



**PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**VALEDICTORY SPEECH**



**Hon Adele Farina, MLC**  
**(Member for South West)**

Legislative Council

Address-in-Reply

Thursday, 13 May 2021

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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 ADELE FARINA (South West)** [2.48 pm]: I wish to begin my valedictory remarks by congratulating the Premier and the entire Labor movement on the 2021 election victory. It is the largest ever win by a single political party in percentage of votes received and in the number of seats gained in each house of Parliament. This unprecedented win brings with it great responsibility for the government and the way government is done. Equally, it represents challenges for Parliament as the principal body of accountability for governments. Parliamentary scrutiny leads to better governance, a factor that helps governments in the long run as much as it helps oppositions.

It is almost 20 years ago that I stood in this place to make my inaugural speech to the Legislative Council. Back then, I was young, enthusiastic and determined to make a difference, not only for the people I represent in the South West Region, but to Parliament itself. In those intervening years I have served five terms, having been re-elected four times, and have served in both government and opposition.

I was first elected in 2001 as part of the Gallop government on a policy to stop logging in old-growth forests. This policy, although generally popular, was very unpopular with the timber communities in the south west that were heavily reliant on the timber industry. It was a time of great uncertainty for timber industry workers, their families and the timber communities. Understandably, they were angry and fearful. In those first few years, I attended many public meetings at which those impacted made their views heard. It was a difficult time. Often, I was the only government member present, which made it very, very tough. Although it would have been easier not to attend, as some suggested, it was my view that the very least I could do was to front up and listen to their concerns. I confess, however, to being grateful to take second chair to the then Minister for Forestry, the late Hon Kim Chance, at the meetings he was able to attend, such was the level of angst at those meetings. I worked together with the minister and in consultation with industry, the Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia, the Australian Workers' Union and impacted communities to deliver packages to assist those impacted by the policy through that very difficult transition period. This work made a significant difference and was the right thing to do.

In another key environmental area, I was pleased a provoking question I posed was instrumental in Premier Gallop's decision not to tap the south west's Yarragadee aquifer to provide water to Perth, which led to the preservation of this most precious resource for the people of the south west.

In government I served as a parliamentary secretary for several ministers over a wide range of portfolios too numerous to list on an occasion such as this. As parliamentary secretary, I managed the passage through this place of a number of government bills. The Gallop and Carpenter governments did not have the majority in this place. The passage of bills required extensive consultation and negotiation with the opposition and the crossbench behind the chair in order to achieve the majority needed to pass the bill. Although at times challenging, participating at this level in the legislative process was a rewarding experience. The process invariably necessitated compromise and amendments to bills. It is my view that the greater level of scrutiny and accommodation required to facilitate passage of a bill when the government does not hold a majority in this place, although very frustrating to governments, generally speaking results in better legislation. It is more reflective of the different views held by the community and competing stakeholder interests. I acknowledge that not everyone will agree with me.

I also held the positions of Deputy Chair of Committees and Chair of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and General Purposes. I was a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges and, for a time, the Standing Committee on Legislation, as well as two select committees.

I would like to take a few minutes to comment on my experience on the Select Committee of Privilege on a Matter Arising in the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations. The weight of responsibility on members asked to serve on a committee inquiry into a possible contempt of Parliament by another member, a colleague, is considerable. A finding of contempt of Parliament is a very serious matter. The select committee comprising two opposition members and one government member, namely me, was tasked with investigating several members of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations for making unauthorised disclosures to lobbyists about confidential committee deliberations. The attempt by lobbyists to use the proceedings of the standing committee for an improper purpose had significant implications for the Legislative Council committee system. As noted in the select committee report, the members of the select committee understood that inquiry to be one of the most important and challenging inquiries in the history of the Legislative Council. The inquiry broke new ground in a number of respects, and I encourage members who have not read the report to do so.

