the campaign by volunteers since my preselection last April have been second to none, and, with your help, we have done our part in changing the government. Thank you to each and every one of you. I wish that I could name you all, but I cannot and I will not because the list is just too long! Thank you to the great volunteers without whom I would never have been able to take this seat. It is great to see some of you here today. We built something and the groundwork has been laid. I am looking forward to continuing the conversations that we started with local residents over the next four years.

Values that I hold dear are those of equality, fairness and opportunity. I will continue to advocate for and endeavour to represent those values. Standing here in this house, the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, has bestowed an innate sense of responsibility to

ensure that I advocate for the people of Joondalup and all that that entails. I took time to reflect—many days and hours—on what I wanted to say in my inaugural speech. I kept coming back to this: be the change you want to see.

I consider Perth's northern suburbs the best place to live and I consider Joondalup our home. I look forward to working with the community to deliver local jobs and continue the growth. Here, this seat in this house is not to be taken for granted. Grassroots level engagement is the cornerstone of our democratic process and that is what I strive to represent. Thank you.

[Applause.]
