



**PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**VALEDICTORY SPEECH**



**Hon Michael Mischin, MLC**  
**(Member for North Metropolitan Region)**

Legislative Council

Address-in-Reply

Tuesday, 11 May 2021

*Reprinted from Hansard*

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## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

### *Motion*

Resumed from 5 May on the following motion moved by Hon Pierre Yang —

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Honourable Kim Beazley, 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 MICHAEL MISCHIN (North Metropolitan)** [5.04 pm]: Madam President, it is 10 days shy of 12 years since I first took my seat in this place as a newly minted member of the Parliament of this state. I delivered my inaugural address on 23 June 2009 in the course of the debate on the Loan Bill of that year. Now, almost 12 years later, it will gratify many members in this place to learn that I am delivering my farewell.

An inaugural address is a challenge for a new member. There is a desire to do it right. One feels the need to say if not something profound, at least something that is not embarrassing or will not embarrass one in the future. I confess that after having proofread my inaugural speech for the purpose of its publication in *Hansard* back in 2009, I had not dared look at it since—until last night. I felt that I needed to do so, if only to refresh my memory on what I might have said that was germane to this occasion and my departure.

The idea of a valedictory is also a challenge. It is the last opportunity one has to say something in this forum. It is a benefit that comes with the post of being a member of the Legislative Council to know the date of your impending doom and demise as a member. It is something that is frequently denied those in the Legislative Assembly. There is always that hope for members there that they will resume their seats in the future. Here, we at least know that the sword of Damocles is about to fall and can make our plans accordingly. But that does not make it any easier. There is pressure to say something, let us say Churchillian, that will be replete with quotable quotes for the future. Hon Clive Griffiths made some such comments, but I will not aspire to that standard. Other members can take comfort that I have chosen to eschew that course so as not to embarrass them.

I make no assessment of the literary merit of my inaugural address but will refer back to it for a couple of purposes. At that time, I expressed my belief that I had something to offer—that I could contribute to this Parliament and to the body politic of Western Australia. I said that I looked forward to working with my parliamentary colleagues and with, or, if necessary, opposing, my political opponents.

Over the last decade and more, I have had that opportunity. I have also had other opportunities, more than I had hoped for or expected at that stage. I have been able to contribute not only as a member of this place, but also as a representative of the Liberal Party in my electorate office and, by virtue of my legal background, by providing some assistance to others in Western Australia who have been referred to me in my capacity as a member of Parliament.

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I have contributed to the work of this house as a sometime presiding officer when I was a Deputy Chair of Committees, as a member more generally and as a deputy chair and chair of a diverse range of committees over the course of the last 12 years. I also had the privilege of being a minister for two portfolios, being Attorney General and commerce. In opposition, I had the responsibility of being shadow minister for those two portfolios and also heritage and culture and the arts.

I served as Deputy Leader of the Government when we were in government, alongside Hon Peter Collier, and I served as Deputy Leader of the Opposition, also alongside Hon Peter Collier. I have had the opportunity to make, influence and amend laws. I have had the opportunity to help my constituents, both as a group, or segments of that constituency, or as individuals. I have been graced. The experience, for all its ups and downs, disappointments and rewards, has been wonderful and is one for which I am truly grateful. I will be sorry to leave. I have learnt much and I have got to know many people not only outside this Parliament, but also the members of this place over the last 12 years—those who were here when I arrived and who have since gone, and the newcomers, although there has been a turnover of some of them as well. That has been an enriching and rewarding experience.

I am sure that it will come as a disappointment to all members that I do not propose to traverse the detail of my career and my experiences. I have chosen instead to devote my time to a number of issues that are of concern to me and that I think will endure into the next Parliament. However, before I do that, I have many people to thank for the opportunity to be here and serve as a member of this place and to rise to the position of responsibility that I held for some four and a bit years as minister.

As I mentioned in my inaugural speech, to attempt to identify all those people to whom I owe a debt of thanks would not only take more of the time of this house than I could reasonably expect to use, but also get a little tedious. It also runs the risk that at some point I will give apparent priority to some over others and that I will omit some or not give the thanks to which they are due. However, it would be remiss of me not to mention a few.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Liberal Party of Western Australia of which I have been a member for some almost 30 years now and for which I have striven to represent in this place to the best of my abilities and with honour and some dignity. I have been proud to do so and to promote the Liberal cause and the values of the party. That is not to say that the Liberal Party is any different from other parties in respect of its having flaws—no political party is perfect; each political party has problems with its operations from time to time. However, the Liberal Party's values endure, and I am proud to represent those. I wish it the best into the future. It has had its ups and downs since its founding by Sir Robert Menzies. One of its earliest victories as a political party, if not the earliest, was in this state. I am sure that this period will be an opportunity for the Liberal Party to rebuild and reinvent itself and proceed into the future as a refreshed party that will be a formidable opponent and, in due course, government, in alliance with its Nationals WA colleagues in this state for the benefit of Western Australians.