Of interest, and in stark contrast to the current tensions between the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Legislative Council, is that in that instance the Legislative Council and the CCC, having regard to and respect for the law and primacy of parliamentary privilege, were able to work together effectively. The CCC provided access under strict agreed protocols to extensive audio intercept and surveillance evidence it had gathered. This exceptionally rare circumstance, although presenting a number of challenges for the select committee, provided it with clear evidence of each unauthorised disclosure. In that instance, the CCC accepted that public interest was best served by assisting the Parliament with its privilege inquiry. It did not use its non-disclosure provisions to refuse Parliament access to audio intercepts and surveillance evidence. It did not seek to interfere with or frustrate parliamentary privilege, nor did it claim that the Parliament had frustrated a CCC investigation. For its part, Parliament showed it could securely manage sensitive evidence, undertake complex investigations and, when warranted by the evidence, find members and others in contempt. This inquiry and all that followed the tabling of the select committee's report was perhaps the most challenging period of my time in this place.

Matters of privilege in this place are now dealt with by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges, which in my view is preferred to the establishment of a three-member select committee. Also, if I may offer a word of advice at this point: unless you have had to inquire into a matter of privilege, especially in relation to a possible breach by a colleague, you cannot really understand the weight of responsibility on members undertaking such an inquiry. Privilege committee reports attract great interest and invariably everyone has an opinion on the inquiry

and recommendations. It is important to remember that members of privilege committees serve to the best of their abilities and have the will of the house. They should not become victims for doing the job asked of them. Each member of Parliament in this place and in the other place has a duty to uphold the law of parliamentary privilege and its primacy. Without parliamentary privilege, in particular the immunities and powers it provides members, members would not be able to carry out their duties effectively and without fear of intervention or proceedings of the Parliament being impugned in another place. Any erosion of parliamentary privilege would have a chilling effect on the work of the Parliament and should be resisted.

It is important to note that our democratic system of government comprises three separate independent branches, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, each with its own distinct role and responsibilities. By providing checks and balances, this system of separation of powers is critical to prevent concentration of power. The ethic of mutual respect requires each branch to be cognisant of the powers and responsibilities of the other branches and to act respectfully so as not to traverse or come into conflict with each other. Overreach by one branch risks this delicate balance of power and has the potential to diminish our democratic system of government.

Returning to the opportunities granted to me as a member for the South West Region, I am again grateful to the late Hon Kim Chance, then Minister for Forestry, for appointing me to chair the statutory review of the Forest Products Act. It is a rare opportunity for members to be appointed to lead a statutory review. It was a very interesting process through which I gained significant experience. It also reinforced for me the value of such provisions and legislation, and I went to move a number of those provisions when in opposition. In government, I also chaired a number of committees and working groups for government, including the Busselton Jetty and foreshore refurbishment working group, the Port Geographe working group, the south west freight on rail working group, the Gracetown reference group and the tourism planning task force. All were instrumental in guiding government policy development.

As a result of my strong advocacy, the Gallop government committed funding that saw the Busselton Jetty Underwater Observatory realised. Now this is a significant tourist attraction for Busselton and the south west and will be well into the future. Upon learning of the state of repair of the Busselton Jetty, which was so poor that it would need to be closed, I successfully advocated, and against some very strong opposition, for the state government to step up, develop a plan and help fund the refurbishment of the Busselton Jetty foreshore. The Busselton Jetty is the heart of Busselton, and after so much hard work by so many of the community to save the jetty from demolition and their fund-raising efforts over many years, I could not stand by and watch the jetty be lost. Through the working group we developed the 50-years-of-life plan for the jetty that provided a rolling maintenance plan for it to be refurbished in sections over the 50-year period. I persuaded the state government and the then Shire of Busselton to commit funds raised from certain leases on the foreshore, which, together with the Busselton jetty committee contribution of \$1 million a year from its profits, would fund the jetty maintenance plan. At the time the LandCorp plan for redevelopment of the foreshore, which incorporated medium-density residential use, was understandably not well received by the community. Nevertheless, it triggered community discussions and was the catalyst for a new plan which has delivered a superb redevelopment of the foreshore, drawing locals and visitors alike to this beautiful part of our coastline.

