



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Dr David Honey, MLA

(Member for Cottesloe)

Legislative Assembly

Premier's Statement

Thursday, 12 April 2018

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PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from 15 February on the following question —

That the Premier's Statement be noted.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [11.00 am]: I rise today to talk to the Premier's Statement. Mr Speaker, I am honoured to stand before you today as the member for Cottesloe. I have the greatest respect for this institution and for the people, past and present, who have served in this chamber. I hope that I can also make a significant contribution to this place. I will be only the fourth member for Cottesloe, following Sir Ross Hutchinson, Hon Bill Hassell and Hon Colin Barnett. I would particularly like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who helped me get to this place, some of whom are here today. In particular, I recognise: Ms Danielle Blain; Mr Ben Luscombe; Mr Willie Packer; Mr Simon Ehrenfeld; Mr Sam Calabrese, the state director of the Liberal Party; the members of state executive; and the many members of my family who are here today as well.

At the outset, I wish to especially recognise the contribution made to this Parliament and our state by the previous member for Cottesloe, Hon Colin Barnett. Colin served the people in Cottesloe for 27 years, equalling Sir Ross Hutchinson's period of service. A chronology of Colin's achievements would occupy the larger part of the time that I have allocated to me, so I will highlight only some of his key achievements. First and foremost, he was an effective representative for his electorate. During the campaign for the seat, I met many people who had benefited from Colin's hard work as the local member. He held a number of ministries in the Court Liberal government, most notably: Resource Development; State Development; and Education. He then carried most of the responsibility for the difficult role of Leader of the Opposition until he was sworn in as Premier in 2008. Colin had a vision for the state that manifested itself in many ways, including the most sustained period of growth in our state's history. He transformed the public health system. I especially recognise the initiative of the Barnett Liberal government in the recently opened Perth Children's Hospital, which was a marvellous initiative of his government—something that will serve the children of this state for many decades to come. His tenure also saw the transformation of Perth city into a vibrant and modern precinct, including Elizabeth Quay, Perth Stadium, Yagan Square and the sinking of the railway line, which have been enhanced by direct flights from London. He cared for the environment, overseeing the vesting of Bold Park as an A-class reserve with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, preserving 437 hectares of pristine coastal bushland for future generations. A substantially more impressive achievement and a more important legacy was the establishment of the Great Kimberley Marine Park. It is 1.8 million hectares of marine reserves in the north west of the state that permanently preserve Aboriginal and natural heritage in the region.

For my part, I believe that Colin's passion for improving public education will be his most lasting legacy. As education minister and Premier, he was responsible for the construction of 118 new schools—something I doubt that we will see bested in any time. He was also responsible for a major shift in the culture of our public schools, culminating in the implementation of the independent public school initiative, which has seen the transformation of dependent public schools into strong and successful institutions under the joint ownership

of teachers and parents. The availability of affordable, high-quality public education is critical to an egalitarian society. It is the principal enabler for social mobility and a key to maintaining a globally competitive workforce. We have a state education system that is the envy of much of the world and Colin can take significant credit for this achievement. I also recognise Hon Bill Hassell. Bill was the member for Cottesloe for 13 years from 1977 until 1990. I have known Bill for almost 30 years and I was the vice president and senior vice president of the Liberal Party when Bill was president. Bill has an outstanding and ongoing record of commitment to public service and I greatly value his wise counsel and guidance.

The electorate of Cottesloe is unusually interesting and diverse. It covers 35 square kilometres, comprising the southern-most peninsula of land between our beautiful Swan River and the Indian Ocean. To the south and south east, it is bounded by the Swan River, including all of the north side of our state's major gateway, the port of Fremantle. The western boundary is defined by the waters of the Indian Ocean, including the swimming beaches of North Fremantle, Mosman Park, Cottesloe, Swanbourne and the southern tip of City Beach. These beautiful beaches enhance the lives of the Perth of people. Cottesloe, in particular, attracts many local, interstate and overseas visitors. The main eastern boundary is Loch Street, which divides the suburbs of Claremont and Nedlands. There are seven local governments areas, which are wholly or partly contained within the electorate of Cottesloe. Working from north to south, these are: the Town of Cambridge; the City of Nedlands; the Town of Claremont; the Town of Cottesloe; the Shire of Peppermint Grove; the Town of Mosman Park; and the City of Fremantle. There are 18 schools in the electorate—eight government schools and ten private schools with an approximately equal balance of primary and senior schools. There are 24 primary and senior schools in addition to several dedicated kindergartens and many childcare centres that cater to students from the electorate. The electorate is well served by our highly regarded local newspapers: the *Cambridge Post*; the *Claremont–Nedlands Post*; the *Mosman–Cottesloe Post*; and the *Western Suburbs Weekly*.

