

STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
&  
PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Transcript of an interview with

**PHILLIP PENDAL**  
**b.1947 – d.2008**

STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 19 January 2007 – 25 May 2007  
INTERVIEWER: John Ferrell  
TRANSCRIBER: Hansard  
DURATION: 15 x 60 minute tapes  
REFERENCE NUMBER: OH 3568  
COPYRIGHT: Parliament of Western Australia and Library Board of  
Western Australia

## **NOTE TO READER**

Readers of this oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a verbatim transcript of the spoken word and reflects the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Parliament and the State Library are not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

**Bold** type face indicates a difference between transcript and recording, as a result of corrections made to the transcript only, usually at the request of the person interviewed.

FULL CAPITALS in the text indicate a word or words emphasised by the person interviewed.

Square brackets [ ] are used for insertions not in the original tape.

## Phillip George Pental, 1947-2008

Phillip George Pental represented the South-East Metropolitan region and the seat of South Perth in the Parliament of Western Australia in both Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly over a quarter century from 1980. Initially a Liberal, he became an Independent for the last term and a half of his political career, in protest at what he considered corrupt electoral practices within the party. He was made a Parliamentary Fellow in 2004 in recognition of his contribution to WA politics including research into the history of the Parliament.

This series of fifteen one-hour interviews highlights the following themes of his life.

- **Rural origins** in post-war Bunbury where his father was a contract builder and member of the Town Council. Here Phillip began developing his interest in public affairs.
- **Catholic up-bringing** and education due to his mother's influence. He progressed from altar-boy to leadership in the Young Christian Workers' movement, then became a strong advocate for Catholic values in relation to right-to-life issues when in Parliament, for which he was awarded a Papal Cross.
- **Career as a journalist** with WA Newspapers, first in Bunbury then later as political roundsman for the Daily News in Perth.
- Work as a **press officer with Premier Charles Court**, which formed a natural bridge from journalism into a political career.
- **Association with the Liberal Party of WA** and career as a member of parliament in successive Liberal teams. His contribution as a Shadow Minister in various portfolios culminated in developing the environmental policy which helped Richard Court win government in 1993.
- **Life as an Independent MLA**, including the particular challenges of adopting that position.
- **Identification with South Perth**, both as an MP and local activist, including founding of the Historical Society and the May Gibbs Trust. Phillip was recognised with Freedom of the City of South Perth.
- **Interests in History**, spanning family history, local history and in particular research and writing – with others – of parliamentary history.
- **Family man** in the roles of husband, father and grandfather.

A warm and sociable person, of the highest integrity, Phillip left an enduring mark on the West Australian scene and on his community.

John Ferrell  
August 2008

**Table of Contents**

**PENDAL**

<b>Tape One Side A</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Earliest childhood memory of growing up in Bunbury, houses lived in (moving next door).	1
Forebears & family members.	2
Bunbury in the 1950's.	3
Father's building business.	6
Personality characteristics owed to father.	7
<b>Tape One Side B</b>	
Loss of father at an early age.	10
Influence of mother on Pental's childhood.	12
Relationships with other family members.	14
Family history – descended from convict stock.	16
Early interest in politics.	18
<b>Tape Two Side A</b>	
Schooling	19
Interest in choir, music.	22
Membership of Police & Citizens, boxing lessons, fundraising work.	24
Books interested in, influence of teachers.	25
Gradation from convent to Marist College.	26
<b>Tape Two Side B</b>	
Marist college days, influences of teachers.	28
School sports.	30
Animosity between Protestant & Catholic students.	31
Parents' association with the school.	32
Father's interest in tennis, importance of religion to Pental.	33
<b>Tape Three Side A</b>	
Effect of Vatican Council II on Pental's beliefs.	38
Pental's involvement with church groups.	40
Family move from Bunbury to Victoria Park.	42
Schooling at Christian Brothers College.	43
<b>Tape Three Side B</b>	
New friends made at CBC.	47
Schooling at CBC	48
Interests outside school.	50
Early work experience; Olympic Tyre & Rubber Company, Commonwealth Bank; transfer to Boulder.	51
Night school studies in Boulder and Perth, journalism cadetship.	52
<b>Tape Four Side A</b>	
Winning a trip to Canberra at age 15, meeting Robert Menzies.	57
Development of interest in reading, from Enid Blyton to	60

## Table of Contents

## PENDAL

mainly political works.	
Taste in movies from childhood onwards.	61
Pendal's view on Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.	62
Pendal's views on capital punishment and the hanging of Eric Edgar Cooke.	63
Time in Bunbury as a cadet journalist.	64
<b>Tape Four Side B</b>	
Experience as a cadet journalist.	66
Life in Bunbury outside journalism.	70
Introduction to motoring; first car purchased in Boulder.	71
Meeting future wife, courtship, marriage.	72
<b>Tape Five Side A</b>	
Early married life, arrival of children, fatherhood & family life.	75
Achievements of Pendal's children, role as a grandfather.	77
Working life as a journalist in Perth with the Daily News.	79
<b>Tape Five Side B</b>	
Working life as a journalist in Perth with the Daily News (continued).	84
Experiences as an executive committee member of the Australian Journalists Association.	89
Award received for provincial journalism.	91
<b>Tape Six Side A</b>	
Joining the Liberal Party while still working as a political roundsman.	93
Relationships with key members; Fred Chaney, Noel Crichton-Browne, Bill Grayden.	94
Positions held within the State Liberal Party.	97
Being appointed to the staff of Sir Charles Court.	99
<b>Tape Six Side B</b>	
Working life under Sir Charles Court.	102
Working relationships with Cyril Rushton and Neil McNeill.	105
Travelling with Sir Charles Court.	106
<b>Tape Seven Side A</b>	
Benefits from the experience of working with Sir Charles Court and their relevance to Pendal's subsequent career.	111
Pendal's preselection.	113
<b>Tape Seven Side B</b>	
Pendal's 1980 election campaign.	119
Working as Press Secretary for Ian Laurance until being sworn in.	126
Relevance of the Upper House	127
<b>Tape Eight Side A</b>	
Office arrangements during and after campaign.	129

## Table of Contents

## PENDAL

Pendal's illness during 1983.	131
Maiden speech.	133
Pendal's early goals once elected.	134
Committee work undertaken by Pendal.	136
<b>Tape Eight Side B</b>	
Appointment of Laurie Marquet to position of Clerk of the Upper House.	138
Marquet's influence on Upper House reform.	139
Pendal's relationship with Upper House President Clive Griffiths.	140
Pendal's committee work.	141
Relationship with leaders; Court, O'Connor, Hassell, MacKinnon. Pendal's opinions of other senior coalition players.	142
<b>Tape Nine Side A</b>	
Pendal's experiences as shadow minister.	146
<b>Tape Nine Side B</b>	
Continuation of Pendal's experiences in the shadow Environment portfolio. Interest in Heritage and creation of Family policies.	155
Influence of Upper House colleagues.	157
Clive Griffiths' capabilities as Upper House President.	159
Relationship with Norman Moore.	160
Nomination for Lower House seat.	161
<b>Tape Ten Side A</b>	
Relationship with Barry MacKinnon.	164
Pendal's views on W.A. Inc.	166
<b>Tape Ten Side B</b>	
Pendal's views on W.A. Inc (continued).	172
Pendal's dealings with Bevan Lawrence.	175
Difficulties of being in opposition.	178
<b>Tape Eleven Side A</b>	
Pendal's role in the "Liberal Party Strategy Group".	180
Upper House Issues.	182
Parliamentary Library	186
<b>Tape Eleven Side B</b>	
Need for Parliament House to be extended.	189
Coup to replace Hassell with MacKinnon	190
Coup to replace MacKinnon with Court	192
Pendal's relationship with Richard Court.	193
Pendal's move from Upper House to Lower House.	194
Liz Constable's winning of Floreat as an Independent	195
<b>Tape Twelve Side A</b>	
Pendal's 1993 campaign for the Lower House seat of South Perth.	197

**Table of Contents****PENDAL**

Establishment of Eminent Australians Forum	200
Differences in duties between being an Upper House member and a Lower House member.	201
<b>Tape Twelve Side B</b>	
Pendal refused a ministry by Richard Court.	206
Pendal resigns from party.	207
Pendal's opinion on his treatment by Court and who may have been advising him.	208
Lower House committee work undertaken by Pendal.	210
<b>Tape Thirteen Side A</b>	
Pendal's best and most helpful associates and colleagues in the Court Government.	214
Pendal's resignation.	215
Pendal's observations of branch stacking.	217
Pendal's deliberations over his resignation, support from Lady Brand.	222
<b>Tape Thirteen Side B</b>	
Reactions to Pendal's resignation.	224
Pendal's objectives as an independent.	226
Pendal's 1996 election campaign as an independent.	227
Pendal keeping abreast of issues without party support.	229
Pendal's Right-to-Life stance.	231
<b>Tape Fourteen Side A</b>	
Pendal's travel to UNESCO, the Scottish Parliament and Hong Kong.	234
Pendal reflects on his parliamentary career, particularly as an independent.	236
Pendal's service on the Parliamentary Historical Advisory Committee.	240
<b>Tape Fourteen Side B</b>	
Events leading to Pendal's decision to retire.	243
Pendal awarded a papal cross and also freemanship of the City of South Perth.	246
Pendal's association with the Catholic Church.	248
<b>Tape Fifteen Side A</b>	
Pendal's writing separate from his political duties.	251
<b>Tape Fifteen Side B</b>	
Pendal's community work.	260
<b>End of Oral History.</b>	

## TAPE ONE SIDE A

This tape contains an interview, first in the series, with the Hon Phillip Pental. It is being recorded on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007, at Parliament House in Perth, and the interviewer is John Ferrell

JF Phil, as an initial talking point, what's your very earliest childhood memory?

**PENTAL** I think it's living in a street in South Bunbury that, in those days, we called "Latrilly" Road - Latreille. Today, I notice local people have adopted "La-tree-ill". I'm not sure what that says about us or them. I think my first memories are in a home at number 15, probably of three or four years of age. I lived there with my parents. It was on the southern edge of South Bunbury, beyond which there was simply miles and miles of bush. That would be the furthest back that I can recall. In many ways, it set the scene for a lot of things that were to occur after that. We had shifted from a house next door, and I can vaguely recall shifting from the house next door. My father had sold that house to his banker, the ES&A Bank, for the bank to locate their new resident manager in Bunbury. When my mother asked, "That's all very well, but what are WE going to do?" He said, "Oh, I'll build another house next door." I can recall us, as little children, moving through the gap in the fence, taking little bits and pieces of furniture from one house to another. So it must have been about 1950, when I was three or maybe four years of age.

JF Yes. What about the structure of that place?

**PENTAL** The physical building structure?

JF Yes.

**PENTAL** I can recall it vividly. My father was, as I have mentioned, a builder. It was immediately post-war, and it later only became apparent to me, the circumstances of those houses. Both were built with tiles but clad in asbestos. That meant nothing to us at the time, but I later learnt that things like bricks were in very short supply, as indeed were other building materials. So both homes were clad in asbestos, and when I go past these days they look distinctly downmarket because of

that, but we thought they were fairly good in their day. It had the conventional three bedrooms, a sleep-out, a lounge and a separate dining room, and an enormous kitchen, which also served as an eating area. We always seemed to have relatives or employees of my father whom he had brought over from the eastern states, or his office staff. They always seemed to be cohabiting with us, and there were always people around. Perhaps then the dominant memory of a backyard which was adjacent to what was known as the "Five Mile Brook", which I later learnt was some sort of a drainage of some of the swamps which we now call "wetlands". In those days swamps were for filling in and we were 50 years in ignorance before we did something about that. The house was adjacent to this enormous Five Mile Brook, at the bottom of which was a small stream filled with gilgies and logs and frogs. That was part of our growth years as well. So the house was very commodious but fairly conventional, and I think conventional because of the post-war shortage of materials crisis.

JF            You were there with four other siblings, I believe, eventually, and your two parents?

**PENDAL**        Yes, my dad and my mum. My mother had been in Bunbury. She was a Buswell, and her first forebear had arrived in Bunbury in 1855. He had received assisted passage, as it were, from Her Majesty's Government. His name was Joseph Buswell, about whom I have since written because you tend to celebrate a convict in the family, whereas when I first began that, I remember my grandmother being very standoffish about what I was doing and raising all of this stuff that didn't need to be raised. My mother's family had been in Bunbury since 1855. My dad had met her when he was posted to the outskirts of Bunbury during the war at an army camp. I grew up with an elder sister, an elder brother, and a younger brother followed me, in 1953. Subsequent to a shift to Perth in 1959, my parents had their fifth child, who was born in 1960. So, yes, four of the children had their early infancy and childhood in that home.

JF            As was fairly common then, I suppose, you would have been sharing bedrooms and that sort of thing?

**PENDAL**        I was, and I recall sharing a room with my older brother, Vince, who was about 16 months older than I was. We shared what seemed to me was ...

everything seemed to me to be enormous. I don't know what that says about my early psychology, but the rooms appeared to have been, if I describe it now, enormous. I am sure if I went back, it would be a run-of-the-mill garden variety third bedroom in the house that I shared with my brother Vince. My sister had a separate room up near where my parents slept. I'm not quite sure where my younger brother slept. I have no visual recollection of where he was in the house, but clearly we found some spot for him.

JF            Bunbury, at that time, to go into the context, was a very different place from Bunbury today. Can you give us a very quick word picture of the Bunbury that you knew?

**PENDAL**        It was, as you say, a very different place. Bunbury, the southern extremity stopped virtually at our home, maybe one or two streets onwards which was called "Mangles Street", which was named after Governor Stirling's mother-in-law, I think, or parents-in-law. Mangles Street appeared to have been the southern extremity. Old Bunbury was in and around the present port of Bunbury and it extended out to Rathmines, towards the east. So it was a small country town by today's standards, reliant on its port. Bunbury, post-war, saw a huge expansion into a suburb called Carey Park, a State Housing Commission area, much of which my father built as a building contractor in the 1950s. So it was, in all, a tiny place, I recall. The school that I ultimately went to at Marist Brothers, out towards Picton, seemed to be light years away when we had to travel out there by bicycle. So it was, indeed, a small, confined 1950s town.

JF            It had all the usual services and facilities, I suppose. Like, where you were, you had power, I suppose?

**PENDAL**        Yes, I was never conscious of ever living in a home without electric power. So that part of Bunbury, South Bunbury, Latreille Road, certainly had the conventional services; electricity, good roads - they were bituminised, as I recall it. My father was a councillor, and one of the little memories I have there is that each week before a council meeting the local traffic cop would turn up at our house and deliver the agenda and the papers and so on. For the first few times that happened, I think some of my friends often and openly wondered why this traffic cop was always

visiting our house. For services, and things of that nature, we really landed on this earth as children at a time when we knew want for none of those things.

JF Continuing services just for a moment: would Bunbury have been sewerred then, or were you on septic tank sewerage at that point?

**PENDAL** I have an idea that we would still have been on septic tanks. I can certainly recall the continuation of what they called "grease traps", which took all of the waste water out of the kitchen sink and so on, because I recall opening one up on one day to inspect it and a little girl fell in, in, of all things, her first communion dress. This was very bad form for someone like me. Her mother happened to be my godmother, I think, and there was a party at our home. So that I can recall opening this up and probably bragging about what a good grease trap we had, and she promptly fell in, white dress and veil and all. I'm fairly certain, in those circumstances, that we would have been on septic tanks, but I may be wrong about that.

JF Leaving the facilities, or services, for a moment; you have mentioned the bush at the end of the block, and in your questionnaire to me you said that the bush environment was special to you. Tell me, how did you use the bush as a boy?

**PENDAL** Well, it seems to me that we were always attracted to its openness, to the mystery of it. I can't ever recall going out by myself. I was always with my brother, Vince, or my sister. We had relatives who lived ... there was a vacant paddock opposite that had a few dairy cows in it, and on the other side of that paddock my mother's brother - to us, "Uncle Des" - and his wife, Kath, lived with a houseful of children, and they would often be at our place and we at theirs. We had other friends, the Hornes, whose father was the Dulux paint shop man in Bunbury, and they lived on a corner just over from us. We would frequently be out in the bush with them, and there were other children as well. It seems to me that we would simply use the bush to go exploring, as a way of spending our time. Our mother might see us disappearing off the property, "Where are you boys going?" We'd say, "We're just going out to the bush for a while." I think if my grandchildren said that today, I would freak out. I really would. But my mother would say, "Well, just be careful." I'm not sure what we were supposed to be careful of. I mean, we had a vague understanding out there that there were ... the worst things that would have

been there would have been snakes. I can't ever recall that we saw wildlife like kangaroos or possums, which, as I've looked back in later years, surprises me. We would wander out into the bush, and, somewhat to the horror of the later environmentalist in me, one of us would take an axe and we would decide which tree we would chop down for the day. That is another thing that appals me; I think half of the native forests south of Bunbury were chopped down by my family for a bit of recreation. We would go out, we collected birds' eggs, we explored little rivulets and streams, we climbed trees and chopped them down when it seemed to be the right thing. It was just a giant native backyard that seemed to us to be a bit like paradise. It was just a wonderful environment, and I'm sure I have idealised this as I have got older, but I can't think of anything that ever went wrong, no-one was ever bitten by a snake, we always seemed to find our way home, so it was a wonderful environment to be in.

JF            Good. The beach wasn't all that far away. Did the beach and the sea mean much to you?

**PENDAL**       Well, you are correct. What we called the "back beach" and was the Indian Ocean front - ironically, where my great-great-grandfather, the convict, Joseph Buswell, ran a whale fishery in the 1850s, although I was not to know that until later years. But the back beach never had a lot of appeal to us. We did, however, spend a lot of time at what was then called the "baths" in Bunbury. That was a fairly pretentious description for a couple of rickety old jetties that were positioned in Koombana Bay in Bunbury, which I might say, 50 years down the track, is now a very swish part of Bunbury 2000, but the baths provided us with the swimming lessons which we attended, a small beach, there were speedboats in Koombana Bay. So we always seemed to be as well ... when we weren't in the bush, we were down at the baths. The back beach, as we called it, was never attractive to us, I presume because there was surf and there was the occasional person who was lost there. The back beach also was where people, some of my younger uncles and aunts who were then in their early 20s, were part of the surf lifesaving club and scene. That's my only recollection of the ocean beach, and most of our time would have been spent at the baths as a conventional swimming hole.

JF            So you are not a fisherman?

**PENDAL** Well, strange that you should say that because ... the baths was under the protection of a huge groyne that had been built, I imagine, in the 1890s or the 1900s that swept like a big arm around the outer end of Koombana Bay. That gave enormous protection to the baths. Coming out from the baths was the only jetty that serviced Bunbury and the south west, other than Busselton. This jetty was a long, spindly snake of a thing that headed probably north east from the shore, really only a couple of hundred metres from where we swam, at the end of which there was very, very good fishing. I do recall, since you asked about my fishing prowess and I did not volunteer it, on Anzac Day 1958 - and Lord knows why I would remember this, but I was then 11 - we caught something like eight dozen fish off the edge of the jetty, all edible fish. I'm not quite sure how we disposed of them, but many were taken home. It was just a particularly good moment for the tides and for the fish. So we did do a fair bit of fishing, although I wouldn't have called myself any sort of an expert fisherman. That was part of that, sort of, life in a little country town that was surrounded by water and bush, and so we seemed to have that experience of those things that were around us.

JF Yes. You've referred to your father and said that he was a builder. Was he a hands-on builder or more an entrepreneur?

**PENDAL** I think you've hit it really on the head. My dad was an entrepreneur. Mind you, he was a very hands-on person, but a very quick little story will tell you something that you've picked up: at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my father's death only a year or two ago, because he died quite young, we had a function and I got my uncle to make a recollection. He said that at the time he, my uncle, might have been 17 or 18 years of age and my father was involved in building houses at Carey Park for the State Housing Commission. One morning, he went around in a panic to this young uncle, my brother's sister, Peter Buswell, and said, "I want you to get over with me quickly to number 10 Frankel Street, and, here, put this carpenter's bag on." So he put it on and he said, "Where am I going and what am I doing?" My dad said, "Just get over there and bang a few nails in. The State Housing Commission inspectors are here at 10 o'clock and they expect that I'm going to have four apprentices on." My uncle said, "But I'm not an apprentice", and he said, "No, but with that bag you'll look like one." [laughs] I learnt this only recently. So my dad had left school during the Depression, and the only real trade he had learnt during the war, while he was a member of the Australian armed forces ... and he became a surveyor. He was very

good at mathematics, I recall that. The surveying seemed to lead him to think that he could become a builder. Well, he did become a builder and he became a very successful one with probably, by today's standard, a multimillion dollar book of buildings. He, in the end, actually went bust, and that was a matter of some trauma to our family. He wasn't a hands-on builder, although he certainly taught me to do things that I use to this day of driving a nail and putting it in the soap first, and how to use a handsaw and things of that kind. I think you've described it rather well, and I hadn't expected that.

JF I got the impression from reading your two family essays that maybe he was an entrepreneurial man, rather than a trained carpenter, for example. So that's documented. How close were you to your dad?

**PENDAL** In terms of what children are with ... like, my own relationship with my own son and children today seems to be a lot different to the relationship I had with my dad. We were a close family, but it seemed to me, as I looked back, it wasn't a period when you were demonstrative. I don't ever remember my dad coming and embracing me, for example; it just wasn't done. Whereas when my son, now 35, turns up at my home, he will embrace me and kiss me on the cheek. Maybe that is typical of my times. He died when I was 17, so I didn't really have a lot to do with him in a young adult sense, and it's something, you know, I learnt to regret. He was indisputably the head of our household, and when he said "jump", you certainly jumped. I'd have to say he was a very affectionate and proud father, but he was pretty hard, but I wouldn't say harsh. So I think I had a terrific dad, but for only a short time, and certainly not for long, but if you got into trouble, I can recall the worst that would happen, you might get a whack with a rolled up *Daily News* around the backside as you were going past. It was about the most corporal of punishment that we ever got. I always remember admiring him ... he always looked, to me, a tremendously handsome man. He was a city councillor and he was dressed up nicely. He wore a hat that I wished I, to this day, could look like him when he was in all of this stuff. So it was a close relationship and a warm one, but different to the sort of things that you see happening in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

JF What aspects of your own personality do you think owe their origins to him, either because they were learned or because they are somehow innate?

**PENDAL** To the extent that I learned, later, that I had any leadership capacity, I most certainly got that from him. I always saw myself as being, at the time, quite a shy and a fairly tentative sort of a child, but I admired my father's leadership. He seemed to be a leader. At a later stage of my life, when I was at a small Christian Brothers' College in east Victoria Park, I can recall one of the brothers there who gave me some training in respect to public speaking and Eisteddfods and things of that nature, so that maybe that was something that he saw in me that had come from my father. So I would think that anything ... to the extent that I had any leadership capacity, I certainly would attribute that to my dad. My mum was quite a different kettle of fish, but I think that's what would have ... he always seemed to be out front, he always seemed to be making the speech. He always was surrounded by my mother's family, who were quite a poor family; people who worked on the wharves in Bunbury, people who were labourers or truck drivers, and they seemed to gather around my dad in a rather nice way. It was always a good feeling to be in their company.

JF You've mentioned, a couple of times, his role as a councillor in Bunbury. I believe he was something like nine years a councillor, from what I've seen. The circumstances in which he got onto the council were where he was originally leading some sort of a protest, I think, when the municipality was about to be declared. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**PENDAL** Yes. I came across some of these things in the newspapers many years after the event, so I don't have direct recollection of them. It would have been in the early 1950s, and he was at some sort of protest meeting over the municipal status of Bunbury, and over, I think, the boundaries of the local authority. There was a protest meeting held, and I saw, in later years, his name appearing in the press as being part of a group, I think, who were heading off to put a protest in front of the Minister for Local Government. Subsequent to that, perhaps 1953 or 1954, he was then elected to the Bunbury Town Council, as it was then called. I think he had a break, and then I think he was re-elected and he stayed on the council until around about May 1959. It's a long call, but I think, in other circumstances, he would have gone into the Western Australian Parliament, because I do recall the death of the sitting member, a man called George Roberts, who was a relative or a descendant, I think, of Sir Newton Moore. Roberts was a very, very promising young member for Bunbury, who died early, by which stage my family had relocated to Perth. I can

recall going back to Bunbury one night with my father, I would have been 12 or something, and I have a strong idea that he was going back to contest the pre-selection for the seat of Bunbury. If he did that, he lost. I actually tried to check with some Liberal Party records in Bunbury many years later, but that didn't throw up any evidentiary material.

JF            He had a sort of interesting relationship with the mayor, I believe. Do you know anything about the background to that?

**PENDAL**        Yes, he did. He did. The Mayor of Bunbury, at the time, was, seemingly, a giant-like figure; Percy Payne. If he seemed to me like a giant-like figure, the second most apparent thing to me was that he couldn't abide my father and my father couldn't abide him. I'm not sure what brought that on. I've got a funny feeling that Payne was part of the old, established ... almost a local aristocrat, and he may have seen my father as a bit of a blow in, a bit of a ...

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE A

## TAPE ONE SIDE B

Tape one, side B: interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal.

JF                    Now, you've mentioned that you lost your father when you were a fairly young age. How did you manage to come to terms with a thing like this, because it would have been a huge event for a child, or a boy?

**PENDAL**        Yes. [long pause] It was a difficult time, and I guess not just for me. I was just turned 17, I think, brothers and sisters. My mum was all of about 44. I know that I felt he'd sort of been robbed. He was too young. He had such promise. I recall one of the first impacts was at a wake that was held the day of his funeral. I recall that none of my friends turned up and I remember thinking ... well, there was an ambivalence. I remember the night of it, there were people at our home and they were doing what you mostly do at a wake; they were drinking alcohol or drinking tea or coffee, or having biscuits or sandwiches. I remember seeing my mum laughing, and that, sort of, threw me. I didn't say anything to anyone, but it was the first major death that I had had to confront, so I didn't think anyone, or a widow, should have been laughing. Now I know that that's a silly adolescent view of it, but at the time that's what I thought. I also was a bit surprised that my friends weren't around, but I understood later that they were simply embarrassed. They didn't know how to deal with death. I have since said to my children, as a result of it, "Just go up and touch someone. Put your hand on their hand, but don't walk past them." So it certainly changed things. By now, our economic status had really tumbled. We'd come from very good surroundings in Bunbury, my father had lost the business and we'd moved to Perth for him to try to recover. We went to live in circumstances that were much more modest and humble than we'd ever experienced, although that didn't seem to do any of us any harm. So it did have that impact, but for a long, long time it made me quite morbid in my attitude towards life. Only recently my brother-in-law, who is now a professor of microbiology at the University of Adelaide, we were having a drink over Christmas and he said, "I recall the first time I met you ..." he was studying at Oxford and he had come home for a Christmas break where I met him, because I was now taking out his sister. He said, "One of the first recollections I have of you is that you told me that you weren't going to live long", and I said, "Did I really?" It came back to this point; I wasn't aware that I was expressing that, sort of, morbidity at the time, but I was and he was evidence of it. So it did have the impact, but that was ... yes.

JF            Were you able to get help from other people around you, to adjust to that?

**PENDAL**        No. I did what I suppose society did in those days; you just, so-called, bottled it up, you dealt with it yourself, to the extent that you dealt with it, and probably I didn't deal with it. It never occurred to me ... today, when you hear of trauma, it rather irritates me to hear the news media say, "And counsellors have been sent in." For some reason, I'm affronted by that. So there was no sense that you would sit down with someone ... it was just an attitude, I suppose, that said, "Well, son, you've just got to get on with your life." That was, sort of, the matter-of-fact way I think my father would have viewed it as well. So, no, no counselling in those days. [laughs]

JF            No. I'm going to come to the church later on, but was there no priest, or person like that, that had any impact at that time for you?

**PENDAL**        Certainly priests had a big impact, a good impact, on my life, but I can't remember one coming and, so-called, offering counsel. When I look back on it, I don't think I expected that. Today, I'd be affronted if that didn't occur if something happened to one of my children or whatever. My dad was an Anglican, sort of a non-practising Anglican. Not that that made any difference because he seemed to get along well with the Catholic clerics who would visit our home. His death occurred when we were in Perth, and I just can't recall there being anyone who really would say, "Look, do you want to sit down? Is there anything you want to get off your chest", or, "Can I help?" or whatever. You knew that they were there, that they were your friends, but for some reason you didn't connect with them on that particular score. It does puzzle me, as I look back now, but at the time I'm sure I sort of took the view that, "Well, I've just got to get on with life." I don't think the question of you've got to deal with it, because at the time I would have said, "Deal with what?" It was a terribly sad time, but that's where it seemed to start and finish.

JF            The death was relatively sudden, I take it?

**PENDAL**        Well, for a cancer victim it was. I was, at the time, living in Boulder and working in the Commonwealth Bank, and on trips home ... I knew that in 1963 I'd

known that my father was diagnosed with lung cancer and he had a lung removed. I feel guilty to this day that I know absolutely nothing about him going off to hospital ... I must have been at home ... going off to hospital and having a lung removed and having a virtual death sentence placed over him. I have no recollection of ever going in and sitting with him and doing what I would now do if I was that much older. I was then packed off to Boulder by the Commonwealth Bank at the grand age of 16. When I look back, that appals me a bit. Up I went there, and on one of my periodic visits home my mother came into my room late at night. She said, "You know that he's not going to get better." That would have been, I reckon, in the March or April, and then by the June he was dead. I guess for a cancer victim, rather than linger on for many years, it was pretty ... it might have been, you know, nine or 10 months from start to finish. So I don't think we sort of had any sense of preparing for it in the way that you do now. However, that appeared to be the way things were, for better or worse, and I would say probably for worse, yes.

JF           Turning now to your mum ...

**PENDAL**    Yes.

JF           ... she was obviously a very influential character for you.

**PENDAL**    Yes.

JF           So tell me about her personality and abilities and characteristics that charmed you about her?

**PENDAL**    If my father was the dominant one in the family, the undisputed king of the little Pental kingdom, my mother was ... I suppose it was stereotypical really; my mother was quiet. I always imagine she was very beautiful, and I look at things like wedding photos and photos of her youth and that's certainly confirmed. She was an uncomplicated woman, certainly had not had a lot of education, but I would say a terrific sense of natural wisdom about her. She was a product of her family, which was this rather large, boisterous, sometimes rowdy, mob of boys and girls in her family, which numbered about eight. She was the one who would always say, and I am sure you could recognise it, she was the sort of person that would always be saying, "Oh, it will be all right." Things were always going to be "all right". She was

the pacifier, she was the one who would intervene to save you from being clipped by your father with the rolled up version of the *Daily News*. [chuckles] She tended the home in, as I say, that very stereotypical fashion, although I don't mean that to sound dismissive or patronising. She ran a great home. She was, I guess, the quintessential mother of the day. She'd pack us off to ... the days that my dad didn't drive us to mass ... I recently measured the distance; it was a couple of miles. On occasions, he would drive us when she would ask; on other occasions she'd say, "You boys, Jule, are you ready? Okay", and we would walk for what seemed to me ... well, what I now know to be several miles, and then home again. That was nothing; it was just what people did. Nothing extraordinary about it. She was a terrific, steady, modifying, moderating influence on the whole outfit, yes.

JF                    She'd been, according to your essay I think, a photographic assistant for a chemist?

**PENDAL**           She had.

JF                    Did she ever continue with that later in life?

**PENDAL**           No, she didn't, but it used to puzzle ... she worked for a chemist called "Morley Thomas", or the company was called "Morley Thomas". It used to fascinate us children, as we got older, to think that our mother did anything that was remotely scientific or technical. I would have thought that she was the least technically able person in the world, apart from me, I'd say. It used to fascinate several of us that she had this job that seemed to be a fairly complicated thing, when it probably wasn't, to be developing photos, and so on. So she worked there. I think it was the only job that she'd had before she was married.

JF                    She didn't ever continue with her interest in photography?

**PENDAL**           No. She seemed to develop, late in her life, occupations and fascinations that she showed no signs of when she was young and when she was our mother when we were young. Like, in later years ... because of my father's death she remarried, and she and my stepfather would spend weeks at a time sitting at the end of the Broome jetty, fishing. So my mother took up fishing. She was a great, sort of, crossword worker. So it puzzled me that she did things in later life that

didn't seem to have any connection with her earlier life, but there was no follow up with anything of the photographic work, no.

JF                    Do you recognise any characteristics that you may have inherited from her or learned from her?

**PENDAL**            Well, I do think I learned, to the extent that I learned things like patience, I think I learnt them from her. I think to the extent that ... I found that ... I think in political life later on, I was often in the role of pacifying competing interests and trying to draw competing strands together. Yes, I think that sort of thing I got from my mother. In a strange way, I learnt to have the, sort of, outwardness and boisterousness of my dad, and this more passive and pacifying role of my mother. I think she did have a big impact on me.

JF                    You mentioned a maternal uncle as being very significant to you, when you completed my questionnaire. I wondered if you could enlarge on that for us.

**PENDAL**            This is a man called Peter Buswell. He's still alive, he's into his 80s, and he is nursing a wife who has either Alzheimer's or one of those disorders of senility of some kind. He continues to do with her what he was always like with us ... [interruption for phone call]

Peter was one of my mother's brothers. He was born, I think, in 1928, so that when I came on the scene he was either about to be married or had been married. He was a very handsome, physical man who was, by then, a national cycling champion. Very talented, and probably, by modern standards, would have been at least up to Commonwealth Games standards. As I say, he won a number of interstate and national championships. Cycling was a huge sport in the 1930s and '40s, and still in the '50s. When he married, they were so poor that they came and ... they'd lodged with my parents at this famous number 15 Latreille Road, and they occupied what was then supposed to be a dining room. It was a separate room, but it was sealed off for them. I, as a young bloke, was part of their very earliest married days, and I'm sure I was a most unwelcome visitor into their room. They seemed to live there for maybe a year or so while he built a home elsewhere. He was a very industrious man with no training, but he drove a truck for a living, he kept a cow in a paddock down the road to provide his own milk as his family grew. He was very much a man to be

self-sufficient and coming from a very, very modest background. He always seemed to me to be very active, very handsome, very devoted to his wife, and a real role model. To this day, we remain enormously close friends. Several years ago, for what must have been maybe his 50<sup>th</sup> or 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, he asked me to give the speech at that. We were close. If I had another dad, then it was him. He was much less remote, because my dad, as I described earlier, he was the, sort of ... almost like a bigger brother, and always involved in cycling or surf lifesaving or those physical pursuits. A really good man in all respects.

JF                    He never managed to drag you into those sporting interests?  
[chuckles]

**PENDAL**        No, no. [chuckles] I seemed to manage to avoid that sort of activity, although I had a few minor triumphs as a school athlete. The minute I begin to tell my own children about these, they switch off, the eyes roll, and they absolutely deny that there is any possibility I could have had any claim to fame, although I have managed to track down one or two little press items where I got my name in the paper. They still believe that that was probably a mistake on the part of the newspaper. [chuckles] So I was in sport, but I was never really much interested in it.

JF                    Still you had grandparents alive, didn't you? I think your grandfather died in 1961, your paternal grandfather. Were they influential at all for you?

**PENDAL**        Not really. On that paternal side, my grandfather was friendly enough, but he was a remote grandfatherly-type figure. My grandmother was a lot more forthcoming. She was an Englishwoman from Norfolk, but still just a little bit perhaps at arm's length. My maternal grandfather had died when I was two, so I have no recollection. Probably the biggest influence, or impact, of all of my grandparents was my maternal grandmother, who lived through until after I was elected to Parliament. She was the only one who was. I was quite close to her. She was a bit like another ... she was certainly the mother of my mother. I saw in one what I saw in the other. So she was probably the only one who had any ... for whom I have the greatest affection because of that.

JF                    Yes. Of the five siblings, which of them was of most significance or importance to you as you developed?

**PENDAL** I think I'd have to say my sister, who was the eldest, Julia, and the eldest by about four years, and my brother by about 16 months. They were, sort of, contemporaries. We, sort of, grew up together, certainly in the case of my brother. My sister seemed to be one of those hyperactive people ... well, I would say she was hyperactive. She was a good athlete, she was tall and slim. Being the first child, my father placed huge demands on her, as I learned from her in recent years, the expectations on the first child, which is common, but my sister tended to be a bit of a mother to the rest of us. My brother Vince and I tended to be more like mates. We did grow up together, we played together, whether it was out in the bush or down at the jetty baths. Because my other brother came in 1953, we sort of regarded him as being a really junior member of this outfit and we looked at him with some level of superiority for some reason. So it was the two older ones who were more my contemporaries, and certainly my brother Vince, who, in later years, became a campaign chairman for me when I was running for Parliament. He could always be relied upon to raise good, honest money that wasn't going to get me into trouble or him into trouble, so we remained close over the years.

JF Probably it's time to bring in the matter of the family history, first of all. Was the history of the family spoken about very much? You had this convict ancestor, and I wondered if that was spoken about at all in those days, when you were a child?

**PENDAL** Not even remotely mentioned. It was not until around 1980, maybe it was the late '70s, that a particularly close cousin of mine, Michael Buswell, who was seven or eight years older than me but who has become something of a history tragic along with myself in this pursuit, he said one day, "Do you know that our great-great-grandfather, Joseph, came to Western Australia as a convict?" Well, I wasn't flabbergasted, I was utterly delighted. I couldn't believe my luck. As we started digging around, I recall my grandma, my nana ... the one to whom I referred a few minutes ago ... I remember she looked down her nose ... she'd married into the Buswells in 1915, I think it was, and she very much looked down her nose at this business of fossicking around and looking into the past. So there was not the slightest mention, but she must have known, having married into the family in 1915. The wife of the convict, Eliza Buswell, had only died a year or so earlier, and so there must have been remnants of this cover up, that you don't talk about certain things.

When my mother found out because of what I was feeding to her, I think she was rather pleased. But of course we were that far removed ... it's all very well ... I mean, if my dad had been a scoundrel and a crook or a cheat, I guess I wouldn't be proud about telling that to you, or even if that had applied to one of my grandparents, but when it's remote enough to not matter you tend to be very charitable and say, "Well, these things happened", and ...

JF                   And society has changed its attitudes anyway, hasn't it, on that matter?

**PENDAL**       Yes, it has. Very much so. I think, John, that it was the sesquicentenary in Western Australia, in 1979, which did change all of that, which told people that even if ... you hear this story often, that the convicts were sent out because they stole a loaf of bread; frankly, that's nonsense. They were sent out for more substantial reasons, but they were hardly hanging offences, and today it is a matter of celebration. I recall learning that this same man ... and I have to stress, because of the point of the story ... who was English, illiterate and a Protestant, he was at the heart of the rescue of John Boyle O'Reilly off the coast of Bunbury in March 1868; O'Reilly being Catholic, literate and Irish. I can tell you that my delight in learning that my great-great-grandfather was a convict was only ever outweighed by learning that he had helped John Boyle O'Reilly escape. That would have been at huge cost to himself, had he been sprung for what he did. So, yes, those things, to me ... and now, in the family, they celebrate this, but I do appreciate that at the time, in generations closer, it wouldn't have been a matter of great celebration.

JF                   So when did you become aware of Joseph's convict status?

**PENDAL**       It must have been in the late '70s, so by now I was, say, 21 or 22, told by my cousin, Michael, who had been told by someone else who must have had it handed down to them, "You know those Buswells, you know where they came from." When my cousin discovered it, again I think in the late '70s, it was a matter of real curiosity and some pride to him, just like it was to me. But he was the one who first discovered it, and then it was like him giving me a shovel and I haven't stopped digging the hole since. [chuckles] It's been a fabulous ...

JF                   Is that really what generated your interest in history?

**PENDAL**       No. I'd always loved reading and I recall, as a very young cadet journalist, going back to Bunbury after an absence of many years. I recall being involved there in trying to save the ... so this is 1967 ... trying to save a very, very old corrugated iron Catholic church out at Australind. I have often thought, "Where did that come from?" I do think that my sense of interest in history did have a lot to do with the loss of my father, the sense that perhaps if I hadn't lost him early, I wouldn't have needed to have wanted to know more and more of the family histories. I think, also, it came from my lack of formal education. I left school when I was about 15 ... 14, I think; just before I was 15. I was ordering, much to the amusement of other people, ordering *Time* magazine by the time I was 15. When I look back now, it must have looked awfully pretentious, but it wasn't meant to be. It became sort of a tertiary education for me. I remember a girlfriend at the time, now that you've asked it, bought me a present that might have been on Stanley Melbourne Bruce, or one of the early Premiers or something. So I must have been interested, but it wasn't so much from my school days as I think that I knew I had a fair bit to make up and it was something that I had an interest in.

JF                   Just briefly, was politics talked about at home?

**PENDAL**       Yes. Yes, politics was big, especially to my dad. He was a Liberal to the bootstraps, which was something of an irony because he had married into a family that was as Labor as you could find. As I have said, with all of these other in-laws of his who would be in contact with him, they were as Labor as he was Liberal. It seemed to work. I never, ever remember there being a fight about politics. I can't remember there was ever a fight either about religion, for that matter. There seemed to be that civil and ...

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE B

## TAPE TWO SIDE A

This is tape two, side A, in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal. This is being recorded on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, 2007 at Parliament House in Perth, and the interviewer is John Ferrell.

JF            Now, Phillip, you said that ... you were talking about your interest in history and before we get onto the schooling, which is going to be the main topic of this discussion, I wonder if you would just tell me how aware were people around you, and therefore you, of Bunbury as an historic precinct when you were growing up there?

**PENDAL**        I don't really have any strong recollection that they had that understanding. My father had been born in Collie. His parents were then running a farm at Kukerin, so he was something of an outsider. My mother's family had been there since 1855. If anything they seemed to be aware of its importance as a port. I don't know that they had any real feel for it as being important in an historic sense in WA's history.

JF            I wondered if that had been a factor perhaps in your later interest in history being in Bunbury but as a child.

**PENDAL**        No, I don't think that was a factor. No.

JF            All right. Well, let us come now then to your schooling in Bunbury and I take it that you went to two different schools there from what you've said. So what are your vivid memories of the convent primary school that you attended?

**PENDAL**        Well, I started early. I think I started in the year in which I turned five when I think the norm was six, was it not? I've never been able to prove that that was associated with any genius on my part [chuckles]. I started at what was called St Joseph's Convent in the old part of the town ... in what I now know to be the old part of the town. That convent had been established in I think 1897 by the Mercy nuns. Amongst my early teachers were, I can recall several nuns: Sister Peter, Sister Eta, Sister Philomena. Many years later when I met up with Sister Philomena as a cadet journalist because I've gone back to Bunbury, I learnt that Sister Philomena was the sister to the late Labor Premier Phillip Collier. I immediately

regretted that I hadn't taken an interest in her and perhaps done some oral history with her. I was always a fairly shy child but I seemed to fit in. I never had any traumas associated with my schooling. I certainly recall liking to read. It was, all in all, an uneventful period at St Joseph's, but one that I remember with, you know, affection.

JF                    How big was it at that stage, roughly?

**PENDAL**        Well, I would imagine that it ran to several hundred students. It was a boarding school to children whose parents lived in Bunbury's hinterland, and I can recall a girl whom I went to school with and who remains a friend to this day. She had actually been orphaned at a very early age and I always imagined that she was a boarder because her parents lived a long way away. I later found that the nuns took her in because the parents had died. So there were boarders in one particular wing of the school. It seemed to me to be a very large school, to the mind of a little boy. I would imagine that there would have been certainly 200 or 300 children. That is, drawn from Bunbury, South Bunbury, Rathmines, but also those farming communities like Dardanup and Boyanup and places of that kind.

JF                    And this was the days I suppose before they went into lay teaching.

**PENDAL**        It was. Ironically, I've now been commissioned to write the history of Catholic education in Western Australia since 1843, so I'm learning things now in retrospect about [education] at that period. Certainly teaching nuns were the order of the day when I was at St Joseph's. There would have been, you know, a sprinkling of lay teachers. So I'm now talking of the early 1950s. It wasn't until the late '60s and the early '70s that this quite dramatic reversal took place and the laity became the predominant teaching side.

JF                    And for you it was quite a journey, I should say, from South Bunbury. How did you get to school?

**PENDAL**        I think we caught a bus. I don't recall ever being driven by my father and I think we were, by a long shot, too small to be riding bicycles. So the Henderson's Bus Service operated from South Bunbury for everything else and I can recall my mother going each Friday to "town" to do the shopping. She always caught

a bus and so I imagine that we were put on the Henderson's bus every morning and delivered and then returned home by the same method.

JF            You've mentioned a girl associate that you had known and still know from those days. Were there many people who've remained important to you throughout the rest of your life from that school experience?

**PENDAL**        She would certainly be one who immediately comes to mind. Her name now is Barbara Colgan. She was then Barbara Depiazzi from Waterloo, I think. Offhand, I can't think of any others whom I've known through to this day other than of course my siblings. No, she would be, if not the only one, then one of a group whose names I can't immediately recall.

JF            And was there ... how evident was the migrant presence in the school? You just mentioned Depiazzi so that obviously was of Italian origin.

**PENDAL**        Yes. It did become apparent to us. Perhaps it became more apparent to me when I went to Marist College not all that many years later. I was, I think, about eight when I went to the Marist Brothers and certainly there the post-war migration was seen to have a huge impact. There were children from Italy, as you have mentioned, from continental Europe, children I imagine who might have been Poles by the names that I can still recall. So I think my memory of growing up surrounded by New Australians, as we called them, I think, was more apparent to me as I look back at Marist Brothers when I was just a little bit older. But certainly there were lots of Italian-sounding names of people who predominantly settled in that area between Bunbury and Collie. Indeed, my wife and I had our first visit to Tuscany about 10 years ago when I was, say, 49-ish and when I first saw the hills of Tuscany it then became apparent to me, it struck me very dramatically, as to why so many Italians settled in the Waterloo-Dardanup-Ferguson Valley area; because they were almost identical. If I'd shut my eyes in Tuscany, I could have been transported back to that little part of Western Australia. Very green in the winter, not mountainous but very hilly, rolling hills, very beautiful environment. So that's another aspect to the impact that that Italian arrival had on me many years later without me thinking it had had any impact.

JF            Yes, and what about an Aboriginal presence? Were there Aboriginal students at the school?

**PENDAL** That's a good question. If there was, I was not aware of it. I suppose I didn't really see any impact of aboriginality until years later when I went back there doing my cadetship in journalism. I remember being sent out, and so this may well be 1967-ish, to a place near Dardanup, to an Aboriginal camp, and there was some complaint about, you know, the appalling level of, standard of services, or the lack of services. I recall that visit to this day; but at school I can't recall, now that you've raised it, that there was any dominant Aboriginal presence. There may have been but if it was there, I wasn't conscious of it.

JF Did you have any problem coming to grips with foreign students, with people who were culturally different?

**PENDAL** No. It was, as I look back on it, a remarkably simple existence. They were children who came from other places. Many people think that perhaps being a Catholic school it would have been kids of Irish extraction. I suppose they were there too, but if they were they didn't stick out. The ones whom you were more aware of were the Italian children and I recall us learning things, the words like spaghetti and we would have our usual clever remarks about, you know, spaghetti munchers, without knowing what we were saying and indeed without knowing what spaghetti was for all of that. I recall that there were down the road from our house in Latreille Road, there was a market garden. That is back towards Bunbury, and the house was there and occupied by an Italian family for years and years. I imagine they would have been post-war arrivals. We were conscious of them being there and the neatness of the rows of their market gardens. So if any ethnic group had an impact on me and of me being conscious, it would have been children of Italian parentage. There was never ... I can't recall that being ever a difficulty. They were other kids, they were a bit different, and because they had another language which occasionally we would hear them talking, but for the most part, they fitted in and we fitted in with them in a fairly unremarkable way.

JF Now, that convent, not the school necessarily, but the convent was noted I believe as a centre of teaching excellence for music. Did that spill over into the school to any degree?

**PENDAL** Yes, even I as a non-musical person can recall that, for example, there were particular nuns who taught the piano; I think other children learned the violin; choral work was very big, and whether you could sing or not you ended up in a

choir. I recall, too, there were plenty of children who came in from outside the school and whether they were Catholics or non-Catholics, it didn't matter. Many of those took lessons in music. As I think back it may have been a nun called Sister Paul who was noted for her music teaching, but it didn't impact on me. I was actually learning the guitar privately from a guitarist around the corner. Our parents insisted that we take up one instrument. My sister learnt the piano and I suspect she would have learnt that from the nuns. My brother learnt the piano accordion and I wonder now, since you've raised the issue, I wonder whether that was some Italian influence. I learnt the guitar, so learning the guitar outside of school hours I was never involved in any tutelage in convent music other than being in various choirs.

JF            Did you at that level, I suppose, have any large choir concerts or choir functions to be involved with?

**PENDAL**        Yes, I ... probably ... there was a hall on the site that has since been demolished, like so much of Bunbury's heritage. Much of this old convent has survived but the hall, I think it was called St Patrick's Hall, where there were end-of-year productions and so on. I can certainly recall us being press-ganged into ranks and marched in there to do singing. But at that level I can perhaps more vividly recall the Railway Institute had been built opposite the convent and was a very large auditorium. It was built by my father, so we felt very proud that we could look over the school fence and skite to other children that our dad was building that. That was where I heard my first symphony concert by the WASO (West Australian Symphony Orchestra) because, and I recall it was John Farnsworth Hall, I think, who was the conductor. So some of those larger performances that I imagined were too big to be performed in St Patrick's Hall were performed in the Railway Institute Hall and I can recall attending those as a customer, not participating. But I'd say that was the extent of my musical involvement at the convent.

JF            And what about the guitar? Have you, did you continue with that for long?

**PENDAL**        Well, I did and in fact in later years I played in a band called the Night Beats. Not a very good band but we got a few engagements here and there and sometimes I think back now and I wonder just what people made of us. There were four or five and I played the guitar in the Night Beats. One of our number, in fact two of our number, went on to become quite famous with a national television show. One

was Kerry White and one was Jim Maguire, who was studying medicine at UWA, and they went on to form this other group called the Twilighters and became very big on the national circuit. But my capacities didn't extend to that and I think, too, that my father would have seen that coming and there would have been no way in the world that you would have been going out doing this for a living in a time when you should be getting on with school and then going getting a job. So my guitar days were fairly limited and pretty modest.

