



**PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**INAUGURAL SPEECH**



**Hon Jacqui Boydell, MLC**  
**(Member for Mining and Pastoral Region)**

**Legislative Council**

**Address-in-Reply**

**Thursday, 23 May 2013**

*Reprinted from Hansard*



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## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

### *Motion*

**HON JACQUI BOYDELL (Mining and Pastoral)** [2.49 pm]: Mr President, may I congratulate you on your recent election as President. May I also congratulate Hon Adele Farina on her election as Deputy President.

I would like to start by acknowledging the staff here in the chamber and in Parliament House. Members may not be aware that I had the privilege of working as a staff member at Parliament House in 2009–10. The staff in this place are just fantastic, and it is one of the most supportive and friendly work environments I have encountered. I look forward to working again with many of the people who were here during that time, and I welcome the new staff to the house. I also want to acknowledge my family and friends in the gallery, and those unable to attend who are watching via the web. It is wonderful to have you here today.

My family background has great significance and meaning to me, as it has defined who I am today and is partly the reason I find myself in this place. My mother arrived at Fremantle port aboard the ship *Ellinis* on 6 June 1964 as an 18-year-old on a journey of adventure to a country she had never been to before and to a family that, although related, she had never met before. That would be a brave thing to do even by today's standards. Well, I can tell members that my mother is a brave woman and a great role model to me, my daughter and my nieces, and, indeed, to many of the other young women she has met throughout her life. In fact, she and my father have always been generous with their time to family and friends, to people less fortunate than themselves and people more fortunate than themselves, and to their community of Carnarvon and the greater Gascoyne region in general.

My mother was born at home on the family property in Northern Ireland on the outskirts of a small town called Roslea. She was one of seven children, although unfortunately for my mother and her family, three of those children did not survive, because they died during their early years. My family faced many adverse times during my mother's childhood due to a number of factors: discrimination according to religious background; a lack of freedom; a threat of violence; a lack of opportunity; and, of course, the economy in general in Northern Ireland at the time, which was not great, and I am sorry to say we see that occurring again at this time. However, no-one could hold down the spirit of the Creighans and the Beggans, and there were many joyous times to be had. Stories of my family's history have been retold many times and are a source of great fun, admiration and inspiration to us all. My mother is a brave and strong woman as a result of her close family ties and the integrity and dignity that her family had in the face of that adversity.

My father was born in Subiaco. His family was living in Carnarvon, but because babies could not be delivered at Carnarvon Regional Hospital at that time, my grandmother had to travel to Perth to deliver her child. The journey via car in 1941 had to be taken over approximately a week. At the age of two weeks, my father was flown home with his mother in a Tiger Moth aeroplane, with the journey taken over a period of two days. The distances travelled and the remoteness of the north west sometimes seem daunting in 2013, let alone what it must have

been like in 1941. These people were truly pioneers, and the region has been built on the back of that pioneering spirit.

Interestingly, when I was due to have my first child, I, too, was living in Carnarvon, and I have to say the situation was the same. There was no obstetrician at Carnarvon Regional Hospital; therefore, the expectation was that I would have to leave my family and friends, and my home, to have my child in Perth. So, in 1994, I found myself in the same situation that my grandmother had found herself in some 53 years earlier.

My father hails from a hardworking family. My grandparents owned a banana plantation in Carnarvon, and my father grew up there, with his three brothers. Later in life, and certainly my first recollections of my grandparents, they owned and operated the first commercial laundry in Carnarvon. In later years, they returned to the plantation business and also ran a nursery. I spent many happy times with my grandmother in the greenhouses of that nursery. She always loved gardening, and, to this day, whenever I go into a greenhouse I feel relaxed and have a sense of peace and serenity as a result of the times I spent with her in the nursery.

My grandfather was also a very community-minded man. He was the founder of the Gascoyne Research Station; he was a shire councillor for the Shire of Carnarvon; and he was made a freeman of the town of Carnarvon in 1991. He loved football and was for many years the trainer of the East Carnarvon Football Club. That was the only Indigenous club in the Gascoyne region, and to this day I think he was the only white man ever allowed into their clubrooms for a long period of time. My father is the oldest of four boys, so the expectations on him to carry responsibility were there from an early age.

