



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL SPEECH



Hon Colin Tincknell, MLC
(Member for South West Region)

Legislative Council

Address-in-Reply

Wednesday, 24 May 2017

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 23 May on the following motion moved by Hon Sally Talbot —

That the following address be presented to Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson, Companion of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the state of Western Australia and its dependencies in the commonwealth of Australia —

May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [5.31 pm]: Madam President, to begin, may I congratulate you on your election as President and also Hon Simon O'Brien on his election as Deputy President.

I would also like to honour the Whadjuk people from the Noongar nation and offer my respects to elders both past and present.

I also congratulate my fellow Pauline Hanson One Nation Legislative Council members, Hon Charles Smith to my left and Hon Robin Scott to my right, together with all other members who have been elected and re-elected to this Legislative Council, including my crossbench colleagues. Having been chosen by the people of the South West Region to be their voice in the Western Australian Parliament, I rise before you with a mixture of pride and honour. This is truly a humbling experience.

I also want to acknowledge and thank close to 180 000 people throughout Western Australia who voted for Pauline Hanson's One Nation in this recent state election and inform them that all One Nation Legislative Council members are here to work for Western Australia and not the current establishment. We will not buckle to political correctness or waver from our responsibilities to the majority of Western Australians, and we will not recoil from the tasks at hand, regardless of the criticism hurled at us from lobby groups for the powerful left minority. Urgent change is needed and we will stand up and represent those forgotten Western Australians. We will research and inform ourselves of all relevant and important issues and then debate each piece of legislation before us before making a decision. I say to the people who elected us strongly and bravely to this new Parliament, that is our promise.

As a proud and slightly parochial Western Australian, I want to tell members a little bit about my background so they know who I am, the values I hold and what I stand for.

I was an 18-month-old baby when my parents, sisters and brother arrived in Fremantle in June 1955. Dad was a very determined carpenter and handyman. He went doorknocking to find work, so as a child, growing up, I did not see my dad all that much because he was always working. However, he instilled in me a very strong work ethic and family values, and I still hold that to this day. Mum found work as a nurse and within two years my mother and father had bought their first home in Claremont. That was a fair task for a young couple with four children to feed and clothe, with less than £300 in their hands when they had arrived in Western Australia two years earlier and with no real job prospects.

Those early days of growing up were free and easy. As a child I learnt the respect and dignity of work, after witnessing my parents deal with life's ups and downs and misfortunes and successes. It taught me to strive hard and to persist, and to never give up. When people have a job they tend to be not only happier, but also healthier and, from what I have seen, they are better prepared to handle life's challenges. They realise that this great life comprises a series of calculated risks, in which you may succeed in most but rarely in all. That has been the amazing story of my life.

My vague earliest memories of living in Perth were growing up in two tough migrant camps in Redcliffe and Graylands. Apparently, I was a bit of a rebel in those days. After moving to Claremont, I attended Claremont primary school where I was an average student. Fortunately, however, I excelled in sports and was good at most things. I made many great friends, including an Aboriginal boy called Jimmy Yarran from Bruce Rock and Narembeen, in country WA. He told me about the great Aboriginal footballers who came from that region, and that is where my love of Aussie Rules came from. All I wanted to do was play league football for Claremont, and nothing else—other than to learn more about my Aboriginal brothers and sisters who were mainly unseen in the suburbs of Perth when I was growing up in the early 1960s.

I attended Swanbourne High School, where things started to really click for me. I remember fondly to this day volunteering to do extra studies with my maths and English teachers, thankfully. My great love of history and geography was my driving force at school, and to this day it has not waned.

During my time at high school, my parents moved the family home to Woodlands. Claremont Football Club quickly signed me up and played me in an under-19s game—I was only 15 at the time—so that I would not be picked up by Subiaco Football Club because of our new address.

It was at about this time that my mum and I returned to England for an extended holiday via a ship cruise. As a young boy of 15 who loved history and geography, I travelled through many capital cities in Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, Mexico, Panama, South America and the West Indies, and returned nine months later through Holland, Portugal, Senegal and South Africa. It was an incredible eye-opener to see the rest of the world. That was when I learnt about different cultures, languages and customs. It taught me great tolerance and patience. Considering the political problems that existed around the world at that time, I started to really appreciate how lucky we were living in Western Australia and holding the values that we cherish as a society. I still hold that fiercely today.