JF                    We're talking about acoustic guitar, are we?

**PENDAL**        Mine was a stringed guitar. I'm not sure if that's the same sort, but it certainly wasn't an electric guitar. It was a ... I thought we called it a stringed guitar and I learnt to play by chord. I can still remember ... I could still play a few of those to this day; C, G7 and F and a few of those but nothing to ... nothing that would have made me a rival to Johnny O'Keefe [laughter].

JF                    What other interests did you develop in your youngest years at school? I mean, for example, were there cub scouts or that sort of club that you belonged to?

**PENDAL**        I remember we were ... the involvement, I think, would have been confined to the Marist Brothers College when I eventually got there. I don't recall that I was ever in Scouts or Cubs, although now that you've prompted the memory, I did join the Police and Citizens Youth Club with my brother, where we learned boxing. That seemed to me to be a very unlikely thing for me to have done, and I can now recall that whenever there was a dispute, a fight, looming between my brother and I, my father would absolutely insist, "Well, go and get the boxing gloves. If you're going to have a fight, that's the way you're going to do it". It seems ridiculous now, but we were trussed up in these boxing gloves and by that stage, of course, you'd lost all interest in giving anyone a good biff. So I don't think he was ever under any real threat from me or me from him, but we learnt boxing at the Police and Citizens Youth Club in Bunbury. So I don't recall that there was anything else although a group of us got involved, for some reason, in raising money for one of the radio stations. A woman announcer from Perth, Jane Marshall ... and whatever we were doing was sufficiently important that she came to Bunbury and we did something on radio and explained to her what it is ... what it was we were raising money for. I think it might have been some of my siblings and one or two kids around the area. I have no idea

now what it was we were raising money for but we sort of got a bit of notoriety in going on 6PR because it beamed into Bunbury, 6PR, 6TZ and 6CI Collie, I think it was. So, but beyond that I don't think we joined very much at all. We seemed to have a pretty full school life, family life and that apart from the boxing and the music lessons, that seemed to have been it.

JF           And you'd developed an interest in reading, you said a moment ago, particularly. Was that pretty well developed at that early junior primary stage?

**PENDAL**       I think it was. I can quite strongly recollect collecting The Secret Seven books and The Famous Five, which I think was the series by Enid Blyton, and I loved that sort of material. Books weren't a big thing in my parents' home and sometimes when I look at the library I have now, which is probably 4000 or 5000 books, I actually think that was a psychological make-up for me having, not having had a tertiary education. In a way my library became my tertiary education. I'm making that point only because in those days in the mid-50s in Bunbury we had everything in our home and a very happy home. I was never aware that ... there was certainly no overflowing library in one room, but we did seem to have access to books of the kind that I've described. So I loved those stories. I can still remember Uncle Julian, I think it was in The Famous Five, and I read and collected them and held them until I was in my late teens. Just recently I was lamenting that somewhere along the line I'd parted with them, and I don't know where. So reading was important, yes.

JF           Did you receive book prizes for anything?

**PENDAL**       We did. I certainly received a book prize at Christian Brothers College in East Victoria Park although that was for Christian doctrine. It was quite a beautiful Sunday missal. Whether I received any book prizes, prizes in the form of books, in Bunbury I don't recall. I don't think I did.

JF           Now, of those primary teachers, which do you think would have been of most importance in your development and what do you think she contributed if you can nominate one as being important?

**PENDAL**       I recall the teachers like Sister Peter, Sister Eta, in particular. Sister Eta had the habit, if she was telling you off, she would go, "tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk" and

she'd do it in what you thought was a devastating way. I mean to be tut-tutted by this particular nun was devastating. So I can recall doing everything ... I mean I think I was one of those kids who did everything he could to keep the teacher happy. I don't know why but that just seemed to be. That's what you were supposed to do and you were probably under a fair bit of threat from your parents to behave and do the right thing at school. I can't recall until later when I was at Marist Brothers teachers having an impact. But they seemed to me always to make an impact on me because of the sort of people they were rather than what they taught me. Now, I don't know if that's a common thing and perhaps you as a former school teacher would know more about that, but I ... in other words what I'm saying is that I can recall them because of the sort of people they were to me rather than for any particular knowledge they imparted. I hope they wouldn't be insulted by that because it's not intended to be that. That's the best I can recall about the impact in an educative sense.

JF            Now, when you first started then at the convent school there wasn't such a thing as the Marist College.

**PENDAL**        No.

JF            It was still being talked about and developed. I think they didn't apply for permission to build until into the '50s. So can you tell me now about how long you stayed at the little junior primary school and tell me about the gradation moving onto the Marist Brothers?

**PENDAL**        I mentioned that if I started in the year in which I turned five, so I was starting at the convent in 1952 in February. I can recall staying there but for perhaps three or four years, and that would then have me being out at Marist Brothers round about 1956 or 1957. Now, the Marist Brothers in Bunbury, the college opened in 1955. I recall the principal was Brother Valentine. His baptismal name was Brian Flynn. He was the first principal and died very young from cancer. He would have been in his late 40s and he died in September 1958, I think. He had a big impact on us because he was a great sportsman apart from being our principal. He was a great hockey player, very much involved in the Bunbury community. He also used to shoot crows, which to us was the epitome of manhood. This bloke who had a gun, and guns played no part in our lives, but to think that you had a school principal who could go out and clear out these crows when they became a nuisance at the school, in modern day language we would have called him a legend.

TAPE TWO SIDE A

PENDAL

END OF TAPE TWO SIDE A

TAPE TWO SIDE B

This is tape two, side B, interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal.

JF                    So you were talking about Brother Valentine and his impact upon you.

**PENDAL**        There were other teachers there, all brothers; Brother David, Brother Leo, all of whom I seemed to get along well with. Again I can't say that I can recall them so much as teachers but more as individuals and as other human beings who we looked up to. They were all relatively young men when I look back now. One of them later went to a school in Victoria where during a chemistry lesson he blew the laboratory up and lost a leg. Many years later when I was having a lunch here with the retired principal of Newman College, Brother Steven, I told him of that incident and without me knowing, he got out his mobile phone and dialled a number in Melbourne and put me on and I spoke to this Brother for the first time in, I don't know, 45 years. I was diplomatic enough not to mention about the loss of leg but it did fascinate us as kids. So without getting away from the point, I don't know why it is that I can't recall much about them in terms of their educational impact on me. I was a reasonably good student, certainly not at the top of the class but I was always, say, four or five, fourth or fifth position in a class of, say, 25. I just don't have any recollection of that impact as educators but more as people.

JF                    Do you have any memory of the opening ceremony for the college? I think it was opened in 1954 by Prendiville, I think, was the officiating archbishop. Was he at that time?

**PENDAL**        Yes, that would sound right and no, I don't. In 1954 I would have been seven years of age. I guess there are other things that I can recall from being seven but I have no real recollection other than when I got there by which stage the school had been under way for perhaps two years.

JF                    And it was relatively small still at that stage, I think.

**PENDAL**        It was. It had, I think, three classrooms out in, I think it was called the Sandridge Park Estate. I've got an idea that it was land that the church bought off Brother Valentine's brother who lived and farmed in that part of Bunbury. There were just the three classes and shortly after Brother Valentine died, the Mayor of Bunbury chaired a public meeting where they thought because of his impact, enormous

impact on the town, particularly at sporting life, they launched a fund to build what they called The Brother Valentine Memorial Wing which was built at an angle, almost like a V-shape, forming a V-shape and which later they built a chapel at the bottom space created by the V. So the Valentine Memorial Wing was built probably in the early '60s by which stage we'd left. So my recollection of it was always that first three classes sitting in the bush. I mean it was extraordinary really and thus the crows were always around [laughs] and the only other thing on the site was the Brother's house, perhaps a hundred metres away, and which I recently visited just in search of a few archival things; but yes, you are right, very small at that stage.

JF           And that was a boys' school, I take it.

**PENDAL**       It was. Yes.

JF           Yes, but the convent being co-ed obviously.

**PENDAL**       The convent was co-ed and I think it meant that ... the Brothers weren't taking little children at that stage and I don't know ... well, I don't know if they subsequently did. But girls and boys would start at the convent, there'd come a certain point when the boys would be diverted to Marist College and the girls would stay on in the convent in Bunbury. There were other convents and convent schools in South Bunbury and one at Carey Park, St Thomas's, and a few scattered places.

JF           And had they been operating when you first started at the convent in town, the ones in South Bunbury?

**PENDAL**       Yes, and I sometimes wonder why we didn't go there because that's where we went to mass with our mother each Sunday. But for some reason it was chosen that we would go in the town. The school at St Mary's in South Bunbury was the school my mother had attended and all of her siblings back into the 1910s, and only recently going through Catholic archival documents in Perth I came across school reports about these individuals of my mother's siblings and it was eerie to be seeing, you know, whether they were any good at this or that and mostly they didn't seem to be. But they were children who went to this South Bunbury school. I was certainly conscious that that was a school but for some reason we didn't attend there.

JF           To what level did the Marist College reach academically?

**PENDAL** Academically, at that stage it was intended to go through to junior and then subsequently it extended through to leaving, and then became co-ed. It then in turn became what's now known as the Bunbury Catholic College.

JF How did your interests develop as you went into that older stage in primary education at Marist? You were still a reader, I suppose.

**PENDAL** Yes.

JF Sport, you mentioned playing sport as one of the things you did. That would have been a bit limited with the small number of ... team games would have been a bit limited with the small number of students, I suppose, with only a couple of hundred or less than a couple of hundred to choose from.

**PENDAL** Well, I know at Marist Brothers in between that time, say 1956 to 1959 when I left, I know that I played cricket, and I was captain of one of the lower grades of cricket. I recall going to the WACA with my father. He was an avid cricketer, loved it and I saw a Sheffield Shield game and I might have been 10 at this stage. I recall the field was set, I think they call it in an umbrella fashion and with all of these blokes in slips and set around from that. I remember going back to my team the next week and setting it. I mean I had no idea why it was set that way because we were never taught ... you never seemed to be taught the rudiments of things like cricket or football. If you wanted to play football, the aim was to run hard enough to [interviewer laughs] get the football and kick it to the next child or if you wanted to play cricket, the aim was to go out there and just hit that ball. But the idea of leg glances or some of the finer points, not only did we not get the finer points we never even got the rougher points. So I recall being a captain of a cricket team, I remember being in the annual sports, the athletics at Hands Memorial Oval in Bunbury and, you know, if I was captain of something it was the captain of the sort of D grade, but there did seem to be a lot of team sports. Now that you've raised it, there can't have been all that many boys there and yet we did seem to have enough to field sufficient for a team. So that did ... and for someone who wasn't all that inclined towards sport I did seem to play a lot of it. Perhaps that was an emphasis that the Brothers had intended, I don't know.

JF Did they have interschool sports contact?

**PENDAL** We did. In fact, what was called the Southwest Catholic Schools Sports Association was a very, very big thing and would get a lot of coverage in the local papers. I don't know what time of the year it was, September or October, or something. Teams would be drawn from, you know, the Busseltons, the Dardanups, the Capels, the Collies. Collie was always big because it, too, either had a Marist Brothers or a Christian Brothers College. So, interschool sports were definitely a very, very important part of our school, our sporting activity.

JF Tell me, did you rub shoulders at all with state school students?

**PENDAL** Well, we had plenty of them as friends of course. Predominantly in where we grew up in South Perth and in terms of whether we ....

JF In South Bunbury.

**PENDAL** I beg your pardon, in South Bunbury. But whether we competed against them, I don't recall competing with state school children in sporting contests. Certainly I don't recall it as vividly as I do in this big Southwest Catholic Schools Sports Association. So I'd have to say no to that. Our contact with state school kids was in our immediate environs of South Bunbury.

JF Was there ever any rivalry or criticism or hard feeling between yourselves and state school people?

**PENDAL** No, except we used to recite the usual insulting things to them, and they would do the same. You know, "State school logs sitting on the frogs eating maggots out of frogs" or something idiotic and they would do the same back to you. But they were the kids you played with so it didn't seem to matter too much. I never ever imagined that it was any serious taunt but rather just something that one child would say to another. Yes.

JF Yes. To what extent was, and we're coming up towards the religious aspect I suppose if you like, to what extent was the animosity between particularly Catholic and Protestant, which existed in society at that time, evident to you growing up in Bunbury?..

**PENDAL** I certainly knew there were differences. I certainly knew that instilled into us as part of our faith education that we ... that our teachers and our clerics wanted us to regard ourselves as special, if you like. Now, having said that - and so that did have its impact on me - but having said that, I can't recall any overt animosity; us for other people or other people for us. I wonder if the reason for that was that in our home I had a Catholic mother and an Anglican father. My father was very supportive of our mother in her faith and in us going to Catholic schools. So to us there wouldn't have seemed to be much sense of feeling alienated from non-Catholic kids. One thing that did stick in my mind was that on a Friday evening, of course we would have the Friday meat fast. So on a Friday evening we would have fish and chips. My mother would cook for my father what I still imagine to be the biggest, juiciest piece of steak, and he would sit at the head of the table and hoe into this beautiful steak while the rest of us had fish and chips. I later learned not to like fish very much and it's probably something of a throwback to those days. But I certainly envied my father that he could have this beautiful, succulent, cooked steak on Friday when we had to make do with ... and I was aware that he could do that because he wasn't a Catholic. But I really don't have any recollection of religion playing a divisive role in our life.

JF You don't think he was asserting his independence of Catholic teaching or something in asking for that, or had he asked for it?

**PENDAL** No, I don't think so. I don't think he was like that. I think it would have started with perhaps my mother saying, "What would you like for tea tonight?" "Oh I'd love a steak, thanks." I don't think there was any element of him, you know, in-your-face type attitude. He simply liked that as a meal. I mean when I think back on the meals that we had compared with today, they were so bland, so ordinary, so English, but I did have a bit of an envy for him because he could have a steak and we had to be on the fast.

JF Yes. Just digressing a little bit away from the religious topic itself, was the parents' association very firm with the school?

**PENDAL** Yes, and in fact I can recall my father being quite active, not as one of the sort of people who turns up to meetings and sits on committees. My father would

often be involved with the school if there was some smaller building project because of his background and his work as a builder. So that things like, you know, when they were building shelter sheds or tennis sheds, or things of that nature, my father seemed to get roped in willingly, it seems to me, and he did his duty in that sort of way.

JF I think somewhere I picked up, maybe from your questionnaire, that he was quite fond of tennis himself.

**PENDAL** He was because at the back of our home in Latreille Road our block intersected with the backyard of a block in the side street, Mangles, and in the block on the lower side of the house in Mangles Street, it was a vacant block that was turned into a tennis court by my father and the owner who lived in the house next door. It was very, very sophisticated for its day. It was a tennis court that had lights so you could play tennis at night and that, I think, was the talk of Bunbury, South Bunbury. The internal playing surface was painted green by my father and that was really something to write home about. It's the, apart from cricket which my father loved, it was the only sport that I'm aware that he was associated with and we would frequently access the tennis court that my father played, and my mother. We would go down for evening, where basically it was adults, but it was a very strong part of their social life. Yes.

JF Were you a tennis player?

**PENDAL** Yes, I was. I used to represent the Marist Brothers Bunbury in tennis and we would play at Marist Brothers College in Subiaco on courts there. So probably I was a better tennis player, when I reflect on it, than I was a cricketer, or I certainly don't recall representing my school at cricket or football but I did represent the school in tennis. So that's where I would have got it from and I'd forgotten to mention that earlier.

JF Yes, well perhaps we'll come back for a moment because you didn't actually complete your junior or anything in Bunbury, you left before that happened, so we'll come back to the religious topic now because how important to you was religion and the church in your development as a young person?

**PENDAL** I think it was very important. I was an altar boy at St Mary's in South Bunbury. I also served on occasions at St Patrick's when there was a big liturgical occasion and they would bring in priests and altar boys from around the town. So from an early age I was serving on the altar, having that contact, more than regular contact, with priests of the day. You would often, perhaps not often, but you would occasionally be called out of school to serve at a funeral. I'm not quite sure how they did that but perhaps they'd ring the school and say, "Could you let young Pendal off for the morning because the funeral of so and so" and I recall as a kid being an inveterate attender of funerals [chuckles] as an altar boy.

JF And you were robed and everything for that?

**PENDAL** Yes, yes you had what was called the black cassock, which went to the ground. It was called a soutane, I think, and then over the top you had a white surplice which went to the midriff and sort of was a lacy thing that, I think, occasionally early on, you know, you get a bit jibed by the other kids. Although even then that was to them quite natural to see, you know, altar boys in that gear. But yes, we were fully robed and only recently I found ... I went back to Bunbury and went through the archives in the wake of the tornado that destroyed the Catholic Cathedral, and I felt the need to go back and rummage through the archives to see if I could find any evidence of me being there, and lo and behold found a couple of these photos of me trussed up in surplice and soutane [chuckles]. Yes.

JF What did you make of the mass as a kid? I mean, it was I suppose still in Latin in those days, so what sort of impact did it have on you?

**PENDAL** Well, you are right it was still in Latin and what's more we had to learn the whole of the Latin mass. To this day I can still recite it. I need a little bit of help to ... but you'd have missals in those days, where I think on the left-hand page was the red print and that was the Latin and on the right-hand page was the black print and I think it was English, although the notion that you would have a mass in English when we were little kids was totally far-fetched, you wouldn't have imagined it. I recall having difficulties with that a few years later after the second Vatican Council. But we learned the Latin mass and you see the people in the Catholic Church in those days, they didn't speak, but we were effectively responding for them as altar boys. The priest would say his bit and we would respond, and I look back now with some wonder at this little kid, up there, muttering away in Latin and being expected to

know it. But I did, I formed a great ... there was a certain mystique or mystery about it all to me. It appealed to me, I'd learnt to love it and my children today are still surprised that I can do anything that resembles another language. I think they still are a bit surprised that I had that capacity [laughs].

JF Did you study Latin at school?

**PENDAL** We did. We studied Longman's Latin at the Marist College in Bunbury, and which I found easy. Then when I came to the Christian Brothers in East Victoria Park, they had another Latin text and, I'm pretty sure of this, which I found quite difficult. So yes, we were studying it as a second language.

JF So you understood what you were saying at the mass?

**PENDAL** Yes.

JF How did you receive, I suppose ... how was your appreciation of theology then developed?

**PENDAL** Well, I think it was developed through, firstly, the schools. See, I've said to you only 10 minutes ago I can't recall sort of learning much and now your questions bring to me this understanding or clearly I did. So clearly the Catholic doctrine and Christian doctrine, I think they called it lessons, helped in that formation. We would also have been ... we would have had extra instruction as altar boys although the things I remember more was the annual altar boys' picnic rather than any altar boy instruction nights. But I suppose that's to be expected from a child. We certainly had developed through both the nuns and the brothers, and then the priests a clear understanding of what the mass was. There was a very famous text written by Dr John McMahon who was the parish priest of South Perth. He was a very fine scholar in his own right and sat on the senate of the University of Western Australia. He had become famous for writing a book called *Pray the Mass*. So there did seem to be, when I reflect on it, a number of formal ways in which your theology and church practice was developed.

JF And what about ceremonies like confirmation and that sort of thing? Do you have any special memories of those as they apply to you?

**PENDAL** As distinct from being an altar boy?

JF Yes.

**PENDAL** Obviously I can't recall anything about my baptism, which would have occurred a couple of weeks after my birth. The only thing I can recall about my confirmation is that I chose the name Dominic. You had to choose a saint's name and upon whom, the theory went, you would model your life. And this saint was Dominic Savio and I think it might have been just a bit of a fad for me at the time because I can't recall now too much. If I'd refreshed myself, I would but that's about the only thing I can recall that made an impact for the confirmation. We were aware that your confirmation was what it said it was, that in Christian theology it was a stage in your life when you were being confirmed in the Christian faith. But beyond that name I don't recall a lot, no.

JF To what extent then has a personal religious faith been important to you and how has that developed during your life?

**PENDAL** Well, I'd have to say it has been an important part of my life. I guess it went right through my adulthood and into my marriage and my children going to Catholic schools, and in a way I didn't invite or even particularly enjoy, but it was very much part of the terrible days of 1998 when the big abortion debate broke out in Western Australia, which was watched right around Australia because of its impact. For all of the things that successive Commonwealth governments want to interfere in, and they want to interfere in everything, federation will always - this is an aside - federation will always be in good shape because I recall some months ago when Peter Costello was asked whether the Federal Government would step in and legislate on something to do with abortion, he said, "No, no, no!". "No, no," he said. "That's a state matter!" [laughs] When euthanasia came up, I saw the same reaction. So I always think to myself the federation is actually quite safe. But getting back to our point, it did. My upbringing, my thought process, my faith background certainly impacted in that debate because I was put in that amazing position where I chaired a cross-party group of MPs, where for three months in this Parliament - I mean it was a gruelling, difficult experience, and yet we were running like a sort of an Opposition in exile; this group of Labor, Liberal, National, Independent members of which I was the chairman and we did our best to give our opponents the rounds of

the kitchen. So in answer to your question, it did. It had a big impact on my life and continues to do that and manifested itself in that way as late as eight years ago.

JF                   And what about Vatican II? You suggested you were not necessarily very supportive of some of the proposals for Vatican II.

**PENDAL**       No. Once I had left school and I was certainly ... a big formative impact on me was a group called the Young Christian Workers Movement, which to many people sounded like some communist cell, so that we'd often get our legs pulled. Around this time the Second Vatican Council had been initiated and sat from 1962 to 1965. One of its outcomes was, for example, the Latin mass went and for me, who was then all of about 17 or 18, I was horrified. I mean I had learnt by then the beauty of this Latin mass. Other things I recall at the time in-

END OF TAPE TWO SIDE B

## TAPE THREE SIDE A

This is tape 3, side A, in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal, this one being recorded on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at Parliament House in Perth; the interviewer being John Ferrell.

JF            Phillip, when we were last together, we started talking about the importance of a personal religious faith to you, and in your life later as a politician. You had started talking about your reaction to Vatican Council II, but we didn't have time to carry on with that. I wonder if you could take up the story from there, and firstly say how that affected your beliefs, or faith, and then to go on and say how this came together for you as an adult, and what your faith is, if I could say, now, following a lifetime of interaction with the church?

**PENDAL**        The second Vatican Council didn't do anything that affected my belief system. I do recall vividly that it made a number of decisions that, in hindsight, I can see the wisdom of it, as you often can; one of which worked particularly well, one of which worked particularly poorly and was abandoned. The mass went from Latin into English, and I must have been old before my time, because I was just old enough to feel saddened by that, that this wonderful 2000-year Latin connection had now mostly gone. I later came to see the value of that.

The second thing that sticks in my mind is that at one point in the mass was introduced in the post-conciliar days, what they call ... it was meant to be called the "kiss of peace". It was based on the European exchange that men and women would go through; that is, they would embrace each other and their cheeks would touch, which goes on in Europe to this day. I knew that was never going to work in an Australian environment, maybe because of our blokey way of doing things, or whatever. It was always a very awkward thing, that you would see people getting used to this and being very reluctant. In the end, it was adapted so that people shook hands, because that's what it was intended to be; a sign of peace to acknowledge those around you. That actually showed me that there was a sense of adaptability there and that they weren't going to grimly hang on to this European "kiss of peace" that was just totally at odds with our Australian cultural existence. From there on the Vatican Council ... I remember at one stage, as a young journalist, interviewing Bishop Goody in Bunbury. He had just returned home from one of the sessions, it must have been about 1967. I used the comment, something like, "Now

that's it's all over", and he said, "My dear boy, it has only just begun." Again, he could see as, you know, a very well-educated and leading figure at the Council, that I had got it wrong, that I'd thought, "Well that's all over now. Now what do we do?" He said, "No, on the contrary, this is the start of a huge shift in the Church itself." So that was my immediate memory of what the Vatican Council ... I mean it meant a lot more, there were a lot of documents to read and things of that nature.

JF            Yes. To what extent was your religious faith a motivator in your eventual adoption of Parliament as a vocation?

**PENDAL**       Well, it was a sort of circuitous route. I don't think there was ever any obvious intention of mine to say, "Well, I'm going to hop off into public life one day and apply all of this." What did happen; I joined ... and it was a terrific part of my formation as a young person ... I joined a group that was then very active in the world scene in the Catholic Church, called the Young Christian Workers movement. That had a huge impact on me, its formative influences. I became very active both in Perth and then later Bunbury when I went back to the town to do my cadetship in journalism. That was very much oriented to ... well, partly oriented to social justice and social action. That certainly helped form me for a later role in public life. I recall it was held up to us, actually ... there was then a minister in, I think it might have been Harold Wilson's first government and I think his name was Michael Stewart, who had been a member of the YCW and had undergone this sort of formative training. Then I think I did start to make a connection, and because of my background, my dad was intensely interested in politics, and in 1962 I won a study trip to Canberra and met Sir Robert Menzies. All of these things just seemed to couple together, but I was very conscious that I was ill-equipped in an education sense. I had wanted to be a lawyer, but I hadn't even gone past advanced secondary. All of this started to come together, and it was then that I had decided to pursue ... I was doing my Leaving Certificate at the Eastern Goldfields High School, and I did enough subjects that would qualify me to get a cadetship in journalism. I actually had in mind then that would give me something to fall back on if I did go into politics; it would be like law, I would be able to fall back on it if I came adrift. All of those things seemed to happen to me in the space of about from being 15 to 16 to 17, through to until about 20 and 21. I think then the die was cast, that I did want to one day go into public life.

JF            Taking a step back to the YCW; how did that work? How often did you meet? Was it in every parish? What did they do at their meetings, etc?

**PENDAL**        Yes, it was very much a parish-oriented thing. It then was organised on a regional level. There was what was called a diocesan executive, and I was on the Perth Archdiocesan Executive. Then I left Perth to go back to Bunbury to do my cadetship, so I rejoined the YCW there. I became the diocesan president for, really, the whole of the south west and great southern of Western Australia. They were at least weekly meetings. Its intention was to show that a person had to understand and live by gospel values, otherwise there was no point to what you were doing. It was a hollow ... it was a nominal Catholicism if you didn't do that. We came under the influence of a number of very, I found, quite powerful priests; Jim O'Brien was one, John O'Reilly was another. They were men who did form those ideas that you had to learn to apply these things, and you had to ... it was incumbent on you to have some impact on others in a social justice sense, that there were plenty of people who did need a helping hand. So that was certainly very important to the YCW and pretty important to me.

JF            Are you familiar with the Christian Endeavour movement in the Protestant sector? Would that have been something similar, or not?

**PENDAL**        I am familiar with the name of Christian Endeavour, and I think that was particularly prevalent in the Uniting, or the old Methodist Church. I can't say that I understood ... well, I never got the chance to understand what was their underpinning and motivation, but certainly this idea is a twofold thing; that if you didn't live out your life according to those values, then you weren't doing what you were supposed to be doing. Secondly, this social action-type stuff that I think was ... while it came from the international movement, it seemed to coincide with that era of Catholic action in Australia that had grown out of the trade union blow-up of the 50s, the Santamaria influence. It seemed to be a parallel thing in its values and about applying those values.

JF            Of course, Santamaria was well and truly writing and very active at the time you are talking about, when you were in your teens. Did you ever meet him or have any close association with ...

**PENDAL** No, I didn't meet him. In some respects I regret that, because later in life I learned that quite a few of my Liberal colleagues who were not Catholics would regularly pay calls on Santamaria if they ever went to Melbourne. I often used to say to myself, "That just never occurred to me", and in a way I regret it. What did happen, I was encouraged, and feted to a small extent, by leaders of the DLP in Western Australia to become involved there because of my involvement in the YCW. For some reason I never did that and I never wanted to do that. I think I did see the DLP as being very much in minority politics, and I do not mean by that unworthy. I remember being growled at one day by one of the leaders of the DLP, John Martyr, who later joined the Liberal Party and became a member of Parliament and we became colleagues and quite good friends. I remember him remonstrating with me one day that, as a YCW leader, I should be there, in the DLP, and chipping away. I didn't see any attraction in that at all, and for what reason I really find difficult to fathom.

JF Right. Probably we should tie a knot on Bunbury and your childhood experience of Bunbury. Before we do anything else, perhaps if you would just briefly sketch the ... what came out of your second lot of schooling there. You have talked about the Brothers, you have talked about the sport, but were there any associations with other students, and so on, which have become significant to you out of that era? We spoke about the earlier ... St Joseph's ... and you really only have one associate that goes back to that time. What about the Marist College associates?

**PENDAL** I can't recall that there was any student with whom I have kept up a lasting lifelong relationship. That later happened when I went to the little CBC college in East Victoria Park, where I met a fellow student who remains to this day a very close friend. I was at Marist Brothers in Bunbury, I think it must have been certainly two years, and probably three. They were happy days. They seemed to be terribly uncomplicated. When I look back, I think the world used to shoot over my head a lot. I'm not sure what that says about me either, but I was, sort of ... I always felt happy, I always felt secure, and I just didn't seem to worry about too much. I can't even recall that there were any really close friendships, and certainly none that endured over the years. So it's almost a bit of a blank, but quite a nice blank, if that makes any sense.

JF Yes. Coming then to the family move, which no doubt was something of a trauma at the time, anyway, would you sketch the background to how that took place and why that took place, and so on?

**PENDAL** As it turned out, which is something I didn't realise until much later in my life, we thought my father lost his business through an economic downturn. It turns out that we lost the family business ... he became addicted to gambling and ran up enormous debts. We had gone from a position of being ... I remember my mother saying that from her point of view, they had the money at the wrong time of their life. The '50s were very buoyant for them and for the rest of us. They were socially very active, and to some extent prominent. Little me knowing that my father had this awful problem of a gambling addiction. So that when we left Bunbury, and I was fully 12, I took it that the business had fallen in an economic collapse. I suppose that was the line that they thought was best to give to us. It wasn't until many years later my mother said, "Don't you ... you must have known", and I said, "I've had ...", I was in my 40s when I learnt this. So we went from these circumstances, very wealthy circumstances; we came, we went to Victoria Park. The reason that we went to Victoria Park was that my father had grown up there in the 1920s, he'd gone to school there at the East Victoria Park State School. His mother and father still lived in that district, and his brother and sister-in-law and their family still lived in Hubert Street in East Victoria Park. So it was, I suppose, a comfort zone to him. We stayed with my grandparents for a while. We rented this incredibly small house opposite her, while my father got on his feet, although he really never did because within five years he was dead. I think the sheer hard work ... he had promised everyone he would repay those debts, which he did do. So it wasn't any sort of a trauma for me because I didn't know these circumstances. It was a trauma, I recall, leaving Bunbury at the age of 12, and leaving all of your friends, to the extent that I said to my parents, "Why can't I stay here and go and live with Uncle Peter, or Nana Buswell?" It seemed to me perfectly logical that I could do that and the rest could clear go and off to Perth. [chuckles] So it was a big break from that point of view, but we re-established in East Victoria Park, and that was in the middle of 1959.

JF What did your father do in East Vic Park?

**PENDAL** Well, in the end he ... with some irony, given his early death, he got a job ... he was working for the Karrakatta Monumental Works, selling tombstones, for

heaven's sake. He had to find a job that he could make good commissions and start to repay off some of this, from what I imagined, was quite a huge debt. I remember his card said a "monumental consultant". That used to play on my mind a lot over the years; well, does that mean he was a mighty big consultant! It was a consultant to people who were wanting to put tombstones on the graves of their loved ones.

JF                    So you then went to CBC in East Vic Park. Can you give me some background as to that experience and the effect of CBC on your life?

**PENDAL**        We'd gone from the Marist Brothers in Bunbury and then to the Christian Brothers in East Victoria Park. They were quite a different set of men, although I could never work out why. Again, my experiences at East Vic Park were always happy ones, but I think ... one of the first changes, or challenges, was that they ran a different Latin text that I found terribly difficult. I thought that I had gone from being a reasonably well credentialled student in Bunbury, to being battling when I got to Perth. When I look back on it, I don't think that was so much the case. I mean, I remember getting a few distinctions in things like geometry, and I was, again, always reasonably ... it was a very small class. There were 19 or 20 boys and I was always around third or fourth in the class. It was a happy environment, but for some reason it seemed to be a different environment, and maybe that was because ... maybe there was more trauma involved in me swapping from one to another than I realised at the time. I do vividly recall two things that occurred there, at the instigation of the principal, Brother Hugh Sharp, who was a great lover of classical music. I remember that he came in one day ... I think it was a science class he taught. He must have thought we needed a bit of pacifying, or perhaps a bit of psychology to calm us all down, but he said that he was going to bring in a record each lesson, and if it was science, and I think it was, that he was going to play something out of one of the ... a classical piece. We were all a bit bewildered by this because we'd not been exposed to this sort of thing. I remember one piece in particular he announced he was going to play was the Nutcracker Suite. Well, you can imagine what smart alec 12 and 13 year olds would make of that. That helped instil in me a love of classical music that was cemented when I met my wife and she had come from a background where they had learnt to appreciate classical music. That was a big impact on me and I was always grateful for that. The other one was that he chose me to represent CBC, East Victoria Park, in the annual Christian Brothers' Eisteddfod at the Capitol Theatre, which was all, again, a

bit ... seemed to be a bit highbrow for me and terribly sophisticated in a school that otherwise didn't seem to be very sophisticated. But he must have seen something in me that I certainly didn't see at the time and helped me later in public speaking and things of that nature. So I was off to compete against all of the so-called "posh schools", but he desperately wanted me to get a place. He wanted to be able to show his colleagues at night and remind them that, oh yes, we'd got in ahead of someone like Aquinas or CBC Terrace, or whatever. Lo and behold, I got some sort of a prize, I think I might have come second, having to reproduce some lines out of *Coriolanus*. So that was my first exposure to Shakespeare. This fellow had a big impact on things that, when I think about it, had an impact on my later life in politics and for public presentation. They weren't very academic things, but those, both the music and the speaking and presentation, certainly remain with me, and he had a big impact on that.

JF            The eisteddfod was largely public speaking, was it?

**PENDAL**    Yes.

JF            Or were there other components to it?

**PENDAL**    No, I think the eisteddfod was ... well I imagined it was ... it seemed mostly to do with kids sprouting some Shakespeare, or things of that nature. I don't think it was a public speaking competition per se. I know that many years later, 40 years later, he was visiting from Hobart, to where he retired. I had him to lunch at Parliament House and I told him these things, and his eyes misted up and he sort of came back in control of himself and he said, "I just never thought I had any impact on you boys." Now, perhaps you, as a teacher, would understand that more, but he was a big impact. I got to like him a lot.

JF            Since you went into journalism eventually, what about your English teaching at CBC? Was that well done?

**PENDAL**    Yes, I think it must have been, although there was no ... I was always good at English and put a lot of work into it. I can't remember the things that I would have read. One of the subjects was English Literature, which I enjoyed. But I think now, when I think of the short story writing, we were exposed to a lot of that, and I

think as I look back, I think those things certainly helped instil a great love of literature which has survived to this day. At the time, as a student, you really can't see the point of a lot of this, but that's why you're a student, isn't it, [laughs] to learn the value?

JF Yes, yes. To what extent was religious instruction important at CBC? Was it any more or less than the previous experiences?

**PENDAL** Well, I think it was more important because I was now a bit older. I know that in either 1959 or '60 I won the prize for what they call "Christian Doctrine", and I was given quite a very handsome missal, which I later lost, to my regret. The teaching of Christian doctrine clearly was a central part of existence in a CBC school. It stood out more in my mind than it had done at any previous time, but perhaps that was because I was getting a bit older and becoming a little bit more inquiring. That was always ... yes, that was always important to me, and it was certainly important as part of the school's program.

JF Did you continue to have a role as an altar boy in Vic Park?

**PENDAL** I did. The church there was called Our Lady, Help of Christians, which was just over the back fence from where I was going to school. One of the reasons that I recall continuing as an altar boy, I had the awful experience of ... I was serving a weekday mass one morning ... and again this was the days when your back was to the people. The parish priest there, a man called Frank O'Connor, Father O'Connor, had just been made a Monsignor, which is like a ... they call it a "domestic prelate". That was always marked by having this very European-looking biretta, a sort of a black hat with a purple pompom on the top. This always was at the foot of the altar, and I remember one day when I was changing the gospel from one side of the altar to the other, which was part of the altar boy's duties. As I was coming down, I couldn't see what was in front of me and I booted this biretta and it landed out into the congregation. [chuckles] I thought for a minute I might have been up for excommunication, instantaneously, but I seemed to keep the affections all right of El Monsignor. So, yes, I did keep that up, and probably for two or three years that I can think of.

JF                    Coming back to schooling then, did you leave CBC with a Junior Certificate?

**PENDAL**            I did, I left with a Junior Certificate. A lot of my colleagues went into Trinity. There was never really any discussion that I was aware of that I would do anything, or that any of the children in our family would do anything more than our Junior. Our father was insistent that you had to get the Junior, but he was of a mind that said once you've got your Junior, the next important thing you had to do was to get a job in a bank. He had a fetish about the security that a bank job would give you all your life, and I suppose he might have thought access to low interest loans for staff and this sort of thing. But it was the security that I think he lacked from his early days. He grew up in the Depression, he would have been 14 years of age when the Depression hit, so he had a fetish that we would do our Junior and go and get a job, and it would be in a bank preferably, which was what happened both for my brother and I. So that there was no culture in the family to go on and do Leaving, and certainly the idea of university just was non-existent. It was only later that I, in Kalgoorlie, when I was in the bank, transferred there, that I knew I had to upgrade my qualifications. I was still hanging out for the idea of being a lawyer. My dad talked about me being ... I forget the word just for the moment; not apprenticed ...

JF                    Articled.

**PENDAL**            Articled. Thank you. There was a leading barrister in Perth at the time called Leo Wood, and my father often talked about he would go and see him and see what was possible. That didn't happen because he died fairly soon after. The idea was that I would try and get my Leaving Certificate. I didn't really have much idea of what I was going to do beyond that, but while I was doing that, that's when I saw an advert for cadetships at *The West Australian*, and there the minimum they required was leaving English, and I think Leaving Economics, and lo and behold I'd got that behind me and so I diverted off into that future.

END OF TAPE THREE SIDE A

TAPE THREE SIDE B

This is tape 3, side B, of interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal.

JF            The transition from the country to the city; were you comfortable about that?

**PENDAL**      Other than losing contact with my friends, which did distress me, and I think my brothers and sisters had the same difficulty, there was no real problem in making the break from Bunbury. I can't recall any overtly difficult times that I went through.

JF            You said a while ago that you made a close friend at CBC.

**PENDAL**      Yes.

JF            Would you like to talk about your friend?

**PENDAL**      His name was Alan Mitchell. He was the son of a policeman. He remained a friend of mine, and as recently as a couple of weeks ago we were at a function together. He grew up, I think he went on to do his leaving at Trinity. He became ... he entered the state civil service, later became a policeman, detective, and then ended up as the bailiff in Bunbury, of all places. So that when I went back to Bunbury to do my journalism, he was actually in Bunbury, having been transferred there by the police service. I think he met his wife there, and I know that I met my wife there, so that, you know, we have married, produced children, and, as Zorba the Greek would say, the full catastrophe from there on. So we have remained friends. Another boy with whom I, too, were a fellow, Alec Bell, who, within a very short time afterwards, was conscripted into the army and was killed in Vietnam, the only East Victoria Park boy. As recent as two weeks ago, we're almost on the verge of having a new park in Victoria Park named after him, after years of effort and fighting people in the bureaucracy.

Another boy, Danny Ryan, whose father was killed in the mine explosion in Bullfinch at the time that I had met him, although I have since lost contact with him, but he was a close friend. I think Alan Mitchell was the one with whom the friendship mostly survived.

JF            So generally then, the experience at CBC in Vic Park was a positive one. What do you think about things like their teaching methods, and so on, in those days?

**PENDAL**        Well, you see, when I look back on it, I didn't have a lot to compare it with. I mean, a teacher was a teacher. There did seem to me to be ... the Christian Brothers were harder on you than the Marist Brothers. I've tried to analyse that without much success. It may have been that I was simply a bit older, and as you got a bit older they needed to apply a heavier layer of discipline than when I was two years younger in Bunbury and was basically a pretty docile sort of an individual.

JF            Was the stick very commonly used, for example?

**PENDAL**        No, but the strap was ever-present. The strap was dealt out with almost reckless abandon. I certainly got my share of it. I'd often remember going home and you might be holding your hand and my father would say, "What's the matter with you?" [chuckles] I'd say, "Oh, it doesn't matter, I got the strap today." The first and only thing he would say was, "Well, you must have deserved it." There was no inquiry as to whether or not I didn't deserve it, and the reality was I probably did. Now, I think I probably think that I got the strap more than I must have done, because, I mean, I don't think that I was a terribly rebellious or ill-mannered boy, but certainly I got the strap sufficiently to know that it was best to avoid, if you could possibly avoid it. But that was the worst thing that ever happened to me. You would be aware of the small minority of Christian Brothers who were badly errant, and they were a small number. That never occurred to me. I had nothing other than, you know, good relations with my teachers, other than the fact that as teachers, they were always in charge and you watched your Ps and Qs, but that was the way of the world then, I think –

JF            Yes.

**PENDAL**        - amongst most of my contemporaries.

JF            Was there much interaction, other than the occasion of the eisteddfod, between East Vic Park and other CBC colleges?

**PENDAL**        No, I think we were a bit out there on our own. There was something of a reputation that the very location of it, in East Victoria Park ... and of course in those days Perth sort of stopped at about Cannington, and there was a little

settlement at Kelmscott and a bit more out at Armadale, but there was a feeling that the CBC - it was called a regional school for the Brothers - was a bit of a roughies' domain, and the word I recall being used. I'm not sure whether we used it as boys, or whether we heard adults use it. There was not a lot of contact that I could think of, other than with Clontarf, the orphanage, which was through the pine plantation, on which later Curtin University developed. But in those days it was pine plantation, and it was significant for us because Clontarf had the only swimming pool in Christendom, or so it seemed to us. Because of our connection, through the Brothers, we were allowed access to the swimming pool because we went to CBC. So it was a bit of a bonus, the only one I could think of, where we would ride our bicycles through the pine plantation and we'd go swimming. There were huge handball courts over at Clontarf as well. So that was the contact we had with the orphanage. I mean, I might say, too, that we often hosted orphans at our home in Bunbury on school holidays and so on, now I come to think about it. So our contact with other CBC schools was really limited to Clontarf, and I can't recall having any contact with Aquinas or Trinity or CBC Terrace.

JF                   What about sport? Was sport important at Vic Park?

**PENDAL**           Oh, very much so, and all played on the public oval, Fraser Park, opposite the school. It was a very cramped, what you'd call these days an inner city environment, that there was no space for anything, and ... but sport, yes, was always important; cricket, football, tennis and I'd say swimming.

JF                   So you weren't called upon to represent the school in any of those, like you had done, say, in Bunbury?

**PENDAL**           Well, I do recall playing cricket of a Saturday morning, because I recall when I went home on a Friday and told my father that I had been included in the cricket team for the next morning, not only was I surprised, but he was surprised. We must have been playing another school, and I vividly recall him ... I was very conscious of him watching me as I was getting ready to bat. I hit the ball, took off down to the other end, tripped and slid along the pitch, took off all the buttons on my white shirt and my head banged into the wickets and I was out. I remember thinking, "Oh, I wish I hadn't asked him to be here, he'd be looking at me now and I've made a fool of myself." So I mention that because I think that must have been an interschool match. I don't recall playing football for CBC in interschool matches.

JF Well, what interests did you have, if any, outside school at Vic Park?

**PENDAL** I would say they were fairly limited. I mean, we hung around with a small cohort, including Alec Bell, the fellow who went to Vietnam. I was, as I now recall it, a member of what was called the "Catholic Boys' Club". It was run by a senior fireman, who was the organiser. To my astonishment, he made me the captain of this club. That did bewilder me because you'd have to be the first vaulting over the horse, which I hated doing but I had to do because he'd chosen me as the captain. I don't think I was a terribly elegant gymnast or somersaulter, or whatever we had to do. So I was involved there. It was a gymnasts' club, rather than a broad sports club. I was active, as you've mentioned, as an altar boy. We would simply do the things that kids mostly did, and be allowed to go to the pictures of a Saturday if you had behaved. Life seemed pretty busy, but there was no standout sort of occasions beyond those things.

JF You said once before, in talking to me, that you used to take a subscription to *Time* magazine. Do you remember the impact of national or world events as you were at school? I mean do you remember ... do any of them stand out for you particularly?

**PENDAL** Well, one that did have an impact later in my life, because I always was very proud that it was my vote that got rid of capital punishment in Western Australia. As a child, and it must have been, I would say, in the late '50s or the very early '60s, when we seemed to hang a fair few people in Western Australia, that I recall asking my father one day, "Is the difference between Liberal and Labor that Labor don't hang people and Liberals do?" I had no real understanding of any fundamental philosophical differences, but that did seem to me to be a big difference. I remember my dad saying, "Well, what you're saying is correct, but there is a lot more to it than that", and he was right, as I've later found. So I seemed to be interested in events that would crop up in the newspapers. I used to read the newspapers voraciously. I did subscribe to *Time* magazine, which I still own all of them ... well, not all of them, but many of them, from those days. I have got nearly a 40-year collection. For some reason I loved Latin American politics. There always seemed to be coups or revolutions, or people marching in the streets, and *Time* magazine was very, very big on Latin American politics in those days. I don't think much has changed down there, [chuckles] they still seem to have revolutions, and so on. That's as much as I can recall.

JF Yes. What about your recruitment for the bank? Tell me about that.

**PENDAL** My first job on leaving school had been to get a ... there was a recession on in 1962, and I remember having applied for 29 jobs before I got one. So it probably was a bit of an indication that not only was there a recession on, but, you know, I wasn't the most well-qualified job applicant. I got a job with the Olympic Tyre and Rubber Company, I think because my father was able to pull some strings with them; he knew senior management there. While I was there, about nine months into that job, the results of my bank examination came up. They offered me a job, and I left Olympic Tyres and I became a very junior bank clerk. I served in South Perth. I was the only bank clerk, I think in the history of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation, who failed his probation. It was largely, I think, because of the manager, whom I can still recall was very belligerent towards me, and I know that he had a problem with alcohol. The bank didn't know what to do, because you just didn't fail your probation. So they packed me off to another branch, which was the East Victoria Park branch, which was where I lived. I suppose they thought they were giving me another chance. My father took this to mean that I had been given a promotion, and he was very proud of the fact that [chuckles] I'd been sent to East Victoria Park on this promotion. I didn't want to disabuse him that that wasn't the case. I then was sent from there ... I did well there. I was ultimately sent to Boulder in the bank, where there had been a major scam going on amongst all of the staff. The bank discovered this embezzlement going on and they had to clean out the whole lot in one fell swoop and replace everyone. I went to Boulder as THE junior in the outfit, and I was all of 16 and a half. That's how I got to go to Boulder, that's how I got to do my Leaving by night school at the Eastern Goldfields District High. So fate intervened, and it was a good thing that it happened.

JF Where did you live in Boulder?

**PENDAL** I lived with a Mr and Mrs Fred Ball. He was a carpenter on the mines. I boarded at their home with other people; they seemed to take in lodgers. I spent about perhaps only six or eight months there, and then we got the news that my father was dying. That's when a family member intervened and got, without me knowing it, got me transferred back to Perth in the bank in preparation for my father's demise.

JF So that was the end of your time in Boulder?

**PENDAL** It was. I had about six or eight months there, and a happy occasion, but I recall being very, very homesick. I mean, I was 16 and three quarters when I was sent there, and so I was glad to get back and I began working for the Commonwealth Bank in Canning Bridge. Not long after that, maybe within the year, I got my cadetship in journalism.

JF Tell me, doing this night school, whose idea was that? Where did that originate?

**PENDAL** I was very much aware that if I wanted ... and I was, by then, determined I was going to go into politics. Everything seemed to point to that; my father's background, what was happening at school, and my interest in civic and world affairs. I was very conscious that I was so ill-equipped, and so I started ... I think I still harboured the hope that I could be a lawyer and I started doing both ... I think it was English, English Literature and Economics, which was to stand me in good stead because it got my toe in the door for journalism.

JF So it was entirely on your initiative that you did that?

**PENDAL** Yes, it was.

JF So when you came back to Perth, you wouldn't have finished that if you'd only been a few months in Boulder. Did you continue here?

**PENDAL** That's a good point. I must have continued here. I may also have done some stuff by correspondence. They would let you do it in those days.

JF Yes, TAFE would have perhaps been available, TAFE correspondence.

**PENDAL** So maybe that happened before, and then I continued it at Eastern Goldfields. I recall a very influential teacher there, Peter Bottomley, who, on the English Literature side I just flourished under him. I remember the play we did, it was the Thomas More one, *A Man For All Seasons*. That seemed to, sort of, fit in with my life as well. That's a good point. I certainly wasn't in Boulder long enough, and I ended up getting two of those subjects. I think I must have come back and finished them by correspondence. I can't recall that I physically went to any ... although I did

go to Perth Technical College for a while. Yes, so maybe that's where I finished them off.

JF            So coming now then to the journalistic opportunity. Tell me about the cadetship.

**PENDAL**        I saw it advertised in *The West Australian*. I had really never, ever given any thought to journalism. For all my interest in newspapers and so on, I really didn't have much of a clue what a journalist did. I knew that it was a craft that would qualify me in something, so I applied. I was called in for an interview and *The West* later offered me a cadetship, but on the condition that I went to the *South Western Times* in Bunbury, which was interesting, since I had come from there. I was happy to do that. I went back in January 1966, and it was one of the most wonderful milestones in my life because it just ... I felt as though I had flourished. I felt as though I had been really marking time in bank work for, you know, a couple of years. I just ... I gloried in this idea that you would go to work with a notebook and be sent out somewhere, and you'd learn to be observant and then come back and write. Then the biggest thrill of all was to see, within 12 or 18 hours, something appear in print with your name on it. It just seemed to me that it was the most wonderful way to earn a living. I'd had to take a pay cut to do it, from the bank to go into my cadetship, but I was just transported by the whole experience. Loved it, and it is still having an impact on my life all these years later. So it was a wonderful moment, and it must have been meant to happen because there was no notion on my part that I desperately wanted to be a journalist. I desperately wanted to be something qualified, and it seemed to me to be the best way to get it, other than through a university. So I did, and I was just gobsmacked by what had opened up for me.