Although the credit for funding the first and most significant stage of the Busselton jetty refurbishment rests with the Barnett government, the work of the working group I chaired underpins it and provides for the continued maintenance of the Busselton jetty. Each time I look out at the jetty, I take heart in the knowledge of the small part I played in ensuring the jetty continues as the heart of Busselton well into the future. I also take heart in knowing that the work that led to the reconfiguration of the Port Geographe groyne is underpinned by the work of the Port Geographe working group I chaired. Failure to fill the trap with sand as part of the

reconfiguration works means mechanical intervention is needed annually to enable the first winter storms to wash the seagrass caught in the trap out to sea, thus enabling the trap to fill with sand over time. Agreement by the Department of Transport to undertake these mechanical intervention works earlier each year, before the first winter storm, would go a long way to resolving ongoing community angst, and I commend that to the government. Once the trap is filled with sand, such ongoing intervention should no longer be required.

In those early years a personal highlight for me was facilitating the first-ever Labor regional cabinet meeting in Busselton under the Gallop government, especially as the visit was so well received by the community.

In opposition, I served as shadow parliamentary secretary to the Attorney General and Minister for Environment. This provided me with the opportunity to experience the passage of bills through this place from the opposition perspective.

I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges, the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, a Deputy Chair of Committees, and I also held the position of Chair of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review and Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Administration. In the thirty-eighth Parliament, under my chairmanship, the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review completed scrutiny of 40 bills referred to the committee, in addition to a review of its treaty functions. By any standard, this was a mammoth workload. I am proud of the two substantial reports delivered by the Standing Committee on Public Administration into WorkSafe and private property rights and our oversight of statutory office holders.

Serving on the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission was an interesting experience, not only because of its terms of reference but also because it operates under the distinctly different standing orders of the other place. The committee, under the chairmanship of Hon Nick Goiran, did not hold back inquiring into difficult issues. It was forensic in its approach and always able to deliver a consensus report. I learnt a lot during that period.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the importance of the committee system to the Parliament scrutiny role. It provides a last opportunity for the community to be heard on matters that are the subject of committee inquiries and also through the petitions process. Importantly, the examination of bills by scrutiny committees facilitates a higher level of more detailed scrutiny of bills than is possible in Committee of the Whole and in my view results in better legislation. History however shows that when governments control the Legislative Council, fewer bills are referred to scrutiny committees. In furtherance of good governance and better legislation, it has always been my view that all bills should be referred to scrutiny committees before being considered by Committee of the Whole. Now, governments of both political persuasions in Western Australia, however, have resisted such an approach, despite this practice being adopted with positive outcomes in other jurisdictions around the world. Although I hold no expectation this position will change any time soon, I remain hopeful that a future Parliament will see the merit of adopting such a system.

Members may recall that, as a result of the last major review of standing orders, the scrutiny function of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review was restricted. At the time, I, as did others, argued that restriction of the committee's scrutiny function, so that the committee is prevented from bringing errors it identifies in a bill to the attention of the Parliament, would not serve the best interest of the Parliament or the public. At the time it was suggested by some that this restriction would in time be reviewed. This has not occurred to date. I put out the suggestion that with fewer bills likely to be referred, perhaps there is merit in combining the Standing Committee on Legislation and the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review into one standing committee, as was the situation in 2001 when I first came to this place.

Perhaps the greatest highlight for me was the honour bestowed on me by members of this place by their endorsement to the position of Chair of Committees/Deputy President in the thirty-ninth Parliament. I thank members for the opportunity to have served them in this capacity. Each of those responsibilities in government and in opposition brought its own special challenges, but each was an opportunity to grow in my understanding of the nature and complexity of serving in this state on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

As many members will be aware, my electorate office was first established in Busselton in 2001, as I strongly believed upper house members should locate their offices in long-held seats. This was not a view shared by all in the Labor Party, with some holding the view that I should have located my office in Bunbury. After Labor lost the seat of Bunbury and at the request of then Premier Carpenter, I relocated my electorate office to Bunbury to raise Labor's profile to enable Labor to reclaim the seat of Bunbury. My office and I worked tirelessly to this end and I am pleased that through our efforts in a range of areas we were able to provide a strong foundation for Labor to reclaim Bunbury at the 2017 state election by a resounding margin.