I thought that it may interest this chamber to compare the electorates of Cottesloe and Rockingham, which is the home of our Premier. In many ways, Rockingham is very similar to Cottesloe and the similarities are as interesting and revealing as the differences. Both are highly desired ocean–beachside districts. Both were established prior to Federation and are now residential suburban areas with a mix of some industrial and commercial areas, each of which is going through some renewal. Electorally, both are so-called safe seats with Rockingham having always been held by a Labor member and Cottesloe having always been held by a Liberal member. Like the electoral district of Cottesloe, Rockingham is a compact, laid-back, beachside suburb that offers a mix of older brick homes that are going through renewal, some older flats in need of updating or replacement, newer multi-storey townhouses, and upmarket beachside apartments. However, the recent Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 census publications reveals trends that may surprise many in this chamber. There are 40 000 people living in the Cottesloe district, which is 1 000 more than are accommodated in Rockingham. This difference has persisted over the last five years, despite Rockingham being one of the fastest-growing suburbs in the metropolitan area.

The population density in the Cottesloe district is 11.64 people per hectare; it is only 8.15 people per hectare in Rockingham. In the R-code terms used by residential planners, this means the Cottesloe district with an average of R12 already has a 50 per cent higher residential density than the average for Rockingham of R8. Incidentally, the inner metropolitan district of Fremantle, also held by Labor, has an average of only R9. Medium and high-rise density housing is 43 per cent of total dwelling units in the Cottesloe district, already more than double the 21 per cent in Rockingham. Cottesloe also has more social housing, at 3.2 per cent of total dwellings, which is greater by about 50 dwelling units than the 2.8 per cent of social housing in Rockingham. In short, it seems clear that the Western Australian Planning Commission and

some enthusiastic developers should look further south to Fremantle and Rockingham to increase residential density. Cottesloe is already doing more than its fair share. It is very difficult to see on what basis the planning commission can justify the pursuit of high-density development and in-fill housing in my electorate.

Several key issues in the electorate require further elaboration and immediate attention. First and foremost is the issue of traffic congestion. Traffic flow in the electorate is significantly constrained by the narrow peninsula of land between the river and the sea. The main road connections in the Cottesloe electoral district are via a congested and inadequate connection of West Coast Highway, Stephenson Avenue and Alfred Road in the north and Curtin Avenue, Marine Parade, Stirling Highway and McCabe Street in the south. This problem is exacerbated by the many schools located in the electorate. Parents, most of whom also have paid employment, suffer considerable stress on a daily basis as they try to get the kids to school and then to their place of employment on time.

Cycling in the area can be extremely hazardous. There is an incomplete dual-use cycle path system that runs from Perth and ends at the Grant Street railway station. The danger for cyclists is greatest around the areas where traffic flows east-west over the railway line and Stirling Highway. We recently saw another terrible accident, in which a cyclist was hit by a motor vehicle on Eric Street. The cyclist was commuting from Fremantle and her husband has stated that they would have been using a dual-use cycle path, had one been available. The realignment of Curtin Avenue and the completion of the dual-use cycle path from Grant Street to Fremantle should be a priority of the government. I hope to gain the support of the member for Fremantle for the rapid completion of this important infrastructure. Other safe cycling routes are also urgently needed over the railway line and Stirling Highway and also connections to the beaches.