I would like to thank my parliamentary colleagues in the Liberal Party with whom I have served. I thank them for their collegiality, humour, fellowship and support, especially my fellow upper house members. As Hon Jim Chown said only a little while ago, and certainly in this period of office, we few, we happy few, we band of brothers and one sister have been a great team, and I have very much enjoyed working with and among them. I shall miss them and I shall miss being able to work with them in this place.

In particular, I need to acknowledge my friend Hon Peter Collier. Without his faith in me, I would not have been here in the first place. I hope that I have not disappointed him in the trust he put in me and the confidence and support that he has demonstrated to me over the years. I am very grateful to him. As I said, notwithstanding the downs, this is an experience that I would not

have missed. The journey to this point is something that is denied many people, or at least they do not have the opportunity to do it, and however it ends, the journey itself is a rewarding and important experience that is not to be despised.

It is axiomatic and fashionable nowadays that people despise politicians; they feel obliged to do so. It is ironic that nothing adds cachet to an event than having a member of Parliament turn up to it, let alone a minister. It has been humbling to see in many circumstances the respect that has been accorded to me and other members of Parliament when we have attended events. One that springs to mind and impressed upon me the need to maintain that dignity and to respect members of the community was one of my very first appearances as a member on behalf of Hon John Castrilli, who was then the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests. I went to a small gathering at the Girrawheen community centre, run by the Mauritanian Association of Western Australia.

All of them were refugees who had spent much of their life in a neighbouring country before coming to Australia. Some of them had had their children in a refugee camp and others had families here. I felt the palpable gratitude that they felt to have a member of Parliament drive up and stay at their little event rather than turning up in a motorcade, plundering their village and moving on. They were, I think, surprised that in this system in Western Australia, people as important to them, having the status of members of Parliament, were prepared to go and talk to them as people. One of the things that touched me was that they had festooned the hall with copies of the Mauritanian national flag. They had cut green cloth and pasted onto it gold stars and a crescent; that was their makeshift flag. They were overjoyed when I promised that I would get them an Australian flag, a state flag and a real Mauritanian flag that they could display. It is those little things that we as members can do, not to win points, not to win votes, but simply to show our respect for the people in our community, and I was very moved by the experience.

I thank Hon Peter Collier and my colleagues. I should also mention Hon Norman Moore, who was the Leader of the House when I first arrived in this place and who warmly welcomed me as part of the Liberal Party team—the “Black Hand Gang” as I found we called ourselves; an appellation that had been assigned to us by jealous members of the Legislative Assembly many, many years before. I think it was a sign of their fear of our intellectual superiority and moral rectitude and ability to run our own affairs without being told what to do by even the Premier of the day. I understand that the Labor Party has a somewhat different system—caucus makes the decisions and so forth—but one of the traditions that we have jealously guarded in the Liberal Party is that our upper house members are their own bosses. We decide who our leader will be, and we decide when we are in government who our president will be, in collaboration with other parties. The collegiality of that particular group, the welcome I received, the counsel that I received from Hon Norman Moore, and the information, was invaluable to me as a neophyte.

I want to express my appreciation and respect for the many members of all parties with whom I have worked, particularly on committees. It has been difficult as a minister, because we have to resign from committees and the like in order to focus on our other functions, and it would be a conflict of interest, anyway. However, I have had the pleasure of serving with a number of members of the government backbench over the last four years—Hon Pierre Yang, Hon Laurie Graham, Hon Kyle McGinn and Hon Samantha Rowe. I have also served with Hon Alison Xamon, Hon Aaron Stonehouse and Hon Robin Scott. If I had omitted anyone, I apologise. I have very much enjoyed that experience, and also the opportunity to get to know them better and to understand what makes them tick.

One of the things I vowed to do when I entered this place was to appreciate the differences in points of view. I know that in the political turmoil that occurs from time to time, that can be

forgotten and you have your own views of things and the pressures get on. If I have given offence to anyone on a personal level, I do apologise for that, but I have always tried to deal with my colleagues, my political opponents, and others, with respect, and decently. If I have fallen short of that standard, I very much regret it.