JF            What was the tie up between *The West Australian* and the *South West Times*?

**PENDAL**        By then, they owned the *South Western Times*. WA Newspapers owned *The West Australian*, they owned the *Daily News*, to which I was later posted, but they also owned the *South Western Times*. That paper had been in private ownership for years and years, but was purchased by *The West* because it was a prosperous regional newspaper. They'd often send people there for their training, and so it was no downgrading to be sent to Bunbury. You were often given better opportunities for having been sent there.

JF           What was demanded of you under the cadetship? What were the requirements?

**PENDAL**       Firstly, you did shorthand at night school, and so I went to the Bunbury Tech and learnt shorthand. Typing; I never learnt to type properly, but I can type at a furious pace now. So that was the only formal side. The chief of staff, a man by the name of Paul Wood, also doubled, it seemed to me, with what they called the “cadet counsellor” in those days. But you were just pushed off the edge of ... they wouldn’t do it now, but within days I was sitting in the Bunbury Police Courts, which also became the Supreme Court when it went down there to sit. You covered the Bunbury Town Council, or City Council. There was just ... I remember being sent to interview Premier Brand on a visit to Bunbury. I remember the Queen Mother’s visit, and I had a certain leg in that. So there was no preparation; you were, “Look, son, there’s the notebook, there’s a biro; get out and come back with a story.” I mean, it was appalling when I think about it, but that’s what it was.

JF           You obviously met some interesting people, from the ones you have just noted. That was before the days of tape recorders then? You were doing it all in shorthand?

**PENDAL**       We were certainly doing it in shorthand. I think there were small tape recorders available, but I don’t think they were universally used. I think it had to be something special, and you went to the chief of staff and applied to take one out for that assignment or ... but it certainly wasn’t universally in use.

JF           So what year are we talking about that you started at Bunbury?

**PENDAL**       So this is January 1966, ’67. You would then have the extra experience of being sent to the satellite papers owned by the *South Western Times* at Busselton. Within two years I was running the *Blackwood Warren Times*.

JF           That’s Manjimup?

**PENDAL**       Yes. All on my own, and I had a terrific time. It was while I was there, I had, by now, met my future wife, and she was a teacher in Bunbury, and I had decided to apply for a job on *The West* or the *Daily*; you only applied to one person in Perth. They rang me up one day and said, “Get up, you’re starting in the *Daily News*

..." this was early 1969, I think, and so I was on my way out of Manjimup at a pretty quick pace.

JF                   Where did you live in Bunbury, on your return?

**PENDAL**       There was a group of journalists, or cadet journalists. We hired a huge house that had once belonged to Robert Forrest, John Forrest's brother. We ostentatiously called it "Clifton Court", I think we called it. It was a big, two-storey house with a magnificent lounge in it, a huge fireplace, where all of the journalistic enthusiasm for carafes of wine and ... we'd sit there of a night-time and talk and talk and drink copious quantities of red wine. That was just wonderful sort of ... the camaraderie amongst those fellows, and they have remained close friends to this day. So that was where we lived.

JF                   Did that become the Clifton Motel or is that ...

**PENDAL**       It did, it's the same one. If you ask for a particular room, you can still stay in these ... what, to us, was a small mansion. It was a beautiful old home.

JF                   Who were some of the colleagues that are most precious to you from that time?

**PENDAL**       A fellow called Robert Bennett, who later became chief of staff at the *Sunday Times*. He was a columnist with *The Australian* and he was also *The West's* correspondent in Port Hedland before all of that. He was a very good football coach and he was known to have a bit of a temper, to such an extent that the locals went and registered him with the local authority as a dog, with the name of "Mad Dog Bennett". They presented him with the disc, and he wore it around his neck on a chain for years to come. He was very proud of being registered as a dog under the Dog Act. [chuckles]

John Horner was another fellow who became a very close friend of mine, and the friendship endures. He later went into public relations work. A fellow by the name of John Kelly, who later went to Melbourne, and to this day runs a newspaper in Bali, an English-speaking ... he owns and operates it. So they were good friendships.

JF                   Did you see much of family when you were in Bunbury?

**PENDAL** Well, of course I saw a lot of my older, extended family. By then, too, my mother had remarried. She married a fellow who was a widower and so ... and he had been on a farm at Cowaramup, and they bought a house in Bunbury. So my mother went back, but this was afterwards. So I saw a fair bit of her and probably less of my brothers and sisters, because they were now pretty well in Perth, so that there was that change, yes.

END OF TAPE THREE SIDE B

## TAPE FOUR SIDE A

This is tape 4 in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal, this one being recorded on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2007 at Parliament House, Perth, with interviewer John Ferrell.

JF            Phillip, I wanted to pick up on some of the things that you've mentioned at various times over the last interview, or even the one before, and ask you to elaborate on a couple of things, so let's pick up on that trip to Canberra that you told me that I think you won. Tell me about that. In what circumstances did you win the trip to Canberra?

**PENDAL**        It was an award called the Junior Citizen of Swan, and it was confined to the federal electorate of Swan, which was then represented in the Parliament by Richard Cleaver. The Junior Citizen of Swan Award was open to a young male and a young female annually, someone who was involved in youth work or young people's organisations. I notice you mentioned last week Christian Endeavour in the Uniting Church being akin to the YCW in the Catholic Church, and in fact Dick Cleaver was very much involved in the Christian Endeavour movement for the Uniting Church, or the then Methodist Church. So Dick Cleaver would have called nominations. He had a community panel I think of seven or eight people who would then interview the applicants, and I was nominated by the YCW in East Victoria Park, and in 1962 I was chosen as the male, and a girl called Adele Thomas, who later went on to become a doctor, was chosen as the female. We travelled with Dick Cleaver to Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, where we met people like the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the standout was Sir Robert Menzies, who was then the Prime Minister. So that was in August of 1962. It certainly whet my appetite because of my interest in public affairs, but it was a wonderful experience to meet someone like Menzies and sit in his office. We were probably there for no more than 10 minutes as I look back on it, but it was something that was quite inspirational to me, and I suppose cemented that notion that, well, one day I would like to go into Parliament.

JF            Do you remember any conversation with him?

**PENDAL**        Well, I remember one part. He asked me what I did, or the briefing note to him said what I did (one or the other) and that was that I worked in this very, very modest position at the Olympic Tyre and Rubber Company, and he picked up on

this, as I later learnt as a politician to pick up on a conversational piece. He said, "Oh, well, when I was a very young barrister, I had lots of shares in the Olympic Tyre and Rubber Company, but when I became a minister (I think he said in the Victorian government or the federal government) I had to give them away or put them in some sort of a trust", so I thought I was in good company that I had something in common with Sir Robert Menzies [laughter], and really that was the principal thing that I can remember.

JF                   Where did you actually stay in Canberra?

**PENDAL**       We stayed at private residences. I think in Adelaide, for example, I've got an idea that we might have stayed with a man, Sir Keith Wilson, who was then one of the federal members. They would be people who Richard Cleaver would . . . they were friends of his either through his church or in the Parliament, and these people made their homes available. They were probably the sorts of ages that I am now, where you have extra bedrooms because you've got children have flown the nest, so Adele Thomas and I stayed in these private residences in Sydney and Melbourne and Canberra for this trip that probably went for about a fortnight.

JF                   What were your impressions of Canberra at the time?

**PENDAL**       It occurred to me it was . . . I mean the Parliament I thought was wonderful, and I felt at home with that, probably because the reality of it was a mirror image of the pictorial material I had seen about it. For the rest of the place, it did seem to me to be a bit clinical, a bit too well planned and clean and clipped. I know that we were taken on to various national institutions like the Mt Stromlo Observatory. I suppose the sort of things that you would take kids to who had a reasonably intelligent interest in those public institutions. Certainly I can recall visiting Mt Stromlo.

JF                   And I take it you were travelling by air?

**PENDAL**       We were. That was my first experience of air travel, and I was a bit terrified of it, actually. I recall one of the landings where what I now realise is a fairly orthodox landing, but it might have been a bit rough, and hearing cutlery and crockery fall across the cabin, and I had a bit of a premonition that that was it for me, that I was going to end up in an air disaster in one of the capital cities, but that was a

big experience as a 15 year old, to even have that openness to air transport, which then was a really big deal. I mean, a boy of 15 now to get on a plane to go from here to Sydney, it would be almost of no moment, I think, but it was a big thing, I think you'd agree, to get the chance for air travel.

JF Yes, and how did you relate to Dick Cleaver?

**PENDAL** Well, I found him a very stern, a very . . . a figure of great authority, and it sort of taught me a few lessons for the future, because I later realised that's what particularly younger children, and not always younger children, even adults . . . I found later in my life that, you know, people had an abiding hatred for politicians per se, but they always tended to treat you very, very well, so that I think there was that sort of ambivalence in that people wanted to have some respect and regard for their members of Parliament and their political leaders, and so I did sort of learn from that to try and get across to people, particularly people who might have been a bit like me as I was all those years ago. I did go out of my way to try and be a bit more accommodating and friendly to people because I did find Dick quite an overpowering sort of an individual. At the end of his life, literally, he was dying in a hospice late last year, in 2006, and he asked to see me, which I found interesting, because he had obviously been an influence on me getting into politics, but we ended up at some stages on different sides of the Liberal Party, and I found that interesting that I was in the so-called wing that he wasn't in. But we apparently mended our differences, because just before he died his family asked me to see if I would visit him in the hospice, which I did, and we had some private sort of discussions, strangely enough of a religious or a spiritual nature, and so I was thrilled to think that what had started for me at the age of 15 had really matured and was still important to him when I was 59 years of age and he was literally about 18 hours away from his death. That was quite a moving experience. I guess it proved to me that adage about politics. I think it was Reg Withers who said there are no friends or enemies in politics, just shifting alliances, and while I think that's a bit cynical (but there again Reg was very cynical) it was true in that case.

JF Yes. That's lovely. The sequel to that trip, did that involve you in reporting to groups back here or meeting people and talking about what you'd experienced?

**PENDAL** It did, and I can recall one of the organisations I was a guest speaker at the Victoria Park Rotary Club, one occasion probably around September of 1962, and as I look back on some of those things I'm a bit mortified, because here was this precocious 15-year-old coming back from Canberra and telling people about your meeting with the Prime Minister. I shudder a bit when I think about it now, because I've seen kids like that in my own lifetime and you probably tended to want to clip their ears a bit, but there was that obligation to front back to the people who sent you there. I mean, it gave me, I suppose, an introduction to real life public speaking, which I was then doing in that circumstance at the age of 15, so it was an important experience.

JF Was the whole trip funded by Rotary?

**PENDAL** Now that's a good question. I don't know where Dick got the money for the airfares. Knowing that he had very good commercial connections, I wouldn't have been surprised if he'd got some free tickets out of the Ansett organisation. I don't think Rotary paid or sponsored any of these things financially. I think they probably did give him added support by letting him see what he was doing as a member of Parliament, of which this was just a tiny little sliver, but to my knowledge Rotary didn't underwrite it.

JF Well, maybe we can leave that one now. It's actually been quite a fruitful little area to explore. Taking up another thing that you mentioned in earlier interviews, your interest in reading. We've left you with *The Secret Seven* or *The Famous Five*, and we should talk about how your interest in reading has developed in adult life. What genres, for example, are significant for you and so on?

**PENDAL** Well, much to the dismay of my family, my reading is predominantly, or is dominated, I should say, by political material. Political biographies were, and still are, a favourite; biographies of people in positions of authority; government leaders; United States' politics (I was always fascinated with United States' politics); the politics of the church. Nonetheless, I have other reading interests, and I've learnt, for example, to love John Mortimer as a writer and the creator of Rumpole, of course, but Mortimer also wrote other fiction of an entirely different nature, and in my opinion never ever hit the mark like he did with the Rumpole creation and the series. I think the Rumpole works were actually very good legal texts, too, because they were invariably based on real life situations. Now, he hit the bookstands in a big way

as the creator of Rumpole in the '80s, and by then I was in Parliament, so I couldn't claim that any of his writing had an impact on my thinking, but I recall being very influenced by Mortimer's attitudes. I mean, I think he sold out a lot of his principles in later life. He was a bit of a ratbag all round in the way he treated women and his family, but he was very strong on the notion of the rights of an accused person, the weight and the power of the state being introduced against the individual, that prosecuting people in courts was a dreadful thing to do from his point of view. Those things did influence me, to the extent I can recall years later Kevin Prince, who became a member of Parliament and a minister of the Crown, and then left Parliament and became the counsel for the Police Union at the time the royal commission was held, and I recall him coming to see me on one occasion and trying to persuade me to raise a particular matter in Parliament, and he said "and in your Rumpolian fashion". I was very much chuffed by that, because I had not thought that I had been overtly influenced by Mortimer's writings, but I clearly was, and I wasn't offended at all. In fact, if anything I was quite chuffed to think that a lawyer, as Prince was, had himself picked that up. So that's sort of the extent. I mean, my library . . . I think it's a fairly catholic (a small "c" catholic) taste in reading, but they would be the main things. Political biographies, and then what I'd call serious fiction, like the Mortimer material.

JF            Thanks, and you mentioned going to films, if you had behaved yourself, as a lad. What films do you remember capturing your imagination then, and has that interest continued?

**PENDAL**        The sorts of things that we were exposed to on Saturday afternoon at the Forrest Picture Theatre in South Bunbury was I don't think anything that would have made a profound impact on me. You know; it was *Hopalong Cassidy* and *Superman* and things of that nature. I remember a film that stuck in my mind that I saw many times, *All Brothers Were Valiant*, and when I look back now I still can't remember why I wanted to see it so many times, but it did make an impact as a very small boy. My wife and I go to the movies a lot and have done throughout our married life. She tends to be more discerning, and she tends to be the one who chooses the films that we'll go to, but generally, too, she'll say, "Well, look, I'm going to see this with my friend Joan because I don't think you'll be interested in that", and that suits me down to the ground because it saves me the trouble of having to go to something that I might not have been interested in. I mean, the latest that we saw this week was *The Last King of Scotland*. That was my sort of film, or at least I

wanted to see it, my wife was a bit reluctant to see it, but in the end we thought that was a pretty powerful piece of imagery, albeit that it's not based on fact, or it's not a true story, but it is based on some broad historical moments. I do recall when I was shadow Minister for Cultural Affairs leading up to the, I think, 1993 election that we were expected to win, and where I confidently thought that I'd be going into the cabinet, I was on a visit to one of the country centres, and I was telephoned by the film critic of *The West Australian* and they were wanting to do a story on the Minister for Cultural Affairs and the shadow Minister for Cultural Affairs on films that they had seen. I guess they wanted to see how culturally with it you were, and I recall having to say, "Well, look, I can't speak to you about it just at the moment; can I ring you back in an hour?", and he said that was fine, and from Bridgetown I rang my wife at St Columba's Primary School and said, "What films have I seen lately, and what have I been impressed with?" So I dutifully wrote down these notes on the phone and I rang this fellow back and then I talked with great authority about films that I'd seen and what I'd thought of them, and that must have been true because my wife said it was [chuckles]. But I had to admit I didn't own up to the fact that I had to ring my wife to remember the films and also what I thought of them.

JF            Yes. Wives have their uses, don't they, [laughter] but they're not necessarily written into the wedding contract! Now to turn to a much more serious topic, I suppose, you mentioned that one of your school associates was conscripted to Vietnam and lost his life there. I wondered how you regarded the Vietnam War and in particular Australia's involvement in it.

**PENDAL**       Well, I probably had the quintessential view of a conservative Australian, but I have to say I've seen no reason to change my view on it in all my years. I did think that we had a role in the Vietnam War. I think Australia made two critical errors in its execution, number one in involving conscripts, and number two that it was never fought to the end. I happened to view the same thing in respect to the Iraqi War, and the Vietnam and the Iraqi War have at least in common that they are modern wars, run in the face of public opinion polls. I often wonder what might have happened to England had the same applied in Europe in the late thirties, and there were plenty of people who were happy to appease tyrants like Hitler, and I think had the media had the same sort of dominance, where it sought in the end to, in the Vietnam and Iraqi Wars, to be the determining factors about whether we would stay the distance or not, it seems to me that under those circumstances, that we might have ended up with a German occupied England and we may well have turned up

with a Japanese occupied Australia. So I abhor war like anyone else does, but I think there are occasions when they need to be fought, because there are people like the Hitlers and the Stalins and the Husseins. So, Vietnam I've learnt over the years to think that it was worth fighting. I look at it now and it's a united country, but it's united under a pretty tyrannical Communist regime, and the fact that we trade with it and that we in Western Australia we actually, through the Western Australian Government, we provide technical support for things like their land administration scheme, does not remove the fact that to this day it's a united country under a hard line, and in terms of human rights, tyrannical country. So, that's a long way around the subject, but I thought that we were wrong to fight the Vietnam War with conscripts. That was a critical error.

JF                   And what about for yourself? Were you in danger of having to be balloted?

**PENDAL**        Yes I was, and I can recall it well, but I was not balloted. I think you were balloted by your birth date, and February the 4<sup>th</sup> didn't come out of the barrel, so I missed out, as it were. I'm not unhappy that I did miss out, but had I been called up well then I would have served in whatever way they told you you had to serve; they had the whip hand, after all.

JF                   Yes. Now another public issue, I suppose, which later you became involved with in Parliament. You talked the other day about capital punishment, being the person who crossed the floor to make sure that that bill passed. I wondered how you reacted to the phenomenon of Eric Edgar Cooke and the whole issue around his hanging.

**PENDAL**        Well, I knew from my very earliest days that I believed capital punishment was intrinsically wrong, so we're talking here about the late 1960s and going into the '70s for the controversy over Ronald Ryan in Victoria. This was long before I became conscious of other so-called life issues that our generation confronted later, whether it was abortion, whether it was embryonic stem cell research, whether it was euthanasia; all of these things that seem to have come at once. It always seemed to me to be a sense of hopelessness that a society would go and hang someone by the neck until they were dead. It always was my belief that somehow or other society had lost out by putting people to death on the gallows. And so I felt that. I don't know that I ever expressed it, but it certainly bobbed up

when pretty well out of the blue the bill lobbed into the Parliament, I think in 1984. But yes, I've always had that view that somehow or other it was more a reflection on society that somehow or other it had never come to grips with dealing with capital offences in a better way than by this medieval way of putting people to death.

JF            Yes. You probably were a bit unusual in your day to be thinking like that as a young person. Can you identify any strands, any people who said things that might have led to that conclusion on your part; priests or parents or family members or others?

**PENDAL**       Well, I can't, except that I do recall on one occasion (and I think I mentioned it to you some time ago) I do recall asking my father (and I might have been 12-ish, 13) asking him whether the difference between being a Liberal and a Laborite was whether you put people to death on the gallows, and my father replied, and sensibly, that, "Well, there was more to it than that, but yes, conservative governments did believe in using the death penalty, and Labor governments didn't." So, I must have been asking that question and trying to get some resolution in my own mind about it, and it would have been brought on by something like the hangings of that man Thomas, or maybe Cooke, because even then I would have been 16-ish or something of that kind. I can't recall that there was a family member or a priest or any one particular person who influenced those events, although I do know that by then I was well involved in things like the YCW, and whether it had come into play there I can't recall if it did.

JF            Right. Probably then now we could pick up with your life in Bunbury again as a cadet journalist, and we didn't hear last time from you anything about the terms of the cadetship. Would you like to elaborate? Under what terms were you accepted by *The West Australian* or West Australian Newspapers? What did you have to perform?

**PENDAL**       Right. Well, as I look back on it, it's an extraordinary thing that apprentices signed papers, or indentured personnel entered into certain legal obligations. There was nothing of that in a cadetship in journalism. You were chosen because they liked the colour of your rosy cheeks, or something about you, and you were assigned to a newspaper. My interviews had been in Perth, but I was assigned to the *South Western Times*. When I look back on it, it was a period when *The West* were taking on I think . . . when I say *The West*, WA Newspapers were

TAPE FOUR SIDE A

PENDAL

taking on each year 12 cadets. Six of those were graduates and six were people like myself, sort of maturer age, but there were no specifications. When I look back on it, there was this hollow, and they merely gave you a notebook and a pencil and you attended cadet lectures, although they were few and far between in Bunbury. You did shorthand and typing and things of that nature, but very little formality about it.

END OF TAPE FOUR SIDE A

## TAPE FOUR SIDE B

This is side B of tape 4 in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip Pental.

JF            Now thinking again about your working as a cadet journalist, to what extent did you have a career path in mind when you went in as a cadet, and how did your aspirations within journalism develop?

**PENDAL**        I knew that because of my interest in politics I had to be very careful to keep that thoroughly divorced from my work in journalism. That was very clear in my own mind. But even at that early stage, this was a means to an end. It was the qualification that I was looking for in the absence of doing law had things worked out in other directions, and I was very conscious of the fact that to become qualified as a journalist, and then at some stage to make a bid for public life, I would always have something to fall back on. So I went about my job I guess in the usual way. I was given the courts to cover, so I spent many, many hours in the Bunbury Courts covering criminal matters, police matters, civil matters, trial matters that went to the Supreme Court. I learnt to really enjoy that. There was almost a bit of a surrogate lawyer's job about it to sit there and watch all of this going on between lawyers and judges and accused people. Somewhat to the amusement of my family and friends, I became a sportswriter each weekend, and I was sent out to cover football matches in particular. I did local government in the smaller country towns of WA, Busselton and Nannup and Manjimup, and then you did general reporting, but principally I seemed to be fed into the law reporting and politics. I remember interviewing Sir David Brand, who was then the Premier, on a visit that he made to Bunbury. So in a way my hobby was being worked out in my job. I couldn't believe how lucky I was to have a job. I was being paid for it, and I used to think that I would do this for nothing. I mean, I'm meeting people like the Premier and federal ministers and members of Parliament and lawyers and people whose company I seemed to enjoy, and I was being paid for it, plus I was getting a qualification into the bargain. So it was a really good part of my life.

JF            How much was there sort of tuition in the writing craft? I mean you were at the mercy of an editor, I suppose.

**PENDAL**        Well, you were at the mercy of a number of subeditors. The editor didn't get his hands on your copy all that much that I could see, but there was a chief of staff (a very, very experienced and wily old journalist by the name of Paul Wood)

who assigned you your assignments for the day, but who also got what I think was called . . . well at least it was another carbon copy. Every piece of story that you wrote, the top one went to the chief subeditor, the second one went somewhere else, and the third one I think always went to the chief of staff, and he would be pulling you in all of the time, and he would have done his own subediting independently of the chief subeditor and be saying to you, "Look, Phillip, just have a look here; you can really do this better", and I found that very good, but meanwhile it would go off to the chief subeditor and he might allocate it to one of the subeditors (there always seemed to be a lot of chiefs around the place and not too many Indians that I could see) or to the sports editor, so each of these people would feed back. I know it sounds a very simple and even an awkward way to do it, but they were all good teachers in their own right, hands on. Probably they'd learnt it this way themselves. But no-one actually ever taught me how to write a news story. I mean, that seemed to be assumed that that would come through as some sort of natural instinct. One of my stories was subbed by a subeditor by the name of Ian Baker, who later became Minister for Agriculture in the second John Cain Government, and we caught up many years later (he was in his position and I was in mine in the West Australian Parliament) and we laughed as we looked back on those days. He was one of the people who taught me the skill of writing a feature story which you would introduce differently to the reader than if you were writing a news story. I can recall quite vividly some of the things that he taught me. So there were these older people whose ages ranged from the mid-20s through to the 60s, with a lifetime of experience, and they were the ones who pulled you up and told you why it was not as good as it could be. They were great teachers. I think of them with a lot of affection as I look back on it now.

JF                    And when you're writing like that, especially as a cadet, I take it copyright always rests with the paper, not with you?

**PENDAL**        I know this sounds strange, but that just never entered our mind. The thrill was that if the subeditor or the editor decided that you were going to get a by-line, and to think that you were . . . we were working on a bi-weekly paper, so that if your deadline was Monday at, say, 5.00 pm, the paper wouldn't come out until Tuesday morning. I later saw it happen so much quicker on the *Daily News*, where your work would be appearing on the street within two hours of having left your typewriter and your name being there. So the by-line system was always held out as being the incentive to do good work, yes.

JF            So in fact the paper did own the copyright?

**PENDAL**      I'm appalled to tell you after all these years that I don't know the answer to that. That's a very good question.

JF            Yes.

**PENDAL**      I don't know who owns the copyright. I guess it's the paper. But there again, you're the author of it, so I'm not entirely sure that it would be the paper.

JF            Yes. I didn't mean to put you on the spot, exactly! [chuckles]

**PENDAL**      No, but it's a good question!

JF            Coming back to some of the memorable things you had to write about, you mentioned that you had something to do with covering the Queen Mother's visit to Bunbury. I wondered if you have any memories of that incident or event.

**PENDAL**      That was in 1966, so I'd not been there long. That was the Queen Mother. If a royal tour was planned in minute detail, and it was . . . I later learnt that the press coverage of it was one of the rare occasions when newspaper people planned anything in meticulous detail. It was not a strong point of journalists or editors to be people who were organised at all, or disciplined. They were a pretty ill-disciplined bunch, sometimes pretty rough around the edges. But the royal tours, the newspapers did learn to be quite disciplined so that you as one journalist were never sent out to cover the Queen Mother for a day. She might have been going to 14 different points, and so there might have been 14 different journalists, or let's say, more realistically, seven, and then you would do one of the early ones and then have to do your second stint later in that day. It always amused me a bit because you would phone in and you might phone in . . . you'd be flushed with the excitement of doing this and phone in maybe 10 or 12 paragraphs, and then when it was consolidated and came out in the newspaper you had a sentence in there. It was a matter of some setback that you realised, well, your efforts were only one part of the bigger picture. It did teach me that lesson that journalism was often a composite with someone writing the thing and pulling the best of your remarks, and all of this being done in the space of, say, three or four hours, because then a deadline, that was it,

and you didn't see it then until it came out in the newspaper probably the following day. But I do remember that for those reasons.

JF            Are there other things that were particularly salient and important for you in your reporting in Bunbury? For example, you mentioned an encounter with an Aboriginal group that you were sent to write about. Was that a particularly salutary experience for you?

**PENDAL**       Well, I just found it a bit humiliating all round that we were going out to gawk at these people and we were reporting these things, and I know these things needed to be reported to bring out the sort of public scandal of those conditions so that they would eventually be improved. I found a lot of elements of journalism difficult to deal with, and that sort of thing, that voyeuristic sort of type approach where you'd be going in and looking at other people's misery, I found pretty difficult to deal with. You know, we used to comfort ourselves in saying, if you went down and had a beer afterwards, that, well, you know, this is the only way governments act, and I think that's true to a large extent. But nonetheless I often found difficulty. Someone would come out of a court case and they would look at you across the well of the court. I remember being approached on several occasions by people pleading that a case not be reported. Now I had an easy opt out clause. I remember on a couple of occasions going to my editor, a man called Jim Olney, and he would say to me, "Why do you think this person's case should not be reported, as opposed to all of the ones that you've done?" That put you on the spot a bit. I don't know that I ever answered the question, but in the end he'd say, "Go out and give me the copy", and the first time I didn't know what he meant by that, and I went out to my typewriter and came back with all the copy that I'd written. He said, "Just let me read it", and he read it, in front of me. Then he opened the bottom drawer and he put it all in and he said, "That's for me to worry about." So on those couple of occasions he must have been influenced by what I said. So they were sort of sometimes difficult things. But I never felt like that for people in public life. If you went to a council meeting or to a ministerial press conference, that was a free for all. If they said something off the track that was going to embarrass them, I'd report it. I had no compunction at all. But it did seem to make a difference to me if you were some poor devil, unempowered, and there were those sort of things that hung about the back of your mind. Apart from that, it was a very happy experience, though.

JF Yes. Now life in Bunbury of course existed in things outside journalism as well. Do you recall some of the developments that were important to Bunbury at the time you were there? I mean, for example, to jog your memory, things like St Patrick's Cathedral being renovated and so on?

**PENDAL** I do. One of the reasons that I remember that is that I always had a great regard for Bishop Goody, and particularly for his scholarship. I mean, he'd studied at one of the top colleges in Rome. He had a couple of doctorates. He was a princely type of a person. But I couldn't believe it when he allowed the cathedral, a porch to be built on the front of it. It was the most diabolical addition that you could imagine. I can't ever think why he allowed it to occur. The bricks didn't match, the architecture didn't match. I was dumbfounded to think this man of great learning would ever have allowed that to happen. I remember it was a time when someone had put to him the idea that the big pillars inside the cathedral should be encased in mosaic tiles. It was the most appalling outcome. It would have been okay in some Byzantine church in the Middle East or Europe, but this was Bunbury, Western Australia, and it looked to me terribly out of place. The irony in all of this was that two years ago, in 2005, I think, a tornado came through and so shifted it from its foundations. I was never sure what theologically that was meant to be, although I was sort of a bit sad about the whole thing, and I eventually arranged to buy 750 of the bricks from that cathedral and I'm now building a little building at Toodyay with them. I don't think that was a big event in the life of the town as much as it offended my sense of aesthetics. I'm not sure where I got this sense of aesthetics from. I mean I didn't as you know have all that much education, but I knew looking at those two things that they'd got it wrong, so that stuck in my mind for that reason.

JF Other things in Bunbury at the time? GWN, for example, was new I think about that time.

**PENDAL** It was. I'm not sure that that made a huge impact on me. I recall things like the plans that the Brand Government had to build a land-backed berth in the vicinity of the Bunbury Jetty. That was certainly big from an industrial development point of view. I didn't even know what a land-backed berth was, but this big picture stuff of saying if Bunbury was going to survive as a port town, then having a jetty sticking out into the Koombana Bay wasn't going to be the way to that end. So the announcement by Sir David Brand, I recall that for the reason that six or 12 months earlier, I had purchased a block of land in East Bunbury, in Cambridge

Crescent I think it was called, because of this exhortation of my dad that the minute you started work you had to buy a block of land. You think, well, how is that related to Sir David being there, and Sir David is there explaining this new land-backed wharf and I'm looking at this map behind him and I thought, "For heaven's sake, man; my block of land is in there" [laughs], and in the general area it was. In the end, it actually survived, but I know that I resolved very quickly I was going to sell that block of land before they had ships floating around in the backyard! But that was probably as big as it got in terms of things that would change the nature of the town.

JF            Were you heavily involved with community organisations and so on when you were in Bunbury?

**PENDAL**        The principal one was still the YCW, and as an extension of that we ran a highly successful annual walkathon that involved hundreds and hundreds of young people in Bunbury, and it was raising funds to put in a new youth facility down on that very valuable land at Busselton that the churches owned. I know that we put a lot of effort into that because it was a broader community thing, and so apart from my job as a journalist . . . and I tended not to get too much involved in wider community things, for no particular reason, but I did get involved in and I was the chairman of that walkathon appeal. That made a reasonably big impact each year in the lead up to and the day it was actually held. Beyond that, no.

JF            Did you have a car in those days?

**PENDAL**        I did.

JF            Tell me about your introduction to motoring.

**PENDAL**        Well, that occurred when I was in Boulder, where I turned 17, and one of the fellows boarding with me at Mrs Bull's boarding house was a car salesman, and he ended up selling me my first car and I paid £80 for it. It was just a week or two before decimal currency . . . no; I am about a year or two out, but certainly it was 80 quid I paid for the car, a 1949 Morris Minor with a canvas top. Several years later I traded that in on a Renault 750, the one where the engine was in the back, and then when I was in journalism as a cadet I upgraded to I think it was an FC Holden. By this stage I had met my future wife (we'd become engaged) and I remember learning that the car needed a new engine, and I didn't have a bob to bless myself with. Well,

my wife advanced the money. Well, she was my girlfriend. She was teaching in Bunbury. She loaned me the money to get a new engine in my car, and the person to whom I paid it was a cousin of mine who was an apprentice mechanic but who ran a little business of his own on the side, and I bought from him one of the first Prosser Power engines. He was a fellow called Geoff Prosser, who was my cousin, and he later went into the federal Parliament as the member for Forrest, so that was the story of my motorcars and the way that my then girlfriend loaned me the money to get a new engine. [laughs]

JF                    Yes. Was learning to drive a big issue for you?

**PENDAL**            No. I don't recall any traumas there. You certainly never went to a driving school. I mean, somehow or other, family I imagine, had given us lessons to the extent that anyone ever got lessons. I remember driving a borrowed car to the police station to get my licence, and the policeman in Boulder saying, "Okay, young fellow, let's come out now. Whose car are we using?", and I said, "Oh, we're using so and so's Ford Consul", and he said, "Well, how did that get here?", and I said, "Well, I drove it here". He said, "I don't think I should've heard that question", and it went over my head a bit and I apologised to him, and so he paid me back by going inside, getting an armful of summonses, and for the next couple of hours I drove him around Kalgoorlie-Boulder while he delivered his summonses, and then he came in and said, "Well, come in and I'd better give you your licence now" [laughter].

JF                    Now I think at this stage perhaps you could tell me about meeting your wife. You've alluded to it a few times. Where did you meet, and what attracted you to each other and so on?

**PENDAL**            By 1968 I had been sent to run the *Manjimup-Warren Times*. It sounds a bit ostentatious, but it was one newspaper. There was a manager who looked after the commercial side, and I was the sole producer of the news in this . . . I think it was a 16-page paper . . . so therefore I was based in Manjimup, but I still kept up my connections with these friends that I'd made (with other cadet journalists who were still in Bunbury) and I would always return to them of a weekend. They lived in this Clifton Court that we so called, and one of them said they were having a party and that I should . . . Robert Bennett, who later became a very prominent sports reporter, he was always trying to get me married off. I have never asked him why it was apparent that I should get married off, but he invited me to come along to a

particular party to meet this girl, and I met her. As it turned out, that was the girl that he ended up marrying, but into the bargain I met her flatmate. Her flatmate was Maxine Mayrhofer, my future wife, and she had been sent to Bunbury, in her first assignment, I think. She lived at Kenwick, with her parents, so we met there, and about six or nine months later I asked her to marry me. That's what people did in those days. What attracted me to her? Well, she was very attractive, but she just seemed to have a lot more substance than a lot of sort of flighty people who were around at the time. So here I was being introduced to this girl by Robert Bennett, who he was to eventually marry, but I into the bargain met Maxine. By then, I was transferred. I had applied for a job in Perth. I wanted to get out of Manjimup, and I was told that I had a job on the *Daily News*. I was to start I think in March or April 1969. So I came back to Perth to live, and I lived with my brother and sister in law. Meanwhile, my wife was still in Bunbury. Then she started to commute back to Perth because her parents lived in Kenwick, and so that was in the months leading up to our marriage, which occurred in August '69.

JF               Where and when were you married, and who conducted the ceremony and so on?

**PENDAL**       We were married in my old parish church, Our Lady Help of Christians in East Victoria Park. My wife was not a Catholic, so we didn't have the requiem mass. It was conducted by Father Bernie Dwyer, who had been my YCW chaplain in Bunbury, so we got him to come to East Victoria Park. He remained a life-long friend and does to this day. So we were married in East Victoria Park. The reception was in an awful pub called the Boomerang Hotel in Bentley. It's now been demolished, thank goodness. That's where it all began [chuckles].

JF               Yes. It was interesting that you ended up marrying somebody who was not of the same faith, because that was still quite a big issue in those days, was it not?

**PENDAL**       Not to me it wasn't, and I don't remember it being a big issue. My wife came from an Anglican background. The mother practised her Anglicanism. The dad and the wider family didn't appear to. So it was sort of business as usual, because that's what I'd been used to. I do recall just before we were married my wife asking me the question did it matter to me that she was not a Catholic, and I remember saying, probably based on my parents' experience of happy marriage,

“No, it doesn’t, but what I wouldn’t mind you doing” . . . there were courses available that non-Catholic partners could take, just to get an understanding of what it was that their future husband or future wife belief system was. It was never intended for anything more than that. Maxine did take up one of those courses, and eventually, long after we were married, she became a Catholic, but that was at her pace. It was not an issue for me at any time then, no.

JF               Where did you live when you were married?

**PENDAL**       Well, just down the road from her parents in Kenwick was a little flat attached to a larger house. They were friends of that family, so about a month or so out from our wedding we lined that up that that’s where we would live. I think we spent probably six to nine months in that flat before we bought a little 1920s house in Canning Highway in South Perth that cost us \$13 000. I’m sure you’ve had the same experience. It was a lovely old 1920s place, and that’s where we really started our married life, because the other place was six or nine months we were there. That’s when our first child came along, born about 13 months after we were married, so people started pretty soon in those days, unlike nowadays.

JF               Yes.

END OF TAPE FOUR SIDE B

## TAPE FIVE SIDE A

This is tape five, side A, in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip Pandal. This is being recorded on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2007 at Parliament House, Perth, and the interviewer is John Ferrell.

JF            Now, Phillip, we got to the stage last week of talking about your early married life. You'd told me that you'd moved to Canning Highway and that you'd had the birth of your first child. So, just briefly, I wonder if you'd like at this stage to tell me about your family; just briefly mentioning each one and any of the things that are particularly significant or highlights for you of having them.

**PENDAL**        We had our first child, Sasha Marie, she was born in September 1970, so a little bit over a year after we were married in those days when parents had children fairly soon after marriage. A son, Simon Matthew, he arrived in 1972, in May, and the third was Narisha Louise who was born in 1973. We lived at that time either at 150 Canning Highway in South Perth in a small 1920s home that we purchased and later moved to 67 Collins Street in South Perth and then, finally, we moved into 27 York Street in South Perth which, interestingly, had been built in the early part of the century by the son of the first Wesleyan minister in Western Australia. It was in that home in York Street that we really had the bulk of our family life from '77 right through until our children left home and my wife and I sold up very early in the new century. The children went to St Columba's Primary School in South Perth, which is where my wife taught, she previously having been a teacher in her early life, and so that's where the children went to school and the bulk of our family life was.

JF            Just about being a father: what aspects of being a father did you enjoy most?

**PENDAL**        It sounds awful to say it now, particularly that I've got grandchildren, but I'm now seeing and learning about children in a way that I never did with my own children and we've often tried to analyse that. Young fathers certainly did less in the upbringing or in the maintenance, as it were, of their children than happens today with my son-in-law and the superb way that he is pretty hands-on with looking after his children. I'm fairly sure that I was somewhat typical of my time, so when I get an attack of the guilts about that I comfort myself that it was pretty well the culture of the

time. Certainly, I recall interviewing my children frequently on tape, so the old history bit had kicked in pretty heavily and only a matter of weeks ago I was able to play a tape back to my grandchildren with their mother on at the same age. My wife seemed to do, as I look back on it, most of those things that you thought a mother should do in those days, but we seemed to have plenty of time together; we holidayed, we went into the country. Probably the holidays that we had when the children were small are probably more memorable to me than the long periods in between.

JF            Tell me then, was your wife following her career outside the home whilst having the children?

**PENDAL**        No. Once Sasha came along, my wife gave away teaching and she remained at home, I think, for about seven or eight years. The school was directly over the road from us, so that teaching there and our children being there made it a somewhat fortunate thing for all of us. But, she remained home for, I think it was around seven or eight years, while the children went through most of their primary years when she began teaching at St Columba's Primary School.

JF            Now, tell me, to what extent did your career, say first as a journalist and then in the political arena, conflict with the demands of the family?

**PENDAL**        I think my work was all-consuming and I've often looked back and thought that the hours devoted to that made me neglect my family responsibilities. However, when my wife said that to my son some months ago, he said, "That's a lot of nonsense. Dad used to take me to the cricket on Saturday mornings and do this and that". So, I do think I had built up a sense of not having been as attentive as a parent as I ought to have been, and so providing my children aren't jollying me along, I probably spent a fair bit of time with them. But there did seem to me, particularly when politics took over, that was so all-encompassing, so dominating, so pervasive in the whole of our life that I find that I resent the extent of that involvement as I look back 20 or so or 25 years later. Now, the accuracy of that, I'm in some doubt about now because of this remark by my son.

JF            Yes. Just to round out the story, what became of each of your children?

**PENDAL** They all graduated from university, which I was very proud of. Sasha started her working life as a graduate in the Graduate Management Team at Myer Department Store. She later became involved in federal politics on the staff of Alan Rocher, when he became an Independent. She worked in Canberra and she later became Chief of Staff to one of the current federal ministers Mal Brough. She left there to come back to Western Australia five or six years ago to join the Lions Eye Institute as a deputy director and she has subsequently married, of all people, the son of Colin Barnett, the retired Leader of the Opposition, and they live at North Fremantle.

My son, who is not married but has a girlfriend, graduated as an architect, later went to Sydney as an architect, London where he won some award for a design of a major building in Southwark, and then came back to Western Australia and, incidentally, returned home to live with us in a reversal of the empty-nesters syndrome. Then he was one of the architects who won the award for design of the Bali Memorial, which was subsequently built at Kings Park. He went on then to be one of the designers of the new University House at UWA.

Finally, my youngest daughter trained as a nurse, graduated from Curtin University. She married a young Labor activist who, in turn, became an adviser to the Minister for Disability Services when the Gallop government took office. She subsequently has qualified as a midwife and she's now working two days a week as a midwife. So, the summary of that is that on a Sunday night, it's a very interesting meal discussion with one daughter having worked in federal politics and now married to the son of the former Leader of the Opposition, and one daughter who is married to a former adviser to the state Labor government, and a son who is terribly interested in all these things but not really interested in politics and sits somewhere squarely in the middle, but it makes for an interesting Sunday night.

JF Yes, yes. Well, they've certainly made their mark, each one, haven't they? Now, the role of grandfather you briefly alluded to a while ago. Maybe you could just spend a few moments telling me about your role as grandfather.

**PENDAL** Well, now my wife, if she was here, she would be warning you against asking that question because, like most of us, I mean I've found that the role of grandfather has just swept me off my feet and I find that that's much the same sort of reaction that I get from many of my contemporaries. I have a grandson, Oscar, who's just turned five and who, interestingly, has started school at Ursula Frayne College in the same block of classrooms where I left school when it was CBC East

Victoria Park. He has a little sister called Mayr. We spend a lot of time together, as grandparents tend to do, and it's really a different relationship that I have with them than I had with my own grandparents and I think everyone experiences that. That remoteness has gone and that stern authoritarian relationship isn't there. I just think it is an amazing experience to go through, to watch their development and to join in their fun.

JF Yes. I'm noticing that names like Sasha and Narisha, for example, have a sort of East European ring about them and the granddaughter Mayr, I presume this has something to do with your wife's background, does it?

**PENDAL** Well, you're right on both of those counts. Sasha and Narisha are both names drawn from Russian literature and my wife was deeply into Russian lit of 30-odd years ago, after we were married. So these names bobbed up and they became the names of our two girls. Simon was a bit more orthodox, Orthodox Christian and Catholic, I suppose, Simon Matthew. Yes, you are correct; the grandchildren, the Oscar that's the name of my wife's father Oscar Mayrhofer and he was a school principal and the little girl Mayr is named after the first part of his surname, so that cuts pretty deeply in the family.

JF Yes. Was your wife very much involved with her original culture? I mean, she was East European, I take it, from the surname?

**PENDAL** No, she was born in Brookton, I think, and her father, Oscar Mayrhofer, was born in Western Australia in 1908. His father in turn, Alberto Fortunato Mayrhofer, had been born in Naples, but of Austrian extraction. Either he or his father had been the bookbinders to the Bourbon royal family when they occupied the throne of Naples. I think they'd been kicked out of Italy at the time of reunification in the 1860s and Alberto had come to Western Australia in the 1890s. We've pretty well tracked his career; he set up business as a picture framer, art importer, importer of fine china and things of this kind, so while she has a very European sounding name, the family has, in fact, been in Australia since the 1890s.

JF So, you've both got antecedents that go well back in West Australian history?

**PENDAL** We do, and the story of the Mayrhofers is a very, very interesting one in its own right.

JF Yes. Well, now coming back then, and leaving the family, into your working life as a journalist in Perth, you had a position with *The Daily News*. Tell me about that position that you came to.

**PENDAL** I arrived at *The Daily News* from Manjimup in early 1969. I was put on general reporting and my hope was that I could get on to the parliamentary and political side. I got diverted because of an incident that took place and I was posted to what was called the "Ombudsman's page" in *The Daily News* and under a senior journalist called Vern Lyall. So, I spent some time in the Ombudsman, which I found quite interesting in its own right; it wasn't orthodox journalism but it was an interesting time and then a vacancy occurred as the state political reporter. I think one of our fellows had gone to Canberra to cover the federal press gallery and I was given the chance to take over fairly soon, I think it was in early 1970, when I was about 23. Yes, it was because Sir David Brand's government was still in office and I remember reporting on his government for about the last year of its life before the change of government.

JF And so you'd sort of made a very substantial step towards your political aspirations in getting into such a position as that. How did you fill in the background that you probably lacked as far as knowledge of the political system and process was concerned?

**PENDAL** Well, even though I was always very conscious, very conscious of a lack of a tertiary education, to the point of being weighed down by that, but I never felt that that lack spilled over into the political arena. I felt that the knowledge base that I'd built up by my own reading in the previous five or so years really had left me with not many gaps but, I repeat, I was conscious of the gap of what I know even a basic university education could've done for me. I fitted in, I thought, very comfortably to the post of state political roundsman. I was dealing with ministers on a daily basis. I was starting from scratch because they had had senior people in this role before I took it over, one of whom was Michael Willesee who then left and became quite famous in the national scene with his own current affairs program and so on. So, I was conscious of being in their shadow, but I never felt that I had gaps

in my political understanding or political reading. In fact, I felt I was comfortably equipped to do the job.

JF Did you win the job among other contestants or were you the obvious person, the one and only?

**PENDAL** Well, of course I'm not sure, and I'm not aware of the process that went on behind closed doors, but the two people who would've made that decision would've been John Davies, who was the chief of staff, with whom I didn't get along at all, and the editor, Dan O'Sullivan, who was a terribly remote person, one of the last remote persons I can remember as a young man. I imagine these two put their heads together. There were certainly other young journalists who were looking for their own specialities, but when I was asked to do it I wasn't surprised. I felt that I was in there with a chance and I was very pleased to get that chance.

JF Yes. Just before we talk more about the political reporter's job, what other personnel were significant to you? You mentioned Vern Lyall, you mentioned John Davies, Dan Sullivan. Which others were important to you among your colleagues in *The Daily News*?

**PENDAL** I would have to say of the senior people they were the ones who were important. There was the assistant chief of staff, a man called Bob Lenton, [who] was important in a perverse sort of way because he helped me out of a situation I'd got into. I fell out with John Davies because of an assignment that he wanted to send me on to interview the father of a little boy who had been run over in the family driveway and I was very uncomfortable with that. I also had a problem; I was sent out to interview the wife of a renowned rapist, Johannes Verkerke, whom the state government was prepared to let out of jail and repatriate back to Holland. I was sent out to interview his wife to see what she thought of all of this. I thought that was fair enough in the public interest, but I do know that there was some trickery involved in getting a photo of her. She was tricked into believing that it was going to be a small photo and out of the way in the paper and, in fact, it was plastered all over page one. I fell out with them over that and that was why I was sent to the Ombudsman as a bit of a punishment. Ironically, it was Bob Lenton who had the reputation of being probably the most tabloid-like newspaperman in the whole building. But he was the one who actually rescued me and said, "Well, if you don't feel that that's a fair thing, then I'll speak to John Davies so that you don't have to do that". But behind the

scenes that went against me and so I was shot off to the Ombudsman where I did a bit of punishment. That's why I feel I must've been their first choice because they would've looked for the opportunity to further exile me and instead I was given the job. But I always felt that it was a fabulous thing that my bacon had been saved by this man, Bob Lenton, and that he'd intervened on my behalf even though he was a very purple-prose journalist himself.

JF Did you come to be on good terms with Davies in later experience?

**PENDAL** No. I must say I disliked him then and since. I felt he represented a sort of journalism that I wasn't interested in and yet *The Daily News* was an afternoon tabloid. Somehow or other, I think I was a bit more like the editor, O'Sullivan, albeit that he was very remote from me. I have just a feeling that he might've, behind the scenes, sort of said, "Yes, well, we'll have to teach this Pendal a lesson", although they were the words used by John Davies. So, I rather suspect I might've got a bit of moral support from O'Sullivan, but I doubt that I ever got any such support from John Davies. I felt I didn't like his modus operandi and I never enjoyed any sort of rapport or friendship with him.

JF His role was more on the business side than the journalistic side, was it not, and; if so, was he sort of crossing out of his area of responsibility in directing you one way or another in that?

**PENDAL** Not really, because he had the job of chief of staff and the full title was "Chief of Reporting Staff". The person in that position was the one who worked up assignments early in the morning, probably by five o'clock, and who allocated those, assigned them to various journalists. He was the person who would liaise with the editor about what was coming up. He was the person who would attend editorial conferences mid-morning to warn the sports editor what he had people lined up to do in that field or in the mining sector or local government or politics or general reporting. So, the chief of staff in a way was like the chief satellite from whom all of the lesser people in a newspaper radiated and then fed back into, so he was a very influential position.

JF Coming now to the position that you found yourself in as a state political reporter, it was a different era then as far as the press is concerned and their

almost intrusion into the political scene. Would you like to explain how their role was played out then?

**PENDAL** One enormous change that I think it's fair to say has taken place is that our role in those days in journalism was to interpret and report the news. I would say there was less emphasis on the interpretation and more on the reporting. Newspapers were still vigilant. Newspapers were forceful but the idea was that you kept your own commentary out of it; you were reporting factual data or you should've been. So, you might have been going off on the government round for the day and trying to get to see the Minister for Education, because there was some issue that you want to see him on or you might have been wanting to see the Minister for Police for much the same reason, but you would come back and you would be reporting, in the main, on a factual basis. Today, of course, reporting has crossed over that line and almost every reporter is now a commentator. I think there's been some advantages flowing from that and I think there's been an awful lot of disadvantages flowing from it, but it is certainly the single most important factor that has given rise to what you call that very invasive, all-invasive, all-pervasive role that modern journalism plays.

JF Yes. What stands out in your mind as perhaps the most important or significant set of interviews that you ever did with political people in that role at *The Daily News*?