It is usual in valedictory speeches for members to list their achievements. Over my 20 years representing the South West Region I have strongly advocated on a wide range of issues and there have been many achievements. While not possible to list them all, there are a few noteworthy highlights. My advocacy for people struggling with alcohol and other drug-related problems and their families, including the need for a residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation centre in the south west was critical in delivery funding for Doors Wide Open, additional funding for the South West Community Alcohol and Drug Service and 33 rehabilitation beds in the south west.

My advocacy for people with mental health problems and the need for more funding for mental health and suicide prevention delivered increased resources; however, much more needs to be done in this space, especially in the area of child and adolescent mental health and prevention. My advocacy for improved health services throughout the south west has delivered a number of improvements, including the new Busselton Hospital, the new Manjimup Hospital, and upgrades to a number of hospitals throughout the south west, including an intensive care unit at the Bunbury Regional Hospital. My advocacy with St John of God when it received government funding for six additional dialysis chairs resulted in these much-needed dialysis chairs being placed in Busselton, instead of being added to the existing dialysis chairs in Bunbury. As a result, people living further south have benefited from shorter travel times to access this vital health service.

My advocacy in support of Jess Bevan, a victim of discrimination for breastfeeding her baby in public, resulted in changes being made to the Equal Opportunity Act, to provide legislative protection for a mother to breastfeed her child in public. My advocacy in support of Jessica Turner enabled her young daughter to get the medical treatment she needed at Bunbury regional hospital, instead of Perth, and subsequently the support needed so she could be cared for at home and the family united.

My advocacy for the people of Withers resulted in funding towards improvement of the parks within Withers, an increased investment by the City of Bunbury towards maintenance in Withers and the development of a Withers strategy. My strong advocacy raised public awareness of suicides by St John Ambulance paramedics and volunteers, along with the strain the volunteer-dependent country service was placing on volunteers and country paramedics. This helped to secure a number of inquiries into St John Ambulance, which resulted in the first-ever WA strategy for country ambulance services. This work is very much ongoing and I regret that I will not be in Parliament to see it completed.

Having advocated for most of the last 20 years for Bussell Highway to be upgraded to a dual-lane highway between Bunbury and Busselton, I am pleased that with the assistance of the federal government, this is now on its way to being delivered.

When I was first elected, leavers week was a free-for-all. Local police and local residents expressed concern about property damage, leavers travelling down to Busselton and Dunsborough with car boots full of alcohol, drug use, assaults and all sorts of antisocial behaviour. The stories of harm experienced by some young people during leavers were shocking. It was clear to me that we needed to act to make leavers safer. My advocacy within government and the Office of Crime Prevention resulted in significant work being done to reduce the harm to young people participating in leavers. This included the introduction of wristbands, the establishment of an alcohol-free entertainment area, a bus service to and from the entertainment area and accommodation sites and the liquor outlets in these towns entering into accords not to sell liquor to under-age leavers. As a result of this effort, leavers week today is very different and much safer than it was back in 2001.

There are many other achievements, but I do not have time to raise them all today. As members will know, it is the many small wins for individual constituents that are often the most satisfying.

As other members have noted, we leave this place with unfinished business. I wish to touch on a few of these matters, as this will be my last opportunity to do so. On 3 November last year, I tabled a letter in this place from Kim Taylor detailing flaws with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation modelling for the southern forests irrigation scheme. I did so following a long sustained debate with local farmers seeking to bring their concerns to the attention of relevant ministers. As members know, Kim Taylor is well respected in the field of water resources management, having worked in senior positions within the WA Water Authority and the Department of Water and for seven years as general manager of the Environmental Protection Authority. On 11 March this year, it was reported in the *Manjimup–Bridgetown Times* that the Minister for Regional Development had announced the engagement of the CSIRO to undertake an independent assessment of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's modelling for the southern forests irrigation scheme. The minister was reported as saying that the announcement of an independent review was long overdue, and I agree with the minister and welcome the decision to proceed with that independent review.