I would like to thank my friends and supporters in the Liberal Party for their generosity of spirit, which has sustained me over the years. There are too many to name, and I hope none will be offended if I single out only one in particular, whom I got to know better after my election. That is my very good friend and the current state president of the Liberal Party, Fay Duda. Her energy and commitment to the party is second to none. I thank her for her good humour and her moral and emotional support over the years.

There have been my ministerial staff during my years as Attorney General and Minister for Commerce. I will not embarrass them by naming specifically; they know who they are, and I am in touch with several of them. It is very touching that they still say that they enjoyed working with me and under me, and for me, and I very much enjoyed working with them. My time with them made the challenges of ministerial responsibility not only bearable, but fun. I wish them well in the future. As any minister who has served before will appreciate, the day when they realise that their office is no more and that they will no longer work as a team is a very hurtful one for a member. It was a very, very sad occasion after the election in 2017, quite apart from the political loss and the loss of government, to tell the people who had worked with me and with whom I had worked that their jobs were no more and that they had to pack up and split up and that their futures were uncertain. Likewise, the various departmental officers whom I have worked with over that period of time, their quiet dedication to duty, their commitment to public service, and their apolitical professionalism was something that as a former public servant myself, I respected, I admired and I appreciated.

I would like to thank my wife, Laraine, who has endured the demands on me for the bulk of my parliamentary career and the highs and lows that go with it. Her love and her friendship, and her moral and emotional support, have allowed me to continue and have sustained me until now, and I am confident shall sustain me into the future. It is not a life that is an easy one for a partner, and it involves some sacrifices, if only of potential privacy and the ability to plan events that must necessarily give way to one's political responsibilities.

I have been struck by the professionalism and dedication of our parliamentary staff, not only those in this chamber and the officers of this chamber, but the Assembly as well—the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Clerks and the chamber staff, and also the other staff that make Parliament tick and able to run.

One of the first things that impressed upon me, and that personally I was a bit self-conscious of, was when parliamentary staff would refer to me as “Sir” or “Mr Mischin”, or, in the case of being a minister, as “Minister”. It was that level of formality that I found a little embarrassing, I suppose. I was not used to it. I was used to a far more informal working environment. One thing it did do, though, was apprise me of their professionalism. But also it made me want to live up to the dignity and the respect that they had shown to me, and not to disappoint those titles that they were according to me and the respect that they were showing to me, and to aspire to be better. I am pleased to say that I think I have had a very good relationship with the staff of this house and of the Parliament generally. I will miss them, too. Nothing seems too much for them. Their respectful manner, and the way in which they deal with members, even the newest, serves to inspire one to live up to what is expected of a member.

Lastly, and by no means least, I want to thank my electorate office staff. My electorate officer, Sherryl Paternoster, and my research officer, Peter Ramshaw, were with me at the beginning and they are with me at the end. In my 2009 inaugural speech, I thanked them for their enthusiasm to join me in what promised to be an exciting and rewarding adventure, and so it has been. They have served me loyally and faithfully supported me for these 12 years. They have also been the

first contact point for the needs and expectations of the electorate. In the course of that, they have done an incalculable amount of good for our community. They have given me their friendship through the good times and the bad, the highs and lows, and I thank them for being part of my life for over a decade and for the sacrifices that they have made for me and for the service that they have rendered our constituents.

In the course of that time, they have had to put up with a fair share of abuse. One price, I suppose, that one pays for being a member of Parliament is that we seem to attract the ire of those who are disappointed by government or life generally, or have problems that they are emotional about, and our electorate office staff, being the first point of contact, sometimes encounter personal abuse and threats. They have borne with that and done their best to calm the abusive and the querulous, and to try to achieve for those people the best possible result, but often they cannot. But what does disturb me is that although members ought to expect that as part of the job, they should not expect it from fellow members of Parliament. I fear that from time to time, the standards of debate and conduct, at least in the other place, fall well below what ought to be the case and do members of Parliament no good. Some members feel the need to play the man rather than the ball. Some members feel the need to deride and insult when they cannot critique policy, and that is regrettable and I think unworthy of them. I may be wrong. Maybe it is reflective of their character and their worth. I suppose I should find it flattering that they have thought it necessary to debase themselves and to descend to that level, but I feel that it sets no good example for new members and it degrades the dignity of the Parliament when that happens. I am pleased that the standards in this place have been different. I think that is attributable not only to the traditions of this house, but also to our Presiding Officers, whether they be in place of the President or the Presidents themselves. I have had the privilege of serving under two Presidents. When I arrived here, it was Hon Barry House, suitably avuncular and dignified in his carriage and demeanour. After his retirement, we had Hon Kate Doust. Both have discharged their office with dignity and have earned respect across political divides. I have to say that I am sorry to hear that Hon Kate Doust is not continuing in that role. It is also disappointing if that were to be the case, and I will come to that in a moment.