Public safety is a major issue in the southern part of Mosman Park. Residents in the area are very fearful for their personal safety. Parents shy away from the excellent public parks for fear of their children being exposed to antisocial behaviour or the danger of used syringes. It is apparent that inadequate police response times and a lack of support from the Department of Communities' Housing Authority is exacerbating this issue. A practice of concentrating early release prisoners, many of whom have drug dependency issues, in a single block of flats is a recipe for antisocial behaviour. I fear that it is all too easy to dismiss this critical issue as the complaints of a wealthy few. In fact, as has already been pointed out, the electorate of Cottesloe has a high proportion of public housing, and many of these residents live in the southern part of Mosman Park. These are the people most affected by the public safety issue. In many cases, these residents already suffer significant disadvantage and this is made all the worse by their fear for their personal safety and anxiety about the security of their property.

Finally, beachfront development, in particular on Marine Parade between Forrest and Grant Streets, is also a topic of considerable concern for the people of Cottesloe and also in the wider Perth community. Cottesloe, and its beach, is a uniquely beautiful location. It attracts a large number of visitors from all over Perth and, indeed, an increasing number of visitors from overseas. They are attracted to the area by the excellent beaches, ready accessible by road and public transport, and by the relaxed environment. There are obvious pressures for development in the area. As the Premier recently mentioned in the comment he made to *The West Australian* newspaper, the Cottesloe beachfront does need some redevelopment; however, it is critical that any such development does not negatively impact the amenity that so attracts people to the area. Naturally, property owners will look to maximise the value of their beachfront land by maximising the plot density, but it is the proper role of government, both local and state, to ensure that this desire for higher density does not compromise the distinctive and highly valued qualities of the area. Allowing Gold Coast-style high rise on the

beachfront would substantially diminish the attractiveness of this area for residents and visitors alike, including tourists. Whatever short-term gains some developments might offer for a few, they would degrade the amenity of the area and reduce its potential for the majority of users. As I have already pointed out, the electorate of Cottesloe is already carrying more than its fair share of the high-density housing in our city. Carefully considered low-rise development on the beachfront, focused on lifestyle uses—for example, cafes and small bars—with some increased density for accommodation back from the beach and improved access for pedestrians and cyclists will ultimately provide greater overall benefit for the state. Development in the area needs to be managed with an agreed master plan that incorporates the three affected shires—Mosman Park, Cottesloe and Nedlands. Allowing development to occur ad hoc, with special exemptions on plot density and building height, would lead to a loss of opportunity to develop a world-class tourist destination that can generate significant local jobs and to create wealth into the future.

Like many, my beliefs have been most heavily influenced by my family upbringing and subsequent life experiences. I have had the great advantage of having a strong and loving family to support me throughout my life. My parents, Peter and Jean Honey, had a priority in their lives—to give their children the opportunities that they did not have in their own lives. My father was a young man and my mother a child during the Great Depression. They did not have the educational opportunities that we enjoy here today. I am very privileged to have my mother, Jean, here today, a sprightly 92-year-old. My sisters, brothers and I were raised on a small farm at Cranbrook in the south west of the state. We lived in quite humble circumstances, not unlike many farming families at the time. My parents worked extremely hard to provide a good upbringing for their five children. We had the most wonderful childhoods. Living on a farm provides experiences that are difficult to replicate in the city. We had two parents who loved us. We had excellent food and a warm bed at night. I knew that my parents were doing everything in their control to make my life the best it could be. The wellspring for happiness in most adults I know is understanding that they are loved by their parents. I have tried to emulate my parents' values in the way that my wife, Robyn, and I have raised our own family. We have been blessed with six children—Elizabeth, Catherine, Peter, David, Michael and Rebecca—three of whom are here today. Robyn is an accomplished academic. Like most families, we struggle to balance the demands of a family when both parents have full-time jobs. I could not do what I do without Robyn's love and support, and I am very grateful for that.

I attended Hampton Senior High School in Morley. I was required to board away at Swanleigh Boarding Hostel, an Anglican hostel for children from the country. Hampton was an excellent state school with excellent staff. The experience of boarding gives me some insight into the issues faced by children from the country and, in particular, the challenges children face boarding away from home. I have particular empathy with the plight being faced by the children who are currently boarding at Moora hostel and what it means to close this facility. Closing the hostel and forcing these children to relocate to a larger town or city is causing considerable and understandable distress to the children and their families.