**PENDAL** I suppose at the news level, no one story stands out. I had the job, but well, actually that's not correct, several do. I had reasonably frequent access to ministers, less frequent access to the Premier, but nonetheless access. When it suited someone like that, you'd find the telephone call saying Sir David's on the line about those questions do you want to speak to him now and, of course, what would you say, "No, it's not convenient at the moment"? I do recall quite vividly, because I covered federal and state politics from Perth, meeting Gough Whitlam and he was, at this stage, the leader of the federal opposition. I actually struck up quite a rapport with him, somewhat to my advantage, because I learnt how he operated and he seemed to remember me as he would come back on different visits and he seemed to think well, this fellow gives me a fair go and so he went out of his way to make contact and I found him a very impressive figure to deal with.

END OF TAPE FIVE SIDE A



TAPE FIVE SIDE B

This is tape five, side B, of the interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal.

JF            Phillip, you were telling me about your experience as state political reporter, and you'd mentioned your contact with Gough Whitlam. Were there other things you wanted to bring out?

**PENDAL**        I recall that, as impressive as Whitlam was, I also made contact with two far lesser figures on the Liberal side. I recall interviewing, on several occasions, Sir William McMahon, who just wasn't in the same league as Gough Whitlam. John Gorton was always interesting to interview because, as we all know now, he was so unorthodox and he would sort of slouch into a press conference. He seemed to be one of your regular ... like, he might be a drinking partner down at the Palace Hotel or something. It also triggered in my mind that it didn't seem to be the way that a Prime Minister ought to act. So these two men were somewhat, I think, off the pace. One of the jobs I had was to fly to Kununurra for the opening of the Ord River Diversion Dam. That involved Sir David Brand, I think, and Sir William McMahon, as he then was. I recall, at a barbecue that night, Billy McMahon emerged from his room, which was not far from mine, and he was a very tiny man, really tiny, and he had a set of white slacks on and a white, lacy, frilly shirt, long-sleeved and done up with buttons at the wrists. I couldn't believe that this was the Prime Minister of Australia. Maybe that's the way you went to barbecues on the North Shore of Sydney; I had never went to one. I was astonished, and that certainly stuck in my mind. It just reinforced that view that if you were going to be in the position, at least look like it. I recall, years later, Sir Charles Court, when I worked for him, he would frequently say to people who had aspirations for public life, "If you want to be a member of Parliament, for goodness sake start to look like one." His old army training kicked in there. They were a couple of federal leaders whom I'd come into contact with. Billy Snedden, I interviewed him on many occasions. Again, poor old Billy was just off the pace as well. The federal and state people were an interesting mix, but you were always conscious that some stood out, I guess a bit like students in a school, and some didn't stand out, and therefore always looked as though they were in about the second row from the back.

JF            Do you think any of your reporting or stories altered the course of events to any degree?

**PENDAL** It's difficult to make that assessment, again because the reporting was more reportage of factual data, whereas nowadays it seems that journalists can bring about the dismissal of ministers, as we speak this day, with their commentaries. I can't say that anything comes to my mind that my reportage altered, or changed the earth on its axis that day. I do recall, now that you've pressed me on it, on one occasion interviewing Ray O'Connor when he was Minister for Police. It was the early days of the drug scourge and there had been formed a drug squad within the CIB, I think. I recall interviewing him on the phone. I had taken to him a complaint by the police union, or some source ... actually I can recall the source as I speak now. I spoke to him on the phone and put this view to him that the drug scene was getting out of hand because of the lack of police drug detectives. I recall him saying on the spot, "Well, I'm going to increase them." I was a bit taken aback, and he very much gave me the impression that he was making a decision on the spot. I got what turned out to be a very good story out of it, "drug squad to be increased". There might be other occasions like that if I were pushed on it, but I don't recall that there was any earthshaking change in state policy because of anything that I did.

JF No. Coming to the, sort of, camaraderie of the press, was the Palace Hotel an important venue to you?

**PENDAL** It was. It was quite a shock to me to start with because *The Daily News* had its first deadline for the country edition at 10 past 10 every morning. From 7.30, say, or seven o'clock until 10 past 10, it was one magnificent clatter of typewriters noisily chattering in the background, people shouting to each other, copy boys running about. At 10 past 10, the place stopped and it turned into a morgue. I remember, on a couple of times, looking around to see what had happened. It seemed almost everyone had disappeared to the pub. Now, disappearing ... I enjoy a drink, I can tell you, but the idea that you would go to the pub at 10 past 10 in the morning was just so foreign to me. On a few occasions, the older fellows would put their head back around the door and say, "Come on, come over with us. Just take a break for 20 minutes." So, I mean, I did, but it was a shock to me to learn that this went on. I later reflected, of course, that it was not unlike the miners did in coming off shift in Kalgoorlie, and they might head off to the pub at midnight; to them it was just the end of the working day. Mind you, these blokes were going out to the pub and downing as many beers as they could in that 20 minutes, and then coming back and subbing my material. I often wondered how up to the task they were in that. Without sounding pious, I was always a bit wary then ... I might have gone over and had one

glass of beer, but it still felt wrong to me. Not wrong because drinking was wrong, because I didn't think that all, but it just didn't seem to me to be all that sensible. The camaraderie was there, there was a ... they were a good group of people; they were lively, they were interesting, they were inquiring, many of them undisciplined, but it was sort of the essence of journalism. That camaraderie was there.

JF                    Did you rub shoulders with some of the people like cartoonists?

**PENDAL**        Yes. Paul Rigby was a very, very big name when I was a little minnow swimming around in the pond. Rigby, of course, shared the back page of *The Daily News* with Kirwan Ward. One of the instances that I can recall was seeing the two of them approach each other in the Palace Hotel, and as they got to within four or five feet of each other, they both collapsed onto the floor as they were about to shake hands with each other. I later learnt that this was called the "Limp Fallers Association", of which they claimed to be the world president and the world vice-president, or some such nonsense. This was a real eye opener to me because these men were ... Kirwan Ward was very highly regarded as a columnist, a mature man, and Rigby had certainly a national, and later an international, reputation. I think we called them Mr Rigby and Mr Ward. Now, those barriers are gone and you'd probably say, "G'day, Paul", at the first meeting. They were men of huge stature and it was good being around and seeing this nonsense that went on amongst grown men, falling to the floor just as their hands were about to meet for a handshake.

JF                    You mentioned that some of the staff at least would have been on duty, sort of, in the early hours. What about you as a journalist? What sort of hours were you required to work?

**PENDAL**        I started at seven or 7.30 each day, and you would work through until about a quarter to three. The main city edition went to press, I think, at 2.35, and you might have been around planning for the next day, but by and large that was the time. I don't remember, for example, there being much by way of lunchbreaks because you had those different deadlines. I had a job as the state political roundsman, where you had to get in pretty early. My opposite number on *The West Australian* was a legend in his own time, a man called Don Smith. He was a superb political journalist who broke story after story. I recall, on a few occasions, learning to get in just ahead of him, and he would gently chide me the next day that he'd been

beaten to the gun. I felt tremendously about that, to think that a man of his stature had been beaten to the push by a very young journalist.

JF                   How was that accomplished?

**PENDAL**       Well, it was all about who got access to that piece of information at the right time. One I recall, and I still skite about it whenever I see him; the Tonkin government was in office, we were both ... the press ... it was Christmas time and we were attending the Christmas party put on by one of the ministers on the top floor of the old superannuation building. One of the ministers there was Tom Evans, the Attorney General, who was also member for Kalgoorlie. For some reason ... and it's interesting now because of the topic, the topic being capital punishment. I remember getting him by myself at this Christmas party and inquiring about whether it was true that the government was on the verge of introducing legislation to abolish capital punishment. He looked at me and he said, "How did you know that?" I'm not sure how I did know it. I don't know that I did know it; I might have kept an eye on their policy commitments and just thrown it in. He said something to the effect, "It goes to cabinet on Monday." Well, my heart stopped beating to think that ... this was now, I think, a Friday afternoon and it was of no use to me. I was fearful that if Don Smith at *The West* got hold of it, at that moment he could have it on the front page of *The West* the next morning, or if *The Sunday Times* political reporter got hold of it, he'd have it spread all over the front page. At one stage I saw Don Smith making his way through the crowd to us and I turned to Tom Evans and pleaded, I said ... and Don Smith was an old Kalgoorlie boy and so was Tom Evans. I thought "I can see what's going to happen; I'll be left behind." I sort of pleaded with him, "Just don't disclose this to him." Well, he didn't, and I got a front page story out of it and a by-line: "Tonkin Government to Move on Capital Punishment". I remember Don Smith congratulating me on the Monday. In the main, it was David ... well, it was a case of me really getting the crumbs against this other fellow who used to get the loaf of bread mostly. Occasionally, maybe once a month, I'd beat him to a story, and I was just beginning to learn to like all of this as I was almost coming to the end of my time there.

JF                   So you were able to contribute to *The West* if you got a story that could be broken in the morning, were you?

**PENDAL** No. If you got it during the morning, you would use it, and then it would come out in *The Daily News* that afternoon. If, for example, you came across something like this, as I did in the afternoon, you hoped that no-one else would get hold of it, because had *The West Australian* got hold of it that afternoon, they would have used it for the next day. I certainly wouldn't hand it over to them, I'd be waiting to break it ... and ordinarily you'd only have to wait overnight, but there was this interminably long time from the Friday through until the Monday when I had to hold my breath, hoping that the Attorney General wasn't going to disclose to one of those other journalists.

JF So you would have been there at the time the Barracks Arch discussions were going on, would you?

**PENDAL** I think the Barracks Arch discussion, I think, was 1966, '67ish.

JF A little bit earlier, yes.

**PENDAL** Yes.

JF I wondered if you'd had an opinion on that.

**PENDAL** I learnt to have an opinion later. I always had some real sympathy for David Brand. This was portrayed as the politicians trying to protect their views from Parliament House. I think that was, like most popular arguments, it was a silly, inaccurate summary. The reality was that even back into the '50s, when the extensions for Parliament House were being planned under the Hawke state Labor government, it was always the intention that the barracks themselves, and the arch, would come down, right from 1902 when the site was chosen. The problem for these fellows was that as the decades went by, the cultural value of the barracks increased, and so they were confronted with a problem not of their own making. It's an interesting dilemma to have been in. I've often wondered what I would have done, given my commitment to heritage and things like that. The Barracks Arch was something that I took up and wrote about in *House to House*, with David Black. It was one that I had some sympathy for, for people like Brand, who really were dealing with a problem not of their making.

JF            You had access to David Brand sometimes as a state political reporter. What's your assessment of David Brand?

**PENDAL**        He made a big impression on me, and he made a big impression on me for different reasons than his deputy, Sir Charles Court, did. Brand was a different person entirely, but he had sort of come through the university of life experience, he'd had war service, he'd been wounded, he'd worked on a mine, I think, he'd been a country storekeeper. My overwhelming impression, still, of him is a man of great courtesy. He had a presence about him. Whereas with Sir Charles, his presence might be called, sort of, intimidatory, Sir David Brand was tough, but he was also a gentler person. Above all, he seemed to me to be a very courteous person. Here I was, a young journalist, I'd met him in Bunbury once or twice as a journalist, but he'd been Premier for something like 10 or 11 years by this stage. I didn't have any feelings of him lording it over me as a young journalist. There was that natural decency about him. Strangely, in later years his widow, Lady Brand, became the patron of my campaigns as the member for South Perth. Even when I left the Liberal Party, she made the very courageous decision to remain as my patroness publicly, which I can tell you irritated the life out of the Liberal Party. So Sir David [was] a man of real courtesy, and you tended to learn a certain affection for him because of that respect that he gave for people around him.

JF            Changing the topic slightly; the Australian Journalists' Association, you were involved with their executive, I think, for a part of your time. Tell me about your association with them.

**PENDAL**        I was on the executive. I'd been involved in the AJA in Bunbury. It's where I first came across Brian Burke. I remember Brian Burke wasn't within a bull's roar of AJA affairs, but I found it interesting that he bobbed up just before what turned out to be his endorsement for the seat of Balcatta in 1973. I always felt as though he'd used that as a precursor to his endorsement. I worked with people like Malcolm Hollingsworth, whom I didn't particularly get along with; he seemed to me almost to be a very strident sort of an individual. I worked with a man called Bert Crowley, who was an old-fashioned print journalist from the rural tradition, and he was president. I once stood for the presidency, rather disastrously, of the JA. I was all of about 23, so I had a cheek in doing that, I suppose. My running mate was a young journalist called Peter Kennedy. We ran a joint ticket; me for president and Peter for vice-president. I recall, too, that we had this very sophisticated-looking brochure done up

of a caricature of both of us. It was done by *The West's* cartoonist, W.W. Mitchell, who later worked in the eastern states and on *The Australian*. He was a fine cartoonist who died tragically young. Peter and I stood for election, I got ... and I'm certain that Malcolm Hollingsworth was wanting to ensure that I didn't get elected, and that's what it turned out to be. I was beaten by, I think, Bert Crowley, and Peter Kennedy was elected as vice-president. The irony was that about 12 months later Bert Crowley resigned after a certain unfortunate incident where I think he'd been caught for shoplifting. Peter Kennedy stepped up and became president. So Peter Kennedy and I have often joked that he went for the subsidiary position, but he got the substantial position because of that quirk of fate. I served as the chairman of what they called the "Judiciary Committee", which sounded pretty important, but it heard ethics charges against other journalists. There was a three-person committee who was in charge of that. I was active, I think it was an extension of that old YCW day of being involved in things of social justice and advancement, and I enjoyed my years as a union man.

JF            How important is the role of actually regulating the profession? Is it very important for that?

**PENDAL**        Well, it's changed over the years. It was certainly important then. I think it was a great tragedy for us to see in my lifetime the dismantlement of the Australian Journalists' Association. It's now part of what they call the Media and Entertainment Alliance, or what I disrespectfully call the "Circus Tumblers and Jugglers Society". I don't see any relationship between journalism and people in the entertainment industry, and I think it's been a great detriment to journalism that they've let this fabulous organisation go by the board, because one of the things that it did seem to do in those days was to subscribe to a strong code of ethics, and I'm not sure that that would pass muster these days.

JF            Can you recall anything that you're able to talk about that they dealt with in the way of journalistic malpractice or issues?

**PENDAL**        There would be no problem of me talking about it, if I could remember it. They were things of ... a typical complaint might be that someone would claim that they had been misrepresented. Reporters would be asked to produce their ... they'd be given a time to be present for a hearing, they would do things like produce a notebook, or they would produce a tape recorder, in order to defend their position.

Of course, not everyone who claims to be misreported has been misreported. It's an easy way out. I recall, as the state roundsman of *The Daily News*, being the subject of a Supreme Court writ from Sir Crawford Nalder, who had been Deputy Premier in the Brand government, but he was now in opposition. I had reported him on the issue of members' pay, and the fact that by the time he went into opposition, I think they'd been in government for so long that there was now no longer provision for a third party leader. When I interviewed Sir Crawford Nalder, he was trenchant in his criticism of the tribunal, and this made ... I got a front-page story with a by-line. Sir Crawford later issued this writ, and I was called down to O'Sullivan's office. Again, I think ... O'Sullivan always seemed to have a fair bit of confidence in me, and he certainly would have known that I didn't make it up, but I had to produce my notebook. I had to tell him the sequence of questions. Incidentally, the point of this story is that throughout this writ, or lawyer's letter, was that, "This person, Pendal, then said this, and I then said to this person, Pendal, such and such, and this person, Pendal, then said something else", to such an extent that when I showed the letter around after I'd got out of all of this, people like Don Smith, and others, to this day called me "Person Pendal" because of this description by Sir Crawford. He had been, I think, too clever by half, because my story was out on the streets in the country edition at 10 past 10, when a journalist rang him in the country. He'd left Perth by then and gone, I think, to Wagin. This journalist from *The West* had rung, and Sir Crawford was in too much of a hurry to spend much time with him. This journalist read over the remarks that I had reported, just for their accuracy, and Sir Crawford had said, "No, that's pretty well what I've said. Yes, that's right." *The West* then ran the story, and they were able to collaborate that my account was accurate. So in the end, the writ didn't go ahead, although I still was called "Person Pendal" for the next 40-odd years!

JF            In the course of your journalistic career, I believe there was a Provincial Press Award made to you. Tell me about that.

**PENDAL**        It was while I was at the *South Western Times*. I know that I'd come back from Perth late on a Sunday afternoon. I may well have been up here, visiting my then fiancé, Maxine. I got back to Bunbury, perhaps three or four o'clock on the Sunday afternoon. The editor, Jim Olney, had contacted me, or left a message that as soon as I got back, I was to ring him. There was a major siege underway at Dardanup, just outside of Bunbury, on a farmhouse. Several escaped prisoners were holding a number of occupants of the farmhouse as hostage under a gun siege. So I

went out with Jim Olney and I covered that, so that we were actually covering it ... because we were an extension of *The West Australian* and *The Daily News*, as it turned out, the next paper that could use it, I think, was *The West Australian* the next morning, or *The Daily News* the next afternoon. My story got in that paper first, I think, before it got ... or it may have been that Jim Olney covered it for the Perth papers, and I was left to write it for the paper that he now edited. That led to the winning of the Provincial Press Award, which was, I think, in my first or second year as a cadet, so I was pretty pleased with myself.

JF                   Is that a token? Is it cash? What does it consist of?

**PENDAL**        I think there was a small cash sum. There was a certificate that made up for me all the certificates that I never got when I was a schoolboy [chuckles]. I was very proud of that award, but there went with it, I think, a small cash payment.

JF                   Was that the last such award?

**PENDAL**        Yes. I don't recall getting any other press awards after that, no.

JF                   So it's a hard life in journalism?

**PENDAL**        Yes, it was.

END OF TAPE FIVE SIDE B

TAPE SIX SIDE A

This is John Ferrell interviewing Honourable Phillip Pendal for the Parliamentary History Project tape six, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2007 at Parliament House in Perth.

JF            Now, Phillip, we have come to the point where you joined the Liberal Party. I believe that took place in 1971, so you were still at that time a journalist. I was interested, as state roundsman, how joining a particular party came about.

**PENDAL**        It was certainly not a good decision taken at the time. With some more thought and with some hindsight, it's a decision that ought never to have been taken at all. I had joined the Liberal Party, I think sometime after the 1971 state election. Having done so, I realised that it was not the most sensible thing to have done because I was still a roundsman, dealing with politicians on both sides of the fence. In a way, it had a sort of redeeming effect. I knew I could not undo it. I recall when John Tonkin eventually left office and I called in to see him as a matter of courtesy (this is three years down the track) he mentioned it, because by then it had become public knowledge. I used to cover state ALP executive meetings as well. Somehow or other, people had learnt that I was a member of the Liberal Party. A comment was made in Parliament one day by Ron Davies, who was then I think the Minister for Health, between '71 and '74, saying that the Labor Party were much more open to these sorts of things and were much more liberal, because even where in a situation he told the Parliament, I was appalled to learn, that "a card carrying member of the Liberal Party even reports on the ALP state executive." I recall being in a hotel a few days later when all of the other journalists were trying to work out who it was. It was only later that they discovered that it was me. It did cause me a lot of embarrassment and it was one of those things that should never have occurred. When I called on John Tonkin on his last day in office, he actually was aware of that but he said to me, and I was very pleased with this, he said, "I was aware of that, but I never had an occasion to think that you did anything other than a fair reportage on me or the government and in your dealings with me." So I felt a bit better about that, but, nonetheless, it still ought not to have occurred. I suppose in the parlance of all of the controversies that go on in politics right at this moment, it was one of those things that I should not have done, but I did and you could not undo it.

JF            Who influenced you or talked to you about this as you were joining?

**PENDAL** I can recall a man who was a field organiser for the Liberal Party in Swan division coming around to my home. I must have given some indication to somebody that I wanted to get involved actively in politics. This man, whose name has just come to me, was a man called Bill Kemp. I think he was a retired British Army officer, who was field officer for the Liberal Party. He came around to my home and he actually signed me up. Now that I recall it, I actually held modest office from that time. After it became clear it was a silly thing to have done, at least until I was off the state round, I actually pulled out of those offices. I remained a member of the Liberal Party but pulled back from the offices I held. There was no-one else about who I could have said, "It was he or she who did this." I did it, and it was a very, very silly thing to have done.

JF You said when you actually withdrew from the party many years later, "The party is not the one I joined 20 years ago." I wonder if you would tell me now, in a few words, what you consider the nature of the party to have been when you joined.

**PENDAL** I think when I did join, and the times being the seventies, I think the Liberal Party was still largely an organisation where people got on through their own merits, where I think progress through the party was dependent on your input and your capacities and where preselections were decided on the merits of candidates, and I can never remember that preselections were decided on factional grounds. Twenty or 25 years later, that had all changed. I think it had largely changed because of Noel Crichton-Browne. Noel Crichton-Browne was a particularly effective state president at a very young age, who went into the federal Parliament the same year that I went into the state Parliament. He was a person with a lot of talent, with a lot of personality, but I always believe that his injury to the party was that he could not leave behind the lay party and now take up a new and different responsibility by being a member of Parliament. He was always remaining, if you like, with more than one foot still firmly embedded in the lay party. At one level people would say, "Of course, you have got to do that to protect your endorsement and to keep in touch with people." I understand that. He never seemed to me to do the job of a member of Parliament. It always seemed to be an extension of this work in the lay party, and I think was a great pity because I think he had a lot to contribute. The party at that stage started to cleave, and if you weren't with his people, you were seen to be against them. I was early on painted as being a member of the Chaney faction. I had no desire to be a member of any faction. I knew Fred very well and I regarded

him highly, but it was this notion that “if you are not with us, you are against us”. It later led me to some awful grief with the Liberal Party because I wanted to be part of the Liberal Party and to make an impact and have your differences but to get on with the job, as distinct from getting on because you were part of a particular faction. That’s what changed. It was a deep change that occurred over that 20-year period, and I think much to the detriment of the Liberal Party.

JF                Would that have been the major issue, whether, I suppose, a matter of procedure or whether the party should factionalise and so on, or was Chaney associated with a particular viewpoint at one end of the political spectrum?

**PENDAL**        Fred Chaney, of course, was painted as being on the left or as being the leader of the so-called wets. Crichton-Browne and others were seen on the right as being the dries. I think it started to use a respectable argument to explain a lot of seedy undertones of the way the Liberal Party operated in Western Australia. I had things in common with Crichton-Browne, as I had things in common with Fred Chaney. I just never got on to this idea that you had to be in one branch or the other of the Liberal Party. I joined the Liberal Party and what John Howard calls the broad church of it, and it was that differentiation that people later made, not for philosophical reasons but for power-broking reasons, that brought the party into such disrepute.

JF                On a personal level, how did you get on with Crichton-Browne?

**PENDAL**        Very well. He was roughly my age. He might have been a little bit older than I was. He was state president I think when he was 29. I knew him as much those days when I went to work for Sir Charles Court as deputy press secretary. He had a lot to do with Sir Charles because he was by then the state president. I got along well with him. I shared a lot of his views. I probably had disagreements with him. It always puzzled me that there was this notion that “it’s them or us”. Again, I had learnt throughout my life that you could have lots of disagreements with people and still get on with them and work with them. This division that occurred I think was largely an artificial thing that was imposed because of internal power-broking and not because of philosophical differences. That was the great tragedy.

JF           Who were your closest associates within the party, particularly in those earlier days?

**PENDAL**       Getting over this business where I joined and then retracted from 1971, I didn't become active again until '75 when I joined the staff of Sir Charles Court. One of the people with whom I had the most ties and who had a big impact was Bill Grayden, who was not only my local member but he was a senior member of the first Charles Court Government. Apart from my working in the office of Sir Charles Court, I was also allocated to the office of the Minister for Labour, Bill Grayden, to do all of his press work. He was a huge influence; I mean, I can tell you he was as unorthodox as anything you would find anywhere but he had a very fertile mind. He was a can of worms, and I mean that in the sense that there was always something turning over in his mind. He was an inventive, creative, I might say very erratic man, undisciplined, but you could not help enjoy being in his company. He was a big influence. It was some irony to me that I eventually succeeded him, although I think against his wishes, in the seat of South Perth. Peter Shack was a person . . . we were good friends, contemporaries. He was not yet in the federal Parliament. He stood for a state seat in 1977. Peter was a big influence because he reordered my thinking. Peter was very much one of the new dries in the federal Parliament or as he led into the federal Parliament. Peter's intellect had a big impact on helping educate me philosophically and giving me a top-up into how I had developed so far. He was another influence. W.W. Mitchell (Bill Mitchell) was Charles Court's former press secretary and former press secretary to Sir David Brand, but a fellow now in private practice who still was a senior adviser, a consultant, to Sir Charles. He was a former journalist. He had a terrific mind, a big overview, strategic mind. He taught me immensely how to look at things from a distance; how to see the bigger picture in politics. I didn't particularly like him but I learnt an awful lot from him. They were amongst the people who were big influences early in the piece.

JF           W.W. Mitchell - was he the man who drew your cartoon with Peter Kennedy?

**PENDAL**       No, strangely that was another. I had not made that connection. You are very good at that. The W.W. Mitchell who did the Kennedy-Pendal cartoon was a cartoonist with *The West* and he later ended up in Sydney (I think on *The Australian*) where he died at a very young age. This other W.W. Mitchell used to be a journalist

at *The West*, probably back in the fifties, and later became Sir David's press secretary, so he was a different person entirely.

JF            Now, over the time that you were in the party you held several positions of leadership, both in your branch and at a divisional level, and at state council too, so I wonder if you can just give me a quick overview of that aspect, although we are not really talking about the later era, just in terms of how you served the party?

**PENDAL**        The way one served in those days, I was the president of the Como-Collier branch of the Liberal Party. You were therefore part of the wider Swan division. As I later learnt, in the Liberal Party federal divisions were based on the divisions in the Liberal Party and state seats were based on branch boundaries, so that, in effect, I was the president of one branch in the seat of South Perth in the state scene of which there may have been five branches. Our job was to increase membership, to fundraise and to pay levies to the divisional office to help keep a full-time [person] working in a job. Your job also was to attend divisional meetings and take part in debates about policy or matters that people had put down for discussion and resolution. I served on the divisional council and I also got myself elected to the state council of the Liberal Party. Most of this, of course, was with the intention that I was that much closer now to strike out for a seat. I was unencumbered, thank goodness, now by having been in active journalism, so that you raised money, you increased membership. You were delegate to the wider councils and you were seeking to contribute (I did by debates and so on) in the hope that out of all of this you might be noticed and then put down as a possible, future prospective candidate.

JF            Can you give me the chronology of when you went into which office and so on?

**PENDAL**        I would say that by '75 or '76 I was the president of the Como-Collier branch. That would have given me entrée to the Swan divisional executive of the Liberal Party. I would say that by '76-'77 I was probably a member of the state council of the Liberal Party, which then probably comprised about 100 people from around Western Australia, which then met once a month. Around that time I made my first bid for a parliamentary seat. I put in for the endorsement for the state seat of Clontarf, which was then held by the Labor Party, held by Don May, who had been a minister in the Tonkin Government. I put in for the endorsement. I was very young

and I was beaten by one, I understand, for the endorsement by a fellow called Tony Williams. It was a bit of a shame because it would have landed me in the Legislative Assembly in 1977 at the grand age of 30, but I missed that endorsement. Subsequently, it became clear to me, looking at the results out of the '77 election, that the upper house seat of South East Metropolitan Province was one that would give me an opportunity to get into Parliament, so I had to start all over again and reposition myself. It was a much bigger area geographically. It stretched from South Perth, through Victoria Park, past Cannington and Gosnells, out to the centre of Armadale and then down to Jandakot. It was a massive area. Therefore, to be noticed in the next three years you had to find ways of getting entrée to all of those branches and being seen and being assessed, which I did. I eventually got that endorsement in 1979, in May. It was an endorsement for a seat that you knew on the figures from '77 was a lay-down misère. It was by now a blue-ribbon Liberal seat, and that was the case and I won it by about 4 000 votes and I went into Parliament in 1980.

JF                    Going back to the party and your membership of the party, you were obviously fairly comfortable as a member of the Liberal Party, thinking of the fact that you eventually didn't find it so comfortable, but you were very comfortable in those early days, with perhaps the exception of your reservations about the way Crichton-Browne's activities were going. Would that be true?

**PENDAL**            I must say that even in those earlier days I had no reservations about Noel Crichton-Browne. It was an incremental thing. There was no cataclysmic event that happened. It was an incremental thing over a period of years that made me become very wary of what was going on and what proceeded. It was continuing to happen after I became a member of Parliament. I think for some reason I thought that once I became a member of Parliament I would become immune from all of that stuff. In fact, you became more a target because you were a member of Parliament. To that extent I was probably a bit naïve. I did feel comfortable in the Liberal Party. I cannot really explain, other than that my father was a strong Liberal and I learnt many of those principles from listening over the table, but despite my background, there was never an occasion ever when I wanted to join the Labor Party. I was aware that it was a party of social justice and things of that nature. Even more strangely to me, given my background, I was never either tempted to join the Democratic Labor Party. I was actually asked to join that by John Martyr, who was then its state secretary. There was no persuasiveness on anyone's part; there was

just a sort of natural inclination for me to think of myself as being more inclined to be Liberal. I felt comfortable with things like their emphasis on the individual, private initiative and not so much state-run enterprises. The idea that it was a federalist party very much appealed to me, so that the idea was that we limit things at the centre and that we encourage things at the margins. For some reason, that had a resonance with me. That was really my state of mind, as best I can think of it.

JF                    Probably, we have canvassed that fairly well for now, and there are lots of things that we will pick up later on about the preselection and so on, but now taking a step back, can you tell me about getting your post with Sir Charles Court?

**PENDAL**           He had been in office for about a year. I recall being told that I would get a call from his office to join his staff. I am fairly sure that the person who told me that was my opposite number on *The West Australian*, Don Smith, who, I might say, was an eminently better journalist than I could ever have been, but a fellow I respected enormously. I think it was he who said to me that, "They're going to ask you to join them", and I think he would have said something like, "as Charlie's travelling press secretary." Indeed, I did receive an approach (I think from a man called Derek Flynn who had taken over from W.W. Mitchell in the role). Would I be interested in a job with Sir Charles? It was a big increase in my salary. I think it was the equivalent of an A-grade journalist. I felt somewhat resentful that the *Daily News* was still only paying me a B-plus as a journalist when I was doing fully the state round that other people had been doing for an A-plus. By this stage, I had been married five or six years and had several children, and, most of all, I did want to break free, as I said earlier, to go into Parliament, so I accepted the job. Much to my astonishment, about 10 days later they said, "Have you got a passport?" I said, "No." They said, "You had better get down there," and the Premier's department organised an official passport for me, which I thought was pretty good, and I was off to Japan with Sir Charles Court on his first official visit to Japan as Premier. I spent Easter of 1975 up there with him. I travelled to at least one Premiers Conference with him. I travelled up and down Western Australia and interstate, and learnt a tremendous amount from him, I must say, although I found it very difficult working for him (very difficult indeed), but for all of that, he was a dreadfully hard taskmaster but, in his own way, an excellent teacher, and it stood me in good stead for things that were to happen in the years ahead.

JF            Just to come back to one or two of the things you said, how do you think Don Smith knew about the imminence of that approach?

**PENDAL**        All I can say is that Don Smith seemed to know everything that used to go on, which was part of my ongoing irritation towards him, that he was such a good journalist and such a powerful competitor. He was always in the know, and who told him I can't really say because I don't know. I suppose I could have asked him at the time, but that is the best I can do. He always seemed to know everything that was going on inside the government, even on a fairly minor matter like this one to do with me.

JF            How was the approach from Charles Court's office greeted at home?

**PENDAL**        From my wife?

JF            Yes.

**PENDAL**        I think she understood what I was doing and how I was now trying to position myself for Parliament. She would have been encouraging too, from the point of view that it meant a big jump in our salary, our income. She was now not working. We had two, possibly three children by this stage. She was very supportive. For better or worse, she realised that I was pretty keen to see this career in politics. I think she used to roll her eyes at times about that prospect, but she was very supportive.

JF            Had she joined the party along with you?

**PENDAL**        No. I don't ever remember her being a member of any party although she did tell me later that when she was a young teacher in Bunbury, before I had met her, she used to go to Young Liberal functions. In a way that surprised me because she came from a family which was very strongly Labor oriented. Her father Oscar, with whom I had a very indifferent relationship in the early years and which later graduated to a really wonderful rapport, was a strong Labor person, but Maxine chose not to join the Liberal Party, and, I must say, I was very pleased with that. One at home doing that was enough I think.

JF            So, you've talked about being taken up with Charles Court's travel to Japan very early in the piece, but just before, looking at that first fortnight, what were you engaged on doing?

**PENDAL**        I can't specifically remember, except one would have been allocated two things really. You were always being asked to do speech notes, not so much speeches, but speech notes for the Premier. Charles Court didn't read a speech. He was very good, if repetitive, off the cuff, but you would give him a set of dot points and he could soon mould those in. He would be reading that in a car going to a function, and once that was over, it would go into the suitcase and out would come the next dot points for the next function.

END OF TAPE SIX SIDE A

TAPE SIX SIDE B

JF            Was the position that you occupied with Charles Court still a fairly new position or had the leaders always had press people in their retinue?

**PENDAL**        When one looks at it compared with the development of those facilities, say, in the year 2007, in the office of the Premier of Western Australia or the Prime Minister, it was a very modest little set up, but it was a transitional period when I look back on it now. There may have been three or four press officers or press secretaries centralised in the old superannuation building around Derek Flynn, who was the chief press secretary. With the change of government, our job was to service the Premier and other ministers, so I had a task with Sir Charles but I was also allocated to Bill Grayden, to Cyril Rushton, who was Minister for Urban Development, and Neil McNeill, who was Minister for Justice. My role was spread over those. In answering your question, it would be instructive to look at that scenario 30-odd years later; you would find a big team of people in the Premier's office, who comprise the press unit and the media unit, and then you would find every minister having his or her own press secretary, if not more than that. So that side of government has grown exponentially in that 30 years. One can't be altogether critical of it because the complexity of things appears to have grown too; the accessibility of ministers, their accountability via the media; all of these things seem to be enormously increased in that 30-year period. Then it was a very lean, modest operation.

JF            There was Flynn and yourself. Who else?

**PENDAL**        Off to the side a bit was a very interesting character called Tom Hungerford (T.A.G. Hungerford), the great author and World War II veteran who worked in New York with the Australian News and Information Bureau; a tough, rugged digger, literary minded, tough as boot leather. He would sit in an office away to the side. He worked for John Tonkin and survived the change. Mind you, he told me on the eve of the election that he would never (and excuse the language) "work for that bastard Court". By Monday he had sort of changed his mind. I think he needed the job. He had this sort of love-hate relationship with Charles Court, and it was reciprocal, I can tell you. They loathed one another and looked down their noses at each other, but somehow, for what reason I will never know, Tom Hungerford survived the change of government and continued writing speeches for

Sir Charles although Sir Charles never read speeches. For whatever reason, he survived. There was a fellow called Ross Finister, who later went to work for the Confederation of Western Australian Industry. He was an earnest, hard-working fellow. I am starting to run out of names. There were several senior women stenographers, who could take dictation and turn it into a transcript very, very swiftly, and one or two office assistants, who were always good to be around, but that is how small and lean it was.

JF                    Now, were you always based in the superannuation building?

**PENDAL**        Yes, I was. In my time it was the fifteenth floor, which was where the cabinet room was. The press office that we occupied was immediately adjacent to the cabinet room, and then further out still was the official press office where the journalists would gather and work from and, indeed, where I had worked from when I was a working journalist. We were located on the fifteenth floor, adjacent to the cabinet room and immediately above the Premier's office, which was on the fourteenth floor, so whenever we were to be summonsed to the presence, as it were, you would see a little buzzer go down on the right-hand side of your desk and a light would light up. That is when you would shudder a bit, because it would be the Premier. There were occasions even when people felt like drawing straws about who should go down, but it would be Sir Charles saying, "Right, I am ready now between appointments" and we would get down there with anything to clear. That was the physical layout of the office.

JF                    So your duties, you have hinted at some of them, but you had to make dot points for speeches and so on. What else was included in the remit?

**PENDAL**        You were certainly there, and a large part of the duties was writing press releases; that is, official government announcements. The scenario might be that a file lands on your desk and it has come up from the Premier's department. It contains a cabinet submission. It's due to go into the cabinet next Monday or Monday week. You have to turn the official documents into an announcement. We were always determined to do it as near as possible to the way in which you would write a story if you were in a newspaper. In fact, it was one of the things that I tried to argue for amongst that small group; that if we wrote stuff that looked like it was official puff, it would be treated with contempt. If you filled it with as much meat as you could and you had a very meaty file in front of you, then you stood a good

chance of getting a good run. I used to say it was something that a journalist could never refuse a good story. Therefore, if we were not only producing a government announcement which met their expectations but we were producing a good story which met the press's expectations, then it seemed to me that the government was going to be happy. [So we were] working those press releases, doing drafts, taking them to the minister concerned at some stage before it went to the cabinet or taking it to the Premier for him to okay it. Sir Charles was a frustrated journalist and he would always want a change - always want a change. He would start out making a change on a bit of paper. He would run out of space and he would turn the page and start writing in the margin and he would fill up all that space. Then he would put an asterisk because he ran out of space and he would turn the page over and start writing all of this stuff. We did our best to say to him, "Sir Charles, if we put too much of that stuff in it, then it is going to break its attraction that it should have for the media." Charlie was very knowing in what he wanted in a press release, so there was always that tension going on. That was a big part of our job: I would say perhaps 60 per cent [of our time was spent] in writing government announcements, maybe another 30 per cent in writing speech notes and maybe 10 or 15 per cent that you would be doing official government articles for inclusion in overseas publications or national or state publications that people had requested.

JF                    What hours were you working when you were there?

**PENDAL**        They came back to be probably eight in the morning. You would rarely get away before six at night. On a cabinet night, which was a Monday night, you stayed there until the cabinet rose and then you were ready with the announcements, so that could be eight, nine or 10 o'clock. You were always rostered for a weekend duty with Sir Charles, so that every three to four weeks you were working through the weekend and through the next week. You were expected to be on call at home, but then [you were] invariably brought in by Sir Charles. He was a workhorse and one could never, ever accuse him of doing anything less than about 120 hours a week on a bad week for him. You were frequently pulled in on a weekend and working with him on a one-to-one basis and there would be public servants in the foyer outside waiting their turn, and Under Treasurers and all people like this, where Charlie seemed to get a lot of his business done on a weekend like that.

JF           And you are hinting really that he used to drive himself intensely. Did he actively sort of drive you people along the same lines?

**PENDAL**       He drove us. He drove many of us mad. Yes, he did, and I preface that by emphasising that he could see this was the fulfilment of his destiny, and he was not a young man when he became Premier. Off the top of my head in '74, and I think he was born in 1912, so he was in his early sixties, when you would think that most people are beginning to slow down, but he was as motivated and driven and as excited by the Premiership, and that was good to see. I do believe that he was never, never good working with staff. I think he was tyrannical; I think he was rude. Personal circumstances were never taken into account. I think in many cases he was petty. Having said that, I think he is one of the great Australian political leaders. It somehow seems to be that with greatness comes pettiness. I look at people like Churchill, who was undoubtedly a great man, but you read more and more in the detail of his life that he was a very petty man as well. Sir Charles could stoop to a great deal of pettiness, and that always took the shine off the relationship, for me at least, because I did not need to see that level of pettiness; rather, we should have seen more of the greatness, but that is human nature, I guess.

JF           You said something about your working with Bill Grayden. What about some of those other ministers? How, for example, do you appraise Cyril Rushton?

**PENDAL**       Cyril was a former bank manager and a very, very likable individual, but earnest to a fault. Cyril also tended to know how to be a journalist better than a journalist did. I recall having to try to moderate his views about how he was going to get a story into the public arena, but he was a hardworking, earnest individual (not a great deal of imagination), but he was a technician. He was given a job to do by Sir Charles, as Minister for Urban Development, to ensure that the reasons for which the Liberals had lost the '71 election - that is, a crisis in land coming on to the market for first home buyers - Rushton's job was to ensure that from '74 onwards that never happened. Sir Charles was haunted by that spectre, and so he made sure that Cyril Rushton totally understood that. I think as a technician Cyril Rushton did accomplish that for the government in a very earnest way through various decisions that he made and appointments that he made.

JF            Thirdly, Neil McNeill you mentioned as also somebody you worked for. How did you find Neil?

**PENDAL**        Of all the people that I worked for, I suppose Neil, in a way, was the person for whom I had the most regard and affection. He was a farmer but he had been well credentialled with tertiary qualifications. He had been a Nuffield scholar. He had served briefly in the federal Parliament, had lost his seat and had entered the state Parliament. He was a very intelligent man, probably given portfolios that didn't suit him. He was made, I recall, Minister for Justice, and that reflected that there was no lawyer in the upper house that Sir Charles wanted to have in the cabinet as the Attorney General. In some respects [he was] a nervous individual, but I found a real connection with the man. I respected him; I liked his company. His wife Rhonda, whom I met on many occasions, was a very, very nice individual. So, he was well prepared for politics, but somehow I think he was given the wrong job. He also had that sense of nervousness that perhaps detracted from his performance, but, overall, I am left with the impression of a principled, decent, hardworking, intellectual individual who brought a lot to the government.

JF            You have referred to the baptism of fire by travel in the early times with Sir Charles Court. What other travel did you have to undertake and how much a part of the job was that?

**PENDAL**        I did a lot of internal travel in Western Australia, apart from the Premiers Conferences, which they now call COAG, or Council of Australian Governments, and that trip to Japan. The internal Western Australia travel, as I look back on it, was a bit like being stationed in Lisbon in Europe and travelling all over Europe, because really, when you look at the map, that is the extent of Western Australia's land mass. I travelled frequently with Sir Charles to the Pilbara, to the Kimberley. He made a point every year that he would visit the Kimberley and the Pilbara during the wet season. He wanted to be seen there when the conditions were toughest. He was quite driven by this notion that he wanted to empathise with people in those places, and I think he got a lot of deserved kudos because of that. I travelled a lot with him through the south of the state and into the eastern goldfields. I travelled unendingly with him into the Greenough electorate in 1975 when Sir David Brand decided to quite politics. Sir Charles was absolutely fearful that that seat would fall to the Country Party. He had an abiding hatred for the Country Party, even though he was in coalition with them. I remember spending five or six weekends in a

row going with Sir Charles into the Greenough election. It was a hard slog. I do not think I had a day off in about 35 days. It was hard work, and whenever he saw any approaching Country Party or National Party minister he would just become so tense. I remember we met Doug Anthony, who was then Deputy Prime Minister, at one of the rural country shows. Sir Charles always got along okay with these blokes, but it unnerved him that they were there, because this was his big test. He was seen as being very city-centric, which was odd because of his connections with particularly the Pilbara. As it was, the Libs won the by-election, and that was to a large extent to his eternal credit. It was hard work, and not only for him but for minions like myself. The travel was always full-on, and it bared the tempers a bit. I remember having mine bared on a few occasions when I let fly. Instead of getting the sack (and I lost my temper on a few occasions), I found that, strangely, he was prepared to take that, and realising that he could push you too far. As I look back on them, I would never want to relive them ever, because I found them very difficult times. For all of that, I would not want to change them either, which is a strange thing.

JF            You would stay in country hotels, I suppose, in those days, would you?

**PENDAL**        We would (hotels and motels), and I recall vividly during this Greenough by-election being appalled to learn that there was no provision for a Premier to go somewhere and take a bit of a rest or break. I remember putting in a memo to the Under Secretary of the Premier's department, and they subsequently changed the arrangement. I thought it was appalling. For example, you might go to three or four towns in a region and get to five o'clock and be waiting for a meeting that the Premier might be addressing at seven o'clock and there was nowhere to go and wash up, have a lie down or take your shoes off. I thought it was appalling treatment for a Premier. I remember saying to the Premier's department, "We've got to do something." From then on they used to hire a room that you may not stay in that night but just as a place where he would stop. In the main it was hotels and motels, but he would also stay with local members. One I recall vividly was he stayed with Sandy Lewis (Hon A.A. Lewis) in the south west. His brother was Tom Lewis, the Premier of New South Wales, not a very good one but Premier nonetheless. Sandy Lewis was a rough character. He was the grandson of Essington Lewis, the founder of BHP, and he was as tough as boot leather. Sandy Lewis certainly had no airs and graces. Sandy at this stage was a divorced man and lived in the most appalling house (hovel I would call it). He called it the Hilton Lewis.

I remember going in the car this first time with Sir Charles, and it was on our official stay overnight with Mr Lewis, and Sir Charles saying (and I was in the back seat with him), "Well, we're off to the Hilton Lewis now." I thought, "Well, we're going to be in for a lovely house to stay in." Well, it was this awful, broken down, godforsaken thing. I think we climbed up the front stairs with a couple of sleepers that had been pushed into place an hour before. There was boot polish still on the table, and it was a wreck.

JF                    Was this a farmhouse?

**PENDAL**        It was out of Boyup Brook. If it was a farmhouse, it was never occupied by the farmer. I reckon it might have been occupied by the rouseabout belonging to the shearer. It was an awful place. I thought that was pretty good; that Sir Charles was prepared to stay in places like that. To Sandy's credit, he made sure that someone had come in and the three rooms (our bedrooms) had crisp white sheets and pillowcases, but the rest was just appalling. I think the next day I can recall Sir Charles saying under his breath to me, "Well, now you've stayed at the Hilton Lewis, what do you think?" He was pretty taken aback by it, but for all his faults Sir Charles was not a man with airs and graces about himself, and I think that demonstrated the point. That was the worst circumstance in which we stayed anywhere; mostly they were better than that, at hotels and motels.

JF                    And other overseas trips? You went to Japan that once. Were there other overseas journeys?

**PENDAL**        No, that was the one occasion. We went through the Philippines to get there, but I didn't do any other. He didn't go overseas beyond that. That is the emphasis that in the first two or three years of his job (two years) he placed on our relations with Japan. He was not interested in going off to London to see the Queen or something like that.

JF                    Just going back to the Japan experience that you had, can you talk briefly about what you did there and how it impressed you, because you had never been outside the country before, had you?

**PENDAL**        It was my first visit overseas. I was sent up three or four days in advance to link up. Western Australia had a full-time, he was called, official

representative, a man called Les Slade, who many said had become more Japanese than the Japanese. He had been sent up there by the Brand Government and I suspect Charles Court had had a big hand in that probably 10 or 15 years before. Les Slade was a superb envoy for the Western Australian government. He knew every door to be opened within the government and within industry. Sir Charles' status was such that he had meetings with the Prime Minister of Japan, whose name escapes me just at the moment. He met, of course, all the big trading houses. That was my first understanding of what the trading house meant in Japan, but at Mitsubishi, Mitsui Sir Charles was feted. They would refer to him as the Prime Minister of Western Australia and not really know that they were making an error. After all, these titles are only interchangeable. But Sir Charles was enormously regarded. I recall one occasion. I knew his itinerary back to front, because, basically, when you went away as a press secretary, you became his private secretary and you became all sorts of other things as well, although, I might say, he never let you carry his bags (another little indication that, "Never mind, they're my bags and I'll carry them"). On this Saturday morning there was an appointment that was a blank. "Meet Admiral so-and-so" and two other Japanese names that had military titles attached, but I had not been told about any of it. On a few occasions when I would broach it with Sir Charles, he would say, "Don't worry about that. It's just personal." The more he closed up, the [more] fascinated I became. In the end he said, "Ah, these are three fellows I meet every time I come up here, at their insistence." He said, "It's a bit of a nuisance really because they come along on Saturday morning and bring all this sake, which I don't like. They sit around my room and we exchange pleasantries and stories, and they drink all this sake and they wander off at the end, and that is it for another time." I kept saying, "But, Sir Charles, you still haven't told me who are they and what's the attraction." To my amazement these were the three men from whom Sir Charles had received the Japanese surrender on the island in the Pacific where Sir Charles was the senior ranking allied officer. That blew my mind. I said, "So why do they want to see you?" He said that they had formed a regard for him. He treated them with respect at a time that was very humiliating for them. So every time that he would get within 1 000 miles of Japan, these blokes would want to see him and want to pay him respects and would then sit around getting full of sake while Charlie, who was a one-drink man, would smile and tolerate them until they left. He did have a genuine regard for them that had survived those 30-odd years since the surrender. I think that is an amazing story, so much so that I intended to get the story out to the Australian media. I think it was a crackerjack story from a journalist's point of view, but it never really made the

grade. I must have misunderstood what a good story was, because that was the case.

JF                    How did you adjust to Japanese culture, food and all that sort of thing?

**PENDAL**        I didn't really, because on one occasion I had to go to Les Slade's secretary, who was a young Japanese woman who would have been in her twenties or thirties. In my best Japanese I was able to explain that I was almost starving. In those days I was very thin so I could ill afford that. I remember that she took me to an Italian restaurant one night. I was that grateful to actually get some food in me that I could eat. The other side of that coin was that I went to this official function (a huge business function). There might have been 500 or 600 people in a big hotel. I ended up sitting at the top table. There were two former Prime Ministers sitting at the top table, and I was sitting next to one of them. This fellow could see me picking and really not making much progress. I was forever grateful because he leaned over to me quietly and he said, in quite good English, "You don't like the food." I said, "I don't want to offend you but, no, I can't eat it." He said, "Don't worry. You just leave it there." He quietly arranged for me to be sent some fruit, and I was grateful out of all proportion.

END OF TAPE SIX SIDE B

## TAPE SEVEN SIDE A

This is tape seven in a series of interviews with Hon Phillip George Pendal, this one being recorded on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 at Parliament House, Perth, and the interviewer is John Ferrell.

JF Phillip, last time we spent quite a bit of time talking about your work as a press secretary with Charles Court and his ministers. I wonder if you could just round that off for us now by saying what do you think you gained by that experience; and particularly with relevance to what you went into subsequently?

**PENDAL** John, I think the benefit for me in a job like that was that it gave you a terrific big picture approach to things. You were seeing decisions filter through to the top after they had been through a big array of qualified people and people whose job it was to draw disparate views and angles together, so that the work that we did, certainly for me I think, taught me to see things in a strategic sense, because you were having to gather and present those things that came from a variety of sources within government. But it also taught me to . . . you know, we were dealing on a daily basis with the Premier, with ministers. The knowledge level was phenomenal, so that the experience for someone like me was invaluable for the work that I was going into, or that I hoped that I was going to go into, in Parliament.