As I mentioned, the Liberal Party has a tradition—a convention, if you like—that our leaders in this place are chosen by our “upper house party room” as it were. We do not get dictated to by the party room generally or by our leaders. To my mind, much of the maintenance of standards and many of the restraints upon the use and abuse of power are occasioned by respect for traditions and conventions. They are the unwritten restraint upon the use of unfettered power. When those are dispensed with, we need to be genuinely worried about the consequences.

That brings me to another aspect of my inaugural address. In the course of it, I made several allusions to the risks of concentrating too much power, throwing our body politic out of balance. I mentioned in respect of our constituents—our state’s population—that we owe it to them to maintain a balance between the powers of this Parliament, those of the executive and those of the judiciary, and we also owe it to them to rebuild respect for the institution of Parliament. In the past, I made mention of the lessons of history. Although I am not drawing an analogy, the lessons of tyranny have impressed upon me the dangers of concentrating too much power in one set of hands and how badly power can be abused. I mentioned that I was an admirer of our institutions that we have inherited from Britain—ideals such as an independent judiciary, an independent civil service and the concept of a bicameral legislature. I also mentioned the vitally important role of our Legislative Council in our system of government. I see that now being threatened, and it does concern me. We are told that electoral reform is in the wind and that some of it will involve changing the composition of this house. Once the membership of this house changes, there will be no bar to that happening. There will also be no imperative on the part of the government or a desire, I suspect, to refer those alleged reforms to a committee of this Parliament, let alone to have multiparty comment on them. Any government with an

overwhelming control will descend into hubris and will abuse its power. I hesitate to repeat the old adage that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. I hope that I will be proved wrong, but I do see threats to the integrity of how this Parliament will run and the respect that will be accorded opposing views in the search and desire to maintain control of our body politic by the government of the day now that it has the opportunity to do so. It is no respecter of conventions.

The Commission on Government, after the good old WA Inc days, specifically recommended against having a parliamentary cabinet secretary. It recommended a public servant. That was one of the first things the current government dismissed—disregarded—even though previous Premiers such as Hon Geoff Gallop supported that recommendation. I emphasise that I do not criticise His Excellency the Governor. I found him a very hospitable and decent man with high ideals and standards, and I have enjoyed being in his company and that of his wife, Ms Susie Annus. However, there had been a convention for some 70 years that you do not appoint ex-political people to the post of Governor, but that was done. It was quite blatantly admitted that it was for a political friend and mentor. So much for that convention. I hope that members of this place who will be continuing will remember that if there is a change of government, there are now no conventions. Precedents have been set.

We have had the stacking of committees. Traditionally, the estimates committee of this place is chaired by someone from an opposition party. It was not during the last term. I understand we had a convention in the past that if electoral reform legislation is introduced, there be consultation with the other parties. That was not done with the last raft which came in here last year. We have had the stacking of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission. In the past, it consisted of two members of the Assembly, one from the government and one from the opposition; and, in the Council, one from the government and one from the opposition. The last time that happened—I make no criticism of Hon Alison Xamon, whose integrity I respect enormously—the idea appeared to be to leave only one Liberal member and to have those parties left of centre, including the government, on that committee in the expectation that the Greens would be at the Labor Party's beck and call. They were gravely disappointed, but that was an example of the dispensation of convention and understanding.

A number of things have flowed from that. In the case of the appointment of a Corruption and Crime Commissioner, the government sought a particular person's appointment—the government would say "reappointed". Let us face it, it is an appointment. Each appointment goes through a process set up by this Parliament that, back in the days when the act was passed, was considered by this house, by a committee, which decided that leaving it in the hands of government ran the risk of making it a political appointment. So, it set up a system—an imperfect one—which was a three-stage system. One involved a nominating committee and a submission of three names to the Premier, that is stage 2, but also that a joint standing committee consider those nominations and accept or reject them. Everyone has abided by that over the years, but this government has chosen to disregard that. On the strength of stage 1 of the process and the Premier desiring that particular person, it dispensed with convention and decided that it would move heaven and earth, and even legislate specifically, to name a person it wanted to be commissioner. That is notwithstanding there was no bipartisan or majority support for that person by the joint standing committee.