I was fortunate to gain entrance to the science faculty at the University of Western Australia and completed a science degree with a double major in physical and inorganic and organic chemistry with honours, and then went on to complete a PhD. During my postgraduate years, I became involved in student politics, representing students on the guild council, professorial board and the university senate. My first job was as a forensic scientist at the Government Chemical Laboratories in Perth, now the ChemCentre. I later moved from forensics to head up a section within the environmental chemistry laboratory. I entered the world of mining when I set up a hydrometallurgy research group at Western Mining's Belmont mineral processing laboratory.

At that time, I became involved in party politics at the state level and was elected as the state president of the Liberal Party, a position I held for three years. Finally, I moved to Alcoa, first to the global refining technology delivery group and later to a series of refinery management roles, culminating in the role of production manager at Kwinana refinery.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: When I left Alcoa to take up my seat in Parliament, I was manager of Alcoa's global refining residue operations, with responsibilities in the United States, Brazil, Spain and Western Australia. Since 2012, I have also been the president of the Kwinana Industries Council, a group that represents the major industries on the Kwinana industrial strip. The Kwinana and Rockingham industrial areas and the associated Australian Marine Complex are outstanding assets for this state. The industrial areas alone generate over \$16 billion in revenue and employ several thousand people. This is an area that should be the focus for continued development. The opportunity for new businesses will be considerably enhanced by the development of the outer harbour and I look forward to the outcomes of the current study that the government has commissioned into this opportunity.

I see my principal role in Parliament as being an effective representative of the people of Cottesloe. As I have already said, it is a diverse electorate with a range of common issues. As in all electorates, there are also a range of more personal issues that have significant effects on people's lives and require the attention of a local member. I place high importance on attending to the needs of the people in my electorate, including a couple of members opposite! My next priority is to be an effective member of Parliament. I appreciate that I will need to learn a lot to fulfil this role effectively and I am very grateful for the training and guidance that I have already received from the parliamentary staff. They have been both kind and informative in their training and I look forward to our continuing interaction in the future. I am also very grateful to the parliamentarians, past and present, who have made their time available to educate me about how to conduct myself in this chamber. I am looking forward to working with my parliamentary colleagues to hold the government accountable and to participating effectively in the work of this place.

My involvement in the mining and manufacturing sector has given me a clear insight into the opportunities that we have in Western Australia and also some of the challenges that we face in achieving these opportunities. The heavy dependence of our economy on primary production is a key concern for the future of our state. In particular, with the focus on mining, there is a great risk that we will miss the opportunity to develop the key industries that will enable our children and our grandchildren to enjoy the same quality of life that we have. The bulk commodities that currently dominate our exports are all too finite; hence, the wealth associated with these commodities is transient. It is not that we should constrain these great industries. However, we should have a clear view that this is a transition phase in our economy and that we need to make adequate preparation for an evolution towards a more broadly based economy.

An area of current opportunity is the rapidly expanding lithium industry. In the 2017 report on mining activity, the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety reported a 166 per cent increase in spodumene concentrate—a lithium aluminium silicate—exports to the value of \$780 million. Until quite recently, lithium has been primarily used in ceramics with minor medical uses. However, the growth in demand for large-scale rechargeable batteries has seen a massive increase in the demand for high purity lithium carbonate and lithium hydroxide. Tianqi Lithium Australia is currently completing a lithium hydroxide plant at Kwinana and has already sought approval for a second stage. Other players, including Talison Lithium and Albemarle Corporation, are also actively considering value-added production from concentrate to lithium carbonate or hydroxide.

Perhaps less well known is the requirement for high purity nickel hydroxide in the manufacture of so-called lithium batteries. In fact, the batteries use more nickel than lithium. We have the great fortune that one of the world's highest purity nickel manufacturers is already based at Kwinana—the BHP nickel refinery. BHP is currently constructing the world's largest high purity nickel sulphate plant at its refinery at Kwinana.