JF You said at one stage that you found Charles Court to be an excellent teacher. I wonder if you can identify specific things that you picked up from him.

**PENDAL** Mind you, he was a good teacher, but I don't necessarily think that was any virtue on his part. He was certainly one of these big picture people, and he had to be to have done what he did for Australia's iron ore trade and other forms of development, the gas, the oil. But I was always puzzled too of how much he wanted to get involved in the detail of something, and that seemed to me to be a conflict in the way you did business. He was never prepared to sort of deal with the broad sweep and let you help deal with the broad sweep of an announcement and then let you go away and do the detail; he wanted to get into the detail as well, and that really did puzzle me. I think he tended too to be a person who was not efficient in the way that he ran an office. In fact, I'd say he was gloriously inefficient, and that would run counter to the public image that most people would have of him. If you were called down to sign off a draft press statement, you could barely see him in his office behind files; and I'm serious when I say these files were sometimes two and three foot thick.

There was this forest of files around the place. He worked in a very unostentatious little office, about the size that we are in here, as his working office; and there was a larger, more statesmanlike office adjacent to it, so that if you had to go to this little working office, you were battling sometimes to find him in all the files. He did have a great grasp of details, no doubt about that; but the fact that he allowed himself to get bogged down in it, I think, invariably must have detracted from the time that he could put in refining the big picture that he was always so good at. It actually taught me a lesson not to try to do those two things at once. For all of that, and he was difficult to work for and with, you therefore became that much sharper, I think, because you were determined not to let him get too far ahead or be found wanting. So it was always, to put it mildly, a challenge to go to work knowing that you're going to be dealing with him. He was always better, strangely enough, if you were travelling with him. He seemed to see you more than . . . he was more relaxed; he saw you as a companion. On one occasion, I recall, he asked me did I want to go down to the steakhouse with him, and he'd especially get a bottle of red wine which he knew that I liked, and that was because we were travelling. So he did like that sense of camaraderie, but on a working basis back in Perth at the Premier's department he was very difficult to deal with and there was no room there for any personal interplay.

JF            Is there something that you produced in that office or in that position that stays in your mind as being something you were really proud of doing?

**PENDAL**       Well, there was. I mean, there were several things, but one I do recall. I was given the task of authoring or coordinating a document which I eventually called, or recommended that it be called, "Achievement". It was intended to be the review and the presentation of the first Court period from 1974 to 1977 as the '77 election approached, and it was common for state governments at least to produce at public expense some sort of a document really to say how we believed the government had travelled and it was for them to justify and brag about, and I was put in charge of this. We eventually called it "Achievement" and then with a subtitle. That was fairly taxing, and it was a document that I still retain to this day. It does remind me, however, that if Charles Court was a great person, and indeed he was, that document brought out something of his pettiness. For example, it had a particular subtitle, and the subtitle read something like "The Record of the Liberal-National Country Party Government of Western Australia". When Sir Charles saw this, we

were working one night in his lounge room at Cherita in Nedlands, and when he saw the cover he said, "No, that's no good." And I said, "You don't like the word achievement?" He said, "Oh no, that's all right, but the space taken by 'National Country Party' just overshadows the word Liberal." I couldn't see it myself; so in the end I thought maybe what we could do, and it was the Liberal-NCP Government. He liked that much better. The problem was this had all been set at the printer's and I pointed this out to him because there was a problem doing that all again at public expense. He in fact offered, and I think followed through, with paying for that cover to that document himself. I mean, he was actually meticulous in things like that, but I regarded it at the time as being, you know, the petty side of him that was sad to see because he was in all respects a great man. So that was one of the documents. There were others, but I think that because one of the analogies that I drew, in fact the strongest analogy I drew in the foreword to the whole thing and which Sir Charles ended up liking very much, I ran the analogy that running government was not a lot different from running a good household budget: you have a certain income, you have certain expenses, you have expectations, and so I rolled it around this notion that government was about good housekeeping, and he really took to that. So that was only a small point, but that remained the dominant theme in this particular document at the time.

JF            Probably at this stage we should take a jump onto your move in the late '70s to become endorsed. You referred to it briefly the other day and you talked about your first effort at preselection in 1977 which was unsuccessful, and then you had another go in 1980. I wanted you to tell me: would you have preferred a career in the Assembly to a career in the Council followed by the Assembly?

**PENDAL**        When I look back on it, a number of people chided me at the time, one of whom was Ian Thompson who was the Speaker of the house well before I got there but who was a personal friend of mine. He always felt that I should have gone for the endorsement for the seat of what was called East Melville that was being vacated in 1980 by Sir Desmond O'Neil, and I by this stage had set my sights on the upper house seat, which was a lot larger seat but I knew that it was eminently winnable and it didn't seem good sense to me to change direction, change focus. It was only in later years that I realised that I had probably made an error. I can honestly say that when I sought endorsement, and perhaps I had set my sights too low, I never saw myself wanting to be anything other than a member of Parliament. The idea that you might end up a cabinet minister one day simply didn't come into my

equation. Later it did, because later when I got there and found that you were really only dealing with ordinary mortals, some more talented than others and some talented in one area and not another, that it started to occur to me that I could have gone into the Assembly and perhaps had some aspirations for the leadership. I vividly recall Ian Medcalf, who was the ex-Attorney General but still the Leader of the Liberal Party in the upper house and leader of the government when I got there in 1980. I remember him pulling me aside one day and he said, "I want to tell you something that I was told when I got here." And he told me a story that he said had been told to him by Frank Wise, the former Labor Premier, who at that stage was in the upper house. Frank Wise had told him this story that some people do stand out as being certainties to be going into the ministry and therefore what they should be looking to do is A, B, C and D. Years later Ian Medcalf came and said this to me, and I remember being quite taken by it because he had always been way up there to me; he was a fabulous man in all respects. Then within three years of being in the upper house, I found myself on the front bench for the first time (admittedly, we had gone into opposition) and I was made shadow minister for a few junior portfolios. But there, again, I was 35 or something of that kind; and it was only as time went by did I come to realise that I perhaps ought to have gone into the Assembly. Mind you, I didn't reach the starry heights in the upper house, so it may well have been a pretty pointless exercise even to have imagined that I could have gone into the lower house. I do feel, however, that yes, I probably missed an opportunity by not going into the lower house in the first instance, where the chances for ministerial service and so on were much higher because there were a bigger number of ministers.

JF            We'll come back to talking about the relative merits of upper and lower house later, but what about now telling me about the process of preselection?

**PENDAL**        Once I had set my sights after the '77 election, when I saw the results (and I was on duty in the cabinet dining room on the night that the election results came in, and it was Bill Grayden who was then present, I think, and who then came up to me and pointed to the figures for this upper house seat of South East Metropolitan province) one half of it had been won that night by Clive Griffiths, who was then the President of the chamber, and I recall Bill Grayden pointing to the figures and saying, "That's where you need to set your sights. That is a winnable seat for three years." I took his advice. What it did mean was that whereas an Assembly seat on average might have had five branches and they were all fairly local, it meant that for an upper house seat the problem was vastly different. An upper house seat

then took in four lower house seats, and that might have meant, off the top of my head, 25 or 30 branches. It crossed three federal boundaries, this state upper house seat; so it meant that you not only had to keep an eye on the divisional politics in Swan division but Tangney division as well and Canning division, so that you were looking for a three-year period to work and have an impact in those branch areas and in the divisions. It became almost a full-time job doing that of a night-time, attending meetings, interminable meetings, but knowing that, hopefully, there was something at the end of the road. When I and a couple of other people, including Peter Shack who was one of my close friends, sat down at the start of all of this, we were able to work out that there were at least 11 potential prospective candidates for the same preselection. So it was not only a question of me doing all of the hard work in the branches that you would expect to do, but it was a question of keeping an eye on them, finding them, you know, being aware of what they were doing. These people ranged from lawyers to a stockbroker and there were a couple of ex-members. Anyway, the effort that I put in, in the end no-one could believe it but I was the only nominee; and for a seat that was a lay-down misère, the fear was that the Liberal Party would recall nominations because, firstly, they felt there was going to be a big string of nominees and then only to find that I was there. So I lived in fear for several weeks around about April-May of 1979 worrying that the state council would say, "No, we've got to reopen nominations." In the end they decided not to do that and I remember putting in a superhuman effort in my presentation for fear that the preselection committee would say, "Well, this bloke's not up to it" or "We would like to put him under a bit of competition." In the end, I got the endorsement and that situation remained by and large for the next 13 years, where I contested upper house seats and succeeded on each occasion.

JF                    And it entailed going before the state council, did it, to make your presentation; or were there other fora along the way that –

**PENDAL**        No, each seat and type of seat had a different preselection. The only people who ever went to the state council of the Liberal Party for seat preselection were those who were seeking Senate endorsement. Every other house, federal House of Reps and state upper and lower house, had their own procedures. Of these, perhaps 25 or 30 branches scattered from the lower house seats of South Perth, Jandakot, (I think it was called Murdoch in those days) Clontarf and the seat of Armadale, which was held by Bob Pearce. In those four seats all of the branches in the Liberal Party contributed a certain number of delegates to a preselection panel. I

think the panel might have been on this particular night something like 48 people whose backgrounds I knew intimately. I knew who they were, where they worked, what their interests were, but that was the nature of the upper house preselection committee for that seat.

JF                   And what was the nature of your presentation?

**PENDAL**       It's a long time ago now, but I do recall being very strategic about it, probably having learnt these things that I had working for the Premier and ministers. The detail, I must say, I can't recall but I do know that I asked to sit around a table with me people like Peter Shack, people like Ian Thompson and one or two other people in order for me to, instead of making a presentation that might have covered 15 topics, I was determined to have a presentation that would come down to three or four major points. I know the discipline of that had been brought on by this previous experience that I had. Certainly I know that federalism and our, the Liberal Party's, commitment to federalism was something that came into my speech. I think I may have mentioned as well removing some of the barriers for small business in Western Australia, but beyond that I don't recall.

JF                   For how long would you have to speak in making your presentation?

**PENDAL**       Well, most people would say the briefer the better. This was something else that I had to contend with because ordinarily in other preselections that I contested (one in '92 when I got the endorsement for South Perth) you were often up against, say, 15 other people; and you had to take into account that if you spoke for 20 minutes and everyone else spoke for 20 minutes, you were going to turn it into a very long preselection meeting; and if you missed the mark you were going to be making a lot of people very, very angry that you had missed the mark. So, knowing that I was the only candidate and I could really speak for as long as I liked, but knowing too that people could see through that, that you would be taking advantage of it, I think in the end I would have spoken for no more than 15 minutes and then you were open to questions and scrutiny and criticism and so on. But I had learnt even then that the length of a speech had nothing whatsoever to do with its quality. Maybe I had picked that up because of this work with ministers and the Premier and so on.

JF            Now, at one stage you said that Dick Cleaver had some role in helping you get into Parliament, I think. Was he active at that point in your career?

**PENDAL**        Dick by now had been defeated in the federal seat in 1969. So by the time I was coming up in 1979 Dick was well out of politics, but he was still active in the lay party in the Swan division. He had always been encouraging to me. I don't remember him being any particular assistance, and I don't remember asking him for that matter, in those first preselections. I think once I did receive the preselection and I was elected to Parliament, there is no doubt he was very proud of that. He saw me as a protégé and someone that he had, because of the Junior Citizen of Swan award, given a leg up to all those years earlier. It was only later as the '80s moved on that there were terrible divisions that developed within the wider Liberal Party in Western Australia. These were reflected in the Swan division as well, and it was an awful time. I mean, you had people like divisional presidents, people who were going to jail on drug charges and things of this nature. There were people getting into the party (infiltrating it, I call it) because they were more interested in status and political power and position and so on. It was during this period, for reasons that I'm not really sure of now, I found myself on the opposite side of the equation from Dick Cleaver; and I went through a period where I think I was (I know that I was) very badly treated by him and things that he said about me publicly. I found it interesting that towards the end of his life he sought to correct that and have me over at Swan Cottages to open fetes. And then, I think I mentioned to you, literally on his deathbed he sent a message that would I come and sit with him, which I did, and we talked. I knew then it was a square-off, and I say that in the positive sense. He just wanted to put all of that bitterness behind and I was glad to do that too. That is really . . . he was helpful and encouraging but he had no direct influence on my preselection. Then in my middle years in the Liberal Party we became opponents and then towards the end of his life we were reconciled.

JF            The opposition, did that turn on particular policy issues or was it to do with other things?

**PENDAL**        No, John, and that is the tragedy. This factional nonsense, there was never an occasion when I felt that I had had a bad time with people because of any philosophical disagreement. You had those but that was part and parcel of it. Then the meeting finished and you might go down to the local hotel or we would stay and have a coffee and talk to the people; a bit like Parliament eventually where you could

have seemingly the most violent clashes with people in the chamber, your opponents, and then see them in the parliamentary bar in 10 minutes and in all likelihood buy them a beer. And that didn't represent anything like hypocrisy; it was just good, robust democracy. Now, I never ever felt that I had a philosophical clash with people in the Liberal Party. I had lots of disagreements and good debates, and that is the tragedy because the Liberal Party began to split on . . . it was personality lines and I was uncomfortable about being painted as a Chaney-ite; for all the fact that I respected him and he was a close personal friend, but I didn't want to be a Chaney-ite; I just wanted to be a Liberal. But personal political power came within a small group of people and they were determined to push this line that if you are not with us and the way we do business tactically, that means you must be against us and you are going to be treated as an outcast and as an enemy. And that has been to the eternal discredit of the Liberal Party of Western Australia now for the better part of 20 years; very, very sad.

JF                    Just in the few minutes that we've got left, where was Charles Court in all that?

**PENDAL**        Charles Court never made any secret of his closeness to Noel Crichton-Browne, and in the main I had no difficulty with that because I actually got along with Crichton-Browne myself. They were certainly comfortable with each other's positions. I never saw anything from Sir Charles that would suggest that he was angry with the tactics that were building up over the years at the behest of people like Noel Crichton-Browne, and I think that was to his discredit that he was unable or unwilling to stand up to people for whom the rest of us were clearly beginning to have an adverse impact on the party and the way it was run, the way preselections were being carried out, the cheating that went on. And I don't mean just the occasional trick being pulled on your opponent; I mean wholesale dishonesty, branches being invented and documents being falsified. It was in the criminal class, and it got to the stage where some people on both sides of that abyss were involved in those sorts of tactics, and it was a cancer that still remains to some extent at least today.

END OF TAPE SEVEN SIDE A

TAPE SEVEN SIDE B

This is tape seven, side B and the interview is with Hon Phillip Pandal.

JF            Phillip, you then had to organise some sort of election campaign, I suppose, having achieved the preselection. Could you recount for me, please, how your campaign developed and who were the personnel and what you did and so on?

**PENDAL**        In those days, when upper house or Legislative Council seats were two to a province and one came up at one state election for a six-year term and then at the next state election the other one would come up for election, Legislative Council campaigns were not run in isolation. You generally ran piggy-backing onto the lower house seats in your province. So in my case I had to work in with the seat of South Perth where Grayden was, the seat of Clontarf where Tony Williams was, the seat of Murdoch where Barry MacKinnon was, and the seat of Armadale, which was held for the Labor Party by Bob Pearce and where the Liberal candidate was a woman called Nancy Jones. Each of those four lower house Liberal candidates or members would be running very strong Assembly campaigns, and it was the role of the upper house candidate to make sure that he or she got 50 per cent billing in the campaign. I have to say that to his credit the architect of that was Clive Griffiths, and he eventually got this culture applying across the state. There were too many people . . . the Legislative Council, as you know, was now fully elective and full adult franchise since 1965, and had enormous powers constitutionally to block budgets and to send the government to the people. So it was largely through Griffiths that lower house campaigns were forced to ensure that if a piece of literature came out and it had "Bill Grayden for South Perth" on it, it gave equal billing to Phillip Pandal running as the upper house candidate. So your job largely was running from lower house campaign to lower house campaign. You were expected, if you could, to send and redirect donations to lower house campaigns. If you had people willing to donate to you, there was no way you could spend the money on a separate campaign; and therefore it was sensible to work out . . . well, I'll re-donate that to this lower house campaign or that lower house campaign. So at the same time as [being] a new candidate, I was expected to doorknock in all of those four lower house seats, which I did extensively. I didn't like doorknocking but I knew I had to do it. You attended fundraising functions in all of them. It was full on, the period from preselection in May 1979 until the election in about February or March of 1980. It was a very, very full-on period, but that was basically the way upper house candidates plugged into the lower house campaigns.

JF           And were you still trying to do your assistant press secretary's job whilst this was going on?

**PENDAL**       Absolutely. So you were expected to be working long hours Monday to Friday and then being rostered of a weekend. But, by the same token, there were pluses because I at this stage had personal friends amongst cabinet ministers, which you might not ordinarily have had at that age applying to other candidates. So there were occasions when I could ask them to do me a favour by turning up to a function or speaking on my behalf and things of this nature. But, yes, you were working more than full time in your job as a press secretary, and then every other waking hour was devoted to winning this wretched upper house seat.

JF           To what extent were your siblings or other family members involved?

**PENDAL**       My children to this day, if the subject ever comes up, all groan with a deep voice and wail and generally chiac about how they were involved in literature distribution. But I remember one of my children, I think it was Sasha, the eldest, saying at one stage (she never really complained or never felt that she had reason or grounds for complaint because she assumed this was the way all children in Western Australia were brought up) that they were sort of unpaid and slaves to their parents' aspirations and ambitions. But still to this day the children groan at what they had to do going back to that first nine months where, apart from me doorknocking, if there weren't enough people to be putting your literature in thousands of letterboxes, you'd usually put your hand up and say, "Well, look, I'll try to cover that", and then go home and break the news to your wife and children that Saturday was going to be taken up doing that. So in a way it was all done in a fair bit of good fun, but they certainly knew that they were involved. And years later, amongst other members, we used to call it the early form of child abuse that we were all a part of in getting our children to do that sort of thing at their age. I mean, they weren't little (they could have been seven, eight, nine, 10 or 11, that age) but they were there, yes.

JF           What about your brother?

**PENDAL**       My brother Vince in particular later became much more active when I became an Assembly candidate, and indeed all of my extended family, all of my siblings became involved in those campaigns in '93, but more particularly when I became an Independent for '96 and then 2001. The word went out amongst the

broader family, and so all of my brothers and my sister were involved. But by then, too, my elder brother, Vince, had become my campaign chairman; he was very important in fundraising for me. We were always proud of the fact that he could access and we could access money that was not going to get us into trouble, because lots of people did even then. I had a very, very strong treasurer, a fellow by the name of Kerry Davey who remained a warm supporter through all those years. As well we had an organisation that was quite unique called "The Eminent Australians Forum", which sounded very grand. My brother was the chairman, Kerry Davey was the treasurer, and two other journalistic friends, John Horner and John Kelly, both of whom by now were in public relations, became trustees. This was formed after I came down with an aneurysm in the brain in '83, and these fellows got together and said that the best way they could help me was to perhaps try to take over that fundraising effort. Well, they just did it splendidly. We had top businesspeople flying in from the eastern states where we could run a breakfast where we might get 500 along to listen to Sir Arvi Parbo or Sir James Hardy at the America's Cup time. We got John Elliott, we got an array of people where it was relatively easy then to make small amounts of money from lots of people going to a function. So my brother was central to all of that and remained central right through to my last campaign.

JF            So at this stage then we won't spend any more time talking about the later campaigns. I think it might be time to now think about going into the actual job in the Council. Tell me about what you were doing on polling day itself in that very first Council election.

**PENDAL**        Well, your role as a candidate, whether it was an upper house, lower house, federal or state election, was to visit the polling booths; and that is just to let your supporters see that you were on the job giving them encouragement, expressing your thanks to them and usually taking a boot load of soft drinks and snacks and so on. The number of polling booths in a metropolitan province of that size, which had incidentally a population, I think, of 210 000 people or thereabouts, and the number of polling booths, just off the top of my head, would have been upwards of 48 or 50; about a dozen per lower house seat. So that you spent the day . . . you were usually asked specifically to find yourself a driver, usually one of your good mates, maybe a relative, who would drive you around; and you would say, "Well, why would you need that?" The idea was that you didn't have to park half a mile away from the polling booth and waste that time walking up there and then

another 10 minutes getting back to your car. The idea was that you would be delivered up to the polling booth, that you would hop out, that you would go and see your supporters, you would hop back in and then you would go to the next one. So you did at least the 48 once during the day, and if you had spare time, you started going on the circuit again, and the same applied in all elections that I was involved in.

JF                So how soon on that first occasion did you know the result? I mean, you expected to win, but how soon did you know the result on that occasion?

**PENDAL**        I did expect to win but there was a hiccup. The thing was being televised in the ABC teleroom, if I recall, and the figures as they came in and were going up onto the screen didn't look good at all. I eventually won by about 4 000 votes. Something went wrong with the tally room to the extent that my Labor opponent thought he had won the seat; a man called John Bissett whom I still see to this day. He is a Victoria Park councillor. He rang my home on the night to commiserate, as he was virtually claiming victory but I knew that I was winning because you have your own scrutineers in at all of the counting centres. And if your scrutineers are good, and mine I regarded as being good, were constantly phoning into the big celebration, wherever it was being held, and their numbers were going up on the board, so that I could tell that I was going to win. Clive Griffiths was certain that I was going to win because he was getting access to the same figures, but the ABC got it mixed up and I had this embarrassing situation of John Bissett ringing me, and I recall saying, "Well, John, it's decent of you to ring but you're going to be the loser, not me", and that was the case.

JF                He can't have had very good scrutineers himself then.

**PENDAL**        I imagine that was the case because, indeed, he may not even have had scrutineers. But I was confident, not smart but confident, because we had good scrutineers; and, gee, at my very first election it taught me the value of getting the very best people who, if they did nothing else for you every three years, would give you three hours on election night because they had good mathematical brains or whatever it took to do that job.

JF                How did you go about getting them and who were they? You probably can't nominate all of them but –

**PENDAL** Well, as an election drew nearer, there was a schedule that you had to follow from the party, and you would see on the list that you soon had to appoint your scrutineers. You always wanted to have separate scrutineers from the lower house candidate because most of the lower house candidates and their supporters really never knew where you fitted into the scheme of things as an upper house candidate; it was always a puzzle. They sort of knew you had some importance around the place but they could never get their mind around what the devil you were doing there and why you were always bobbing up somewhere; and so you couldn't rely on them doing a double scrutiny. In any event, when I think about it, they would have been taking place at different tables. So you generally asked people who were close friends and whom you trusted to be able to follow the instructions of a scrutineer, and then to phone into the celebratory headquarters. So they mostly came from close personal friends or senior members of the branches that you were involved with.

JF How many counting centres would they have had to cover in a metropolitan province?

**PENDAL** I imagine that there would have been one single counting place for each Assembly seat (I think I'd be right there) and that would mean four places. No, as I think back on it, that wasn't the case. Each booth used to count its own. There was a state electoral officer in charge of each booth and I think you in fact had that role in seats, not to do with me. If I remember correctly, at the end of each night that returning officer would be in charge then of undoing the sealed box, putting them all on a table. So, now I think back, there were counts being conducted at every polling booth, and then at the end of that it was the returning officer's job to be letting the central place know. That was not our concern. So, in effect, I guess I would have had anything up to 48 scrutineers scattered throughout the south east metropolitan area.

JF A big number of people to find.

**PENDAL** So it was a big number of people, yes it was, but we seemed to find them.

JF And so did any of them stand out as of particular importance?

**PENDAL** I had brothers and stepbrothers. Most of those came from a business background, the ones who stand out, and therefore they were well equipped with figures and mental arithmetic and the use of calculators as well. But others as well,

family friends; I recall a friend of my wife and mine, Maureen Hinton; she was always a good scrutineer. She trained as a nurse, and nurses seem to have a certain air about them and sense of authority, and she was a good scrutineer. There were other party people, some of whom would come to you at the early stages of the campaign and say, "I can't really do much but I would like to scrutineer if you want me on the team", and you always accepted that with alacrity.

JF                    So was this actual win finalised on the night then?

**PENDAL**        It was finalised on the night but with a vastly reduced majority that puzzled people, experienced people like Clive Griffiths. I recall when we went to the Claremont tally room the next morning he turned my . . . I think I had a 2 000 margin, and because of his intervention, it turned into four. It was sad because I later had a major falling out with him and he had a major adverse impact on my career. But he was watching the boards at Claremont this next day and he was puzzled by what he thought were discrepancies. No-one else picked it up, and then he was able to go to the returning officer. It turned out to be the case that 1 000 votes of mine, which had been counted and with elastic bands put around and set aside, had by mistake been put onto the pile of my opponent who was the sitting member, Grace Vaughan. So 1 000 off mine and onto hers made a difference of 2 000. So when he discovered this and he pointed it out to the returning officer or the counting officer, then it was quickly adjusted and the thousand went back to me and it came off hers. So my 2 000 . . . I think my maths are right there in saying that I was now leading by the 4 000 that he had assessed I should be leading by. It was a very good moment, I vividly recall.

JF                    So how did you feel about the fact that you had finally won?

**PENDAL**        Well, I was ecstatic. I was really over the moon. I did feel daunted by it. I remember one of the first things I had to start thinking about was a maiden speech. And even though I knew I was a good or perhaps even better than that, you know, a competent public speaker, those sorts of things used to churn me up a fair bit. So I wasn't long in celebrating all of this before I began to put my mind to that sort of thing, but I was just over the moon to think that at my first try I'd won a seat. I recall coming to Parliament House and being shown where my office was and going through what little orientation there was in those days, which was basically to say, "See that door there? You can go through there and that's your office." These days

they have quite elaborate orientation processes. But no, I can only repeat the word again: I was ecstatic to think that I'd finally made the grade.

JF                   And, I guess, was that reflected by the attitudes of your family members?

**PENDAL**       Very much so, although I still recall my mother . . . my mother was not what you'd call politically adroit (she had other strengths in other fields) and I remember her saying on election night, "So what does this actually mean?" And I said, "It means, mum, that I'm a member of Parliament." "Oh," she said, "well, that sounds really good to me." But no, the family . . . my brother, whom you mentioned, we were so . . . he was a very successful businessman at this stage. He may or may not have been a merchant banker at this stage, but he was so overwhelmed on the night that I recall it looked like we were going to run out of beer; and within about 20 minutes (I don't know how he did it because all the closing hours had passed well and truly) a bloke had turned up at the house and he had a truck and he had a big keg of beer that my brother had magically produced from somewhere and he was just a . . . I remember saying, "Well, how much is that?" because, you know, you paid your way; and he was waving it off, "Don't you worry about that." So he was . . . yes, everyone was very, very happy.

JF                   Where was the celebration?

**PENDAL**       That was at our home in 27 York Street in the back yard. There were probably, you know, upwards of 100 guests there, scrutineers returning, polling booth workers returning, family; that sort of thing.

JF                   Just as a matter of interest, was there any involvement of your church community in backing you?

**PENDAL**       Well, in a few cases . . . I recall one as being a friend of mine who had been in the YCW with me for years and who has remained a close friend, Ken Sullivan. There was no organised pillaging or poaching that I can recall, but he certainly is a standout. I mean, that did happen later, I found, that when in my Independent days in South Perth I would often say to people, "If I stripped out of my campaigns the foot soldiers who came from the local Catholic church, the local Anglican churches and the local Uniting churches, I would have been left with about

three per cent of my workers. I got terrific support from that but that was more in the later years when I was an Assembly candidate.

JF           The induction wasn't elaborate for new members of Parliament in those days, as you've said. What did you do specifically to prepare yourself then for taking your seat?

**PENDAL**       Well, bear in mind that as an upper house member and being elected in a February, you had to wait until May the 22<sup>nd</sup>, which was the constitutional turnover date when the defeated members of the upper house would move out and the successful ones would move in. I had a three-month waiting period and I had made no plans for that. It meant . . . because I'd resigned from my job with the government, and I had given no thought to how I was going to put food on the table for the next three months. Amazingly, out of the blue when Charles Court announced his new cabinet, one of the new people he named was Ian Laurance; the member for Gascoyne became Minister for Housing. He rang me up (we later became quite good friends) and he said, "You and I have got something special in common today." And I said, "Oh, what's that?" And he said, "Well, I've just been sworn in as a minister, as you know." I said, "Yes." He said, "You are without a job and you are an ex-press secretary and I don't have a press secretary. What about coming here for three months?" It was the first time, I think, that I had realised the imperative of having a job. It was a wonderful let-off because I was able to say, "Yes", because I was going to get a salary. So I went down to him and was allocated the biggest office in Christendom; it was massive. I don't know who used to occupy it but it was a temporary thing and I became his press secretary for three months; and I think the only thing that I really did was to be again putting my mind to my maiden speech; and I did put a lot of effort and thinking into that, but I was also preoccupied by doing a day's work for him in the lead-up to my taking my seat.

JF           Where was Laurance's office?

**PENDAL**       It was in the State Housing Commission building, which is in Plain Street, diagonally opposite Queens Gardens. It was there that I discovered that the house that Maxine and I owned in 27 York Street was built in 1919 by the son of the first Wesleyan minister in Western Australia. The reason I got to know that was that Ian Laurance asked me to stay back on a Friday and have a drink with him and to meet his mother who was coming in, very proud of the fact that her son was now a

minister of the Crown. She said, "So you live in South Perth?" And I said, "Yes." And she said, "Well, Ian's grandfather lived in South Perth many years ago." And I think Ian said, "Oh, did he?" The mother said, "Yes. He built one of the first houses there." And I said, "Really; where?" She said, "I forget the address but I've got a photo of it." And she said, "Next time I come in I'll bring the photo." The next Friday, I think, she came in and I couldn't believe it but it was the house we were living in.

JF                   Isn't that incredible?

**PENDAL**        It was amazing and it was the only way that I got access to this photo. So that period with Ian Laurance in the lead-up to my taking my seat was really not terribly hard work. I mean, I think I was preoccupied, frankly, with this quite exciting period ahead.

JF                   Tell me about who helped you to sort of settle into the house?

**PENDAL**        Well, I have to say Clive Griffiths was very, very good. He was at the apex of the whole show. He was President of the Legislative Council, and that helped me. There were other people: Bob Pike who later became a minister and then died quite early; John Williams, a Welshman, a psychologist who gained election as the member for Metropolitan Province. He was a real wag of a fellow, well-read. I got to like him and he was very good in mentoring me, and I think they would have been the major ones having an influence.

JF                   In some quarters, probably more ALP than otherwise, the upper house tended to be criticised as something of a token house because of it being largely in conservative hands. How do you react to that criticism?

**PENDAL**        Well, I shared it. It was not an easy thing to share that view from the Liberal Party vantage point. Indeed, many years later, this year in 2007, as a parliamentary fellow I was asked to write an article for *The West*, which was published in February this year, on the role of the upper house. I did that and that was published, and one of the points I made there was that there was a great piece of democratic evolution, because you are right, when I got elected to the upper house, it was still pretty well loathed by the Labor Party; and they stood for its demolition . . . for its abolition, but probably its demolition too! On the other side, the Liberal members, most of them, were intransigent. There was going to be no change.

So you had these two extreme positions. And I wrote in this article in February 2007 . . . I think what eventuated both of those parties moderated their position and the result is we've got a better house of review out of it. The Labor Party had to compromise and say, "No, we're going to go for reform, not abolition." And the Liberal Party had to swallow some humble pie and say, "This system is not fair." And the result was that they made a shift. Now, it didn't apply to everyone in the Liberal -

END OF TAPE SEVEN SIDE B

## TAPE EIGHT SIDE A

This is tape 8, side A, in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal. This is being recorded on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 at Parliament House, Perth, with interviewer John Ferrell.

JF            Phillip, we got you elected to the Legislative Council last week. In talking about that, I didn't actually ask you whether you had a campaign headquarters from which your campaign operated, or did you just go from office to office of the local candidates?

**PENDAL**        My recollection is that we had that campaign structure that piggybacks onto lower house Assembly electorates. I don't recall having had any central campaign structure other than that there was a bank account kept by several trustees into which money came by way of donation, and then out of which we would direct it to those Assembly campaigns. So that was by and large the way it worked, and I don't recall that we had any physical headquarters.

JF            Now what about once you were a member? Did you establish an office for yourself in the electorate?

**PENDAL**        No. This was just before the days when members of the Legislative Council were allowed to have offices, or to put that in the positive sense, the decision hadn't yet been made that upper house members could have an electorate office. What happened was that you were allocated space in Parliament House. I'm sorry; I really have to correct what I've said. Perhaps members of the upper house did have electorate offices, but if they did, they then had to share an office at Parliament House with another member. If, however, you didn't have an electorate office, you got an office to yourself, and that was the position that I developed. In fact, in that case, the member then shared an electorate officer with another member, so you got 50 per cent of the services of a personal assistant. It wasn't until 1984 that I moved to the electorate. That was after the coalition's defeat in 1983 and there was a general move by members such as myself, newer members, to say, well, the better place to be was out in the electorate. I took up an office at the corner of Canning Highway and South Terrace diagonally opposite the Como Hotel. That was '84, but when I first came in, it was a question of sharing with another member if you had your own electorate office, which I didn't.

JF Right. You said you shared the services of a staff member. Who was the staff member, and how long did that arrangement apply?

**PENDAL** The staff member was a woman, Monica Travers, a lovely woman, whose husband, Tom, was a senior executive with the Papua New Guinea Telecom Service. He actually operated from Port Moresby and was always on the telephone to her, but he had the great advantage, I suppose, that he got free telephone calls down to Western Australia. I shared Monica with Graham MacKinnon, who had recently ceased being a minister. I think he had ceased being a minister in 1980. He actually encouraged me to that arrangement by telling me that it would be in my best interests if I collaborated with him, he said, "because I'm an old member on the way out and you're a new member keen as mustard on the way in, and you would probably end up getting 75 per cent of her time". That's in fact what happened. She relocated with me when I went into the electorate office in 1984. She always maintained that she would stay with me until I became a member of the cabinet and then she would let me go my own way. In 1986 she left my employ to retire. She remarked at the time that she had broken her own promise because we were well and truly embedded in opposition in those days, and then sadly, within a year or so, she got cancer of the liver and died. It was a great sadness, because she became part of my family, a very good friend and a support to my wife and children, so it was a very sad time.

JF You mentioned Graham MacKinnon. Had you known him in Bunbury?

**PENDAL** I had been aware of him as a little boy that he was a member of Parliament. I certainly became aware of him being a member of the cabinet in the Brand era when I was doing my time as the state political reporter for the *Daily News*. He had known my father in the Liberal Party in Bunbury. As well, his children had gone to the Marist Brothers College in Bunbury. So there were these peripheral links that I had had with him, and by the time I shared the office with him, I knew him reasonably well. The most difficult thing I had to get used to was in not calling him Mr MacKinnon and learning to call him Graham. I remember finding that very, very difficult to do.

JF Yes. Now before we go very much further, you mentioned last week that you took ill, I think it was during your first period in office. Maybe you can just

take a moment to tell me about that and the implications of it and so on for your work as a parliamentarian.

**PENDAL** I think it was in 1983, in June, by which stage I'd been a member for a little over three years. Late one Friday evening, in fact after my wife and I had been entertaining at our home the federal shadow Minister for Tourism and his wife, who were visiting Perth, and I was the Western Australian shadow Minister for Tourism. We had had a dinner party, and they left to return to a city hotel. During that night I had what was diagnosed to be a transient ischemic attack whereby I temporarily lost my capacity to speak, and where I had a lot of difficulties with the left side of my body. By the next night, the Friday evening, in I think late June 1983, I was by then in St John of God Hospital and I had been diagnosed with an aneurysm in the brain. That was a big shock because, you know, they were going to do brain surgery that next day, but they pulled back in the end deciding that the part of the brain that they had to repair was simply too risky, and they decided, on what they called the conservative method of treatment, to monitor it. That's what's happened for the past 24 years. At one stage my X-rays and angiograms were taken to Canada, to an eminent brain surgeon there. His view was that we were doing the wrong thing; that I should be operated on immediately, because there was the chance of a haemorrhage and dying, but the advice of the Perth neurosurgeons was to the contrary, and I think time has proved that they were right. I'm very pleased that they were right.

JF How long did it take before you got back your capacity to speak and so on?

**PENDAL** That was only a matter of days, the speaking side, but it took probably a period of several months' recovery. I had a lot of problems with my left arm and left leg that always appeared to me just to be leaden. I guess, too, the psychological blow was also quite difficult to deal with because I was 36 years of age, three children, a wife, and in a job that really didn't commend itself to a quiet life. It wasn't a five-day a week eight till five job. It was a good learning period to readjust and to learn to deal with long hours and a fair bit of pressure, but to deal with it in a way in which you would survive. I was always very grateful in some respects that I got that warning, because it happened to other people where they didn't, and they met their end, so there were some plusses that came out of it as well.

JF Yes. Were they able to say what had given rise to it?

**PENDAL** No. There were various things. One of them was, historically, it could come about with people who had a form of madness, and, who knows, going into politics, that might have qualified me! In the old days, I learnt from looking up old books and so on, people who had had syphilis and other pretty grubby sorts of diseases were prone to this sort of thing. However, the best that was really explained to me was that it was a weakness in the wall of that particular artery in my brain and that that was nature at work going to the weakest spot, so I never got beyond that in understanding what had brought it on.

JF What was the treatment apart from monitoring it? Were there drugs involved?

**PENDAL** Yes, there were. I began a daily course of a form of aspirin, which was meant to thin the blood. They seemed to be quite concerned in those days to keep that blood at a much slimmer consistency, which was probably good because it was the only thing about me that turned out to be anything slim line. I've continued that treatment to this day. I regularly go back every year or two to have MRIs and things of that nature. The aneurysm itself has grown slightly over the years but by and large it is, I think, under control.

JF It must have made you think very seriously about the future when it was happening. Did you have to reassess totally whether you should stay in the job?

**PENDAL** It did. I recall at the time the Leader of the Opposition at the time was Ray O'Connor, previously Deputy Premier to Sir Charles Court. I think he came to my home to talk with Maxine. I'd only just been appointed to the shadow cabinet some months earlier. He was very good, I must say. Other people in the party were very good. I recall Noel Crichton-Browne, who was then the president (if not he might have been in the Senate) but he was in touch with Maxine on a regular basis. Other people responded wonderfully. There was a friend of mine from my Christian Brothers College days in East Victoria Park who is now prominent in mining, John Lyndon, a very wealthy man. He put at my disposal his personal aircraft to go to some other part of the world for treatment that he had heard about. So people were very, very good, and it did make me and Maxine reassess. We knew that wherever I went there was going to be pressure. I think again it was a case of being a silver

lining to the extent that it taught me that I had to find new ways to deal with hard work, long hours and pressure. I think that did have a big impact on the rest of my working life.

JF                   What sort of things did you do to change your style or approach?

**PENDAL**       Well, I couldn't work any fewer hours, because it was simply demanded of you and I was very much involved in the house. I was very much involved in legislation. I had a good allocation of portfolios, and I always seemed to be dealing with bills that I found required a lot of work and study and preparation. I did learn to mentally adjust and to pace myself. There was no outside help that I can recall. It was a question of having to come to terms with how you would continue to do a busy job but do it in a way that was consistent with good health. There was a conscious effort to carry out tasks with the available energy, without expending energy that might bring about a haemorrhage of the brain. So it was an informal thing. I mean the first thing I had to do was give up smoking. I was a heavy smoker. I guess there was another plus. I recall when my wife was wheeling my wheelchair somewhere after those first awful days she said, "Is there anything you need?", and I said, "I'd give anything for a cigarette." Of course it was one of the first questions that the neurologist, Bill Carroll, had asked my GP. I heard him asking him quietly so that I wouldn't hear, although I did, "Is he a smoker?", and he said, "Yes, he is." So that was a big change in lifestyle, to give up smoking, but I've not had a cigarette since. I was a heavy, addicted smoker. But none of that was virtue. That was sheer fear, and, again, another good thing to come out of it all.

JF                   I went onto that because I wasn't sure where it came in your early days in the job. Can we just take a step back? We haven't talked yet about your first opportunity to address the house, so we look at you in action in the house next for a little bit. What memories do you have of that maiden speech?

**PENDAL**       Well, of being very nervous. I had prepared a maiden speech that was on the issue of federalism. That was my enduring interest in all of my time in Parliament. I had flown an idea of bringing an end to this constant bickering between the Commonwealth and the States by proposing my own solution, which I think I called a constitutional trade off, where the States would give over certain powers to the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth would give over certain powers to the States, and where never the twain should meet. I specifically outlined some of them

in this maiden speech. I put a lot of work into it, but the nervous energy that went into it was . . . I still recall pacing up and down in the corridors outside knowing that I would be called next to my feet. I gave the speech, and I felt that it had gone well. We were due then to fly out that night, I think, or the next day, to holiday with friends at Rottnest Island. I recall I got to Rottnest Island and I came down with a horrible cold or the flu. I've got no doubt that was because I'd worked myself into a bit of a lather in preparing for the maiden speech. The irony was that I actually knew that I was a good speaker and a good presenter, but I died a thousand deaths to get on my feet. But I kept reassuring myself. I recall this bit. I'd say to myself, "Phillip, you're not going to address the United Nations; you're going into the Parliament of Western Australia to make a speech." Now I kept telling myself that. It was only in later years, incidentally, that I learnt that people like Harold MacMillan, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, was physically ill (he'd go to the bathroom) before making a major speech. I learnt that lots of people in public life who were regarded as very competent speakers were terribly nervous. Over the years that didn't lessen my nerves, but it did make you feel as though your agony was shared around the place a bit.

JF                    Yes. Did that persist to any degree as you stayed on and got more used to Parliament?

**PENDAL**        Well, to some extent I got over that nervousness, but it would always reappear. Just when you didn't need it, it would put its head above the parapet. I don't know. I sometimes thought that it was a device by nature just to keep me from getting too big a head. I did. I sometimes thought, "Well, I can't think of any other reason." All my life I'd been in positions where public speaking had become part and parcel of it, but it just never came any easier. I could never explain why that was the case, but it was the case.

JF                    Let's also look back into when you were first thinking about the Council. What particular goal had you set yourself, if any, to achieve within being a Legislative Councillor?

**PENDAL**        Well, it's interesting as I look back on it that I was never, ever conscious in those first few years, for example, of wanting to get into the ministry. I contrast that with a generation later where people would arrive in either house and sort of be eyeing off the front bench almost immediately. It was not any lack of

ambition on my part. I really only saw myself at that stage as wanting to be a good member of Parliament. You see, I'd come in from a background where I'd known and worked with Sir Charles Court, Des O'Neil and Ian Medcalf, who was a big influence. All of these people were in some respects quite awesome figures, who were cabinet ministers. I certainly never saw myself in that mould. Maybe that's the reason that I never got to go into a cabinet. I did change within a few years, though. I could see, sitting in the shadow cabinet, many of these people came back to the field, and I realised that you weren't talking about . . . even the best of them were still ordinary mortals, and that made a big impact on me from 1983-84. It certainly then told me that I was at least as equipped as most of those. But my immediate ambitions never went to that high office. I simply wanted to be a good member of Parliament, and I was very proud about having got there against the background that I'd had.

JF I wondered whether, from when you were saying last week, you may have had aspirations to do something about reform in the upper house?

**PENDAL** Yes, but I didn't see a necessary prerequisite as being a cabinet minister in order to achieve those things. It is true I came into the upper house with a view that it was overdue for major electoral reform. In fact, I got myself into some unpopular situations with some of my colleagues. I recall that I was asked by Gordon Reid, in the days when he was still at the University of Western Australia, to address a conference in Perth on the role of upper houses, and I was asked to speak on the Western Australian upper house. It was an Australia-wide conference. I recall in that speech making the point that I felt that there was a case for some reform, although I did have some genuine concerns about how you would achieve that. I recall that that speech outside the Parliament got me into a fair bit of trouble inside the Parliament from a Labor member called Bob Hetherington, who had previously been at the University of WA as a political scientist. Whenever I would talk about these things in the house, Bob Hetherington would invariably interject and say, "Oh, and here's the member who believes in reform, but not just yet!" [laughs]. So he used to give me a bit of a hard time about that, but I was frequently as a journalist, and then as a young member, of the view that change was well overdue. The fact that we had gone almost 80 or 90 years without the Labor Party ever having achieved a majority told me acres about what basically was an unfair system.

JF            Now, where to go from here. In that first three years, say, '80 to '83, were you involved in very much committee work?

**PENDAL**        I was. It was the time in West Australian politics where the upper house and its members on both sides knew as well intuitively what I have just said a few moments ago, that people knew that we were going to have to have some form of reform to remain credible. Amongst the Liberal members there were people like Bob Pike and John Williams, both of whom had been working within the party for the Legislative Council to adopt a professional form of committee scrutiny in much the same way that the Senate had undergone, barely 10 years before, under people like Senator Peter Ray. My arrival was coincidental with their leadership. John Williams was on the verge of introducing a motion, as a government backbencher, to bring into place a permanent standing committee of the house to have scrutiny powers over all of the non-departmental government agencies. It eventually led to a select committee, and we travelled around Australia to gather data, and in turn that led to the formation of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. John Williams was the mover of all of this. He enlisted my aid. The intention was that he would move for the standing committee, and then he would also move to have himself appointed its first chairman. I was pulled aside, I recall, by no less a figure than Clive Griffiths, to say, "You should have some sort of arrangement with John Williams, because you're doing a fair bit of the work." I asked what he meant, and he said, "Really, then, if John wants to be the chairman, you should have the right to be the person to introduce the initial motion into the house, because it goes onto the permanent public record." I took his advice on that, and I spoke to John Williams, and John was very accommodating. So I made the initial speech setting up the committee. This was a move, incidentally that was trenchantly opposed by older Liberal members of the house, including Graham MacKinnon, including Norm Baxter, a National Party member. All of these members felt that you just didn't need this sort of modern gadgetry. But the newer members felt that you did need it, because there was so much going unchecked. I think I recall a figure that these government agencies at the time had budgets amounting to something like \$800 million, where they weren't subjected to the normal departmental or ministerial interventions.

JF            Can you nominate examples of that?

**PENDAL**        I can. Things like the State Electricity Commission, or it might have been the State Energy Commission, things of that nature, so that the Standing

Committee on Government Agencies eventually had the reach over all of these bodies to try to understand and report to the Parliament on their workings. The equivalent today would probably be expenditures of \$3 billion, so it was important stuff. So I did get that opportunity very early in my days to go down that path, and that's subsequently been taken up by scholars like Harry Phillips and others, so that was fortunate from my point of view that I got those chances early.

JF            You mentioned the advice given to you by Clive Griffiths. Was this as a matter of propriety protecting Williams so he could get into the position without having been seen to be making his own demands? What was behind the advice?

**PENDAL**        Given that I had a massive fallout in later years with Griffiths . . .

END OF TAPE EIGHT SIDE A

TAPE EIGHT SIDE B

This is tape 8, interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal, and this is side B.

**PENDAL** Notwithstanding that fallout with Griffiths, I do believe that he was acting in my best interests there in having me do one or the other; that I should have the chairmanship if John Williams was going to introduce the motion, or vice versa. Given its subsequent importance in the scheme of things in the Parliament, it was a very good piece of advice, and it was a chance that I was grateful to get.

JF At this stage had the new Clerk been appointed or not, or did this lead up to the appointment of the new Clerk?

**PENDAL** Laurie Marquet?

JF Yes

**PENDAL** That was quite a separate issue, although I recall an interesting thing occurring. Griffiths would often confide in me, because I was his new co-member. He was in the process of appointing a new Clerk to the upper house. He had decided on quite a radical course of action, to bring someone in from the outside, which I don't think had been done in 100 years. He told me one day that he had interviewed a young New Zealander who had trained in the New Zealand Parliament, had a law degree, and then had become a professor of law in California. He was inclined to appoint him because he had met him at some parliamentary conference and was very impressed with his enthusiasm and his intellectual gifts. Griffiths asked me if I would meet with him, without looking as though I was meeting with him, to run the rule over him, and we went down and met Laurie Marquet at the Parmelia.

JF He was in Perth coincidentally?

**PENDAL** No. He'd come across I think for the interview with the President and perhaps whoever else does these things, and I was being asked to come along to informally give an assessment. I was certainly very impressed, and I remained impressed with him, I must say, throughout his professional life. Subsequent to this, Clive Griffiths came to me and said that he'd just got a call from Johnno Johnson, the President of the New South Wales Legislative Council (a very, very powerful Labor figure from the right) asking whether Griffiths knew that Laurie Marquet was a

homosexual. Attitudes were certainly different in those days to what they are today, and so Clive Griffiths was deeply concerned as to what he was getting himself and the Parliament into. I remember he asked my opinion, probably because he knew that I had views that would roughly align with Genghis Khan on most of these things, and I said to him "It depends". If Laurie Marquet was so overtly a member of the gay community (I don't think that term had even been invented then) but if he was so overtly homosexual that that would then detract from or impinge on his job, I don't think you can proceed, but I said I had met with him and I didn't think that that would be the case, and I thought that he was a person who could conduct his private life as a private life. Subsequently, he was appointed. Years later, when Laurie was arrested at Perth airport on a drugs charge, for heaven's sake, we were told at the time by Clive Griffiths that we would have to, as a house, sack Laurie Marquet that afternoon, to which I responded, "No, no, no, you appointed him; you do the sacking." But I remember, too, taking the view that it was really quite unfair, it was a sense of double jeopardy that he was going to be dealt with by the courts, and he was. I actually spoke up for Marquet to see that nothing untoward happened to him. Years later, Laurie had cottoned onto this, somehow, because we would sometimes have a bit of a chuckle that someone with my views on homosexuality would be the person going to his assistance. It was a great pity, because his life ended in tatters, his professional reputation was destroyed, but it does not alter the fact that what he did for this Parliament was a magnificent contribution; just magnificent. I think we are all the better for having had him work here. I'm just very sad that at the personal level he didn't have the strength of character to see it all through. It was very sad.

JF            Yes. So specifically then you would say that he was able to implement, from a practical point of view, what you were driving at, or the committee was driving at, in making the upper house more akin to, say, a Senate type house?