Water management issues in the Warren–Donnelly area, however, are not restricted to the southern forests irrigation scheme. If, as expected, the CSIRO confirms the modelling for the southern forests irrigation scheme is flawed, it will be essential that the CSIRO be engaged to review the *Warren–Donnelly surface water allocation plan*, which is reliant on similar flawed modelling. Also, the allocation plan is being enforced by the department, even though the statutory requirements for its endorsement have not been followed.

Further, the inconsistent decisions by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation on the question of spring rights are not a thing of the past, as the department indicated to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs, as has been reported in its thirty-third report. In a drying climate where competition for water is high, the department's lack of consistency is causing significant angst in Warren–Donnelly. An independent review of the department and its decisions is needed to restore community confidence in the department.

On the issue of spring rights, the department maintains that a watercourse may not be immediately apparent as it does not require a bed or bank, and flow may be intermittent or occasional. This has resulted in some farmers being told that there is a watercourse on their property when clearly there is no visible bed and banks and no visible flow of water at any time of the year. An assessment of the legal authorities in this area does not support the department's position.

Understanding the value of a second opinion, I engaged as a consultant a law professor from the University of Western Australia, Professor Alex Gardner, co-author of the book titled *Water Resources Law*, to provide a legal opinion on the question of what constitutes a watercourse under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act. Having regard to the legal decisions and the amendments to the legislation since those decisions, Professor Alex Gardner concluded

that “watercourse” under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act does require a channel or a bed and banks. The department’s interpretation is clearly incorrect and leaves the government exposed to costly legal action in the event that the department’s decisions are challenged in the courts. I implore the government to undertake a review of the department’s decisions and the *Warren–Donnelly surface water allocation plan*.

Members will be aware of my disappointment with two recent government decisions. The first being the government’s decision to provide less financial assistance to regional taxi operators than was provided to metropolitan taxi operators, which has financially disadvantaged regional taxi operators. Legislation facilitating the financial assistance package for regional taxi operators was considered by the Parliament as a time-limited COVID bill last year, which restricted scrutiny of the bill. I urge the government to review its decision and extend to regional taxi operators the same financial package provided to metropolitan taxi operators. It is fair and it is the right thing to do.

The second is the government’s decision on the alignment of the southern section of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road. The government approved modifications of the route for the northern and middle sections, while refusing to consider a different alignment of the southern section, which dissects the small community of Gelorup. There is much I could say on this matter; however, I will restrict myself to noting that there are sound economic, planning and environmental grounds for realignment of the southern section of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road and it is not too late for the government to reverse its decision. I again ask the government to reconsider its decision on this issue as it is impacting a lot of people who live in Gelorup.

On the issue of disappointments, in my inaugural speech, I talked about my commitment to advocate for a fast train between Perth and Bunbury, and my hope that it would eventually extend further south. It is with great disappointment that despite my best efforts over the last 20 years, a Perth–Bunbury fast train and the benefits it would bring to the south west, has not been realised. Due to its design, the construction of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road will now require the undergrounding of the rail line at the northern interchange between the Bunbury Outer Ring Road and Forrest Highway, thereby significantly increasing construction costs and making the realisation of this project during my lifetime highly unlikely.

In many ways, serving in this place has been my life, but it would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of family and close friends, who were understanding on the many occasions when duty meant I was absent or not as attentive as I should have been. As I said in my inaugural speech, none of this would have been possible without the sacrifices my parents made on my behalf. Never did my parents entertain the idea that one of their children would go to university, much less be elected to Parliament. I would like to thank my parents, whose guidance and support not only helped to make me the person that I am today, but whose support and understanding enabled me to devote so much of my time to Parliament and my constituents. They instilled in me a strong moral compass that has guided me when making tough decisions.