I have been extremely lucky in my life to have had close relationships with my extended family. Even though many of them lived overseas, my parents always ensured that my brother and I engaged in family goings-on. Through the guidance of my mum and dad, my brother and I are knowledgeable about our family history and have a much defined sense of who we are and where we come from. I think it is so important for children and families to understand where they fit in the world. To me, this is a starting point to base myself on. As we all know, without a defined starting point, it is hard to know what direction to take. This became very clear to me when my grandfather, Herbert Day, passed away at 1.00 am on 15 December 1995. The ties of family ran deep for me on that night. My grandfather had been there in the first throes of my father's life. It was a poignant moment for me when I, his granddaughter, was there in the final throes of his life to comfort him. The legacy that he left and the ties that bind us all were crystal clear to me in that moment. I have tried to teach my own children the value of the relationships they build within their families and with their friends and how important it is to know their history, so that at the end of the day they can go forward with a great deal of confidence in who they are.

After arriving in Perth and spending some months here, my mother commenced her trip around Australia and found herself in Carnarvon in 1965. My parents were married on 12 February 1966. I can recall my grandmother telling me that one day my dad came home and told her that he was getting married. She was quite astounded, because she had never met his apparent girlfriend at that time, so she asked him, "Well, who to, and what is her name?" to which he replied, "I don't know her name yet, but I am going to marry her." My dad denies this story, but I can tell members that it was the start of a great partnership. I was born at Carnarvon Regional Hospital on 22 February 1968, the youngest child of Tom and Margaret Day. I grew up with my older brother, Mark, in Carnarvon as part of a busy, young, industrious family. Throughout most of my childhood my parents owned and operated a transport company called Day's Transport. This business started with one truck and my dad as the only driver, servicing the plantations on the banks of the Gascoyne River. Day's Transport expanded in 1968 when my parents purchased a transport yard and built a house on the outskirts of town in Boor Street, Carnarvon.

The business expanded at a rapid rate. Day's Transport also became the fuel distributor for BP Australia and commenced servicing the outer-lying pastoral stations of the Gascoyne region via a weekly mail run. The first fuel order received was for Yalardy station and was for 44 drums of fuel. My parents worked hard, and at the time of selling the business in 1984, Day's Transport was selling 30 million litres of fuel throughout the wider Gascoyne region. The mailman was a welcome sight on many pastoral stations, as sometimes he could be the only visitor in a week or two and was a lifeline to the outside world for many supplies.

As well as spending time building the family business, my parents were involved in the local community, with both serving on many boards and committees. Both my parents were also heavily involved in my brother's and my sporting pursuits and, in my case, my drama pursuits. During this time my father also served as a shire councillor at the Shire of Carnarvon for 10 years. He was also the shire president from 1989 to 1995, and, like his father, was awarded a freeman of the town in 1996. All of my parents' individual pursuits have also been family pursuits; it has always been a joint effort. The thing I recall most from my childhood is that my mum and dad took my brother and me everywhere. There was nothing we were not able to attend, including the Winning races, the Gascoyne Junction races, cricket matches on the RFDS strips on many different stations throughout the region, and camping at Main Roads camps when my dad worked there. To this day, the sound of a truck loading up at 4.00 am for a big trip brings me much comfort.

Out on Boor Street we were a long way from town. The only other people out there were the local Ingada people, who lived across the road in camps and makeshift houses. We had the only phone in the street. It was not a street, really; it was a dirt road, actually. I made a lot of friends on that dirt road, and one in particular, whom I will not name as I do not have her permission to do so. She and I were great friends; however, circumstances separated us when I moved to boarding school in my later years of schooling, and our lives took different turns. Mine was filled with opportunity; I am not sure that hers was. But fundamentally we were the same people when we were young kids at home. She is an Indigenous person and society definitely dealt her a different hand from the one it dealt me, even though it did not know me any better than it knew her. The endemic negative Indigenous issues we face in our communities are something I passionately want to change. I am extremely proud of the Indigenous heritage that emanates from the Gascoyne region. I highly regard Indigenous culture and spirituality, and I want to get to the day when all of society understands and values our Indigenous heritage. Boor Street was a long way from school, let alone from decision makers in Perth or local members of Parliament. I am not sure anyone in any authority really thought anything about what was occurring on Boor Street. That is my reflective childhood thought, anyway.