**PENDAL**        Yes. Now, Laurie Marquet wasn't directly involved in our committee, in the original select committee which led then to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, but he was always there in the background for assistance. I don't think he travelled with us, but he was certainly attuned, as a young parliamentary officer, to this notion that we were attuning ourselves to as parliamentarians, that the house had to become more relevant, more professional. We employed, for example, Dr Martin Forrest, who later became a departmental head and who is now the head of the health department in Tasmania. We employed Dr Martin Forrest as the executive officer of the new standing committee. All of these

things would have appealed to Laurie Marquet. They would have appealed to his academic background, his intellectual capacities. He could see what we were trying to do over on our side of things was much what he was trying to do, and was being encouraged to do, I might say, by Clive Griffiths at the officer level, so he did make a big impact. He just lifted the whole intellectual capacity of the place immensely.

JF           Where did Clive Griffiths get the idea that this was the direction to go? Do you know?

**PENDAL**       I don't, but wherever he got it from, he certainly deserves credit for having done it. He could have done what Presiding Officers had done for decades, just enjoyed the wig and the gown, and the pomp and the ceremony, and the yes Mr President and no Mr President, but he did set out to make things happen. Looking back on it, I would not be surprised if what he saw in Laurie Marquet at this Pacific Islands conference I think it was, that he saw this young vibrant officer who was out to make a name for himself, and I think that would have had some appeal to Clive Griffiths, because after all he went to some lengths to get him recruited into the Parliament here. So just what was his trigger and spur, I don't know, but he certainly deserves commendation for it.

JF           Is it appropriate at this stage to take up your personal relations with Clive Griffiths, seeing we've been talking about him?

**PENDAL**       Yes; I don't have a problem there.

JF           What transpired that put you at odds?

**PENDAL**       Well, it was the leadership of Barry MacKinnon, probably in 1987. By now I'd been in Parliament for seven years. I was on the front bench by a factor of four years. I was quite senior in the ranks of the parliamentary party. MacKinnon had become leader and I was a strong supporter of his. I think there was a certain resentment on the part of Griffiths that he wasn't quite as powerful as he had once been. Other people were coming on the scene, younger people, including me, to whom he had been very generous, I might add, and I felt that he had no grounds to feel that he was being sidelined. I recall the moment in history that spelt the end of the MacKinnon leadership, and it was to do with Clive Griffiths, because in the party room in early 1987, or late 1986, Clive Griffiths would always sit at the back of the

room, which I always found odd, because he was a very senior person, President of the Legislative Council. It puzzled me as to why you would always want to sit at the back. On one occasion that Barry MacKinnon was chairing a meeting, Clive could be heard to be talking with people around him and interrupting the flow of the meeting, and Barry MacKinnon gently banged the gavel and asked him and everyone else to pay attention. This persisted until Barry MacKinnon lost his temper and thumped the table with his hand and said something to the effect, "For God's sake, Clive, will you shut up or move outside, because we're trying to run a meeting here", which was a fair comment to make, because Clive Griffiths himself was a Presiding Officer in the house. Now Clive took great umbrage at that. He was very angry that he had been spoken to, and he promptly jumped to his feet and left the room. Well, it was the start of a major breach, because Clive Griffiths had been due in March of 1977 – I beg your pardon, March 1987 - to attend a 10-year anniversary function for Barry MacKinnon, who was now the leader, in his electorate of Murdoch. The guest speaker was to be Sir Charles Court, and Clive Griffiths was to introduce Sir Charles. Well, of course, because of this incident that occurred in the party room, Clive told MacKinnon in no uncertain terms that he could find his own people to introduce Charles, so he refused to do the job. I learnt of all of this because Barry MacKinnon rang me and said, "I want you to do it; you have to introduce Sir Charles", and I did, I think with the result that Clive Griffiths never went to the function. Ironically, I ended up having a clash with Sir Charles as a result of the night that he appeared there, and which certainly didn't help my prospects into the future either, with him. But from that moment on there was a breach between Clive Griffiths and Barry MacKinnon and, to some extent, MacKinnon's leadership was under a cloud from Griffiths's point of view from that very slight incident. It was still to go on for another I think five years, but they were never the same in their rapport, and it was the start of a widening gap between myself and Griffiths, because he could see that I had, in many cases, the ear of MacKinnon. I think he found it difficult to come to grips with the fact that he really had removed himself from contention in the way he had behaved. So it's marvellous how major things can grow out of such small, petty things, and that is what had happened.

JF            Yes. All right, then, to return to discussion of committees, you were on this standing committee then for, what, the rest of the time you were in the upper house?

**PENDAL** No. I think I served on it until I realised I was starting to have too big a load. I was very active in the shadow cabinet and in the public arena, and at some stage I spoke to people like John Williams and others about me pulling back from that. I guess that was an indication, too, to me that the cabinet and the ministry was there for the future by working towards it, and that the committee work therefore I'd pull back from. I was replaced, I forget by whom, but I have always been very proud of playing that part to get the first of them established.

JF Yes. Were you serving on other committees during that first six years in office?

**PENDAL** I served on a couple of the internal parliamentary Liberal Party committees. I recall John Williams was the chairman of what was called the law and government committee, I think. He asked me to join that as secretary, which I did. I enjoyed that work. It meant that the bills to do with law and justice and government came to that committee before they went into the Parliament, so I enjoyed that process. And I did a bit of other select committee work, I recall on the *Batavia*, the sinking, in 1992, but I did that for political purposes, and it was a wonderful committee because it opened up a whole new unintended line of interest for me in the years after I was dispatched by Richard Court. I served as well on the Privileges Committee over the Penny Easton death and the subsequent inquiry by the Parliament into the behaviour of John Halden. I was the only one on the committee who believed he should have been judged guilty, and the report reflects that. It was an awful inquiry to be a part of, the whole process, to think that a young woman had died, leading up to this, but I was intending to bring in a minority report because I couldn't talk around people like Peter Foss or Tom Evans and one or two other people. In the end, I agreed not to bring in a minority report so long as the report contained the expressed view that I thought Halden should have been done for a breach of parliamentary privilege. They agreed with that, and that's the way the report came. That was another committee that was an awful part to be party to, but which has just come to mind because of your question.

JF Yes. Well, I think probably now let's just take a jump into leadership questions. You've mentioned Barry MacKinnon's leadership in the course of talking about Clive Griffiths. Was there some doubt about O'Connor as leader from the very time that Charles retired? Perhaps even start a bit further back if you like and give

me an opinion on Charles Court's decision to retire. Do you think it was at the right time?

**PENDAL** Well, I didn't think it was, because I recall on the Friday morning of his announcement he was appearing at a big breakfast in South Perth where I had to give the vote of thanks to him as the new youngest member. Clive Griffiths was present, Bill Grayden; there was a big crowd. The newspapers were speculating that he would announce his retirement that weekend. I recall making my thank you speech to him in front of this audience and expressing the hope that he would not make that decision. That's the way I felt. I mean, he had his faults, but he was a powerful and worthy leader. But he didn't take my advice [laughs] and he decided that weekend that he was going. The party room then elected Ray O'Connor the following week unopposed. I liked Ray O'Connor. I had worked with him as a member of Parliament, I had reported him as a journalist, but I knew he wasn't Premier material. I knew that at the grand age of whatever I was; 35. I recall him being in the parliamentary bar immediately prior to the meeting to elect him, and I was astonished, and I said to people like MacKinnon, Hassell, Ray Young, Ian Laurance, all of whom were three years ahead of me in the scheme of things, I said, "But you can't seriously be suggesting that we let O'Connor get himself elected unopposed?" But that's exactly what they were, because they'd obviously done a deal with him to stay in the cabinet, and so by that night Ray was the Premier, and these people were reappointed to the cabinet. Come the 1993 election, which we lost comprehensively to Burke, and immediately the knives were out for Ray O'Connor. Indeed, I was one of the early ones.

JF Sorry; the '83 election that went to Burke, not the '93?

**PENDAL** I beg your pardon. The '83 election, which we lost to Burke, made Ray O'Connor Leader of the Opposition, and within 12 months (maybe even less; six months) the knives were out and there was a lot of speculation about his future. I thought I was doing the decent thing by personally writing to him and saying that he should stand down so that he didn't have to go through the trauma. I said, "You've been Premier, you've been Deputy Premier, you've been a minister; it's time that there was generational change." I told him that. He didn't like that, and I didn't expect him to. I thought this is the way you were supposed to behave. Ray O'Connor was then replaced by ... there was a challenge and a ballot, and he was replaced by Bill Hassell. Bill was a very capable man, intellectually very capable, but

I felt he was a pretty narrow individual, and I was saddened by this narrowness, because of his intellectual capacity; he was a good speaker, powerful presenter, had a good mind. But I woke up to find that I wasn't in the shadow cabinet. So, I had been in the shadow cabinet briefly under O'Connor. I think I have the sequence right. We then went forward with Bill Hassell as the leader from about 1984 through to the 1986 election. If the good Lord himself had been the Leader of the Opposition, he wasn't going to get to be Premier at that moment. Burke was riding high. Burke was performing superbly. Burke was pulling the rug from under us on just about every policy you could imagine. He appealed to the business community, and this is in the days before he got into trouble with them. Burke was up there, and it didn't matter what Bill Hassell could have done; it was just never going to happen. We lost the '86 election; we lost it badly. Some people wanted to challenge Hassell immediately, and I opposed that. I said to them that no-one could have been expected to have done better than him in the lead up to the '86 election, so I was actually very much on his side. Later in the year, '86, there was a move on to replace him by Barry MacKinnon. By then, I had become a close supporter of Barry, but I opposed that challenge on the grounds that it was far too early. We were still two and a bit years out from an election, and that anyone who was elected to succeed him would be a bit tired and shop worn by the time of the election. So I argued very strongly: don't oppose him; don't challenge him. If he is still not travelling well next year, meaning 1987, then have a crack at him and I would support them. But no-one took any notice of me as well. I was in a minority, I think, of one. MacKinnon did challenge; he won. Hassell was replaced, I think unfairly, because he had performed as well as could be expected. From then on, I was as close to any leader as ever I was for the next five years. Many people say I was too close to MacKinnon. I remember at one stage *The West* ran a story from Diana Callander saying that there was resentment brewing that I had too much influence over him, and she asked me my comment to that. I said, "It's absurd. I've got one voice and one vote in the party. Other people have got the same value, and if I try to work to influence events and outcomes, they've got the same right to work in that direction, or against; it didn't matter." But I could never follow that notion that somehow you had too much influence on one person. However, that was the start of a long, five-year haul. It was probably the toughest years of my life. And then eventually it led to another challenge, this time from Richard Court, when we were within an ace of taking government, and MacKinnon was replaced, and then that was pretty well the end of me. I had been, by that stage, approached by Sir Charles Court to swap my vote, by Peter Jones who was now the state president and who was very close to the

Hassell and Court family. I was asked to change my vote, but I declined. I certainly paid the penalty for it. Richard was elected in the May coup of '92. That was the end of my leadership or the battles in which I was involved. It was like a revolving door in that period from '83 through till '92. It was an awful period and I would never wish it on my worst enemy, because it was a thankless task, despite you thinking that you were working hard to deliver government to the Liberal Party. It was hard, unremitting, unrewarding work.

JF            Yes. At this stage, then, I am just trying to work out where to go in the time that we've got. Perhaps you could briefly talk about the conversion of Country Party men to Liberals. You mentioned Peter Jones. I think it was he and Dick Old at the same time changed allegiances, again in this opposition period.

**PENDAL**        They did, and of course it proved to be the end of their political careers. They had come into government as young first-term members. Both had only been in Parliament for a year or two in 1974. The coalition had split between Charles Court and McPharlin in '75, and then a new coalition had been worked out when Bjelke-Petersen flew in and a few people like that, and replacing the old Country Party ministers were the new ones in Old and Jones. One has to say that they turned out to be very, very good ministers in my opinion. They were both very capable men. Old became Minister for Agriculture; Jones, Minister for Education. They became in a way more like Liberals than the Liberals were. They both were strongly supportive of Sir Charles. They eventually decided that the National Party had become moribund and they decided they would swap and become members of the Liberal Party. Well, that was fatal, because their electorates rejected them. Their electorates were very, very strongly National Party or Country Party based, and both of them were defeated the next time they faced election. So, two very capable men were gone, at least one of whom, Jones, might have been capable of becoming Liberal leader and succeeding and getting us back into government had he survived.

END OF TAPE EIGHT SIDE B

## TAPE NINE SIDE A

This is tape nine, side A, in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip George Pental. This is being recorded on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2007 at Parliament House in Perth, and the interviewer is John Ferrell.

JF            Now, Phillip, I think we canvassed pretty fully the ... what you thought were the most significant committee achievements of your time in the Upper House, so I thought today we'd break into the ... your experiences as a shadow minister. You had a number of different responsibilities over the years, so perhaps if you would sketch the different ministries you were responsible for as a shadow minister and pick up to deal with in more detail perhaps the ones that you think were most significant or where you were able to make a particular contribution.

**PENTAL**        John, I recall the first appointments in 1983 under Ray O'Connor. They were, as you'd expect, relatively minor. I was given the Lands portfolio to shadow, but also Tourism and was as lively an industry as Lands was generally as quiet and restrained. Over the next few years, I served under the Ray O'Connor, Bill Hassell then Barry MacKinnon and then briefly as a shadow minister under Richard Court. I served, I think in the end, about in 15 shadow portfolios, including Federal Affairs, but I think in the end my best contribution came in the Environment portfolio. It was the one in which publicly helped change perceptions for the Liberal Party leading up to the 1993 elections. If I recall correctly, a major Westpoll that had been run in the last week or so of the 93 campaign, the Westpoll showed that we were going to win. They singled out the two areas of industrial relations and environment where the coalition, and that means specifically Graham Kierath in IR and myself in Environment, where he had allayed certain fears in the community and where I had turned public perceptions around regarding environment issues. It was that period from about 1990 to 1993 that was the most rewarding for me. You were responsible for producing policies. I put a lot of time into that. I always recall how I got the appointment, because it was not what that I asked for. I was usually in the business of suggesting to Barry MacKinnon about, "Look, why don't you change so and so to that portfolio and bring so and so up". I was never short of having by two bob's worth in that respect, but I hadn't had the tables turned on me until I was driving back with a car load of members of Parliament from the Geraldton by-election that saw Bob Bloffwitch elected. I was actually in the back seat and I was asleep. I awoke to hear several of the members were talking about putting to Barry MacKinnon a reshaping of the shadow ministry. I awoke to hearing my name being mentioned, that I should

become shadow Minister for the Environment. Well, I was most taken aback with this. They in fact must have had their way because they saw MacKinnon, had that input and that is how I got to that job. So that period from '83 going through to '93, but principally to '92, was an exciting period, but particularly because of the Environment portfolio.

JF                   Who were these people that had nominated you?

**PENDAL**       Well, one of them I recall in the car was ... Barry Blaikie was the member for Vasse and a vastly underestimated man. He was a dairy farmer from the south west. He had been in Parliament a long time and he was, as I learnt over the years, a very wise old fellow. He really did have a lot natural wisdom and a lot of natural wit and intelligence about him. He was always on the fringes of the environmental debate in our party, not because of his background as a dairy farmer, but because he was the member for Vasse and I think he very perceptively saw environmental and green issues emerging because that was the area that he represented, and, if that's so, how right he turned out to be. I don't recall who the others were, but he was there principally saying that "Pendal should be taken into that job because it's important. We need someone with an empathy to the environment but then someone who can publicly portray and turn the Liberal Party around". So he was the one I always blamed later in any case.

JF                   And was he aware of particular environmental interests on your part? Had you made that known that you were interested in the area or knowledgeable about it?

**PENDAL**       I had been involved in a number of environmental issues early in my career as an upper house member. I recall being to the forefront of getting the Charles Court government to withdraw from what was called the Spencer-Chapman highway link in the southern suburbs that would have had a very profound and adverse impact on the Canning River. I had always taken a big interest in the Swan River and the Canning River because I could see their broader value to the metropolitan area and right into the catchments, but I must say that I can't recall taking a special interest in environmental issues. It was more of a case, I think, that as we came out of the Geraldton by-election, as we were heading towards a 1993 election, there was a huge gap between the Liberal Party and the Labor government in things like the environment, and people like Barry Blaikie and others on the

backbench were constantly at MacKinnon and others to say, "If we're going to win office, one of the areas in which we are going to have to lift our game is the environment." I think that's how I came to it.

JF Yes, and they obviously saw that you had, not only the powers I suppose to negotiate policy, but perhaps to present it, is that ... would that be what they were looking at?

**PENDAL** I think that's what they were looking at. In something that perhaps might have affected Blaikie's outlook, I had been principally involved in the 1987 by-election for the South West Province seat with Vic Ferry retired and caused a by-election, which was subsequently won by Barry House. It was a time when the Burke government was at its peak and we won that seat against all odds. It was admittedly in the Liberal camp, but the fear was that with Burke riding high the seat would fall into the Labor Party's hands; most especially, because the South West Province was focused on Bunbury, where the government had put in huge resources into winning the seat of Bunbury with the program called "Bunbury 2000", and the Labor Party was very much flavour of the month in those years from '83-4-5-6-7. I had got involved in that at Barry MacKinnon's expressed wishes and I think I did 28 trips into the south west in the course of the by-election, desperate that we would win, and that meant doing a lot of research on topical issues, things that we ought to be addressing. We won that by-election against all the odds. People like Julian Grill were stunned that we had, because he was the Minister for the South West and I think that experience in the south west and on some of those green issues had led people like Blaikie and others to say that I was perhaps better equipped than most to go out and try to sell . . . firstly, to understand what our environmental position was and then to go out and to start selling that to the electorate. I think that's where it started so my apparent success in 1987 was my downfall in 1990 in being dobbed in for the job.

JF Yes. I think that you went on to be responsible for sort of creating the policy for environmental issues for the Liberals from that time, so can you talk now about that particular task and how you went about it and what were the key features of it?

**PENDAL** Well, for me it was the most wonderful, creative period that I had in politics, from 1990 right through to 1993. I was basically given an open book by

Barry MacKinnon and very much encouraged by a lot of those backbench members who knew that, not only was the environment emerging as an issue, but it had emerged as an issue well before—decade, two decades—and where we were on the Liberal side constantly seen, not only to be behind the play, but sometimes even contemptuous of environmental issues. I was therefore told to start from scratch, and something that was pivotal in my learning was that I had an early meeting with the President of the Conservation Council, Professor Philip Jennings, from Murdoch University. Now, I had no doubt that Professor Jennings was either overtly or in his own heart and soul a Labor supporter, but he received me well. He took me at face value. I think he realised, too, that the wheel would turn one day and that if there was going to be change of government, better to help form an up-and-coming Minister for the Environment. He was very, very important in my thinking. One of the things he did in a very positive way was to be able to show to me; he said, “You know the Charles Court Government record in the creation of national parks in Western Australia beats that of any other government in Western Australia’s history.” Now that flabbergasted me; it absolutely flabbergasted me and so I went back and had a look at those things where, in his view, the Liberals had a positive message but had never bothered to sell. It showed me, and I was able to demonstrate in our shadow cabinet, that people had no need to fear green issues. We could be leaders. I actually obtained a copy of the Conservation Council’s policy document and I started to flip through it and to see which were terrible, illiberal, anti-business, almost red policies that we would be repulsed by. I found very few of those. What I did find as well ... it was a huge amount of policy ideas and intellectual property in there that I picked up and ran with. Philip Jennings wasn’t going to mind. I would come along and say to my colleagues that I think that we should be looking at a certain policy in regard to XYZ, and I didn’t tell them where it had come from until I knew that I had them on the line. So over a period I made a huge effort to go out and understand what were the real issues, what were the substantial issues and what were the issues that were the tinsel that could help in the public sale of all of this. I went to groups; I listened to groups; I pillaged material that I knew was not inconsistent with Liberal philosophy, and policy and over a three-year period we came up with a policy that was a winner. There were difficulties always in the area of old growth forests, but my aim in all of these was really to narrow the gap between the left of politics and the right, so that we could credibly say, when the time was right, that we had strong credentials in that field. I am very pleased to say that’s what did turn out to be the case.

JF Yes. And this came together in a document, I think, didn't it, before the 1993 elections, was that correct?

**PENDAL** Yes, it did. It was released. I've got an idea it might have been in the January of 1992. No, I think I'm wrong. It may have been later when Richard Court had become the leader, and of course whatever Richard Court thought about ... he was terribly nervous about what was in it. He looked very much askance at me, but if I had managed to win a lot of widespread community support, there must have been something in the document that was illiberal. I recall I was asked by Bill Hassell, who was then, I think, could have been the state president, to produce a copy of the document. Well, I did and I was able to point out that "this document has been through your state policy committee". People like Jeremy Curthoys [amended to Buxton] who was seen as being very strongly pro-Court family and, in those days, Crichton-Browne. Jeremy was very supportive of this document, so that they were very suspicious of me and wanted to see it. In the end, when it was released, we released it at Lamont's Winery in the Swan Valley. We had a huge press contingent. We had people invited from many of these organisations, and one of whom was Dr Beth Schultz, who in many ways was seen as the mortal enemy of people in the Liberal Party and I recall just nervously, just waiting for the reaction. Richard Court spoke and I spoke and media asked questions, but off to the side all these lobby groups; you could see them. I could physically see out of the corner of my eyes they were looking at copies, and then finally Matt Price, who today is a leading writer with *The Australian*, came up to me, and he was then with Channel 9, and he said, "Pendal, I don't know what you have done to Beth Schultz but whatever it is you've got her support." It was the greatest relief, so much so that she did agree to take part in a colour photo shot with me, which was then published on page 3 of *The West* the next day. The reception of this document, without going into all the detail, but it was a pivotal turning point for us.

JF And that, of course, is all the more significant because she'd been such a prominent activist, hadn't she, on environmental matters?

**PENDAL** Yes, and I have to say we hadn't really, in this document, come to grips with this terminal problem of old growth forest issues. The party still wouldn't let me go ... I gave the party an option that didn't go to what the Beth Schultzs of this world wanted, but it was closer than a lot of other things in the past. I was only pleased to be able to show people that this idea that because you're on the

conservative side of politics, you somehow had to be anti-environment, was an absurdity. But to have had people then like Beth Schultz and Philip Jennings and the Wilderness Society and other people even coming out and giving you a grudging partial support that “On the whole, you know, it’s a good document. We have some concerns with X, Y and Z, but it’s a fairly good document.” This was a breakthrough of amazing proportions and even commented on, I remember at the time, by people like Senator Fred Chaney, who was by then the federal shadow Minister for the Environment. So it was a big moment in 1992, for us to break through and to be able to show that we could make the grade.

JF                Yes, this is long before the days of regional forest agreements and so on, isn’t it?

**PENDAL**        Yes. I think the regional forest agreements came in, if I remember correctly, somewhere around about 1992 or . . . no, no, it would be later; maybe 1994 or 1995. These were being struck, I think, by Keating and the states. They got the same problem that we did, of course. We thought on our side of politics that we were the only ones with problems with the Greens, but, of course, the Labor Party, through the unions, had their own immense problems, but we had never really nussed that out very well, but behind the scenes that had been the case. That then had led to regional forest agreements as being the Labor way out of this dilemma that we all faced in politics—left and right.

JF                Yes, and going onto the, just briefly, taking that environmental theme to what extent do you think that affected the subsequent 1993 election?

**PENDAL**        The polling showed in that week before, and I still have the cuttings, but the polling that we had relieved the pressure on ourselves; that our environmental policies were a pivotal reason why people were prepared—not the only reason. Those industrial relations policies that Kierath sponsored were part of it, where he was able to dampen down any overt concern on the part of people. So there’s no doubt that the policy on all indices changed enough people in the centre to put us into government in 1993.

JF                Just taking a step away from Environment now, you were shadow Minister for Tourism, as you said, over a period of time, and I think that kind of started with the America’s Cup time.

**PENDAL** It did.

JF Could you talk for a few minutes about your involvement with that time and how it affected you?

**PENDAL** Well, it was again an exciting time because this business of ... none of us had realised, I think, just how big this business of the America's Cup would be. I was shadow Minister for Tourism at the time, and as well shadow minister for the America's Cup, so we not only had a minister for the America's Cup who was Des Dans, but then the Opposition made sure that we had our own spokesman and that was namely myself. It wasn't really, I mean in a summary, it wasn't a time of making much political progress because people ... it was a non-political thing that the state and the economy was rejoicing in this chance to host a major world event to defend a cup win that we had had in Newport three or four years earlier. I was always conscious that I would go ... I went to hundreds of [countless] functions. I was always conscious that you were ... there is the shadow Minister for Tourism, but people didn't care too much about that at all. But, there again, neither did they care too much that the Minister for Tourism was there. They didn't care too much that the Premier was there or anyone else. It was just buoyant, exuberant, exciting time for people, so I always saw it as an opportunity for me to fly the Liberal flag, but I realistically worked out that it wasn't a time to be trying to nudge in, with one exception perhaps; in an old book my wife had bought on American history that was published in 1876 on the anniversary of their revolution, I discovered a picture of the America's Cup, but it was called The Cup of All Nations. I pondered this for a while and I started to run a bit of a theme that while Australia held the America's Cup, that we should rename it back to the original, which now expressed the reality of the cup more—that is, cup of all nations—than what the Yanks had when they purloined it. I thought it was a start of ... I misread it, but I saw it as the start of an opportunity to de-Americanise the America's Cup, and with history on my side, I put in a fair bit of effort. I finally realised that I was trying to fell a tree with a set of tweezers and in the end I gave up because no-one, no-one noticed what I was trying to do. But I look back sometimes and think that might have been a nice little one-upmanship for the Americans had I been able to succeed, but I failed. [laughter]

JF That leads generally to the ideas that you have about the US. Are you ... would you say you were pro or anti-US or are you ambivalent about the US?

**PENDAL** No, I'm not ambivalent. I would ... unhesitatingly and happily say I'm pro-American. I'm aware, however, that there are plenty of shortcomings in their society. I recall talking to you several weeks ago about the weaknesses that I thought in the American fighting both Iraq and in Vietnam. One of the comments that I was making to you was that our failure was and America's failure in Vietnam was in giving up. Subsequent to speaking with you about that, only seven or eight days ago, I read in a new book by Woodward, *The State of Denial*, in respect to Bush and Iraq. It quotes Henry Kissinger at some length and I thought of you in our interview when I read this only a few days ago, because Kissinger said something very similar, but he went on to say that it was America's inability to take hard and uncomfortable decisions, that America in effect had become fat and lazy. Now, he didn't use those words, but that's what he meant. So if I was asked my response to the American nation, I mean I've had three trips there as a member, I was their guest for an extended period as shadow Minister for the Environment; I think in all respects they are a good people, a creative and generous people. I think they're a lot like Australians, but, similarly, I think just like Australians, there are some deep flaws and weaknesses in the American psyche and the way they govern themselves.

JF And just in a few minutes can you talk about the trip then that you took there on environmental matters?

**PENDAL** I was given this chance. It was to do with the young leadership awards, so as I look back I'm delighted that I was recognised at some stage as being youngish. I went on a trip sponsored by the US state department with every other shadow Minister for the Environment in Australia. Subsequently, two or three of those became ministers; Pam Allan in the Bob Carr government of New South Wales is one that I can recall. We were taken all over the United States to see large and small environmental issues at work. We met with President Bush senior's White House environmental advisors. We met people down on the ground in the southern states. It came at a wonderful time for me, having just taken over the environmental portfolio. It was like being stuck inside an encyclopaedia for six weeks. I came home and I really am convinced that it elevated me at a time—that's quite accidentally, no merit on my part—at a time when if I'd been looking for a chance to be elevated, I couldn't have manufactured it. It just put me in such a good stead with all of those in Western Australia and gave me just a broader and deeper understanding about local, national and international and global events. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience. One of the things that the American visit did for me, I recall that it was a

wonderful introduction to the subject of wetlands across the United States. I'd grown up, as most West Australians had, thinking that wetlands were swamps and swamps were to be filled in and so you build houses on them. I remember this trip opened my eyes enormously to what nature intended and it was again part of that wonderful education for me.

END OF TAPE NINE SIDE A

TAPE NINE SIDE B

This is tape nine, side B, interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal.

JF Continuing the environmental discussion, Phillip.

**PENDAL** Well, we were talking while you were changing the tape, John, that the immense jump that had been made from, say, the early 1950s, where I can certainly recall, and you can, the general attitude towards things like swamps in our environment, things to be filled in and built upon. If you take that in the early '50s, it was only roughly 18 years later that the West Australian government under David Brand appointed the first Minister for the Environment in Australia, where we formed the first Environmental Protection Authority and, indeed, appointed Dr Brian O'Brien, fresh in from his lunar experiences of helping men get to the moon. So that environmental initiative coming from a Liberal government in the late '60s really did represent a massive quantum leap from those days in the early '50s when we were very cavalier and really quite ignorant about environmental issues around us.

JF Yes.

**PENDAL** I think history will show and examination will show that there was a massive shift starting to go on, that is still going on to this day in many respects.

JF Yes. Well, look we've taken the environment as the highlight of your ministerial or shadow ministerial experience. Did you think it worth bringing any other matters in? You were in charge of multicultural and ethnic affairs at one point, I noted, briefly; heritage, youth, federal affairs, you know, there were other issues that you were responsible for. Is there something you need to bring forward?

**PENDAL** Well, I think I did in all of them. In the field of heritage it was an enduring interest. I ultimately wrote the heritage policy for that same election year. I think there that I helped the Liberal Party make a quantum leap, too, in its views of the built environment. Certainly, it's one that was topical. Bob Pearce was the Minister for Heritage at the time. There were major issues going, including centred around the old Swan Brewery. So that was another field that I felt I not only enjoyed, but where I helped develop a level of expertise and credibility for the Liberal Party, not all of which they embraced after they took office, I regret to say, but at least it gave some credibility in an area that they had been neglectful of until then.

JF                   And history was already one of your interests at that time, was it?

**PENDAL**        Yes, it was. So, in many respects, I used to wonder at this notion that here I was doing my work for the Liberal Party and for the opposition and for Western Australia, and I had to chuckle to myself; this wasn't work, this was a lot of fun doing it. [laughs] You sometimes had to keep a straight face so that you looked as though you were suitably burdened by actually doing your job. [laughing].

JF                   Yes. Was there any issue in the area of family, the elderly and the retired, that you ... that needs mentioning, because you were also in charge of that area of portfolio at one stage?

**PENDAL**        I was, and as I look back on it now, I probably authored one of the most conservative family policies in Australia, but it was a time, the late '80s early '90s, when a lot of those issues were swimming along in very unsettled circumstances in Australia. I remember clashing on one occasion with Kay Hallahan, who was the minister for family, and we took great exception, and I'm not sure that I've altered my view too much. I was trying to get her to admit that the definition of family in Western Australia could mean two homosexual people living together and raising the children of one of them. I've probably got a lot better understanding and a lot more tolerance about me than I had in those days, although I'm not sure that I've altered my views very substantially, but I recall seizing with glee an admission that she made during a television debate with me at Channel 7 one night that that's indeed what she was proposing. It was some of those issues that were, that always seemed to get the headlines at the time. You know, I took part in some of those with some level of discomfort because I didn't want to embarrass other people or belittle people, but they still needed to be confronted, and so, in the end, I put forward a family policy, which I recall getting a letter from a Professor Whitfield, from one of the UK universities, in which he commended me for the work that I had done and published. We used that to our advantage to show that we were on the money in that respect. But as well, I mean, I thoroughly enjoyed the time in cultural affairs and heritage. The Liberal Party let those be linked at my request. These were the days when David Parker was the minister for the arts, when the Art Gallery of Western Australia was doing all sorts of controversial things and Robert Holmes à Court was the chairman. Notwithstanding the relationship between Parker and Holmes à Court, I remember there were a few occasions when Holmes à Court was very unhappy at things that were being done by the government, and conversations I had

with him, faxes that I exchanged with him from London on one occasion when he knew that I was going to use the information he was giving me to give a lathering to David Parker who was, you know, pretty friendly towards him. So I found that period in cultural affairs, the arts, the museum work, the art gallery, the Western Australian Academy of the Performing Arts and WASO; all of those things always had issues bubbling away that I certainly set out to exploit properly on behalf of the opposition. Strangely enough, my wife and I continue to go to functions today at the invitation of organisations that I was shadowing in those days. So that was an important period, too.

JF            Yes. Now, if you think we've spent enough time talking about shadow ministry experience, I wondered if maybe you could spend a bit of time now talking about colleagues in the Upper House because your leaving of the Upper House isn't very far off. So I think, for example, let's start with people who were on the opposite side to you. I think you mentioned at one stage that Joe Berinson was quite a significant influence on you, but you haven't explained on tape what his influence was.

**PENDAL**       Well, I've never let onto him of course that he was influential in my thinking [laughter] but Berinson was by far the most superbly equipped parliamentarian in all of my time in observing federal and state politics. Why the Labor Party never had the nous to switch him to the lower house, I'll never know. Berinson was a very amiable sort of fellow. Mind you, he was hard as nails, but, there again, he would say we were as hard as nails towards him. I mean it was like mortal combat and conflict. It was an awful time when I look back on it, because as a result of later becoming an Independent, I got to see these people in different light and they got to see me in a different light. People do see Independents in a different light. But Berinson was just a superb performer. A very, very fine mind, a debater of real capacity, a cutting sense of humour that could reduce you to a quivering little mess if you'd got in his way, but still a good and decent man. He, for example, went looking for me one night when, not long after I was out of hospital with my aneurysm, and they thought I'd disappeared and, unbeknownst to me, I had Liberal and Labor members combing offices and the corridors, and then they found me somewhere and they realised that I was okay. Berinson was one of those, so that's a little bit of an insight into his personality: but a superb operator, whom I secretly admired and very much envied, and did try to learn a lot of the tricks of the trade from him.

JF           And a couple of others; you mentioned that Tom Stephens was another person that you admired somewhat.

**PENDAL**       Well, in those days I didn't. I was a sort of a, again, a mortal enemy of his. It makes me embarrassed to think, because he and I share the same faith and we later became very, very close comrades in arms on the abortion issue. At that stage he was fresh in from the north west. He had trained as a Catholic priest. He'd been in the seminary for years. Philip Lockyer, one of my colleagues also from the north, used to interject on him and call him, "Look, just admit it. You're just a failed priest". [laughs] I didn't really approve of that sort of interjection but I did enjoy seeing Philip Lockyer put one of his northern colleagues on the end of the roaster. One year I can recall Tom Stephens interjecting on me. I think it was one of the best interjections and it just stopped me in my tracks. I was going on about a particular issue and I made a mistake of taking a deep breath and in that split second he interjected, "Mr Pendal, have you ever thought of taking up bungee jumping?" and he paused for several seconds for effect and, as I looked at him, he said, "Without the rope." [laughing]. Well, he brought the house down and he left me speechless, which took some doing, and years later I found that he was very embarrassed by it and he asked me not to keep reminding him about it. I would tell this story to other people, but he thought that it sort of lacked charity and, you know, basically, he's a hard fighter but a pretty charitable sort of a fellow. So, yes, Tom Stephens ... I went from having a very tumbly relationship with him in the first 10 years to having a very close, collaborative relationship with him on these pro-life issues in later years.

JF           Can you just mention those years to remind me now. When was that pro-life issue so significant?

**PENDAL**       The pro-life issue really became in 1998.

JF           1998, yes.

**PENDAL**       So by then I had left the upper house by a factor of about five years, so I was now half-way through my lower house career.

JF           Right, so we'll pick that up later on, yes, at that time. Okay, there are other people around you in the upper house. You've said quite a bit about Clive

Griffiths on and off, but you perhaps haven't said so much about him as President. Would you like to say anything about his style as President?

**PENDAL** He took that role very seriously. From a man of very modest background, he learnt to become quite a serious student of constitutional law, and I suspect Laurie Marquet had a lot to do with that education. I think he was quite narrow in a lot of his views that he arrived at, but there again I can look back at views that I had of the similar nature, so that it's like life itself; you learn and grow and develop as the years go by. Griffiths was, I think, a good President, who certainly was keen to protect the ancient privileges of the house from external forces but also in its relationship with the lower house. I think he was a good President, who probably missed a few good opportunities to do things on the way through.

JF Did you have much to do with him that related to your joint membership of the same province?

**PENDAL** Well, we constantly were in each other's company in the electorate, and in the days when we got on he would in fact call at my home. We'd often be going to the same meeting somewhere in the electorate. He'd call my home, pick me up and then drop me home often for official functions—local authority annual dinners, things of that nature. He and his wife would, and they'd got access to a driver and car, and they would call at our home and pick my wife and I up. We would catch a lift with them, as it were, and go to the function and then come home with them. So, yes, I saw a lot of him within the Liberal Party and external to the Liberal Party in those years.

JF I take it you wouldn't have qualified for a car, perhaps even as a shadow minister.

**PENDAL** No, I didn't. On occasions when it warranted, the Leader of the Opposition in the upper house, Gordon Masters would make his car and driver available if there was some particular reason for it. Sometimes, for example, you'd be nominated by the leader to represent, let's say, the opposition at the annual ANZAC Day ceremony on the Fremantle Esplanade. There they always insisted that, you know, it was part of the drum rolls and the cars would stop and someone would get out and you'd be saluted and all these sort of stuff. On those occasions

you were usually accommodated by someone within the opposition or the government to have a car and a driver, but ordinarily, no, you looked after yourself.

JF Yes. Other people who come to mind, did you have anything much to do with Norman Moore? How did you find him as a colleague?

**PENDAL** Well, I think Norman was one of these people who had a good education, who had a good mind and who never did much with it. I had a lot of things in common with him in respect to things like commonwealth-state relations, but, for example, Norman was absolutely trenchantly opposed to anything that even looked like Aboriginal land rights. Norman was absolutely and trenchantly in opposition to anything that resembled reform of the Legislative Council. He was in those respects not just a conservative but a reactionary, and it can't be said that he was a reactionary because he had an awful mind or a bad education. He had a good mind and he had a good education. He was a good speaker and he presented well, but he seemed always to me to be a person who was against things rather than as a person who was in favour of things. I don't think he was creative and I think that was shown when he eventually became a minister in a senior portfolio like education, and then that ended in grief for him. At a personal level, he was always good to be with. He shared my love of good wines and, you know, the social level we got on, but, as the years went by, I might say, and these factions developed I was certainly always on the other side of the debate to that that he was on. So I just think he was a person of a lot of ability but I never saw him put it to much use.

JF Would you like to nominate others who were your colleagues in the upper house particularly that you found particularly significant?

**PENDAL** Ian Medcalf, of course, whom I mentioned and I probably don't need to add too much; I just admired him because he always seemed to be the opposite to what most politicians were. He was a quiet individual; he would never raise his voice. He'd taken a bit of a shine to me; he was always encouraging of me, and so he was a big influence. I think he was another case of a person who might have made a good Premier had he been in the Assembly, but, beyond that, I think, I mean, there were lots of people that I liked and got along well with, but they would have been the key ones whom you have raised.

JF           The key ones, yes. Now, looking at colleagues within the party who weren't necessarily in the upper house, what about presidents of the party; people going back even as far as Jim Sampson? Did you have much interaction with presidents? Is there anything you'd like to bring out about your relationship with any of them?

**PENDAL**       Not really. Other than, I guess, the first president that I really got to know would have been Noel Crichton-Browne and I think he was a good president. I think he knew what he stood for. My complaint always with him was that when he went into Parliament, he didn't really leave the lay party behind. Ian Warner was the state president, a senior lawyer in the town. I had my moments with him, but in the main I got along well with him, but none of the presidents really figured all that much. I really had that notion that I've left that behind, and not that that's unimportant but that they'd given me a new job to do, and so I've got to concentrate on my mind on things to do with the parliamentary party. The last one I had anything to do with was David Honey who came to the position just as I was leaving the Liberal Party.

JF           Yes, okay. Well, there were one or two issues that we've talked about. What about this business of factions at the time when you were facing a change from upper house to lower house, say, and that relates, I think, perhaps to your actually seeking lower house seats, doesn't it?

**PENDAL**       Yes.

JF           Can you say something on those issues?

**PENDAL**       Yes, I had been re-endorsed in May of 1992 for my upper house seat. I knew that we were on target for government and I fully was confident that I would be a minister in the next government. Around that time the Liberal Party endorsed Roger Hussey, a Rhodes Scholar, to the seat of South Perth that was being vacated by Bill Grayden. Bill Grayden had hoped to have a son following him in the seat. Bill Grayden and Clive Griffiths were always very close, and when Roger Hussey was nominating, I didn't know him from a bar of soap. The person who looked like getting the endorsement was a fellow called Peter Kirwan. Peter was a young bloke in the Swan division, a nice young bloke but I didn't think was up to the task. I was now, you know, pretty senior in the parliamentary party and it was my view the seat should have gone to a person who was going to be a minister or even a Premier, and of all

people out of the blue Bill Hassell telephoned me and asked would I meet him on the subject of the South Perth endorsement, and I did. I think he would have been aware that I was not happy about Peter Kirwan going into the seat, and he said, "I wonder whether you would meet a man whom I think should get the endorsement, and just you make your own assessment." Despite my differences with Bill, I said I would do that and that was the first time I met Roger Hussey. Hussey would have been an outstanding acquisition to the Parliament—just outstanding. Whether he would have gone on to be premier or not, I don't know, but he would have fitted into the ministry the next day. I met with him and then I agreed to do all I could to see that he got the endorsement. He got the endorsement. He started campaigning. He then ran into a problem with both Bill Grayden and Clive Griffiths, because they were reluctant to do anything in the electorate for him or to be seen in support of him. I began advertising with him to, you know, these sorts of things, "Phillip Pendal welcomes Roger Hussey's endorsement" and these appeared in the local papers. But after about three months, Hussey, who'd been in the hard world of business; I mean, he was the bloke who arranged the purchase of WA Newspapers back from the eastern seaboard to the western seaboard. It was a \$300 million deal. But he eventually rang me and he said, "Phillip, I just can't take this any longer. I'm going to pull out." When I asked him why, he explained the reasons that I've just given you. I was then contacted by the acting general secretary of the Liberal Party, Geoff Paddock who said to me, "Phillip, if you're trying to pull the pin on Friday and we're going to have to call nominations again, I think you should be putting your hand up." I remember him saying, "Because, Phillip, we don't want another Floreat here" [laughs]. In other words, "We don't want another independent emerging with a fight over a good seat." I then agreed, but I agreed on the understanding that I would, you know, be given all encouragement and support from all of these factions if I was going to give up my endorsement in the upper house. I found that all of that was not forthcoming, but nonetheless I won the endorsement comfortably. I think there were 28 votes and I might have got 22 or 23 of them in the end. So that was my transferring down to the lower house. I never for a moment thought that it would affect my status as a shadow minister or going into the ministry. It never occurred to me, for example, to go along to Richard Court, who I think by this stage was now the leader, to say, "Richard, I've been helping Roger Hussey at the behest of your friend Bill Hassell. I want to make sure there are no problems about me transferring down." That never occurred to me to do; I can honestly say that. So I transferred down with that expectation that life would go on and that I would go into the ministry there. So that

was the circumstance in which Roger Hussey had to withdraw because he simply wasn't getting the support of other members.

JF            You said once before that you didn't think Grayden was all that happy about your nomination. Can you enlarge on that a little?

**PENDAL**        That was the case and I felt somewhat rebuffed by that, because I'd worked for Bill and I'd given him unstinting support over the years, both out in the branches and when he was a minister of the Crown, and I always learnt from there on that there was a fair level of selfishness attached to Bill Grayden's motives. He was a capable man, a likeable man, an eccentric man, but he had this notion that one of the boys would follow him. I resented that notion, because they were in a box seat to have done that had they done all the preparatory work. They would have known beyond anyone else when Bill was going to retire and they could have worked and positioned themselves actively in the party, but none of them did that. It was as though, you know, the baton would pass from one generation to the next as of right, and I'm certain that Bill resented the fact that I beat, that I helped defeat one of his sons in the pre-selection that Roger Hussey won. Then I myself defeated another of the sons when I got the endorsement. So, I always felt that Bill showed by that he was there for smaller motives, just to look after the family, rather than larger motives of looking after the bigger picture.

END OF TAPE NINE SIDE B

TAPE TEN SIDE A

This is tape 10, side A, in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal, this being recorded on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2007 at Parliament House. The interviewer is John Ferrell.

JF            Phillip, we had spoken about some of your associates in the upper house last week, or the last time we met, and prior to that we'd mentioned some other people within the party. Although you've made numerous references to Barry MacKinnon and advising him when he was leader and things like that, I'd failed to pick up on your relationship with him, and I think, obviously, you were fairly close to Barry. I wonder if you could spend a few minutes telling me about how your association with Barry arose and what it amounted to.

**PENDAL**       Barry MacKinnon's name first came to mean something to me in 1976, as I was about to put my name forward for the Clontarf pre-selection, which I eventually lost by one vote. I was aware that in the seat over the river, a new seat called Murdoch, a fellow called Barry MacKinnon was expected to emerge as the victor, and he did. I always recall being puzzled because of my mistaken belief that Barry MacKinnon was a milkman. It turned out that, amongst other things, he had been the chartered accountant to the Milk Vendors' Association, or some such thing, or had been their advisor. So that was my first mental introduction. When I got into Parliament in 1980, my election coincided with his elevation to the ministry by Sir Charles Court, which was the same time that Bill Hassell became a minister. I always looked at these two men in a different way. I felt that at an intellectual level, Bill Hassell was the front runner. Bill looked, in all respects, a future leader. In many ways I warmed to him more than I did to Barry MacKinnon. Barry was more of a knockabout individual, had had a good education, had an economics or a commerce degree, had been successful in business, but he was a much different, earthier person than Bill Hassell. Therefore, I was always more inclined to take Bill Hassell more seriously than I was Barry MacKinnon. But as the years wore on, I saw in Bill the deficiencies that I thought ultimately mitigated against him, even though I enjoyed the intellectual capacity that Bill brought to his job. On the other hand, Barry MacKinnon always seemed to be this bit of a larrikin, a bit loud. He would walk into a room where five or six of us were gathered and he would slam the door so that everyone in the room jumped. You would know he was there, and he would take great glee at this business of shaking you all up. So that in the end, I came to the belief that Barry MacKinnon, while he looked on the surface to be the more ordinary of the two, he certainly had this earthy, larrikin style, devil-may-

care type approach to life, and I thought that he was, in all respects, a better prospect than Bill Hassell. I always found it, ironically, that with Barry MacKinnon, he was going to make his first move against Bill Hassell after the loss of the 1986 election. I counselled him against it, because I thought it was unfair that Hassell was going to be replaced so quickly, when he had done, really, the best anyone could ever have done in the 1986 election. I opposed Barry MacKinnon even being a candidate. I remember later that year, other of Barry ... so at a time, I suppose, when I wasn't attached to either one of these fellows.

Towards the end of 1986, I think it was, I was told that Barry was going to make a challenge. I again told him, and Clive Griffiths and several other people, that I thought it was silly. Quite apart from anything else, I felt that to make a challenge to Hassell two and a half years out from the next election, by which stage then a new leader would have become old hat, was simply silly tactics. Nonetheless, they went ahead and Bill Hassell was deposed and Barry became the leader. From there on, I think it's true that Barry turned to me for help, I guess because I was willing to give it. From there on, we worked very closely together from '86, right through until '92, when he was deposed in turn by Richard Court.

We went through a lot together. I felt ... there was a lot of resentment on the part of other people in the party, who thought that I had too much say. I never could understand that because I assumed that everyone had the same access to him and everyone had the same capacity to open their mouths and express their views, or to come up with ideas. That was the start of my association with Barry. It was, in the main, harmonious and productive, and a lot of fun attached to it, apart from being a serious time.

JF            When he finally was replaced with Richard Court, your stance was behind him, was it?

**PENDAL**        Yes, it was. I vividly recall the party room coup. Most of us, people like Graham Kierath and myself and Barry Blaikie and other strong MacKinnon supporters, we thought that by the May of 1992 we were past the point at which Richard Court could successfully challenge, because it was too close to the next election. We were wrong. I vividly recall leaving the party room meeting, which was then located next door to the parliamentary library, one morning at about 20 to 11. I whispered to Kierath, who always sat next to me, that I was just going into the library, and I recall, of all things, to read up on the coup that had taken place in South Australia in the last few days, against I think it was John Olsen. So I said to

Kierath, "There's nothing happening here, I'm going next door to the library." Within four or five minutes he came to the library and he was as white as a sheet. He said, "Phillip, it's on." I said, "What are you talking about; it's on?" He said, "They've just started a move against Barry." I was gobsmacked. I followed him back into the room, and Richard Court was on his feet and he paused as I went into the room. Richard then turned to me, as though he sort of should announce it to me again, just like he'd apparently announced it to the party room. He said, "Phil, I'm just letting the party room know that I'm not happy with the state of affairs and that I intend, this morning, to challenge Barry for the leadership." As they say in the classics, "the rest is history", because Court emerged victorious from that. From there on, my position, when I look back on it, was always precarious, although he kept me in a couple of jobs, and then went on to win the next election. But from then on, I should have been aware that my days were basically numbered.

JF            We won't go into the rest of the Richard Court saga yet because I wanted to come back through the affairs of the '80s more. So thank you for bringing us up to date on the MacKinnon relationship, which was the main point of my question.

Now, you being a professional observer of the political scene before even entering Parliament must have had some feelings about the development of what became called "WA Inc". I wondered if we could turn some attention towards that and what you saw at the time, and reflected upon, as being untoward, or in some ways not appropriate action by Burke and his associates, and so on. What's the progress towards WA Inc, as you observed it?

**PENDAL**        My memory is quite a clear one, that of all the people in the Liberal Party room who started to see what was unravelling, it was Bill Hassell. When I look back on that, that's no surprise. Bill had been a minister for one term, he may have still have been leader, he was a lawyer by training, educated at UWA and an English university, articulate, intelligent. He, from my point of view, was the person to begin to see the emergence of things that were happening.