Over the last 20 years, my sister, Paola, has travelled to the south west for almost every election to work all day on a polling booth and on one occasion roped in her eldest son, Michael, to assist. In more recent years, she has been joined by her other sons, Daniel and Christopher, who have worked all day on polling booths. Daniel has also helped me to put together polling booth kits, including cutting metres and metres of bunting. Daniel and Christopher, together with their older brother, Michael, were great sounding boards and often put me straight on what was and was not important to young people and shared their perspectives on a range of current issues. Most importantly, they reminded me to laugh and to, at least occasionally, stop to smell the roses. Their support has been greatly appreciated, as was the fun we had along the way, and I give you a heartfelt thankyou.



Understandably, my nephews, like other members of my family, are disappointed for me that my parliamentary career has been cut short by the decision of others. However, I must put on the record that my nephews are also disappointed to learn that Hon Aaron Stonehouse is leaving Parliament and that his private member's bill to legalise airsoft in Western Australia has lapsed with the prorogation of Parliament! A sentiment shared by all airsoft enthusiasts, I am sure.

Throughout my parliamentary career I have been ably supported by electorate staff, some who were with me for years and others who gained valuable experience and went on to bigger and better opportunities. I thank each one of them for their support and hard work. Some, however, need special mention.

Lesley Morris, an experienced electorate officer who worked for Hon Tom Stephens before me and for a number of other members in the north of the state in more recent times, was a critical support in my early years. I had the good fortune of Lesley returning to live in Busselton at about the time I was establishing my electorate office. Lesley ensured everything ran smoothly and played a key role in establishing office procedures. Her knowledge of local issues, electorate experience and interpersonal skills were invaluable, and I owe her a great debt. If Lesley had not returned to live in Broome, I am sure she would have remained my electorate officer through to the end. We remain good friends and catch up whenever she comes home to Busselton.

Ross Bromell, my research officer, together with Rod Clark, my former electorate officer, were a formidable team. This was a particularly busy time, and knowing that Ross and Rod were in the electorate office and more than capable of handling constituent inquiries made it possible for me to get out to other areas of the electorate and to perform my parliamentary secretary duties. I would not have been able to achieve all that I did during those very busy years without their support, and I thank them.

To my current staff, Emily Montgomery and Sophie Elliott: they have been a terrific team. Their concern and attention to resolving constituent inquiries has been exceptional, and I am grateful for their support and hard work. They and their partners have become family. What is not understood by those outside politics is that the party's decision not to preselect me meant that they, too, lost their jobs. The last 12 months have been difficult for all three of us as we have contemplated what next. Decommissioning the office and sorting 20 years of paperwork is a soul-destroying task. We have supported each other through it, and I am deeply thankful to both Emily and Sophie for all their support. I am disappointed, however, that our team has had to part ways sooner than we would have liked. Emily is expecting her first child, and I wish Emily and her husband Hayden the very best for the impending birth of baby Monty. They will be terrific parents. Sophie has secured a job with Jackie Jarvis and I wish her well. Both Emily and Sophie have bright futures ahead of them and I look forward to seeing where the future takes them.

A special thanks also to Dennekka Sullivan, who has done relief work in my office for many years. Dennekka has been an invaluable support, always willing to do whatever is asked of her. She has also assisted with campaign activities and on polling booths. Dennekka: my sincere thanks for your friendship and support.

Since Emily took maternity leave, Jeni Henderson has joined my relief staff. It has been a joy to have Jeni in the office. Jeni and her husband Gus have been good friends and a strong support for many years. A heartfelt thanks to you both.

On an occasion such as this, I must also thank Labor branch members in the South West Region who have given so much of their time to help in a range of campaign activities, and for their support over the last 20 years. I especially thank David Smith and Phil Smith, on whom I have always been able to rely to help me with doorknocking. Your support and advice over the years has been most appreciated, and I thank you both.

A special thanks to the Progressive Labor members of Young Labor for the many times they travelled to the south west to assist with various campaign activities and to lower the average age of those of us working on those campaign activities!