I attended St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School in Carnarvon until I moved as a boarder to St Brigid's College in Lesmurdie to complete my schooling. I also attended the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts to study media journalism. I travelled quite extensively throughout my early 20s, and upon returning from one trip in 1991 I moved home to Carnarvon as I had no job, no money and nowhere to live, so home to mum and dad I went. I later married and had my three children whilst living in Carnarvon, although, as I alluded to earlier, my first child, Jackson, was born in Geraldton after a very harrowing RFDS trip.

When I made the decision to return to work, I moved into a part-time role with Centrelink in Carnarvon. At that time it was the Department of Social Security. This was a complete eye-opener for me. I had never received income support payments and had actually, I am ashamed to say today, never thought much about people who did. I have to tell members that this was one of the greatest and most rewarding jobs I have ever had. Many people on income support payments are in situations about which I would say to anyone here, "There but for the grace of God go I." I met many fantastic people, some of whom I am still friends with today. When people think of

income support, they think of people on unemployment benefits. Somehow, mainstream society tends to think that people on income support actually choose to be there, but I found that in the majority of cases that is simply not the case. Income support and welfare agencies are so much more than that. I visited people who were terminally ill, people who had just had babies, people whose family members had just died, people who had been affected by natural disasters, people who through no fault of their own were victims of violent crimes and dysfunctional families, people who had mental health and intellectual disabilities, and people who just wanted to get their lives back on track. I can say that many of them did. There were definitely stressful times, as members would expect when dealing with people who are often at their wits' end with no other place to turn. On the whole, most people struggled with their issues everyday with an aim to improve their circumstances, and rather than diminish my faith in humanity, it increased the degree of inspiration I felt from the actions of many. Many of these people, without opportunities having been provided to them during their childhood, do try to make the most of it and are trying the best they know how to etch out a happy life for themselves and their families. That, members, is definitely something to aspire to. During my time at Centrelink Carnarvon I was part of the statewide leadership team that delivered the new family tax benefit policy to Western Australia. The Carnarvon office at that time was also delivering support to the communities of Karratha, Port Hedland, Newman and Northam and surrounding districts. I travelled extensively to these areas. I am really proud to say that I think we changed the service delivery model of income support in a very positive way. The people who work for Centrelink today, or in fact any welfare agency, continue to face difficult circumstances; however, they achieve many great outcomes for the people they aim to assist, which unfortunately never get reported by the media at least.

After this period, I worked for the Shire of Carnarvon in local government as manager of the Carnarvon Civic Centre. It was at this time that I became increasingly frustrated with government at all levels. The support of government seemed very remote to me, and I could not understand how we had got to the point at which we could not replace a light in the theatre because there were no funds to do so. What I knew was that I was trying to deliver a community service with limited funds, and that the local government was relentlessly under pressure and with no apparent support from state or federal governments at any level. Members may not be aware that I have known Hon Col Holt for some 20 years. In 2007 he visited my home in Carnarvon. It was during a conversation I had with him about my increasing frustration about the lack of support for my community that he suggested I should meet Brendon Grylls and listen to what the Nationals WA had to say about a program called royalties for regions. I come from quite a political family, so my involvement in politics goes back to my parents' involvement, as Hon Ken Baston will attest to. At this time I was very negative about politics and indeed the general concept of government because I felt I had not witnessed the degree of support that I thought communities above the twenty-sixth parallel deserved, and this was in fact reflected in many regional towns and communities across the state. In the early 1990s my mother was actually the divisional president of the Kalgoorlie division of the Liberal Party. My parents had been members of the Liberal Party; however, after a period of disillusionment, their involvement waned as did mine. My mother also ran for the seat of Gascoyne for the National Party under the leadership of Hendy Cowan. Although it was a hard-fought campaign, at that time the Nationals were not quite ready to be a truly regional party, as it was still quite firmly based in the wheatbelt and it would be some time before that changed.