I remember vividly something that was said by one of our frontbenchers against Laurie Connell. Connell, who was a puffed-up little individual, took great umbrage at this and decided that he wanted all members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party to come down and hear his side of the story, and that's what happened. Almost the whole parliamentary party transferred down to the Terrace. There were two people who didn't go. One was Bill Hassell, and I'm pleased to say that the other person

was myself. I even had a go at ... I think MacKinnon was the leader at this stage, and I took Hassell's view that it was not our place to be going down ... that was not to say that we regarded ourselves as being above anyone, but it seemed wrong to be going into the lion's den. So that was one of the things.

For me, it came home on the Sunday morning, and I think it was 27 October 1987, and if not, the Sunday closest to that day. It was a couple of days after the collapse of the world stock markets. It was a pivotal moment for many of us. The Saturday had seen a number of us in Bunbury for the counting of the South West Province by-election, which, thank goodness, we had won, and which MacKinnon had put in a massive effort. I had assisted him to put in the massive effort. It was the first real test of his leadership. We had spent weeks down there and we were exhausted. I recall driving back to Perth on the Sunday morning with my wife and family, thinking, "Thank goodness, we can just get a few days to ourselves."

The phone rang on the Sunday morning. Barry MacKinnon was on the phone. He said, "Would you come into Parliament House?" I think I said something like, "Golly gosh, heavens above", or something to that effect! He said, "Phillip, I know it's a big ask, but I just need your help on a press statement." When I got into the office, it was more than a press statement. He was wanting my view on whether he should respond to Alan Bond's personal request, made to him, I think that morning, that the Liberals come in behind Brian Burke as Premier, to support the \$150 million bailout of Rothwells. This was the dawn of a new era, although we didn't know that at the time.

I remember saying to MacKinnon quite distinctly, because I was probably a bit angry at being pulled in after the South West Province stuff, I said, "Barry you know that high finance, and all this stuff, is not my field. You should be asking the Hassells, the Courts, and these people, they're the ..." He said, "I'm asking you because you don't know a lot about high finance. What do you think about the prospect, the principle involved?" I remember saying to him, "I don't think there's much to decide.

Rothwells is a private, close-to-the-edge merchant bank, and we're not in the business, as Liberals, of propping people ... they're from the private sector. We shouldn't be in that business." I remember something like he snapped a book or a file shut and said, "That's all I need. You can buzz off now", or something like that. In effect, as I found out later, I was confirming to him as a close friend, what Bill Hassell and Richard Court, as distant colleagues, had been saying to him overnight; that there was no way in the world. It later emerged that ... because I was told that there was a lot of church money, Anglican Church money, Uniting Church money and Catholic Church money in Connell; to keep their charitable stuff afloat, they needed

to get the best return for their money. I was still being asked then my opinion, and I said that my opinion was we're not here to prop up errant merchant banks. From that moment on, I can tell you, in the Tuesday in the Parliament we ran a motion in both houses. I recall comments coming back from someone as eminent as Joe Berinson; you need have no fear, the guarantee will never be called upon. To us inexperienced members, we were saying, "Well, if it's not going to be called upon, why do we have to give it?" What it reduced to me was that what had been a mystery to me all my life, this world of high finance and all of this, was not all that mysterious at all. It came down to a bit of commonsense and a few basic principles. That, to me, was the arrival of WA Inc, and it consumed us for the next five years. It was just an amazing period, because then you had, I think, Teachers' Credit Society, then you had PICL, and then the thing blew out until it was bigger than Ben Hur. Something like \$2 000 million of taxpayers' money went down the gurgler. I mean, it's difficult to try and encapsulate it in a couple of minutes, but they were the things that I saw in my own experience that then just dominated everything we did for the next five or six years.

JF            You had encountered Brian Burke as a journalist, I think, prior to entering Parliament. What is his role, and why were so many clever people, whom he had around him, prepared to follow him in such a dicey enterprise as some of the things that he was prepared to embrace?

**PENDAL**        Basically, because Burke ... certainly I think he was inexperienced. When you're inexperienced, you should have sufficient wisdom to know that you don't consult people with similar backgrounds. You go and consult people who can enlighten you, not who can simply back up your prejudices. When I look at it, I don't think Burke, at that stage ... I didn't think a lot of him, incidentally, because I knew him as a young journalist. He always seemed to me to be a lightweight, and that's a strange thing to say. I remember him giving a television news report one night for Channel 7, where he was sitting on a sort of a clothesline, having a pillow fight with someone. God knows what that had to do with television news journalism, but it fixed an image in my mind that that's what Brian was ... that was about his limit. How wrong I was! I realise now, he was a very, very creative individual, a person who developed, before my eyes, this charisma that sort of knocked my socks off because of what other people were saying about him and what the national polls would say about him. So clearly I thought I had been the one who was wrong.

Burke had himself surrounded by people who were not of the traditional public service mould, and was, I think, contemptuous of that group as a group. You had people bobbing up in very senior jobs in government that were people who were just not in the league to advise him correctly. I think one of his colleagues from the days that he used to produce a trotting guide, for God's sake, and sell outside the trotting track to punters; the fellow he used to produce that with was one of the people who was now running the Treasury. I'm not saying that fellow didn't get some qualifications in the meantime, but there was this tribalism about Burke of relying on these people who were simply not up to the task of advising at that high level in government. These were people who had learnt to cut corners. They would sit around, I think, and say to themselves, "Well, we want to get from this point to that point and we'll take a direct line", but traditional public service mechanisms meant that you had to go through processes. You had to go through processes because history showed you that by ignoring processes, you probably got yourself into an awful lot of trouble. I think that was the genesis of Burke's downfall. I don't think he set out, I don't think, to be injurious to the people of Western Australia. I think that he thought he knew it all, and that he was having that reinforced by these other people, who ought to have been in a position, had they been professional public servants, to put the restraining hand on him. Now, whether Burke is ultimately judged to be a terrible person or not, I don't know. I think things are not looking all that flash for him. But this idea that he was probably too young, to start with, as I look back on it, combined with this lack of regard for the civil service and a heavy reliance on people who, like him, were not equipped to deal with high matters of state. So they were, all of a sudden, in the grasp of people like the Laurie Connells and others, who wanted their pound of flesh.

JF            You've mentioned Joe Berinson a few minutes ago as putting the case for what Labor intended to do about the Connell rescue. You wouldn't have thought that a fellow as astute as Joe Berinson would easily let that happen. What's your comment on that?

**PENDAL**        One day I would love to hear Joe's version of all of this, because I've said to you before, and I've said to people over the years, I regard Berinson to have been arguably the best equipped person. Berinson was qualified as a chemist, qualified as a lawyer, he'd been briefly a federal minister, he'd been a very successful state minister. He was at the coalface of all of this. I can't help but think that he was uneasy about all of it. I just can't believe that he would have fallen for a

lot of this stuff. I found him to be a very professional man, a very likeable man. He was put under the pump at the royal commission and seemed to emerge pretty well unscathed from that. I would therefore love, one day, to hear him being interviewed and to see the extent to which, if any, he became a restraining force on Burke. They got along well together, they liked each other, they were very close allies. How he allowed all of this to happen, if indeed he did without protest, is a puzzle continually to me.

JF                There were other people, obviously, around Burke, too, within his ministry who you might have thought would at least strike a note of caution?

**PENDAL**        Well, you would have thought so. I've just, in recent days, been having some discussions with a number of people about a number of these fellow ministers. I wonder where was Malcolm Bryce. Bryce was Deputy Premier. The impression I get is that he was constantly left out of the loop, that he didn't know a lot that was going on. To that, I would then ask, 'What did he ask at the cabinet table about what was going on beyond the cabinet table?' I can say that I had a lot of time for Malcolm Bryce. I was a young journalist when he was a young Labor person on the move, and then he became endorsed for Ascot, so I knew him quite well. I'm uneasy about how it is that someone could be the Deputy Premier, and an exceptionally intelligent man, could have been there at the time and not known what was going on, or at least asked that sort of fabulous question that Jim Hacker asked in *Yes, Minister* of Sir Humphrey: "Can you tell me what it is that I should be asking you, so that I know what it is that I don't know at the present" [chuckles], or something to that effect.

David Parker, an exceptionally bright young fellow. Probably into the ministry too early, at the age of 29. He was Minister for Resource Development, dealing with billions of dollars of investment, and so on. I ask myself, "Did he have his head turned by all of this ego and vanity that was attached to that?" So there were bright people. In many respects it was, academically and intellectually, the brightest lot of state ministers we've seen here in a century. Bob Pearce was another who was in there. Jeff Carr, another well-credentialed person, who I must smile because I'm currently writing a book and being paid for it largely at the behest of Jeff Carr, who is the president of the Royal Perth Golf Club. It's funny how your enemies end up becoming your colleagues.

All of these capable, bright, energetic, young men, and they were mainly men, somehow made such a hash of it. I regret that, because in the end all of that

reflected on all the rest of us as members of Parliament. To the population, we were “politicians, and what else could you expect from them?” So it was a terrible time, and I doubt that there were very many winners, and certainly the taxpayer was a massive loser.

END OF TAPE TEN SIDE A

TAPE TEN SIDE B

This is side B of tape 10; interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal.

JF                   Somewhat of a shadowy figure in the Burke story is Terry Burke, the brother of the Premier. From your perspective, what was his role in all this?

**PENDAL**       Terry was always a bit of a mystery to me as well. He'd gone into Parliament a lot earlier than Brian, in 1968, I think, when I was a journalist at the *Daily News*. So I first met Terry when he was the member for Perth. When he got into trouble with the law on one major thing that became a matter of public record, that's where I met him. Terry Burke, it always puzzled as to why he was satisfied, on Brian's assumption to the office of Premier, with being the Secretary to the Cabinet. Terry Burke was another very capable young bloke. To my knowledge, he didn't have a degree, but his most recent job before getting endorsement had been as associate to Mr Justice Dunphy of the Commonwealth Industrial Court, I think it was. It always seemed to me to be a puzzle that your younger brother would aspire to be, and then become, the Premier, and then you would be content in becoming the cabinet secretary, which really, no matter what they said, was an office job; you know, you arranged the cabinet agenda, and, I suppose, protected Brian's back, and I don't have any problem with that. But I'm just puzzled why somebody like him wouldn't have been a minister.

Now, maybe Terry was concerned about this court case that he had been involved in. It was a matter of public record, where he had run over a pedestrian and the fellow had died, and there was a coroner's inquiry. I think he was either exonerated, or it was an open finding. I sometimes wondered whether Terry felt that that meant he should not seek higher office. I don't know why he would have thought that. Was there, I ask myself, the fear that if he sought higher office, then more questions would have been raised? I don't know. I guess in some respects he was still exposing himself to that risk by being the cabinet secretary, because despite what I said about that role, it was still a fairly high office of state. Terry then, according to the evidence of various royal commissions, emerged as being the person who was lucky enough to get huge donations out of lots of people that he would then send off to the Labor Party. I suppose from a party's point of view, he must have seemed like a magician, because I knew how difficult it was and how ever-present the problem of finance was within lay parties. Terry must have seemed something like a miracle worker, to be bringing in all of this money into the Labor Party.

But you're right, he did seem to be a shadowy sort of fellow, if only because he always seemed to be in the background rather than in the foreground. But that remained a puzzle to me, and it's not been really answered to my satisfaction either.

JF            It's a bit hard to know how to go on from here because there is so much you could chew over about that, but probably we should, at this stage, progress on to cleaning up the mess of WA Inc. Perhaps you could make a comment about how you think Peter Dowding handled the mantle that had been dropped on his shoulders as a sequel to the Burke era?

**PENDAL**        Peter Dowding was another person of enormous capacity. It always was a puzzle to me as to how the devil Peter got to be the Premier, because he got there through Brian Burke's personal manoeuvrings, yet the history of those two families meant that they shouldn't have even been within 1 000 miles of each other. Dowding's father, the Reverend Keith Dowding, had been entirely on the opposite side of the Labor Party to Brian Burke's father, Tom, back there in the '50s. Yet, I understand that it was Burke, you know, personally selecting Dowding and bringing him down from the upper house and getting him ready for his final departure. I would have thought that, given Dowding's capacity and his eminence as a lawyer, that he would have been able to cut to the chase and clean up a lot of this stuff, but it just got worse. I think it's widely accepted that the PICL debacle was essentially one that grew out of the Dowding government, as distinct from the Burke government, therefore I doubt that the Dowding government can separate itself. So it remains, to me, a puzzle. You have these stories that he was in the dark about a lot of this stuff. All I can say is, he must have been a very poor Premier, because that's your job, to be in the light and enlightened about this sort of stuff. To be throwing chairs at people, or losing your temper, as some people led us to believe about him, was really not the response people were looking for. They wanted someone who was going to clean up the mess. But it just seemed to go from bad to worse, to worse. I was always personally angry that in 1989, the only election Dowding won, over MacKinnon, and which then had enormous consequences for me personally, across Western Australia, the Liberals lost by something like 198 votes. I mean, I added it up, and I used to look at this figure every day and the anger within me, the frustration ... I mean, I was one of the ones who led the charge to block supply in 1990, based on this lack of mandate. We actually won the popular vote, and I used to say to some of my colleagues, "There's another reason why we should never have been frightened of one vote, one value." We won the popular vote, but when you added it

up in the few seats that counted, we lost by something like 198 votes. I still shake my head, not anymore in anger, I'm too old for that, but it cost me dearly, apart from what it cost MacKinnon for the premiership.

Dowding; I just think he had so much going for him. I used to envy, I can tell you, the panache that this man brought, the self-assuredness ... this is when he was in the upper house and I was sitting opposite him. I learnt a lot from him because you couldn't help it. He seemed so talented; he was a tall, dark, handsome man, articulate, brainy, but he still made a mess of it. That also remains a bit of a puzzle. I'd love to see his interviews, just like I'd like to see those of Joe Berinson.

JF                    If he'll ever give them.

**PENDAL**            If he'll ever give them.

JF                    Just taking a march forward then: Carmen Lawrence was handed a pretty big ask, to take over after all that. What are your impressions of Carmen Lawrence in the position?

**PENDAL**            At the time I was very impressed with her. I remember one of the things that, we sat down, our strategy group, of which I was a member, Hassell was a member, Barry MacKinnon was a member. When she became Premier in 1990, we had to get our strategy group sitting down to say, "All right, we've got one Premier gone, but we've got the worst of all worlds now; we've got a female as Premier, and she is going to be unbeatable. Heavens above, how are we going to ..." no-one in Australian politics, federal or state, had dealt with a female head of government. What's more, women thought that was just a wonderful thing. I remember one of the things on which I disagreed with Bill Hassell vehemently was that Bill wanted part of our strategy that each time you referred to her, the new Premier, in Parliament or on television or whatever, emphasise that she was an academic. Bill saw that as being ... putting her to the sword. I, who had no academic background whatsoever, thought that it was an appalling suggestion. I said, "Why would we want to drive offside thousands and thousands of people who gained their living at the universities by virtue of their being academics, when the chances were that 50/50 were Liberal voters and were Labor voters?" Thank goodness, Bill's suggestion wasn't taken up there.

Carmen seemed to walk on water until she made the decision for the royal commission. It was the only possible decision she could have made, but we all knew

it was the decision that was going to undo her. She was in a no-win situation. She was being handed the poisoned chalice. It didn't matter, in the end, how good or well-credentialed she was, she was not going to hang onto the premiership. Of course, they changed the premiership, not because they liked the cut of her jib or because they disliked Dowding, it was done entirely to save the bacon of Bob Hawke in the ... it must have been the 1990 federal election. It was a lesson to me, and I used to say it to my colleagues; it was the way in which federal and state politics were invariably intermingled. What happened in one sphere could backfire in another, and vice versa. Here, the federal Labor government of Hawke was going into an election, but when they assessed across Australia, it was going to be lost because of the debacle of WA Inc in WA. A few of their bright sparks had the idea, "Let's get rid of Dowding, cut our losses, get a new Premier; hey, a woman Premier", and that's what they did. She saved Hawke's bacon, but couldn't save her own. That's no great reflection on her. I don't think anyone could have saved that government. But it is ironic, I think, that she was chosen to lead the Western Australian government in order to save the bacon of Hawke, which she did, and then she'd called the royal commission, and then she was as dead in the water from that moment on, even though she was still breathing.

JF            Having raised the name "Lawrence", I wondered whether, since you were in the electorate of South West Metropolitan Province, and later South Perth, whether you had any great amount of dealing with her brother, Bevan?

**PENDAL**        Ironically, I didn't know Bevan at all until the WA Inc era. In the end, Bevan came to my rescue in a big way, which I'll quickly tell you about. Bevan was the leader of this People for Fair and Open Government. "PFOG", we called it. There was himself, there was Professor Martin Webb, there was Paddy O'Brien, and a fourth person whose name escapes me, and it shouldn't. These people were so outraged as citizens, and pretty well credentialed citizens, that they began this PFOG movement. It always stuck in our gullet that they were doing the job of the opposition. We were beavering away here ... I don't think the Lord himself, if he'd been the Leader of the Opposition, could have done any better than MacKinnon. I really don't. But outward perceptions were what counted, and to many people we were a pretty ineffective lot, and even to people on our side, like the Bevan Lawrences. So they started this PFOG thing, and we had this balancing act. We had to keep in touch and keep them onside, but knowing that they were really taking over our job. Silently, we were very, very grumpy about being displaced. But

as things emerged and Bevan became ... for some reason, I seemed to have been seen by Bevan in a reasonably positive light because I wasn't of the Court mould. I don't know if Bevan would see it that way, but I do remember this: I knew my bacon was cooked about the ministry about a month or two out from the '93 election, and this has a Bevan Lawrence punchline. I was looking for someone eminent to launch my campaign, my first campaign as member for South Perth. I think it displays that I had no animosity towards Richard Court. I went to Richard Court and said, "Would you launch my campaign?" He said, "Sure." I gave the dates to the appropriate person and it was set up for a Saturday night in South Perth.

About two weeks out from this function his office told me that he couldn't be there. I should have woken up that this was the first sign of the cold shoulder, but I was very angry because I think we'd had invitations printed. I then went to Bill Hassell, who had, by now, almost reinvented himself, and the terrific work he had done in exposing WA Inc ... and even Barry MacKinnon would acknowledge that. So I went to Bill Hassell and said, "I want you to come over and launch my campaign." Well, Bill found that he couldn't do it either, so I started to feel like I needed to check my deodorant or something or what it was that was driving all these blokes away. [chuckles] So I was in a real bind. There were people standing against me, one of Grayden's sons, and so I had this uneasy feeling that, heavens above, I might not only not end up in the ministry, but I might end up out of Parliament.

So I hit on Bevan Lawrence, and when I contacted his office, they said, "He's not here." I said, "But he'll be back, if you could let him know", and they said, "No, he's gone to Aspen, Colorado, to ski." To cut a long story short, I think I rang him in Aspen, maybe faxed him, and said, "Would you launch my campaign?" Thank God, he faxed back, or phoned back, and said, "I'd be happy to and I'll ...", I've got an idea he returned home early. But I was so grateful because I was in some danger of having the doorman having to launch my campaign, and I feared for that.

So Bevan came back; this got quite a lot of publicity. Bevan, by now, was being seen as being, sort of, offside with a lot of the Liberal leadership. There was this sense, I think, of me being over there somewhere with him, by dint of him coming home to launch my campaign. Anyway, he came home and launched my campaign and I was ever-grateful. Because of his status at the time in that PFOG movement, and of course his status as the brother of the Premier, it was a fabulous boost to me that he did agree. But it was certainly a campaign launch that was being turned down by an awful lot of people until we struck gold with him. [laughs]

JF            So about his People for Fair and Open Government: did you have anything more than a peripheral association with them, or ...

**PENDAL**        I certainly made it my business to turn up to their meetings; one was in South Perth, where were 2 000 or 3 000 people in the civic centre. Literally, there were people hanging out the windows and the balconies. It was a massive turnout. I can't say that I was ever central to their thinking, but I do know that people like Martin Webb and Bevan and Paddy O'Brien, I think they gained a certain regard for me. I know that during 1990, when we ran the "Save our State" campaign, which was largely the creation of Bill Hassell, to try and expose some of the things about the PICL deal, I was sort of somewhat resurrected by this Hassell movement because I was one of the speakers chosen to go out around the state and speak. I remember, on one occasion, sharing a platform with Paddy O'Brien at the Melville Senior High School hall, where a big lot of people turned out. He and I were the main speakers. The reason that sticks in my mind is that Paddy asked me would I mind picking him up to go to the function. I didn't think anything of that at the time, so I drove to Claremont to pick him up, and then I realised ... and I don't think it's any secret; Paddy, a brilliant, lovely man, a beautiful man, I loved him like a brother, but he had an awful trouble with alcohol. We got to this meeting and we were sitting on the stage, just the two of us, with a table in front of us, and out from his right-hand coat pocket came a bottle of port; it sat on the table. Out from his left came a glass, and he put that in front of him. This was in front of the meeting. He was perfectly coherent and powerful all through this meeting, but with the aid of a bottle of port and this glass. Well, I tell you, it showed me a new side of public life. No-one else could have got away with it, except Paddy.

To get back to your point, I did, sort of, have this sort of ... I enjoyed Martin Webb's company, and he would often come to me for help or guidance in the political scene. So I got to like and respect these fellows, although deep in my heart I resented the fact that they were the ones getting all of the credit, if you like, for putting the pressure on the Carmen Lawrence government. It did make us feel pretty inadequate, even though I think there were five or six people in the opposition at the time, whether it was the Hassells, the Richard Courts, the Barry MacKinnons, and then a few lesser lights like me, I thought that given the circumstances, we actually did a pretty manful job, but they were still getting all of the credit and the attention.

JF            Can you pinpoint any more clearly why you didn't have more traction as an opposition at that time?

**PENDAL** Yes, I can. It is the perennial disease that is suffered by oppositions throughout history. I recall, as a young journalist in about 1969 or '70, my editor, Dan O'Sullivan, saying on a particular issue, "Don't worry about the opposition, son", he said to me one day, "We are the opposition. The opposition are hopeless." He was then referring to the John Tonkin opposition; "They're hopeless. We are the opposition." When I look at ...

JF Meaning the newspaper ...

**PENDAL** Yes, exactly. Newspapers invariably see themselves that way, in that exalted role. You see it coming through in the media in Western Australia now. It was present on every single occasion that I know of in state politics for the last 30 years, and I've seen it happen federally. I mean, Rudd has certainly turned things around for the Labor Party and is destined now to be the Prime Minister, but this time last year, no-one would give you two bob for Kim Beazley and the Labor opposition. I think being in opposition is, certainly in politics, the very worst place to be. I was asked on the *7.30 Report* one night, by Kim Jordan, who later went on to be the producer of *Four Corners*, and he's always been a good friend of mine. I was being interviewed about this lack of traction, to use your word, of Barry MacKinnon when he was leader, and Barry was still leader. Kim Jordan asked me a question then, "What do you need to make Barry MacKinnon look like he's a viable Premier?" I remember saying to him, "You confer on him the office." Just as some people say "clothes maketh the man", so does the office make a man or a woman. Without that office, a person can look pretty naked. I think you will have seen it in your profession over the years. Someone might look a fairly ordinary, pedestrian person, and then someone finds themselves ... that person is the principal of a school, say, and the office exalts a person. The same in politics. It focuses attention on a person. It puts people in a position of hope when they listen to that person, that they sort of ... you, John Ferrell, as principal, know more about the subject of teaching their children than other teachers, because why? Because John is the principal of our school. I think that's very much in the political mode. So it's a desolate time, to be in opposition, but oppositions always lack traction because they always look no-hopers because they haven't got that aura of office that's settled on them.

JF To be a bit reflective for the last few moments and to answer a difficult question shortly, what do you say to the proposition, then, that the whole idea of an

adversarial Parliament ought to be replaced by something where people are working together to a common end?

**PENDAL** Well, it's interesting, because if I remember correctly, Geoff Gallop came into the Parliament with something of that view. He used to say, I think, that the very layout of our parliamentary chambers, where you glare across the room at each other, where you speak across the room glaring at each other, was a different set up, for example, than if you go to a republican system or a congressional system, where in the United States, in their congress and their state legislatures, to speak, you go out to the lectern. Therefore, psychologically, you're seen not to be on the other side when you're speaking, but you're effectively standing in the middle. Now, I can follow Geoff's logic there and I can see what you're driving at, but then I ask myself the question, "Would we think that, say, the American congressional system or the republican system produces a better outcome than we do?" I don't think it does. I do think this adversarial mode has become elevated in the past 50 or 60 years. I look back at people and think ... not that I knew them ... I don't think Curtin would have made the grade today. Yet, he did then. There wasn't that onslaught of television, the ever-present, every time someone breathes or ... so I think the adversarial system is not making for good government. I'm not sure, though, how we alter it, because the American, or congressional, system doesn't seem to produce something better, and you don't seem to be able to go backwards in this sort of human activity.

JF Yes, thank you.

END OF TAPE TEN SIDE B

## TAPE ELEVEN SIDE A

This is tape 11, side A, in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip George Pendal, this being recorded on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2007 at Parliament House, Perth, the interviewer being John Ferrell.

JF            Phillip, in our discussion last week, you referred to something that you called a "Liberal Party strategy group", of which you were part, under Barry MacKinnon. I just thought that maybe there is something to be said about the composition of that group and some of the things that it addressed.

**PENDAL**        The strategy group certainly comprised Barry MacKinnon. It would have comprised Richard Court; I think George Cash from the upper house, who was always regarded as being good on those things; myself. I start to begin to struggle there, not because the other people don't stand out, but memory starts to fail me. Certainly I recall those four of us. Our job, principally, was to meet on a regular basis. It was usually a group that met separate from the shadow cabinet, and it was largely its role to address some of the bigger issues of the day and how we might respond, either in Parliament or in the media, to them. Bill Hassell was certainly part of it prior to his retirement. For example, I think I've mentioned earlier where Bill was advocating, in the case of the transition to Carmen Lawrence, that we concentrate on the fact that she was an academic. Generally speaking, Bill Hassell's overview on these things was always a good one. He was certainly a good big picture man when it came to things like that. I didn't always agree with him, but I felt that he had a good strategic overview. Bill was certainly part of that group, and it may be that I can think of other members later, but it was this job, separate from the shadow cabinet, really trying to pick up the greater issues of the day and where we should take them.

JF            I wondered about some of the specific decisions they made on particular issues. For example, was the supply question, and the action taken, discussed by them, or was the strategy planned by them or ...

**PENDAL**        I'd be fairly certain in saying that the blockage of supply in 1990 would have come before that committee. While I have no recollection of Bill's attitude, I would say that he would be more inclined to support any such action than he would have been to decline that path. As I look back on it, the way it was handled, in its detail, was not well thought out at all, even though it did have a number of us

delegated to follow through important lines of inquiry. For example, I was dispatched to see ex-Senator Reg Withers, who had been the fellow, effectively, to have brought Whitlam down in the Senate. I recall having some long discussions with Reg Withers about how we might proceed in this regard. The attempt in 1990, which I still believe was justified given the magnitude of the outcome of WA Inc and given that the 1989 election was decided, effectively, on a lie that had been told by a senior minister, I still believed that the blockage of supply was justified, and that if you couldn't justify it in those circumstances, there would never be an occasion on which you could justify it. I had felt quite strongly about that. The problem was that I was probably its chief advocate in the upper house, and I had people like Norman Moore and George Cash, and others, who didn't want to have a bar of it. Eventually we went to a division because I wanted to be on record, and eventually those people voted with the Labor government to keep them in office. They certainly didn't like that, but it was important that that occur. Why all of these people felt that way, I was puzzled, but in the end I rather felt that they were frightened of the prospect of seeing MacKinnon emerge victorious. We were being told ... I was being told by people like Peter Jones, the state president, "Don't go down this path. The polls show that we can't win." My response to that was I didn't believe that, but even if we did not win, we would at least go on the permanent public record as showing that we did our duty. There was too much division in the Parliamentary Liberal Party between the two houses and between members in the upper house itself for it ever to have been remotely successful. Now that's my assessment now; at the time, when I was pushing for it, things appeared differently. That's, of course, the nature of man, that you learn lots of things with the benefit of hindsight.

JF            Had you originated the idea in the party room or had it come from somewhere else and you just espoused it?

**PENDAL**        As far as I recall, I had instigated it. I had instigated it largely out of the understanding that I'd gained from Bill Hassell about a certain assurance that we believed David Parker, as Minister for Resources, had given in the election campaign ... I think I'm right here in saying that the Labor government had not underwritten the PICL deal. In the February following the election, we found a letter in existence, a handwritten letter from David Parker, to say that he had underwritten it. That, to me, changed the entire view. I was certainly still angry at the outcome of the election, but this now ramped up the whole thing. At some point Bill Hassell had come to the

shadow cabinet with a program that was eventually to be called "Save our State", and it was based around the production of a very large document with a black cover, called *The Big Con*; how we believed the people had been conned, prior to the election, into believing that the Dowding government was cleaning up the mess. Hassell was the author and the creator of that entire program, he brought it to the shadow cabinet, he brought it to the party room, it was eventually endorsed, the state party eventually produced this quite impressive document. Hassell led that fight, and people like myself were invited in to be part of the speakers who went around Western Australia, as, I think, a prelude to the possibility of refusing supply. So that's why I think that Bill Hassell would, by and large, have been a supporter of blockage. In the end, members were given some sort of a free vote in the upper house, which effectively allowed an out on the part of the people who didn't want to go down that path.

JF            You were in the upper house for a considerable period of time. What other issues that we have not discussed do you think you should bring forward and talk about in the context of those last few years in the upper house? I mean ...

**PENDAL**        The last few years in the upper house were just more of the same. They were, at one level, very exciting, exuberant times, but all of them tended to focus around this whole question of WA Inc. When I look back on it, I just don't think we ... either side of politics didn't do very much in those years, other than concentrate on the WA Inc issues. I recall one that I became especially involved in. I was contacted by a very senior person in the public service from the state archives or record side of things, and where I had to meet this person under cover of darkness. It sounds terribly colourful. I was asked whether I understood the impact of legislation that was being put through by the government, I think, that affected the Royal Commissions Act that had an impact on the destruction of important state documents and records. The reality was, when they confronted me with this at this moonlight meeting, as it were, I had no idea, and there was no reason why I would have any idea because the legislation had not yet come to Parliament. It was put to me because I was, at that time, shadow Minister for Cultural Affairs, amongst other things. In the ordinary course of events, for a shadow minister in a Liberal team to go back and start talking about the cultural value of documents, you would have been put out into the corridor and asked to take a walk. Once the shadow cabinet and the leadership group and the MacKinnons and the Hassells, and

in particular Peter Foss, who was, by now, elected to the upper house, I think in '89, Peter Foss understood precisely, once he was brought into the scene, the appalling nature of what was about to happen. In the end, we were able to block the legislation. This was all directly related to WA Inc. The legislation went back to the lower house, and by now the lower house was in the control of a group of Independents. The Lawrence government had lost its majority. They were in desperate straits. In the crossbenches were people like Liz Constable, Ian Alexander by now; I think Ian Thompson was now an Independent Liberal. The place was a shambles. When my amendments went back to the lower house, the Independents in the lower house actually managed to suspend the operations of the lower house, and they requested that a group of us, including myself, go up to the big room which is now the Parliamentary Library, but which was then just a cavernous place that no-one ever went to. They wanted to know from us whether it was us playing politics, or whether it was a substantial fear about the prospective destruction of these records. The result was that they went back into the lower house convinced by our arguments, and the legislation, if I remember correctly, was defeated, or it was sent back to the upper house, saying that they would go along with the amendments that I had moved. From a seemingly insignificant piece of legislation connected with state records, the whole of the WA Inc thing was resurrected once again through this legislation and we won the day.

JF                    Can you recall the name of the bill concerned?

**PENDAL**            I can, because it was the Royal Commissions (Custody of Records) Bill, or something of that nature. I recall Berinson, who was a very good lawyer, he found me out because I had ... and it's coming back to me now ... I had moved an amendment that we would accept the legislation providing no record, no state record, was destroyed without first being referred to, and the destruction sanctioned by, the state archivist. You might say that sounds pretty straightforward. The only problem was that Berinson then discovered that, by statute, there was no such body as the state archivist in a statutory sense. We did have one, it was a man called Chris Coggan, but it wasn't a statutory office. I'm not sure whether I then altered my amendment or not, because it was the days before we had a State Record Office, but in any event it became a pivotal matter. I recall running the argument that when totalitarian leaders like Hitler wanted to protect themselves from future generations, they set about the burning of records. We were able, without extravagance, to make

out the argument that that's precisely what was happening here, and it was something that grew out of this night-time meeting that I had to have with this very senior member of the state bureaucracy who alerted us to what was going on.

JF           Who, I imagine, must remain anonymous because of the way you've put it?

**PENDAL**     Yes. The person has never been identified, although I certainly have the name vividly in ... and for the protection of that person, it's probably best that I don't disclose that.

JF           That was quite a big issue to come out of my question. [laughs] I wonder if there are any others lurking there that I don't know about that I could ask about or should ask about. I'm doing a Humphrey now, aren't I ... sorry, a Jim Hacker now.

**PENDAL**     Yes, look, there are probably many, and I perhaps should have consulted the memoirs that I've actually written before I had the interview, but that certainly was one of the principal ones. I know that I got involved, very briefly, in a matter again to do with WA Inc and the conduct of Julian Grill. One Sunday night, unannounced, a constituent banged on my door and asked to come in. I knew this person; he was a senior executive of a coalmining company. Through various surreptitious means, because of the way in which the WA Inc rescue packages had been going on, this fellow's company had found \$6 million of their money taken out of their account, effectively by the government through the R and I Bank in Collie. Now, I mean, I could barely believe my ears, and if it had been anyone else other than this man, I would have thought he'd had too much to drink on Sunday night and shuffled him out of my home. It was a very complex issue, and I eventually went in and saw Barry MacKinnon, and then the strategy committee was brought in to learn of this, and it turned out to be true, as a result of which, Barry MacKinnon held a major press conference in Parliament House. I mention that because it was one of those that at least I was involved in directly, rather than indirectly. I was involved in many of these issues simply by being a member of the strategy group, but not as intimately involved as in the two that I have just mentioned.

JF                So that was a situation a bit like the forced Royal loans of old Britain, where the King could command somebody's resources for his own purposes?

**PENDAL**        That sounds like a good analogy, because that's what occurred. Yet when this man was explaining it to me, were it not for him being a reputable, sober individual, I would have said to him, "Look, don't waste my time with silly stories because things like that don't happen in a parliamentary democracy. They just don't happen." Well, they did happen, and I felt incredulous then, and I've got to tell you, 20 years later I still feel a sense of incredulity that such things could happen, and so did the Royal Commission, once it got its teeth into those things.

JF                Moving away then - well, yes ... in the last ... seeing we're going to move away from the upper house period; what's your assessment of your time in the upper house? What do you see as your chief achievements and what did you learn from it, and so on?

**PENDAL**        Well, I went away from there terribly let down over this question of supply. Again, I didn't do that lightly, and I felt that if ever there was an occasion when it was warranted, the aftermath of WA Inc was such an occasion. I remember expressing the view openly and publicly for a long time that it effectively destroyed the long-held Liberal argument for the retention of an upper house. My point being to some of these colleagues that when the time arose when it was lawful and justifiable for you, the conservative elements of the Liberal Party, when you should have acted, and the fact that you didn't act, tells me that our justification for having an upper house was fast disappearing. To a large extent I still feel that today. It converted me from being an orthodox, conservative supporter of an upper house system. I'm not sure, if it came to a push and a shove today, where I would fall on the issue. I know that it seriously eroded my belief that having an upper house was of any consequence at all. It did have that impact.

For the most part, my time in the upper house, I just saw it as a time of extraordinary learning. It was learning on the job; there were no manuals, really, that could help you. It did underscore, too, the view that I had developed, that the power to express your view publicly is a mighty power to have in a democracy, that you may not win, but that facility was something that was enormous. The irony was that in many of those years we had the numbers in the upper house over and above the Labor Party. Having those numbers over and above the Labor Party actually did instil into you a

sense of responsibility that might be akin to the headmaster who always had the cane in the cupboard, but hoped that he would never have to use it. They were just really fabulous years of learning some of those quite important principles of parliamentary democracy. By and large, it was a wonderful period for me.

JF           What about making reference to some of the staff members who were important to you, and from whom you may have learned things in the course of that time in the upper house?

**PENDAL**       Of course, I'd come back again principally to the late Laurie Marquet, who, sadly, ended up in a very parlous situation, but who was a great teacher. We were much the same age. He had had this very fine education, and I learnt an enormous amount from him. There were other people who were valuable; Les Hoft, who was his deputy but who never got to go into the Clerk's role, was another man I recall. Ian Allnutt was another who was unfailingly helpful. All of the staff, you couldn't fault, because no matter whether you were talking to one of the house messengers or someone on the switchboard, or someone who was the front door gatekeeper or the Clerk of the upper house, these people, I found, to a man and woman, enormously good at their work; loyal, innovative. Principally, I'd have to say, through those years, Laurie Marquet. I'd had that brief experience, when I was on the founding Standing Committee on Government Agencies, of being largely responsible for getting the appointment of Dr Martin Forrest, with whom I'd previously worked on our executive committee. He was another fellow who brought this huge store of academic information with him, and apart from him being a friend, he was also a great teacher, and his subsequent life in government around the world has gone on to show that. So they were, to a person, very, very competent and loyal people.

JF           For a moment, reflect on the library as it existed in those days, because I think it's been upgraded somewhat since.

**PENDAL**       The library was very much a modest affair. It was on the eastern side of the building, overlooking the city, in the centre of the building on the second floor. You would walk in and immediately see the Chief Parliamentary Librarian, who today has a fine office tucked away somewhere, but quite a different physical layout. It was a small library, but it was always staffed, again, by very competent people, to whom

you could turn. These were the days before we had research officers ourselves, and so you relied on them a lot. It was a day when they had a very good collection of regional and interstate newspapers from other capital cities. Most members who visited the library would visit to see the huge newspaper collection, but there were lots of us who visited it for the pure library services. It was small, but it was effective. I think it would be true to say that if you looked today at the library's budget and its staff numbers, they would be quite out of proportion. The growth would be quite out of proportion to other growth within Parliament House. I'd say that's quite properly the case, too. We have a superb library now, staffed with many more people with a lot of expertise, and a huge physical area that it covers, but quite different from what was a modest, small library when I came in, in 1980.

JF            Phillip, just quickly can you reflect on what the house was like as a workplace in those days of your upper house career?

**PENDAL**        Parliament then, as now, was grossly overcrowded. It later became a sticking point with me, and in a few speeches here and there I pointed out what I still think is the scandalous nature of Parliament not having been extended in size, and instead governments and Parliaments spending huge sums of money hiring office space nearby us in West Perth, instead of taking the hard political decision to expand the house. Successive governments, Liberal and Labor, have been neglectful in that, and I think that's been to a great detriment to the Parliament. \$100 million should have been spent, at least, on an expansion and saving these dreadful rents that they continue to pay in West Perth.

JF            Where would you expand it, just briefly, if you had the money?

**PENDAL**        There were a number of plans put up that came to the Parliament; three or four in the time I was here. Certainly you could expand by going to either end, to the south and to the north, and there were plans where you could take extensions across Harvest Terrace, and, by dint of that, having to close Harvest Terrace, which, incidentally, is a road that, technically, has been closed for something like 35 years, but it continues to run. There is plenty of space and scope for that to occur, we just haven't had any Premier who has had the political courage to do the right thing and to save taxpayers' money.

TAPE ELEVEN SIDE A

PENDAL

END OF TAPE ELEVEN SIDE A

## TAPE ELEVEN SIDE B

This is tape 11, side B, of interviews with Hon Phillip Pandal.

JF            We're continuing to speak about the situation of Parliament House needing to be extended.

**PENDAL**        I recall, on one occasion, trying to convince Richard Court that it was in his interests to spend that money. I had asked a series of questions, which would still be on the notice paper or in *Hansard*, asking each minister what they and their departments paid each year in rental premises for their ministerial offices around the city. Armed with that aggregate amount of what we were paying for rented premises, I was able to go to a friend of mine who was in partnership with my brother in a merchant bank in West Perth. I wanted him to compute how much money I could borrow to build an extension if I had X amount of dollars; that is, the amount the ministers had told me, to do a repayment of the loan. I was able to go back and show Richard Court, and I subsequently ran the argument when Geoff Gallop became the Premier, that you could have major extensions to Parliament House for virtually no extra outlay by this method. Now, they well knew that. Indeed, one of the first things, now I recall, when Geoff Gallop took office, one of the first things I did when Parliament resumed was to put on the notice paper a move for a select committee of inquiry into this very issue that I have just related to you. I felt, rather stupidly with hindsight, that the Gallop government was going to embrace this as a way of getting the extensions, but with someone else taking the political odium. I recall some months later, when nothing had happened with my notice of motion, John Kobelke told me, as Leader of the House, that they weren't going to support it. Without their support, of course, it couldn't go anywhere. This press of mine came over the lifetime of both the Court Government and the Gallop Government. There have only been two Premiers in the entire history of the Western Australian Parliament since 1890, who have showed real courage about Parliament. The first was John Forrest, and he was responsible for the hard decision to build this present building. The second of any courage was the Labor Premier, Bert Hawke, in the early 1950s, who took the tough decision to complete the building by putting on the city, or eastern, facade, and it was a big decision. So only those two men had the courage to do the right thing in the face of what they thought might have been a lot of public and press anger to the contrary.

JF            Thanks for that. So we have actually strayed into your time in the lower house a little bit, but the issue straddles both eras. Before we go into the lower

house, though, there were ... you were on the inside, or you were knowing about the coups to Hassell and MacKinnon from being part of the party. I wonder if you could just give me some background, perhaps, into the coup, particularly against both of those gentlemen? Who was organising what and how was it done, and was it generally known, for example, that this was happening, or was it just small groups of people planning or ...

**PENDAL** You mean in the case of Hassell, and then MacKinnon?

JF In the case of Hassell, and then MacKinnon, yes.

**PENDAL** In the case of Hassell, I had been one of those, after the 1986 election, to oppose any move against Hassell for reasons that I have outlined earlier; that is, that in my opinion no-one could have done better against Brian Burke. Even though I wasn't close to Hassell, even though I was closer to MacKinnon, I didn't believe that we should have a change. In about October or November of that year, I remember picking up, opening *The West Australian* one Tuesday morning and finding on it, on the front page, that there would be a coup, or a move against Hassell's leadership the following Tuesday. Notwithstanding that I still opposed that, I rang Clive Griffiths at his home and I said, "I've just read the newspaper." That was the first I had seen of it because I was not privy to it. I said, "Is it correct?" He all but confirmed that the move was going to take place. I remember saying to him, "You know my views on this, but those views aside, if you're going to do something, you must do it today. To drag this out another seven days will wreck the Liberal Party." I remember giving him that advice. I wasn't against any change, but I believed that to make a change nine months after an election, and therefore two years and three months before the next election, would make any new leader pretty well old hat and damaged goods before the election day occurred. But I also believed that Hassell deserved a bit better, and it was only nine months into the year of 1989. Nonetheless, Griffiths took my point. Anyway, I hung up and I did nothing more, but by the time I'd arrived at Parliament House for the meeting at 10 o'clock that morning, I was stopped outside by Griffiths, who said that that had been good advice ... not that I'd meant it to be good advice ... but they could see that the damage, if it was elongated over a seven-day period. So the coup took place. The irony was that afterwards, when I was called in by Bill Hassell to learn ... no, I couldn't have been called ... by now, I was not in the shadow cabinet, I had been dropped in the February, which I found rather ironic and very unjust, given that, in effect, I was defending Hassell's position, and all of these other people, who had been ultimate MacKinnon supporters, were, effectively, being rewarded. So it's a strange ... I soon

got to learn that you got blamed for things in politics you didn't do, and the reverse. When it came to Hassell leaving, he was replaced by MacKinnon. It was an awful few moments because the film *Zorba the Greek* came back to me in a scene in Hassell's office as he was moving out. It was the scene where the old woman in this Greek village had died, and everyone descended on her house and stripped it of every bit of furniture. When I went to MacKinnon's office, which up until an hour before had been Hassell's, that's what was going on. That's my recollection of this stripping bare, of just people shifting things out. It gave me that awful recollection of this scene in *Zorba the Greek*. Hassell, at his request, was not put into the shadow cabinet, but he later rejoined and he came back as a valued member. I often think what might have happened if Bill had not decided to retire in 1992-93, and had gone on perhaps to become a very good Attorney General, but he didn't, and that was his decision. So that was the coup of 1986.

JF           It interests me that you, as a person who have identified yourself as not particularly a Hassell supporter, not an overly strong Hassell supporter, were unaware that this was happening. They don't canvass very widely, these people, in constructing a coup.

**PENDAL**       No, that's a good question, but the reason that they hadn't canvassed me was that they knew my attitude towards it.

JF           The previous time?

**PENDAL**       Yes. Once the 1986 election was out of the way, normally a party will meet and reconfirm its leader or do what it wants to do. I had made clear my view that even though I wasn't what they called a "rusted-on Hassell supporter", I felt that it would be unfair to replace him in the February of that year. I also had that other motivation of saying that it was silly to have a new leader being elected two or three years out from an election. So the people who were in the position to mount the challenge to Hassell knew what my attitude was. I can't ever remember talking about it with Barry MacKinnon directly. Barry was not one of these, sort of, plotting, secretive manipulative type of persons, but there were others who did take the view that there should be a change immediately. So through that year it must have puzzled them a bit that I was unreceptive, because by now I was out of the shadow cabinet. I think I have got my sequences right. So from about February through until October-November, I was back on the backbench. Bill had found it quite hard to give me the sack, and as a matter of fact I remember having said to him, "Well, for goodness sake, at least tell the public that I'm getting the sack because I'm having a rest after this aneurism problem that I have had a couple of years before." In the

end, Bill made my landing a reasonably soft landing and there wasn't too much embarrassment about being sacked by him. Again, the reason that his detractors never came near me, or alerted me, was because they already knew my view about replacing him at a time that was just not sensible.

JF            Could we look at the other one; the replacement of Barry MacKinnon with Richard Court? What did you know about that in advance and how did that transpire?

**PENDAL**        I even knew less about that than I did about the other. The irony was that after MacKinnon was elected leader, I did become a rusted-on MacKinnon supporter. I mean, MacKinnon would have been entitled, at that time, to have said, "You didn't help me become the leader", or, "You didn't put in much of an effort, so I am certainly not going to give you a promotion", but I think he understood that I was genuine about those views that I'd expressed. From pretty well that moment on I was as rusted on as you could get as a supporter. I guess it says something about my lack of skills, or stupidity or something, that here it was, three or four years or five years later, that another coup was in the making and it was like I'd walked across the highway without looking to the left and right, because I was just bowled over. Early in 1992, we in the MacKinnon camp believed that we'd pretty well weathered the storm and that there couldn't be a challenge after early 1992, because it was becoming too close to the 1993 scheduled election. I recall flying back from, I think Brisbane, from some conference and reading a *Bulletin* poll on the plane, and my heart just skipped a beat because it was, you know, Libs not performing in the West, or something like this, so it pretty well painted a very gloomy picture for Barry MacKinnon.

Nonetheless, we had introduced an announcement program that I had created for Barry MacKinnon called "*Liberal Horizons 2000 and Beyond*". I must say, 2000 and beyond seemed like eons away, and now of course I've lived past it and that's seven years ago. These were a series of major announcements intended to try and lift MacKinnon's profile and his stature. There were only about seven or eight, but it became a heavy program. One of them was to be a major initiative on the issue of Alzheimer's research, and so on, to make Western Australia a centre of excellence the world around, but just things that would lift the politics out of the ordinary. By then, early 1993, despite the polls, we sort of had a feeling that we might have been over the worst. Then one morning I was in the party room, and I think I've mentioned it, but I'll just briefly mention it; I said to Graham Kierath, who I was sitting next to, that I was going into the library to check on John Olsen's coup in South Australia the previous week, and I said I'd be in the library if I was needed. Within about three

minutes they sent a message to say "You're needed alright, it's on." I remember walking into the room, Richard Court was on his feet, and he turned around and he addressed me as I walked in. He said, "Phil, I just want to let you know I've told Barry and my colleagues that I intend to mount a challenge." So I certainly knew nothing about that one, and within the space of an hour it had all happened again. So, by now, I was getting to be an expert in unexpected coups [chuckles]. I can sort of laugh about it now, but they were very painful experiences at the time. They were awful, humiliating experiences for everyone.

JF           What was your impression and relationship, even, with Richard Court before the 1993 era?

**PENDAL**       I had what I'd call an "amiable" relationship with him. I recall on one occasion after his election, when he replaced his father, my wife and I had him and a female friend of his around to a dinner party on one occasion. I worked well enough with him in the parliamentary party. I would never say we were close. I saw him as an amiable individual. I never saw, however, that he had any magical parts of his character that would take us into government. I thought he was very one-dimensional, as being a man who, a bit like his dad, would sort of talk about the most important thing was to get the economy going and that private enterprise was the font of all that was good and knowledgeable. Richard never, to me, came across as being anyone especially visionary. I just knew him as a colleague who was amiable; I treated him civilly, and vice versa. I thought that he had actually had some respect for the work that I had done in the party, which was not to be the case as it turned out. So it was, in summary, a good working, civil relationship that I had with him, without being in any way matey.

JF           His support within the Parliament, it must have been strong enough to get him into the seat eventually in place of MacKinnon, but how do you think he was generally regarded?