We have the potential to become the epicentre of global lithium battery manufacture—creating “Lithium Valley” in Western Australia and leveraging the many synergies that come from concentrating an industry in a single location. In fact, this should be a goal for the state. We have all the ingredients we require to achieve this outcome—global dominance in the supply of critical reagents, a highly educated and skilled workforce and established support infrastructure in place for energy, water, transport. Critical support industries, including educational institutions, would be drawn to the area, taking advantage of the considerable land that is currently available in the area—over 4 000 hectares of public and private property. This would ultimately create thousands of sustainable jobs for many decades in an area that currently suffers high unemployment. It would also create billions of dollars of additional revenue for our state.

A danger to this future is the misguided fracturing of industry across regional industrial estates. Although I understand the desire to take advantage of opportunities to base industries in the regions, compelling new lithium manufacturers to be based away from Kwinana is short-sighted and threatens the opportunity to establish a new industry that is vertically integrated through to battery manufacture. This would be a missed opportunity that ultimately minimises the opportunities for new jobs and wealth creation for future generations.

We must also pay more heed to the critical issue of affordable energy supply in this state. In 2004 at a presentation to the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce Business Awards ceremony, the late Sir Charles Court gave an excellent summary of the reasons why we originally needed to develop the natural gas industry in Western Australia. Above anyone else, Sir Charles was the parliamentarian principally responsible for fostering the gas industry in our state. He made it clear that the main reason for developing the gas industry was to facilitate downstream processing of our abundant mineral resources. He also warned of the great risk that we could see the end of affordable gas in this state in as little as 50 years. He lamented that despite the considerable work done to identify suitable gas reserves, relatively little of it was being used in value-added downstream manufacturing. Estimates vary, but there seems to be a reasonable consensus that for every dollar we earn exporting natural gas, we can earn at least \$10 for our local economy if that gas is used in manufacturing. Looked at another way, a 50-year life for affordable gas supplies could last 500 years for the same economic benefit to the state every single year. Instead of a critical resource lasting for many generations, affordable natural gas is likely to be largely depleted in the lifetime of our children. Energy is not just another bulk commodity like iron ore. Affordable and clean energy, such as natural gas, is absolutely critical if we are to maintain the lifestyles we currently enjoy. Affordable energy supplies for Western Australian households and a competitive local manufacturing sector are key outcomes from having affordable natural gas. Exporting our gas at such a massive rate is akin to exporting most of our clean drinking water when we know a drought is about to occur. Our children and grandchildren will lament this lack of foresight.

The state has very limited control over the offshore gas industry; this is a commonwealth responsibility. The recent moves to processing gas offshore effectively deprive the state of any influence. This increases the imperative for the state government to enable greater onshore gas exploration. We must also develop our substantial non-traditional gas reserves. Onshore gas is far more likely to enter the local gas market and support domestic and industrial use into the future. There are understandable public concerns about the development of non-traditional gas

reserves. However, we should not wait for a gas shortage crisis before we learn how to safely harness this resource. We need to work with responsible companies and understand how we can exploit these reserves and also protect environmental values, such as groundwater quality. I am confident that this is achievable. Simply locking up these reserves and banning future projects will fail the needs of future generations. We must develop a much stronger focus on the state and national interests for any gas export projects. A short-term focus on relatively limited economic benefits is risking the economic future of our state and nation.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I thank you and the members of this house for listening to my inaugural address. I will do everything that I can to be an effective representative for the people of Cottesloe. I will also devote myself to working constructively in this house and contributing to the critical task of holding the members opposite accountable for good government.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal Party leadership team for allocating me the responsibilities of shadow minister assisting the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister for Water. Water is a finite and critical resource for this state. Provision of clean drinking water is the single most important factor protecting public health. It is one of the three critical inputs into allowing the manufacturing sector to succeed and grow. It is the key to the development of new, high-value adding agricultural industries. I am very much looking forward to learning more about this shadow portfolio and contributing to debate in this chamber. I am enthusiastic about my new job and I look forward to working with all of you over the coming years. Thank you.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mrs M.H. Roberts (Minister for Police)**.