I go back to 2007 when Col Holt suggested to me that I needed to meet Brendon Grylls and listen to what he thought royalties for regions could do for Carnarvon. I can tell members that at that time my response was very negative. I said, "Who is he and why would I want to do that?" I have very much changed my views since then. It is hard for me to imagine now that I would have thought that. I was a very engaged member of my community; I served on volunteer

boards and I was across local issues. I knew about local government and I had worked in local government but I had never heard of Brendon Grylls or royalties for regions. It is a testament to Brendon Grylls and the Nationals WA that today I think everybody in regional Western Australia knows and understands who the Nationals WA are and what they stand for. Once I met Brendon, I could not ignore the fact that I thought they were onto something. Once I heard about the concept of royalties for regions, I could not understand why a person living in regional WA at the time would not vote for the Nationals. I believed that only one party was listening to me and, as I said before, Parliament and decision making was a long way from my door, but all of a sudden here it was.

My family and I knew that this was something we just had to become involved in, and so my father ran for the seat of North West for the Nationals in 2008 against Vince Catania. It was a hard-fought campaign, one in which my entire family and friends were involved. We did not win the seat; however, we gained much support and we watched the count for about a week and, as history records, Vince won that seat from my father. There is no doubt that the resonating message of royalties for regions had begun. Obviously, Vince Catania joined the Nationals WA in 2009 and I have to say that he is a great advocate for the people of the north west and it is a great pleasure to work with him.

So, 2007 began my interest in believing that someone somewhere in government actually believed that where I lived mattered. Prior to that, it really just was not happening. Today I see revived communities across the state of Western Australia as a direct result of royalties for regions and the Nationals in government. When I travel throughout the extensive Mining and Pastoral Region, everywhere I go I see the benefits of royalties for regions. I see how people's lives have been enriched as a result of investment in their communities. There is a definite cultural mind shift in residents in country towns all across the state. There is a degree of confidence, there is happiness and there is belief that regional communities will continue to grow and be looked after. That is what I think royalties for regions is really about—it is about the people who chose to live, work and invest their money, families and legacies in those towns that they call home. I can tell members that nowhere I ever came from mattered more than it does now. I am very proud of my home town of Carnarvon, the amazing, intelligent and generous friends I have throughout the region of the north west, and the fact that where we come from finally counts.

I take this opportunity to thank the Nationals WA state campaign team. This group of people worked tirelessly to assist all candidates within our team. As we all know, election campaigns can be stressful. However, the support I received as a candidate was outstanding. I have no doubt that the success that the Nationals WA achieved at this election was due in no small part to the efforts of those people and I thank them sincerely. I want to particularly thank the branches of Carnarvon, Karratha, Newman, Esperance, Kalgoorlie and Port Hedland. We had a wonderful campaign throughout the mining and pastoral electorate, all as a result of the hard work of those people. I also wish to thank all those people who voted for the Nationals WA. It is a truly humbling experience to be here representing you today and I give my 100 per cent commitment that I will do all I can to represent you well. I must individually thank Hon Martin Aldridge; Mia Davies, the member for Central Wheatbelt; and Clare Creegan for their tireless guidance, incredible professionalism and friendship over the past five years. I must single out, however, Hon Col Holt and Hon Brendon Grylls. These two people are just simply amazing; they have both individually made a massive contribution to the Nationals WA. I thank you for your support to me personally and I thank you for seeing something in me that at times I was not sure was there myself. I, and the people of regional Western Australia, owe you a debt of great gratitude.

Finally, I wish to thank my family—those present here in the chamber and those watching via the web. I cannot do this without you. To my children, Jackson, Ben and Sarah, thank you for always committing although not always understanding. I know it can be tough and really tiresome listening to me talk about politics. What I know now is that my children, before they even know it themselves, are working for their communities trying to achieve something better, and that I think is my greatest achievement as their mother. To my brother Mark and his family—Liza, Liam, Emma, Melissa and Cameron—you are truly a great support to me and I love you dearly. To my friends at home who have handed out how-to-vote cards, filled the room for political functions and allowed me to vent, laugh and cry, thank you. To my mum and dad, what can I say? It all began with you. I love you and this one's for you. Thank you.

[Applause.]

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