I know the focus has always been on the Liberal Party blocking the appointment—that has been the political theme—and, regrettably, it was also something that was taken up by the ex-commissioner. The Liberal Party was blamed, ignoring the fact that there was one other parliamentarian with responsibility on that committee. At least two people out of that four-person committee did not support that nomination.

Sadly, another convention has been broken: one member of that committee decided to grizzle about the process in public. Rather than having it investigated in order to see whether a breach

of privilege was involved or there was a crossing of the line, after he had shown to the other members of the committee that anything they say might end up being revealed to the public, have we had an inquiry into it? No; it was blocked by the numbers in the Assembly. So much for that and that level of accountability. In fact, that member was hailed by our Attorney General as being courageous and a hero for doing so. That set a precedent. I know Hon Pierre Yang is concerned about precedents—that is another precedent that has been set.

For political gain, we have had misinformation about the process. We have had the Attorney General seeking and obtaining from the then commissioner, who he wanted to reappoint—the evidence is that is unprecedented—a list of ongoing and prospective investigations by that commissioner. What an astonishing thing to do! The pretext is, “It makes me understand just how important this particular person is,” but it also tells our Attorney General who is being investigated, who is going to be investigated, who is not being investigated and who is not going to be investigated, if that commissioner is reappointed.

We have had the Premier breaching another convention—just because he can, he told us, in answer to a question that I asked in this place—revealing the names of the unsuccessful applicants in order to humiliate and embarrass them. I add to that that in a speech last year, the ex-Corruption and Crime Commissioner said, to an audience, that he was not only the “outstanding” candidate but also that the others were only “suitable”. That is what he told his audience. What an appalling way to treat unsuccessful applicants for a position!

We are going to restart the process now, which is supposed to legitimate what has been done. But who would be inclined to put their name forward knowing that the government does not want anyone except its chosen appointee and might very well reveal the identities of those unsuccessful applicants, and indeed whether the nominating committee thought they were “outstanding”, “suitable”, “so-so”, “unacceptable” or “mad”? Seriously! That was a disgraceful breach of trust.

This house has had to take legal proceedings. Conventions that were meant to be struck between the Corruption and Crime Commissioner and this body were never settled. Instead, it appears there were discussions between the Attorney General and the then commissioner that resulted in production notices and the like, but the process was abandoned before coming to an agreement. Since then, we have had the astonishing spectacle of an Attorney General taking action against the Presiding Officer of the Legislative Council. If I were the Attorney General, I would have moved heaven and earth to try to come to some kind of settlement that would not embarrass the body politic and preserve the complicated and delicate relationship that needs to be observed between the three arms of government: the Parliament, the executive and the judiciary. The CCC commissioner is a part of the executive, although he wants to be above and beyond and not answerable, it appears, because he thinks that he ought to be reappointed. He told people that his reappointment had been blocked and that he had been disqualified for reasons he cannot understand, as though there were some expectation that he should be. That balance needs to be maintained. It is being shifted and it threatens to be destroyed in the foreseeable future. There seems to be a sense of entitlement on the part of the ex-commissioner, having had one box ticked and having had the favour of the Premier of the day, that Parliament is of no account and ought to have no say, and that anyone who opposes his appointment is, by definition, corrupt and may be subject I suppose, if he succeeds, to being investigated.

We have another situation now. I very much respect Hon Kate Doust and Hon Adele Farina for the positions that they have taken in respect of this particular issue. Hon Kate Doust has put Parliament and principle above party and politics. What is regrettable is that she has been punished for it. I do not care whether it is a decision of the Premier, a decision of the caucus or a decision of those members in this place, which unfortunately it is not, but there is no other way of reading it. Hon Kate Doust put Parliament and principle above party and politics and has



been punished for it. I just hope that her successor will also put Parliament and principle above politics and party and preserve this chamber, its privileges and the conventions that have allowed it to function as a chamber of review since its inception. That is not to say that it always has been perfect in its judgement, and there are things that governments would disagree with, but governments come and go. Indeed, they should come and go when their time is up, not be here forever because the system has been changed to suit them retaining power. But I hope, and I have no reason to suppose otherwise, that the successor will also be as principled as Hon Kate Doust is, and also as principled as Hon Barry House was.