On my return to Perth I gained a position as a copyboy, working closely with the journalism fraternity and the advertising department at *The West Australian*. From here I gained an apprenticeship in photo engraving while attending Perth Technical College and achieving a Diploma in Graphic Arts, before becoming a printer by trade. It was during this time that I made my debut as a league player for Claremont in May 1974—a long-held dream—at the age of 19.

However, after eight years of being a printer, being the people person and communicator that I am, I realised that this kind of work was not for me, so I travelled to Europe and the United Kingdom, as people did in the 1970s, working my way around many, many countries before returning to WA and going back to *The West Australian* as an advertising executive. This opened up a whole new world to me. During those years, I was also lucky to play with some great sporting clubs, luckily winning many premierships in both football and cricket. I was fortunate enough to witness and play with and against many Western Australian and Australian greats. Once again, I learnt that if you really want to achieve long-term dreams, never let anyone put you down or discourage you, and if you work hard, you can achieve your aims and dreams with the support of great mentors and family.

Eventually I decided it was time for me to get out of my comfort zone, to lead and not just follow anymore, so I took on a new challenge as a coach in the WA Amateur Football Club, such was my burning ambition to win a premiership as a coach. I achieved this in 1980, and later I captained the WA state side and led it to our first-ever national championship win against the Big V.

After the highs and lows of my football career, I went through a difficult phase in my life following the death of my mother. It was a very tough time for me, as mum had always been an inspiration to me. Family and close friends helped me recover and get my life back on track. I have never forgotten those great family values that mum taught me.

I am married to the most amazing woman I have ever met, and I have four adult children and four grandchildren, and some of them are here today. It has not always been easy to keep everyone on track—including myself—but my children have a wonderful balance in life between family and work, and a self-belief that if you want to achieve your aims and dreams in life, you can do it—it is up to you. My children and their families have become integral components of Australian society and it all started from the lessons they learnt and the examples they adopted from their grandparents all those years ago. A core belief of mine, which some Western Australians and Australians have forgotten, is the essential value of personal responsibility. Unfortunately, some people have not been assisted in this regard due to some recent government policies in this area, both federally and in this state of WA.

My 18-year career in the media as either a sales executive or manager was very exciting at times. You can get carried away. I remember it being very daunting one day when, with about an hour's notice, I was asked to host Paul McCartney and Bob Geldof to lunch, but that is the media for you! It is exciting and scary at times. That is where I also learnt that if you show real interest in people's current and long-term issues and have patience and respect, those people will one day return the favour to you. I may have been just working for a certain newspaper or certain radio station at the time, but that did not really matter much to my clients. What mattered most to them was me, as they had come to trust me with all their advertising needs, and even their TV or other promotional events. I was virtually acting as an advertising agent, even though I was representing *The West Australian*. It was evidence of another of life's great lessons: always be kind, genuine and honest, and demonstrate genuine integrity, regardless of whoever you are in contact with.

My two stints working for radio stations in Bunbury and Mandurah at senior levels were also great learning curves for me, because previous to that I had always lived in the city. Local media in the south west of this state is so vital to farmers, small businesses and people living in the bigger regional towns. I eventually opened up my own promotional and marketing company and, to my surprise, that decision drew me towards a different direction, one I had not anticipated. Firstly, it took me to the Central Desert regions of Australia, where I worked and lived with the remote Ngaanyatjarra people in 11 small communities, in my role of coordinating and delivering sports and recreational activities and health programs. Secondly, following this and other work I had done for the football industry in WA, I was asked by the AFL to become its first-ever chief executive officer of New Zealand AFL, based in Auckland. This was an amazing experience for my family and me, living and working in the birthplace of my wife and being involved in watching the AFL grow internationally. It was a bit of a passion of mine at the time. Unfortunately, my eldest son—who is here today and is now very healthy—was not healthy in those days, so I feel for the member who spoke earlier. He became very ill and we decided to return to Australia in haste. This was a particularly hard time for our family, but thankfully my wife, Sandra, got everyone through this tough period.

Not really knowing what to do with myself, I rang a friend who had previously organised for me to do some work in the desert, and he asked me to come up and work with him as

a community relations person, training and employing Martu people from the Western Desert to work in a remote gold mine in the Pilbara. Many of those Martu people remembered me for the work I had done previously in the Central Desert, because those people are related, in so many ways. This was very rewarding work; the work was amazing. Seeing these Aboriginal training and employment programs develop from scratch with very little support at the time, and to now see these and other programs just like them emerge all over the Pilbara, employing thousands of Indigenous people, is an enormous credit to everyone involved in those days. The wonderful assistance and mentoring I received from the Martu elders of these remote communities has completely transformed me and my life, and my family's life, always for the better. Until entering this Parliament, this was the career I had pursued since that early opportunity presented itself. More recently, I have been working with communities and negotiating agreements with remote Indigenous people in the East Pilbara and northern goldfields.