I also wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to Wes Hartley and Beverley Biggs for their friendship, support and counsel over the years. They have always been there for me, through the highs and, importantly, the lows. They have worked on polling booths all day, letterboxed, helped on Labor stalls at south west festivals, assisted with large mail-outs to constituents and anything else asked of them. They have also done relief work in the office. Wes and Beverley have always made time to listen and to provide advice over a cup of tea. I could not have done it without you. Thank you.

A special thanks to Hon Bob Pearce, who has mentored me throughout my time as a member of Parliament, and earlier. I am sure he would have preferred someone easier to mentor; I am sorry for that! He was always available at the other end of the phone whenever I needed advice or to vent. I thank you for your good counsel and support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Clerk and all the Legislative Council staff, past and present. You work tirelessly in the background, ensuring that this place runs efficiently and effectively. I thank you for the support and assistance you have provided to me over my time in this place; and to dear Deb, for everything she does and especially her caring nature. My thanks to the talented staff of the Legislative Council committee office and the Legislative Assembly committee office. Your work in ensuring that committee inquiries run smoothly and drafting reports is exceptional. Indeed, I extend my thanks to all the staff of the Parliament, past and present. Each of you, no matter your position, make an important contribution to the operation of the Parliament, and I thank you.

To the members of this place, past and current, it has been a pleasure to serve with each of you. You have listened to me and you have respected my decisions, even when disagreeing with me. Most importantly, you have challenged me. Through this exchange you have helped me to grow as a person and as a member of this place, and I offer you my heartfelt thanks. To those who will continue to serve in the forty-first Parliament, I wish you all the best with the challenges you will face in the years ahead as you continue to serve the people of Western Australia. To those who, like me, have come to the end of their parliamentary careers, you leave this place knowing you have made an important contribution to the governance of our state, and I wish you well in your future endeavours.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to express my disappointment that my party leadership chose to deny me preselection and an ability to continue to represent the people of the South West Region, for whom I have worked tirelessly. That task is now to be assumed by others, and I wish them well.

To the government, now with such a significant and overwhelming majority in both houses, the challenge in this historic period will be to stay humble, to stay focused, and to govern with astute wisdom. This new parliamentary term can be a time of significant legislative achievement, hopefully for the betterment of the people of this great state, that will last long after we all are gone.

The task of being a member of Parliament is a heavy responsibility. As I stated in my inaugural speech, the strength of our democracy lies in the capacity of its elected members to project thoroughly and effectively the views, wishes and aspirations of the people they are elected to represent. I have sought faithfully to acquit this task even when I have, at times, had to challenge my own party colleagues that we could do better.

As I prepare to leave this place, I am reminded that it is 100 years since the first woman was elected to not only this Parliament, but any Parliament in Australia—namely, Dame Edith Cowan.

To say that she was unpopular in what was then a male bastion of privilege would be an understatement. Despite being in this place for just a single term, Edith Cowan used her time in Parliament, as one should, to constantly push for change in things that truly mattered. Her efforts made a significant difference, especially for women. I have often drawn strength from Edith Cowan as I have sought to faithfully bring before my colleagues and this Parliament matters of importance to the people of the South West Region and that I believed to be for the good of the people of Western Australia. Such a stance has not always made me popular, but popularity does not in itself result in good governance.

Over the last 20 years throughout the South West Region, I have had the good fortune of meeting many, many truly amazing people who, either through their work, their volunteering, or both, have made the region a better place to live. They have truly enriched my life and helped me remain focused on what really matters. My only hope is that I have given as much to them and the region as they have given. Many of these people have become good friends, and I look forward to our continuing friendships.

In closing, I wish once more to acknowledge my mother and my late father. Despite arriving with nothing other than a suitcase and a willingness to work hard in order to realise their dreams and aspirations, it was their courage and self-sacrifice that made it possible for me to not only dare to aspire, but also realise my own aspiration to serve the people of Western Australia.

It has been an honour to be a member for the South West Region for these past 20 years. I thank the Labor Party for the opportunity and the electors of the South West Region for the trust they have placed in me. I have always endeavoured to champion the things of importance to you, and I trust I have acquitted that task to your satisfaction. Thank you.

[Applause.]