There is another factor to that, and I will not go into it in detail, but the ex-commissioner is now a political appointment whichever way it goes, if he gets reappointed. He delivered a speech in November last year to an audience, which has displayed—well, it is wrong. I have read it through and there are so many assumptions in it that are simply wrong. It is false about the Liberal Party, its motivations, whether it has influenced that process of the appointment of a commissioner, and shown astonishing disregard for the role of Parliament as opposed to party. He seems to think that a leader shows leadership by telling a member of a parliamentary committee what result they want. Well, what is the point of a parliamentary committee? Let us just give it to the leaders of the party to decide. Why do it for legislation? Why have members, such as the ones I have served with, put aside party allegiances to the extent one sensibly can in preference to objectivity and a dispassionate examination of the evidence and what is good for the community as a matter of principle? What is the point? It would save the public an awful lot of time and effort if the two leaders—the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition—just decide these things, instead of going through what apparently the previous commissioner, the previous Attorney General Hon Jim McGinty, the current Attorney General, and the Premier think is a farce. It ought to really be just doing what the leaders of the parties say. Let us save a bit of time and effort if that is the case. The fact that the previous commissioner thinks that that is the way it ought to function just shows that he misunderstands his position. In any event, there is more that can be said but I will not.

In the time available to me, I want to mention two bits of unfinished business. We have all worked on matters over the course of our times in Parliament when we do our best for people. Sometimes we succeed, sometimes we cannot. I am involved in two current cases, which I hope will be resolved in favour of the people concerned. I have mentioned both of them in the past. One is the case of the Mettimanos, residents of Yanchep whose house is sinking into the earth not through any fault of their own. They purchased it on a mortgagee sale and they live in it with their young family. It turns out that, through some fault, the ground was not properly compacted and the latent defects have been exposed and indeed were apparent, but not revealed by those who sold the house to them. The faults were known to the builders and the City of Wanneroo, fascinatingly enough, which was responsible for the building licence, has lost its records.

In any event, I am pleased to say that my colleague Hon Tjorn Sibma will assume responsibility for that case. It is one that demands some assistance from government, if only because it demonstrates a weakness in our building laws and our indemnity insurance scheme. It is because time limits have expired, these people have no recourse. Apparently it cannot even be investigated in order to determine who was at fault because of time limits. That these sorts of latent defects that become obvious only many, many years after the event can have such catastrophic results for innocent parties are a fault in the system. I urge the government to help out these people, identify the faults in the system and rectify it into the future. The fact remains that if the government purchased the land and fixed the compaction problem, it could probably sell it at a profit in the current environment. But what is important is that these people not have to live in a house that is falling down and may be unfit for habitation. They are working extra jobs in order to pay off mortgages for a wasting asset. There must be a solution. I hope that Hon Tjorn Sibma and others who have been engaged in the process will arrive at some assistance for them.

The other unfinished business is the case of the family of young Cohen Fink who committed suicide. He was a troubled youth with problems. Hon Sue Ellery, in her capacity as Minister for Education and Training, is aware of the case. The Fink family want an inquest into his death. After the coroner had decided no inquest was necessary, through their own efforts and investigations they came up with material that suggests that there may have been flaws in the manner in which the department and the school had dealt with the matter. I am not saying that there was, but it raises the question. The Attorney General has told us that he cannot use an apparently obvious power under the Coroners Act 1996 to direct the coroner to hold an inquest, which is why I asked the question the other day about the incident at Perth Children's Hospital where Aishwarya, a young girl, died waiting for medical attention. Apparently, now, the Attorney General can direct an inquest at any time; hence the further question to the parliamentary secretary to the Attorney General, which I asked last Thursday. I am awaiting a response to know how he reconciles those conflicting sets of advice, one to the Fink family telling them it is too late to do anything and another one saying now is not the time to do anything; he can do it any time. I look forward to receiving that. I am pleased to say that Hon Nick Goiran, in his capacity as shadow Attorney General, will take over from me the oversight of that matter and its pursuit, and I wish him the best. I will conclude on that note.

I just want to say, once again, what a privilege and a wonder it has been to take this journey through Parliament. It is something that, even on those mornings when you get up and think, "Why am I doing this?", you reflect that not too many people have the chance. Even when you are in opposition and even when you are in a minor party, you get opportunities that others would not have. You have experiences, opportunities, you learn a lot, you have your chance to change things, and to do good. I am sure that everyone in this place entered it to do that in what they saw as the best interests of their community. And for that, everyone in this place deserves our respect. On that note, I bid you all farewell and wish you the best. For the members of the Labor Party, not absolute best—only the best within reason! And if I might quote Mr Spock, may you live long and prosper.

[Applause.]