I have learnt that the world's greatest commodity is its people. That is something we really need to concentrate on. So many of our governments' failed policies recognise the importance of the economy, the environment and other factors, but they fall way, way short when considering the short-term and long-term effects on their own people, our number one commodity.

Australia has, unfortunately, shipped off most of our manufacturing and industry jobs to other countries, while allowing our agricultural, forestry and tourism industries to also suffer. That has had a detrimental effect upon many millions of Australians. Pauline Hanson's One Nation WA calls for major structural change in the way our governments negotiate with big business and big unions, by putting the needs of the majority of Western Australians first and foremost, not the out-of-touch fringe minorities, as is so often the case.

The south west of this great state is where my main focus will be and I have been given the responsibility as its representative. To that end, I point out that there is so much to be done. The south west currently has a major crime and drug problem. The problem is not helped by the dearth of diligent health professionals and police officers in the region. Many people have lost their jobs and homes, including fly in, fly out workers in the Bunbury and Busselton regions, and there are family breakdowns and the emergence of major social problems, especially in big regional centres.

Many small businesses and farmers are struggling with their new long-term plans, and they are not getting the support they need from state and local government departments, with endless green and red tape slowing them down and, in some cases, stopping any economic progress whatsoever. Tourism has slowed and towns like Denmark and Walpole are not moving ahead as before, and business conditions are difficult. A major coalmine in Collie is under receivership and plans for the future are far from clear.

There should also be a WA regional fire brigade based in the south west. This is vital to the region's security and peace of mind. There are major infrastructure problems, with many roads in the agricultural and forest regions that are unsafe for locals and tourists alike. The South Coast Highway between Albany and Esperance carries big trucks and freight that should be on rail, causing major road damage and, in some cases, death by tragic accidents that could have been avoided with better planning.

With the support of the people of the south west I am proud to say, as their elected representative and Pauline Hanson's One Nation state leader, that we have the plans to help alleviate and fix these problems for a well thought-out and long-term sustainable future for the south west. However, in most cases, we will be seeking either government or bipartisan support to achieve these goals.

The south west is a major economic powerhouse in this state's economy and the local home-run businesses have been the cornerstone of our society in the bush. These need to be protected. In the early 2000s, mining, together with forestry, agriculture and tourism, was booming, as were Bunbury and Albany ports. On most fronts, activity has now slowed and young people aged between 16 and 24 are leaving for the city in large numbers. That needs to change if the south west is to grow and prosper in the future. As a state, we can turn this around, but we need absolute cooperation and determination to negotiate in good faith and win back the support of the people of the great south west of WA. The challenge is there for all of us.

Finally, I want to especially thank Pauline Hanson and James Ashby, both of whom came to see my colleagues and me sworn in to Parliament on Monday, as well as our federal colleagues Senator Brian Burston and WA's very own Senator Peter Georgiou. Pauline and the party showed confidence in me to lead the party here in WA and have given me the opportunity to represent the people of the South West Region. I will always be grateful for that wonderful opportunity. I personally have learnt a great deal from Pauline and James in a very short time and have received great encouragement from them to represent WA first and foremost—always. I also thank all the WA candidates and supporters who have helped Pauline Hanson's One Nation become a force to be reckoned with here in WA and thank them for their dedication, hard work and loyalty during the past six months.

I mentioned earlier that I am married to the most amazing woman I have ever met. It is now time to thank her and my incredible children, who are also here today. I want to thank them for the love and support they have given me during not only my wonderful and amazing life, but also especially the past six months of 18 to 20 hour days, sleepless nights, stress, anxiety et cetera—you name it. I do not enjoy elections that much. It is not just by chance that my life has turned for the better since I met the love of my life, my wife, Sandra. Her love, courage, strength, honesty, tolerance and, most of all, selflessness have guided my family and me to great heights, and I honour them all.

Our state of Western Australia is ready for positive change, where freedom of speech and courage in the face of adversity are admired because of the benefits that can bring to society. We are facing great challenges of a kind this state has faced before and overcome, and I will do whatever needs to be done in this place to help overcome the challenges that await us.

Madam President and Council members, I thank you.

[Applause.]