**PENDAL**       I say this now and without acrimony; if his name had been Richard Smith, he would never have got into the leadership. I think he would have got into a cabinet and he would have been a reasonably solid, middle-ranking cabinet minister. I happen to take the view that his entire promotion was due to the fact that he was Charles Court's son. He was close to Bill Hassell; he was close to Peter Jones. I'm utterly convinced that he would have gone no higher than being a successful middle order cabinet minister. I'm sure that as the MacKinnon years wore on and MacKinnon struggled, that people like Hassell saw an opportunity to get some payback by helping Richard to the leadership. Peter Jones, another influential figure,

was a rusted-on Charles Court supporter. Indeed, both of those men, Peter Jones and Sir Charles, called me into their offices individually. Peter Jones asked me straight out to swap my support from MacKinnon to Richard. I argued with him to show me the sense of replacing one leader - that is, MacKinnon, who had a 30 per cent approval rating - with another leader who had a 30 per cent approval rating. I remember saying to Peter, "If you were showing me that Richard was something of a Bob Hawke and he was going to put us into government without any problems, then I would be the first to go to MacKinnon and say, 'Barry, the game's up, you should give the game away.'" I couldn't see the point of replacing one poorly-performing leader with another poorly-performing leader, especially when I had had a lot of respect for ... MacKinnon was a very tough character in his own way, a decisive and a good man. So I had to tell Peter, who was the state president, "No, I'm not going to swap my vote." A little bit later, I was invited to go down and have morning tea with Sir Charles at his offices that he had resumed at Hendry, Ray and Court. I'd known Sir Charles for years, of course, and I'd worked for him. In the end, Charlie couldn't bring himself to raise the issue, even, that had taken me there. I remember leaving Barry MacKinnon's office, saying, "I'm off now, I'm down to see Charlie, and we both know what he's going to do", and MacKinnon said, "Will you let me know immediately it's over, and what's happened?" I came back within an hour and he said, "What happened?" I said, "Nothing happened." He said, "No, no, but I mean what happened when Charlie asked you to do certain things?" I said, "He didn't ask me." Sir Charles got cold feet. Now, why he got cold feet, I never, ever got around to asking him. We sort of hedged around each other, and I may have obliquely been talking in the terms that I have just talked about; that is, the sense of replacing one low performing or low-rating leader with another one. Again, that was difficult, but as I look back on it now, they certainly made me pay the price for it.

JF           What about, then, your decision to go into the lower house? Why did that look such a good move in this climate?

**PENDAL**       It didn't look all that much of a good move, in the sense that I had been re-endorsed in the May of 1992. That had followed the coup, which I think was round about the same time. I had been re-endorsed into the upper house, at number two on the ticket following Griffiths, so therefore I knew that I'd be re-elected. I had the ambition still to become leader in the upper house and go into the ministry. It was after my re-endorsement for the upper house that the endorsement of Roger Hussey for the lower house seat of South Perth had all fallen apart. He had been, by all accounts, an outstanding potential member and an outstanding potential minister.

But he resigned through the lack of support from other members of Parliament in the district, and he felt he just couldn't go on. It was when the Liberal Party, through Geoff Paddick, then contacted me and said, "The seat's going to be thrown open again, you've got to put your name forward." He said, "We cannot afford another Floreat", and I subsequently got the endorsement in, I think, probably round about June or July of 1992. So here I was, I was dressed up to go down into the lower house, thinking that I was doing the party a favour, and having no special feelings about going into the lower house, but still believing that, at the very least, I was going to end up a senior cabinet minister, and probably the only thing that would have bypassed me would have been then possible leadership in the upper house. As it turned out, none of those things happened, so I wasn't left to die wondering [chuckles].

JF            You have mentioned a couple of times to me that they said they didn't want another Floreat. We haven't talked at all about the desertion of the Liberal Party by Liz Constable. Could you tell me anything about your impressions of that, or your awareness of what was happening when that came up?

**PENDAL**        I knew her, of course, very well, through the lay party. I was aware of the tensions that were mounting with her as she was about to put in for the endorsement for Floreat, in the wake of the death of Andrew Mensaros. As it came close to preselection day, it was very clear to her that notwithstanding her credentials, she was going to be duded in the preselection, and that the chosen candidate was going to be Michael Huston, a nice enough young bloke. There was a strong feeling by a number of us in the Liberal Party that it was an excellent opportunity to endorse a woman, and a well-credentialled woman, in a good seat, and a woman capable of going into the cabinet. When she could see that she was not going to be in the race for the endorsement, she declined to see it through. Even though her name was in for the ballot, she pulled the pin a couple of days before the endorsement was decided, and she decided, of her own volition, to stand as an Independent Liberal, which was an amazing decision to almost everyone associated with politics, because the prospect of an independent winning, certainly in our generation, was unheard of. Well, she showed everyone wrong and she won the seat. Noel Crichton-Browne said afterwards that she wouldn't be there long enough to collect her parliamentary pension. Well, all of these years later she's still there. It was a great pity that the party, at a strategic level, didn't have the confidence and vision to be able to say, "Yes, this business of a senior woman, well credentialled, makes a lot of sense, let's get behind her." Instead, the factions kicked in and

Michael Huston was elected out of the Crichton-Browne faction, and he got the endorsement, but he failed to get the seat.

END OF TAPE ELEVEN SIDE B

## TAPE TWELVE SIDE A

This is tape 12 in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip George Pental, this one taking place on 4 May 2007 at Parliament House, Perth, with interviewer John Ferrell.

JF            Now, Phillip, we have more or less left the upper house now, I think. I don't think there was anything more that you wanted to talk about in relation to your time there, so let's start with the actual election campaign for the 1993 election, when you were standing for South Perth. You've said that the campaign was launched by Bevan Lawrence and you've said that that happened because you didn't have some massive support from upper echelons of the party. I wondered if you could talk for a moment about those people who did give you support from within the party, and then tell me some of the others that were involved.

**PENDAL**        I don't recall that I really lacked a lot of support from in the party other than being what I regarded as having been left in the lurch by Richard Court and then, having approached Bill Hassell and he, for one reason or another, had not been able to accede to that request. I know, for example, that Barry MacKinnon assisted me. In the ordinary course of events I suppose it's true to say that you rely less on parliamentary members at election time than you do on lay party members. I do recall, for example, that my campaign committee had gone out of their way to make sure that our booths were dressed in a splendid way. This had happened only about four months after Kennett was elected in Victoria, in October of 1992, and my campaign treasurer, Kerry Davey, had been in the eastern states visiting one of his family members and saw all of this paraphernalia on election day. He came back to me and said, "Phillip, we've got to get some of this", and we made inquiries of the Liberal Party in Victoria and they were only too pleased, of course, to get rid of anything that was . . . because by then it was redundant. Fortunately it didn't have things like "Victorian Liberals" written on it; it was just Liberal logos. I remember they had things that resembled huge fridge boxes, enormous things as big as a door, and it was a box, you know, it had four dimensions to it. We had all sorts of extraneous material that we imported in from the Kennett campaign, and dressed up this booth. Now this was, if I remember correctly, a month or so before the federal election, and everyone was wondering how it was all going to go because of its impact not only on the state, but federally. I remember meeting up with Kim Beazley at one of my booths. He was visiting the Labor supporters.

JF            Young Kim?

**PENDAL**        Young Kim. He was due to face the polls in a month and I was facing my doom that day. We shook hands and said how're you going. Kim was always down in the dumps at election time. He was the quintessential pessimist. If the end of the world was going to happen, he would be there to see it and usher it in. I remember him looking around at the polling booths and saying, "I guess this is what you blokes are going to do to me next month." He was so depressed. Now, I didn't give him any encouragement to think that we weren't going to do that, but it did stick in my mind just how effectively our booths had been grandly dressed in such a way that we put everyone else to shame. So it was something that we learnt to continue in later years. So it was a reliance on lay party members and friends more so than on the parliamentary members, that I recall.

JF            Can you describe what the actual dressing up included? I mean, you've . . .

**PENDAL**        They were things like, you know, all of the nonsense and paraphernalia that goes with these things, but which give it atmosphere. I mean, Liberal campaigns in the past had tended to be quite staid and sort of a bit blue-rinsy. We had these enormous, as I call them, fridge boxes with Liberal logos. Everyone had to wear T-shirts. We had special hats manufactured for people at the polling booths. We had bunting and ribbons and heaven knows what along the fences of the polling booths so that from 200 metres away it was just dominated by "Phillip Pandal - Liberal, South Perth" stuff, which was a joy to me because I'd been in politics 13 years by this stage, but as an upper house member you never ran your own campaign; you plugged into the lower house. Well, here we were at last running our own campaign and, I must say, enjoying every minute of it, too.

JF            How many booths were there that had to be looked after?

**PENDAL**        I think it was probably 12, and we were keen that we be overmanned rather than in any other shape. We never turned anyone back. We had tremendous support from the local community, the local Liberal Party branches, my family and things of that nature, so that often instead of . . . in days gone by you might have been asking someone to do four-hour stints somewhere at some remote booth in the upper house province. Here, you could often say to people, "Look, if you can give us

an hour on Saturday afternoon, we've got sufficient personnel to cut your hours down to the one or the two."

JF                   And what were you doing all day on that day?

**PENDAL**       Well, it was the candidate's role . . . and of course I was in no-man's-land. I was one of the few in the position where I was a candidate for a new seat but I'd been in politics for 13 years in the other house, but I was also out of a job because I'd had to resign from the Legislative Council in order to nominate for the Assembly, and that posed special problems for me and the Liberal Party because I was then a senior shadow minister, shadow Minister for the Environment, at an election where the environment counted for a big vote. So, for the month leading into the election, I was not only jobless but, under the rules, I was not to go to my office because I was no longer a member of Parliament. They came to an arrangement with both me and Kay Hallahan, who was doing the same thing, I think, that your electorate secretary could stay on but she couldn't answer the telephone by saying, "Good morning. Phillip Pandal's electorate office." She'd have to say, "Good morning. South Perth electorate office." It was simply de-politicised. I had to move to a premises further down South Perth, a lovely old Federation-style home opposite the then Hurlingham Hotel. We hired this premises and it was my office as a candidate; it was my office as a shadow Minister for the Environment. Some people said to me, "It's evened up because Kay Hallahan is under a similar disability." I said, "No, the difference is that she's a minister", and while she's not a member of Parliament (and she wasn't for that month) she would tootle off to be the Minister for Education and she had all of that backup and cars and drivers. I had absolutely zero, not even an income coming in. It was a tremendous stress really knowing that I had to win the seat. I had a candidate . . . one of the Graydens had nominated against me and we had no real idea of the impact of Bill Grayden's influence in the electorate once he had retired, so we had those pressures to make sure the campaign ran smoothly, and I had the statewide responsibilities of flying up and down the state campaigning in seats for other people, principally on the environment. It was pretty hair-raising, I can tell you.

JF                   Yes. Now, you were well known in South Perth, though, so, sort of looking at it from the other side, you probably would've been confident you'd give anybody a pretty good run for their money.

**PENDAL** Well, it's an interesting thing that you put it that way and, at the logical level, what you say is absolutely correct, but you can never tell a political candidate that. It's a little bit, I suppose, of what I said about Kim Beazley a little while ago. Most candidates seem to be very pessimistic and they'll always see the worst possible scenario emerging from a set of circumstances, so I was confident that it was a Liberal seat but I was not confident that we could stop a haemorrhage of votes going towards the Independent under the name of, I think it was John Grayden or it may have been Jim Grayden. In the event, we won with a fantastic outcome. I think it was 64 per cent of the vote, and it was one of the most exhilarating moments in politics.

JF Yes. How did you celebrate?

**PENDAL** Well, at this house that we had hired opposite the Hurlingham tavern, it was turned into a count centre for us that night by the volunteers and it was a party that was catered for, and so all of our campaign workers came back there and saw the results coming in and we celebrated in a riotous fashion. But it was a great relief.

JF Is that sort of thing at your own committee's expense or your personal expense?

**PENDAL** Well, it depends. In some cases I've known members of Parliament and/or candidates to have to bear that cost themselves. I must say, I didn't bear any of that cost. My campaign committee and team just were fabulous. We also had an organisation called the Eminent Australians Forum, which was important for me for most of my political life. After I'd had my aneurysm in 1983, a number of my supporters, including my older brother, came together and vowed that they . . . they said at the time that they could not do my job for me but what they could do would be to minimise the stresses of fundraising and things of that nature. The four of these - there was Vince Pental, John Horner, John Kelly and Kerry Davey - formed the Eminent Australians Forum. It sounded very, very splendid, and it was, because it . . . they became the trustees and I became its patron. We used the Eminent Australians Forum to invite eminent Australian business leaders, mostly, to address breakfast meetings in South Perth, and sometimes in central Perth. For example, we got people like John Elliott in his heyday; we got Sir James Hardie, of yachting fame, Sir Arvi Parbo, the head of Western Mining, and people of this [calibre] . . . we would get advance warning when they were coming to Western Australia for other reasons,

and therefore at their expense. I would write to them and ask would they address, and we would tell them what the organisation was for but that it was primarily non-party and non-partisan, and so these people would turn up. We made huge sums of money very painlessly, although it meant a lot of organisational capacity, so that by the time the elections came around not only were we flush with funds but for things that you've referred to, funding of an election night party, those things had been locked away. It was a wonderful part of my political career.

JF Yes. Where did you hold your breakfast meetings?

**PENDAL** Well, these varied. We had many of them at Gloucester Park in what was called the Beau Rivage room, which would handle, I think, something like 400 people, and on occasions we were getting that many. I remember picking John Elliott up from the Parmelia Hotel. He had just flown in the previous night from London, I think, and he was a really big wheel at this stage, flawed, as it turned out, but a very entertaining man to be with. I met him at the Parmelia to drive him down and it would have been, say, 10 past 7 in the morning. Now, I'm not always at my best at 10 past 7 in the morning but I can tell you John Elliott was positively at his worst. He was one of these fellows, I think, who caroused all night and if he'd had a group of friends in, well, he wouldn't kick them out until all the drinking had been done, and that's what he looked like on this particular morning. As we were driving down, he said, "How much are your customers paying to hear me this morning?" I said something like it might have been the equivalent of \$25, or something. "Ha", he said, "I'm worth more than that. You should be doubling that or trebling it!" In a jocular fashion. That was to the Beau Rivage at Gloucester Park. We had other venues at the old Chesterton Lodge, in South Perth, where we packed people in for Sir Arvi Parbo, probably 350 people. The Eminent Australians Forum was a . . . I was much envied amongst Liberal members of Parliament and by the Liberal Party itself because they always imagined that we had a lot more money than we actually did have, but I never sought to disabuse them of whatever disinformation they had about this marvellous organisation that did the fundraising.

JF Wonderful. Now, as an upper house member you really hadn't had to bother too much about the day-to-day electorate dealings that a lower house member has, I suppose, so did this mean a big change in your style of operation to now be a member for the lower house?

**PENDAL** No, I disagree with your earlier proposition. In fact, by the time I was elected in 1980 we were now on full adult franchise by 15 years and it was many years before the ticket system came in for the upper house where you have a team of candidates for one party for the upper house. So in these days, an upper house member shared the province with one other; there were two members, as you know, per province. That meant that you did indeed do as much electorate work as you possibly could have. I learnt at the feet of Clive Griffiths who, whatever his other drawbacks, was a tremendous worker of the electorate as an upper house member. This can make the difference between winning and losing in a marginal situation, which he had experienced. I was determined to model myself on that. I moved into the electorate with an office as early as I could, by 1983. I used to run clinics, for example, down at Cockburn, at Rockingham, so I was very, very hands-on for fear that lack of commitment of that kind could cost you your seat. Other province members were beginning to do that more and more, so that today you would find most of those people highly active in their provinces or regions.

JF So it would have been something in the way of less work, perhaps, in South Perth, would it, seeing you were now restricted in the area?

**PENDAL** In some ways, yes, but it did mean I went into the lower house seat with a very high profile, part of which had come about because of my shadow minister responsibilities for the environment, which was particularly topical at the time, so that our electorate office from 1993 onwards was always a very, very busy place. It ran not only with my electorate officer and the later appointment of a research assistant, but we always had in the office volunteers, most days of the week. These would generally be retired people, retired women, who would come in and do support work in the office for my electorate officer. We were pretty full-on as a team even in a seat that most people said was staunchly Liberal and therefore you wouldn't need to put in that effort. But, I mean, I enjoyed putting it in because I felt that was my job and, you know, I was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed about the whole thing.

JF Would there have been much in the way of disadvantage in the electorate? You know, a lot of the problems that people bring to lower house members arise from economic disadvantage and so on. Would you have had much of that sort of thing to contend with?

**PENDAL** Well, it's interesting you say that. I recall some years earlier I was in a conversation with Brian Burke. Brian Burke was the member for Balga, and I heard him say to someone (it might have been in a speech) that he had the most State Housing Commission homes anywhere in Western Australia in his electorate, and he gave the percentage. I remember saying to him afterwards, "I can beat that", and he laughed at me, meaning of course you can't in a cushy area like South Perth. I pointed out to him that the Karawarra area of South Perth in fact had a higher concentration of public ownership versus private ownership than any suburbs in Western Australia. It had actually been designed years earlier by the Labor Party to save Don May, who was then the member for Clontarf. Karawarra simply didn't even exist; it was a pine plantation. By the time it developed, it wasn't quickly enough to save Don May. By the time I got to be a member of Parliament, it actually represented a huge part of my work, so that even in what appeared to be a blue-ribbon, well-heeled constituency like South Perth, I had this really big component of people who were the real battlers of society. So, on the contrary, my office got most of its work, I could say, through housing issues or issues that related to housing and federal immigration issues. I had a habit as a member of Parliament: I never, ever referred someone on to a local councillor if it was a South Perth council matter or I never referred a person on to a federal member if it was a federal matter. If people came to see me, I regarded it that they came to see me and not to be fobbed off. So immigration and housing issues, and then education and then law and order, would have been the things that kept us busiest in those years, and very busy indeed.

JF At one stage I think you were holding a shadow ministry for, was it migrants' affairs or something to that effect?

**PENDAL** I did. I had multicultural and ethnic affairs.

JF So I suppose that gave you some sort of currency with the problems of some of the people you're talking about.

**PENDAL** Yes, it did. It was an amazing thing about any portfolio area. As you could imagine, it would become a new learning curve for you. In the end I had something like 15 shadow portfolios, the most important of which I always regarded as the environment, federal affairs and one or two others. But each one, when you were given it, the pit of your stomach was affected because you would say to yourself, "Here we go again. I've got to start all over again." Unlike being a minister,

where you've got advisers hanging off the rafters, as a shadow minister it's going to be as good or as deficient as you make it. But within a short time, networking to people that you thought could be helpful and give you advice so that by the time you've gone through 15 shadow portfolios it was like a, you know, a postgraduate degree in human relations really, because you learnt so much on the way through.

JF            Yes.

**PENDAL**        It is true that things like multicultural and ethnic affairs would certainly help you in some respects in dealing with immigration matters.

JF            How did you come out of the situation in relation with people like Bill Grayden, the former member?

**PENDAL**        Well, my . . . I came out of it very well. I mean, I had been fairly abrupt with some of the things that the family, including Bill, had done during the election campaign and I regarded it as being a bit selfish on their part, especially because I had worked for him for years and given my heart and soul to his cause, and then to find I was fighting this rearguard action against him and his family. So relations were a bit soured for a while, but I didn't keep grudges, and there were occasions when I had to be speaking anyway and referring to him. I always thought people were going to judge me more than they were going to judge him if you, you know, kept those bitternesses going. So within a fairly short time my rapport with him was back on track quite well.

JF            What were the major feelings as you took your seat in the lower house? It was a different environment from the upper house, obviously, though similar in lots of ways.

**PENDAL**        Well, my thoughts of course were dominated by having been passed over for the cabinet, and I was very angry. I recall that anger spilt over with my wife, Maxine. I recall the sort of humiliation for her being at the opening session for 1993 and, you know, she was sitting amongst the parliamentary wives on the floor of the chamber (not literally on the floor but in the well of the chamber) and hearing the spouses of newly appointed ministers, quite a number of whom were not well credentialed, with these women exclaiming, you know, what a wonderful day it is. You know, these things became quite humiliating to my wife, and to me as well. My

introduction to the Assembly, therefore, was coloured by this overhanging cloud. There was some encouragement to know that there was always a lot of press comment that continued. I expected it, you know, to fall off after a week or so, but there was always someone willing to make an issue of it. I remember Carmen Lawrence made an issue of it during a debate, and so it always at least comforted me knowing that I'd been left out not through my own lack of ability but because of the small-mindedness of other people. So everything really in that next 12 months was overshadowed by that exclusion, which I did feel, and where I had to really learn again to reinvent my usefulness in the months ahead. So, it was a very difficult period.

JF                    Yes. When did you . . . how long before the house opened had you become aware that you were not going to be a cabinet member?

**PENDAL**        It was the Saturday following the previous Saturday's general election. It had become . . . there had been a long delay in Richard Court negotiating with Hendy Cowan a coalition agreement. Some things that Sir Francis Burt later told me, because he was the Governor at the time, were enough to make your hair stand on end, sufficient to drag out the process that ordinarily would have seen a new government in place, say, by the Thursday. It was still well into the next week. I recall being telephoned by Court's secretary on the Saturday morning following the election and being asked to front up to his office at Parliament House, I think it was three o'clock on the Saturday afternoon. I learnt that I was the last in the food chain and that was quite ominous. I went into his office and he couldn't look at me - he averted his gaze - but he had this piece of paper in front of him and he said, "Well, I've just got to tell you, Phil, there's no job for you." I suppose I'd half expected it because during the week on the Wednesday there had been press speculation, and he no doubt was the source of that.

END OF TAPE TWELVE SIDE A

TAPE TWELVE SIDE B

This is tape 12, side B, interviews with Hon Philip Pendal.

JF                    So, continuing, he told you then that you were not likely to get a place?

**PENDAL**        Oh yes, it was quite definite. He said, "I don't have a job for you." Well, I then engaged him, as you could . . . quite calmly and civilly, more calmly and civilly, I can say, than I actually felt. He then said to me, and it was rather strange, he said, "Is there anything I can do for you, then?" Now, I wasn't quick enough on the uptake at that stage to press him and say, "What do you mean by that?" There had been some speculation later that he might have sent me to London as the Agent General, and I was certainly of a mind that had it been offered to me I would have taken it. But I noticed in the papers that he had in front of him . . . you see, as an old print journalist you learnt to read upside down. [laughs] You'd go down to the compositing room in a newspaper and there'd be a few minutes to go and the compositor's asking, "What's it going to be?" and you've got to make a decision. You might be there with the subeditor, so you did learn that capacity to read upside down and sort of inside out as you looked at newsprint in the hot metal. I could see on this piece of paper of his all the people lined up for the cabinet and right down the bottom in a separate part there was a heading which said "parliamentary secretaries" and there was Pendal, McNee and Pike, so that when he said, "Is there anything we can do for you?", I said, "Yes, the first thing . . .". This is after it was clear I was being excluded. I said, "You can take my name off that. I don't want to be insulted with an office boy's job, thank you." He began to protest, saying, "Oh, no, no, these are very important." I said, "Richard, you've already told me two minutes ago you don't have a job for me and yet you're now trying to tell me that being a parliamentary secretary is a job. We both know differently." So I got up and I went home. I mean, I was quite devastated. However, I recall some time later, Colin Barnett saying to me, "I am so pleased that you didn't take that parliamentary secretary's role." He saw those jobs as being precisely what they were: they were elevated office boy jobs. They had a few perks attached to them but it was certainly not something that I'd trained myself for through a long apprenticeship and I actually used that analogy with Richard Court. So that was it; I was sent to the backbench. Ten days later, he stopped me in the corridor and said, "Would you be interested in a trip to Tasmania?" I didn't say anything for a minute, because I was in the mood where I think I could have cheerfully pinged him, not that that's of my nature. But this was quite important

because I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "There's a conference of public accounts committees of Parliaments of Australia there and I'd like you to go." I said, "Oh well, if that's the case, I'll go to it." He said something that would imply that I was to be the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. There was no doubt that in those days that was the principal non-cabinet role. I recall going into the party room, because that's where we were both heading when he raised this, and he got to a point in his report and he said, "The next thing I want to report is that we need some delegates to go to Hobart for the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, and I've asked Phil (he was always as though we were old pals, you know) if he would go for us." I was sitting at that time next to Graham Kierath, who was by now a minister, and I said out of the corner of my mouth, "Ask him if I'm the chairman", because again I didn't want to be joining the Public Accounts Committee and then finding myself the junior-most member. I mean, that may sound pompous, but it had been a long apprenticeship and I wasn't going to squander that capital that I had. So Graham Kierath did as I asked and he said, "Premier, does that mean Phillip is to be the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee?" Richard prevaricated, and I thought to myself, "My God, I can't even win the junior consolation prize." What I had not understood was that Hendy Cowan, in the discussions in the formation of the coalition and in the share of the spoils of office, had negotiated the chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee for the National Party; namely, Max Trenorden. So I could see Richard prevaricating but I didn't know why until later. A day or two later we were advised the first meeting would convene of the Public Accounts Committee. The other Liberal nominee was to be Michael Board, later a minister, and as we walked down Parliament Place to the meeting in the old annexe at the other end of the street, Michael said, "Oh well, should be a fairly straightforward meeting and I'll nominate you and we'll do this and that and we should be out of here in 10 minutes." We got into the meeting and Michael nominated me, and Fred Riebeling, who later became Speaker, nominated Max Trenorden, and then it dawned on me that the Labor Party and the Nats had done a deal. Well, I was furious. I was absolutely furious to think that our new coalition partner would do that sort of deal and in the face of it not being clarified in this joint party room several days before. So I sat there and Michael said to me as all of the others disappeared, "Now, don't get upset." [laughs] I said, "Michael, what am I supposed to do?" You know, 13 years and you can only take so much of this. I walked out and I said to one of the secretaries, "Do you have a letterhead here, please, a spare letterhead?" So I wrote my resignation on the spot and as I came past I put it into Richard Court's office. Then it hit the news and it was the front-page lead the next day "First rift in coalition". You know,

the coalition had only been in office for five minutes. Hendy Cowan was as tough a man as I ever met in politics but I could never feel resentful to him about this because he did for his member what my leader should have done for me; namely, Richard Court sticking up for me. In the end it was a small beans thing and Max Trenorden went on to become quite a competent chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. But it was just another piece of news again to show that, you know, my future was very limited, if I had a future at all under Richard Court.

JF                    So you didn't end up going to Tasmania?

**PENDAL**        I did go to Tasmania because they had booked the flights and I went with Max Trenorden and attended this conference. The Auditor General always attended and so I spent some time with Des Pearson. My membership of the Public Accounts Committee I think was something about seven or eight minutes. I think it's a world record but not necessarily one that I'm proud of!

JF                    This sort of raises the question: who was advising Richard Court or was it all his own doing?

**PENDAL**        I don't believe that Richard was making . . . was calling the shots. I think it was payback for me refusing to desert MacKinnon in the leadership battle the previous May, although once the leadership change had occurred and in one or two conversations with Richard, (and it may have even been on this day when he told me I was to be excluded from the cabinet) I actually remember making the comment to him, "Richard, you have nothing . . . I will serve you as well as I served Barry MacKinnon. I'm not complaining that you won a democratic vote in the party room. I can't complain about that." But to be continually punished for it was something that I found very difficult to deal with. I had to deal with it, but I found it very difficult. So, that was the first reason. I think also that there were other people, and I believe Clive Griffiths was by then one of the people saying that, "Pendal gets no promotion if I'm going to support you". By then the rift between us over Barry MacKinnon, ironically, had opened up to a very large extent. He had the capacity to isolate me and make decisions that effectively destroyed my capacity for promotion within the Liberal Party. I was resentful about that because I could see the quality of people whom Richard Court chose to fill at least four or five of those cabinet positions. The quality was not high and several of them ultimately caused him enormous grief and one of them helped bring down his government. But I don't think Richard made those

decisions only of his own volition. I think he was very much influenced by people like Griffiths on the outside.

JF                   What about his father?

**PENDAL**       Well, everyone tells me that of course he was a player. I have no reason . . . I saw no evidence that Charles Court took a set against me. In fact, I had some reason to think that he thought highly of me, having worked with him and for him in those earlier days. There were lots of other people who did believe that. Only recently, strangely enough, Ian Medcalf, the retired Attorney General in Charles Court's government, a QC and a man I've spoken to you about on numerous occasions, said to me that, "One of the great mistakes that Richard made (and Ian Medcalf was close to Charles Court) was to leave you out of the cabinet." He said, "I think the cabinet could have been enormously different had it had you and Elizabeth Constable." He also had a great deal of regard for her. I mean, that's someone from the outside saying that, and there were others as well. I guess I did get that comfort of knowing at the time that it wasn't ability that had kept me there but the pettiness of the Court family and their politics.

JF                   It would have been particularly harrowing, I suppose, that you'd worked very hard on, say, the environmental policy in particular, to be denied a chance to try and get that up and implement it.

**PENDAL**       Oh, absolutely. I think it's true that the last poll that was conducted by Westpoll before the election showed that the Libs would win, that we would win. The poll said that on two major issues we had managed to calm community fears. One was, ironically, on the workplace laws that were proposed under Kierath's policies, but the polling showed that he and others had been able to explain that with sufficient confidence that it was no longer an issue. The second thing was the environmental issues that we had managed to persuade people that we would be good in that respect. So I had no doubt and neither did, you know, anyone in the public who followed these things that the environment was a big winner for us, and it was an affront to then find that Kevin Minson was appointed and, while a nice fellow, he wasn't much of a Minister for the Environment and was removed after one term.

JF                   You referred to comments by Sir Francis Burt about the cut and thrust of the negotiations. Can you give us some detail about that?

**PENDAL** I recall only that years later I went out to see him in retirement on a matter that . . . I was doing some writing for the Parliament by this stage, and I went to see him on a particular matter to clarify. It was during that interview that Sir Francis alluded to this horrific problem that he faced as Governor. He knew that he had to commission Richard Court but he also knew that he had to commission the person who could command a majority in the lower house, which is what his statutory job is. He alluded to it a few times, sufficient with raising his eyebrows to say, "Well, you've got no idea what I had to go through to get those people together", meaning Richard Court and Hendy Cowan, or words to that effect. He was the one who raised it with me. He never went into the detail and never sought to break confidences, but he certainly made it clear he'd had a tough job, as the vice-regent, effectively putting together a government for Her Majesty.

JF Now, you apparently were given some committee jobs in that early period. The record says something about chairman of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Intergovernmental Agreements. What about that?

**PENDAL** Well, it's a strange thing because that became vacant when Doug Shave resigned from the cabinet six or so months later because his wife had left him and he had gone into a difficult period. He was a Court favourite but he had to resign from the cabinet just because his mental health, you know, needed some readjustment. That was when speculation all blew up again that I would now be finally forgiven and returned to the fold. But that was not to be because Richard Court announced that Kevin Prince would be the new minister. That in turn meant that Kevin Prince had to resign as the chairman of the Standing Committee on Uniform **Legislation** and Intergovernmental Agreements. It takes you almost a fortnight to say the title! I was vaguely interested, having gone through this period where I really couldn't see where my future was going to be. I've got an idea that it was Liz Constable, who'd been a friend of mine for years and she was on the committee as an Independent, she came over to me one day and said, "You should get yourself onto that. It is a good, meaty topic. With your interest in federal affairs you would love it and there is a real job to be done." I then started canvassing a few people in the party and I eventually got myself nominated. I became the chairman and one of the people then who was voting on the chairmanship was none other than Fred Riebeling, who had caused me grief six months earlier by voting with the National Party not to have me as the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. I was elected to this chairmanship. I'd no sooner been elected to it than one of the

Clerks of the house came along and said, "Could you bring in your passport tomorrow." I said, "And why would I be needing to bring in my passport?" He said, "You're going to be distressed to learn that you're leading a delegation to Washington and London, [with] meetings with the United States Congress and the House of Lords." I said, "Am I, and what's all this about?" Well, I can tell you I went through a big learning curve. It was a committee that we, I think it's fair to say, put it to the cutting edge of Australian politics, federal and state, as a way of dealing with governments who want agreements with each other, state to state or state to commonwealth, and which caused awful problems for Parliaments when ministers or Premiers or Prime Ministers agreed what the governments would do and then would simply come along to Parliaments afterwards and say, "This is what you've got to pass into law because we've agreed" at a little meeting of six people in Adelaide, say. You can see the consequences on parliamentary democracy of that. It was a bit of a light at the end of the tunnel for me. I put my mind to it. It's like anything. Nature abhors a vacuum, and I was certainly experiencing a vacuum. I found it was wonderful work. We had in the end probably the pivotal influence, for example, on whether Western Australia would go into what's known as the mutual recognition scheme across Australia and New Zealand. We played a big part in that, including myself. It was still consolation prize stuff, but you could only stand around and mope for so long if there's no vacancy, no room at the inn. Well, there was no room at the inn, and that was it. I really was desperate as well to show people that I was big enough to get on with the job and wait my day. That is what my friends kept saying: "Your time will come." Well, as time showed, my friends didn't have a clue what they were talking about! The committee work was a great substitute for having failed to get into the ministry.

JF                    What about the trip to Washington and Britain?

**PENDAL**        Well, they were just superb learning curves. You might think, well, what relevance would we have in going to a place like the House of Lords? The relevance was that they had a not dissimilar committee. The British Parliament was at this stage finding its way vis-à-vis the European Community, of which they were now a part. So in a way the Brits were, if you like, a state in the commonwealth of the European nations. Mind you, I learnt that you never used that word to the British because one or two of them exploded to me. The work, however, meant there were many members in the British Parliament waking up to the fact that now they were members of the European Community they had to, if you like, share power with a

central body in the same way that we'd been doing for 90-odd years in Australia. They were very interested to see how we were handling some of these things and we were likewise interested in the way they were experiencing those things. Similarly, there were legislatures in the United States, both federal and state, where we met their personnel. It certainly had a profound effect on my learning and understanding that the problem we were trying to grapple with in WA was not uncommon in other parts of the world.

JF                   Who was on the trip apart from you?

**PENDAL**       They sent the whole committee. There was myself, Liz Constable was the deputy, Fred Riebeling, Rob Johnson and a fifth person I'm embarrassed to think I can't nominate for a moment. Fred Riebeling, with whom I was now on speaking terms after his previous sabotage of my career, I recall for one or two hours that he and I were determined to go and have a drink in the bar of the Watergate Hotel so that we could say that we'd been to the Watergate. We couldn't believe it either that when we were signing the bill, the pen that the waiter offered us had "Watergate" written on it. We asked him under what circumstances did he think it would be fair that we could remove that pen and purloin it and another one so that each of us would have a souvenir. He was good enough to go and find another one of these and for years afterwards I was very proud of walking around with my Watergate biro. That was one of the lighter moments in the trip with Fred Riebeling.

JF                   Yes. You also became important, I think, or were interested in the heritage laws and ancient shipwrecks committee work. Can you talk about that?

**PENDAL**       I did. It was again one of those little consolation prizes. Because I'd been shadow Minister for Heritage prior to the election, I had made certain undertakings, written and public, one of which was that there would be a review of Western Australia's heritage laws. My old friend Richard Lewis ended up being Minister for Heritage and Richard was the first to admit that he had neither knowledge of or interest in heritage laws. He came across this bit in the policy as he pondered it one day, a review. He said, "What about you doing the review?" I asked how we would do that and he said, "What about running a select committee of the house?" That eventually took me overseas to a number of places, to UNESCO and to London. Parallel with that was the select committee you've mentioned into ancient shipwrecks. If ever there was just a wonderful experience, it was my interest in these

matters. When I was in the Legislative Council, I had run a select committee on returning the *Batavia* relics to Geraldton, to ease tension that had built up for 30 years in Geraldton by people like Max Cramer against the injustice of losing all the relics to Fremantle. That had big effects that eventually led to the new maritime museum in Geraldton, so that was a direct effect of the work that I had done. When I went into the lower house and people were looking around for these consolation prizes for me, apart from the heritage law review that I was encouraged to do by Richard Lewis, I decided that we should run another select committee of the lower house and finish the work on ancient shipwrecks that we had begun when I was in the upper house 12 or 18 months before. That was setting up a select committee to go to all sorts of interesting places, including a dive on the *Batavia*. Included on that committee were Geoff Gallop and Jim McGinty, Liz Constable and Bob . . . not Bob Bloffwitch. Certainly having McGinty and Gallop was another one of those situations where two of the best brains from the Labor Party couldn't believe that we'd got such a good job to do. It was one of those that people broke their necks within the Parliament to do. That did have some big impacts in the end. Just one tiny little outcome of it was I recall being in England doing this heritage law review and meeting with their Minister for National Heritage. I was slotted in for 15 minutes and I noticed at about the 14-minute mark he started to get a big edgy and so we wound the meeting up, so I stood to leave. He said, "No, no, no. I don't want you to go. I just wanted us to get that bit over." He had my CV on the table in front of him and that's when I learnt that he was interested in ancient shipwrecks and wanted me to give him a blow-by-blow account of what work we had done in Western Australia. These things even had the interest coming in from people from that far away. That was a great experience, too.

END OF TAPE TWELVE SIDE B

## TAPE THIRTEEN SIDE A

This is tape 13, side A in a series of interviews with Hon Phillip George Pendal, this being recorded on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2007 at Parliament House, Perth. The interviewer is John Ferrell.

JF Phillip, in the Court Government, when you were there as a Liberal in the first year or so, who were the people that you found most helpful or were your best associates and colleagues?

**PENDAL** They were a small group of ministers. Colin Barnett had always been a close ally of mine. The irony is that 13 or so years later, his son married my daughter, so that we're related by marriage. Richard Lewis was a friend and ally. I was always a close friend of Liz Constable, who was previously in the Liberal Party. Derek Tomlinson, from the upper house, continued to be a close friend of mine. Indeed, I recall I used to maintain this contact with a number of these by running a small Tuesday evening curry club in my room downstairs. Some of these Liberal friends like Colin Barnett or Liz Constable, Derek Tomlinson, and a few others would turn up for these, and usually on a Tuesday dinner break but sometimes at other times. So I did maintain a close rapport with the people who were my closest friends and I suppose I sort of tended to lose contact with people with whom I'd never been close anyway.

JF I was thinking that the curry club you talk about, when did that actually happen in relation to your being an Independent? Was that before or after?

**PENDAL** It was after I'd become an Independent. I think it was my way of keeping in contact with some of the senior members of the government who had been friends of mine and, likewise, they seemed to think it worthwhile for whatever reason to have an hour or so respite from their cares to have some curry in my room and usually a bottle of wine that we'd ordered in. So it was just a place to relax for a while. They enjoyed it and I certainly did.

JF Yes. Just coming back then to the thrust of my question, which I probably didn't make particularly clear: I was really trying to work out what was the support you had, sort of, against the non-recognition by Richard and the top of the party, you know, at the time before you left.

**PENDAL** It was pretty well universally recognised. Now, amongst my detractors in the Liberal Party, they were pleased that I'd been sidelined. Amongst my friends or supporters or those who'd had some regard for me, they continued to express the view that Court had made that error. Within several days of the Cabinet being announced, I actually got a call from Colin Barnett. I was always appreciative of the fact that he didn't become so preoccupied with himself that he had had time to make that call. Richard Lewis was another, and although we clashed on one or two major things in later years, Richard Lewis rang and said, "It is not fair. Richard's done the wrong thing." Another who rang was Graham Kierath, but he had been . . . someone had remonstrated with him that he'd had no contact with me and that he ought to have had the decency to have contacted me. I recall he rang and I naturally was still fairly sensitive to all of these things, but I got the impression that most of the people felt that it had been a mistake on Richard's part not to have included me. Now, maybe that's the sort of thing one says about oneself to, you know, keep your courage up, but I think that was a fairly realistic assessment, that many of them knew that I had been badly treated and they felt (and some of them expressed this) that the government were battling a bit because they didn't have their best team at the crease.

JF The announcement, I think, of your leaving the party was the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 1995. I wondered if you can give us some background to that and particularly what was the trigger that caused it to be done and at that time.

**PENDAL** The trigger at all times was the federal preselection processes for the Liberal Party that were then taking place early in 1995. I've always maintained that my failure to get a place in the cabinet was not the reason that I left. When I look back on things, that made it easier for me to leave.

What had occurred, the federal preselections were coming up for the 1993 election, the state preselections were now well and truly past, we'd had our election, and the seat of Swan, which was in my area, was being contested for preselection by Dr Brian Hilbert. Dr Brian Hilbert had been the candidate for the Liberal Party at the previous election, had run Kim Beazley to within a couple of hundred votes of being defeated. He was an outstanding candidate. I hadn't supported him, I might say, in that earlier bid; I'd supported another fellow. But once he'd been endorsed, I worked with him and I knew that we'd got a quality candidate. When the '95-'96 round of preselections came around again, I was happy to give him every support. But the big faction in Western Australia and that led by my detractors had determined otherwise. I was present on some nights walking into annual general meetings that had been stacked out of all proportion in ways that I'd never ever seen in all my years in the Liberal Party, and one in particular, the Como-Collier branch, where you would normally get 15 or 16 people, there were more than a hundred people present. There were people who had rigged that meeting with all of these outsiders bussed in for the occasion and it all pointed to a defeat for Brian Hilbert at the hands of someone who was in no way his equal. I did my best within the party to try to get the party to see sense, and that culminated in me going to see Richard Court. He wouldn't intervene, said he had no power. That's true at a technical level, but he had plenty of moral suasion as a Premier if he'd wanted to use it. In the end, he rejected that. I could see the endorsement going the wrong way and I then went and saw Richard Court with a resignation letter in my pocket and saying that unless the party did something to intervene, I would give it to him. He asked me not to do that. I went ahead and gave him the resignation and that was the breach.

JF            What was his reaction to that decision?

**PENDAL**     Richard asked me to not do that. He was sitting in the chamber at the time when I went to see him. The seat next to him was vacant and he asked me not to proceed down that path. I said that I had no option if the senior personnel in the party were prepared to stand by and see another seat decided, not on its merits but on who could stack branches the most. There

were other instances too in the party, which I explained to him, of other branches which had been invented on paper where dishonesty was involved. I recall saying to those at the time that if they had done those things in the business arena, they would probably end up in jail for forging signatures and things of that nature. But nothing that I could do . . . Richard didn't want to know, and I regret that that was the case because I think he could have intervened. To a large extent that poison still exists in the party because it's the acceptable sort of behaviour.

JF            How did they bring this about, you know, bringing people in from outside what is otherwise designed as a local branch, isn't it?

**PENDAL**    Correct. A typical branch at that time in my own electorate might have been 50 or 60 people, of whom you might have needed 20 people to turn up to an annual meeting. It was at the annual meeting that the crucial selection of the delegates for preselection committees would be made and if a state election was coming up, then they were more important in that respect, or if a federal election was coming up, they would have greater impact in that environment. When all of a sudden one of your own branches that you knew would ordinarily have 15 to 20 people at an AGM had been literally flooded. The one I'm referring to would normally be held at someone's house or at a local hotel in a side room. I was informed that it was being held at the South of Perth Yacht Club. I was surprised but not shocked because, you know, frequently I would go across there to meetings in some small room or here or there. When I got to the yacht club, I was directed to one of the major auditoriums and I felt sure I was going into the wrong meeting, firstly because there were so many people there and, secondly, I didn't know any of them. There was nothing at stake for me because my preselection wasn't at stake, but I walked into this place and then I saw at the top table some of the senior state figures of the Liberal Party and federal figures from Western Australia. I recall going over to Dr David Honey, who was the new president, and asking him fairly angrily and probably somewhat rhetorically, "Are you responsible for all of this?" I could not believe seeing a hundred people, more than a hundred, sitting in a meeting. I later got up and I addressed them and I wanted to make

them feel uncomfortable by asking them, "How many of you have been manipulated? You've been treated as children to be brought in here to rot the system and you'll walk out tonight and you'll never be seen here, but a bad outcome will have been had for the system." They all just sat stonily and looked at me; probably had been pre-warned that that would be the sort of attitude I had. I was used to competition; I didn't mind that, but here I knew we were doing a federal preselection under a rotted system.

JF           Is there anywhere a record of who the people were so that even a historian, say, at some time in the future could go back through the party records and say, "This person was not a regular member; why was he there?" etc.

**PENDAL**     The answer to that should be that the minutes should be still within the branch of the Como-Collier branch of the Liberal Party. I know the precise night of it. That should still be available unless someone's got rid of it. It's probably sitting in someone's cupboard at home who's the current secretary of the Como-Collier branch, if there is one.

JF           This brings in a wider issue, though, the matter of record keeping and validation of membership and so on. Had that ever been an issue earlier?

**PENDAL**     Oh, yes. It had been an issue over a long period of time and, indeed, occasionally the state body would ask to see the records that you're referring to and whichever branch it was or whichever division it was would be required to take its records into the city. Tom Herzfeld, who had been a member for Mundaring in the state Parliament for a brief period and who was elected as general secretary under the new broom of Keith Simpson, and I was associated with that effort and with Andrew Mensaros, who was one of the ones who began that effort. I recall on several occasions Tom Herzfeld would be in a position of demanding to see the records of a particular branch in order to do exactly what you've said, to validate that what had gone on was legal and constitutional. He on some occasions had no compunction about

overturning decisions and going to the state authorities and getting them to overturn the decisions. But of course that reform movement that we tried to lead didn't last long and eventually the party sort of reverted to form. I might say, an eminent individual like Keith Simpson eventually left the Liberal Party and has refused to have anything to do with any of us ever since. He was so traumatised to think that some people could operate in this dishonest way. He just was traumatised by the three or four years that he had trying to bring about reform.

JF            Just going back to that very meeting you were talking about at the yacht club, were the people that had been recruited for the special occasion residents of Como-Collier?

**PENDAL**    No, they weren't, no, and indeed I would've known. One would expect you would've known a third or a half of them were that to be the case. These were people who came from all around the place. This was part of rent-a-crowd. They were shunted from pillar to post to turn up wherever there was a crucial preselection like this.

JF            And paid to do so, I guess?

**PENDAL**    I don't know that they were paid. They were sort of . . . I don't even know that they were people who really knew what was going on. They took the people who were asking them at their face value that, "Oh, well, this is going to help the Liberal Party." They were fed a line that this was, you know, important to save the Liberal Party from other forces of evil. I mean, it was an awful, combative period. I've got no doubt that their membership would've lapsed the minute that meeting was over and they may have resigned and then bobbed up at some other place to support the aims of the wider puppet masters, because a lot of people at the local level just didn't have a clue what was going on.

JF            Now, you saw it happening in your own electorate. How much wider than that was it, do you know?

**PENDAL** This was universal; this happened across Western Australia. Indeed, an hour before you and I are talking this morning I passed in the corridor a sitting Liberal member of Parliament, north of the river, who is known to be having some similar problems, and this is 15 years down the track. I asked this member only this morning how those challenges were going and I was told that there was an AGM held in a particular branch last night where 50 such people turned up and that has changed the preselection voting delegates that will affect the future of this person. Now, that's not the only one that's going on because one other member asked me to see them in recent times. I came in here, and the same thing is going on in another electorate, and these are replica activities of what I've just described to you for Como-Collier. In my opinion, they are criminal matters. I might say, too, some of the people who rose to prominence in the party in my time over in the Swan division were actually in the category of being criminals. One went to jail later as a major figure in a drug network. Another one had been described by a Supreme Court judge as being a person whose reputation you could never rely on and whose truthfulness you could never rely on. It sounds unbelievable but these things were happening then and they were happening as late as last night. You see, it's become inculturated so that it's not remarkable and it doesn't take people's breath away anymore. It's just institutionalised.

JF Do you think this is true of the Liberal Party further afield in Australia?

**PENDAL** Well, the Liberal Party in Australia has had its moments, and so has the Labor Party for that matter in various parts of Australia, but the notoriety for it here in federal circles. I eventually, when I'd resigned and I was in Canberra as chairman of the Uniform Legislation Committee, I made an appointment to go and see Andrew Robb, who's now in the federal ministry and he was then the federal director. But I wanted him to hear. I have no doubt that he was well aware of what was going on, but they were frightened to act. I saw John Howard at a function on Australia Day, it might have been the following year; it might've been January the 26<sup>th</sup>, 1996. In fact, it was,

because it was the year after my resignation and as he was approaching the big election that he would win and become Prime Minister. He turned up at this function that I was at so I went over to introduce myself. He said, "I know who you are!" It was almost as if to say, "Oh, gee", you know, "I'm not sure we want to be seen." He was merely . . . I'd met him on many occasions as a member of the shadow cabinet and I had no doubt that people like him, and I've got no doubt that he's a straightforward honest fellow and so is Andrew Robb and so were many other people, but they were frightened. They didn't want to rock the boat.

JF            This comes back to who's benefiting then. It's a particular clique within the party that benefits when this happens because they've got people in their pocket whenever they want them, I suppose, to send things the way they envisage the party going.

**PENDAL**    That is the case. It's all about their self-survival. Now, many of those people have fallen on their swords and have been caught out in other ways and so have left the party, but they've left behind this culture that it's acceptable behaviour; it's just politics. It's what you do in a competitive environment. Richard Court tried to lecture me about the competitiveness of politics. I mean, I was very angry with him treating me that way. It wasn't competition; it was corporate dishonesty at a very high level. The outcomes were not to have got people like Brian Hilbert into the federal Parliament. Hilbert was the founding professor of veterinary science at Murdoch. He could have been in the federal ministry within two years. I have absolutely no doubt. Intellectually, socially, all of these things. He's disappeared off the landscape. So, you see, it's a loss that most people don't see but I do see because I saw it from the inside. I feel in some respects I was a victim of it. It's a bit like you never know what you've lost if you don't know what you've lost, [laughter] if that doesn't sound too Irish! It was a terrible, terrible situation to be in. The consequence, too, is that you not only lose those people of talent, you often have them replaced by people of no talent. I'd be bold enough to say that when there was a vacancy in the Senate when John Panizza died 10 or so years ago, it was filled by Ross Lightfoot. Now, I don't want to be too unkind

about Ross, but he wasn't the best that the Liberal Party had to offer in Western Australia to send into the federal upper house. I think all of his track record since then would prove that. So you have a loss at two levels: you have a loss of the finest people not wanting to come into a Parliament, federal or state, and you have other people less capable going in. The person who bailed me up this morning made the remark to me that, "Phillip, what it is resulting is it's dumbing down the quality of the people we're getting in this place." They were the actual words used because of this meeting last night. The legacy they've left behind, those people, has been immense.

JF            You've studiously avoided mentioning names. I take it that's deliberate and necessary?

**PENDAL**    Well, I don't know the extent to which we get . . . Well, I don't think we get any sort of privilege as a result of these interviews, but, yes, that is . . . I could certainly be naming the names but I think I'm in a position where I've got to not say that.

JF            Right.

**PENDAL**    Regrettably.

JF            You've spoken as though this decision to leave was taken mainly entirely alone, except perhaps to reference to Richard Court, but were there other people you were talking with who helped you to come to the point where resignation was the only way?

**PENDAL**    I think it was a decision that I came to over the months, very reluctantly. I know that before I announced the decision I made a furious set of phone calls to people because they were going to be shocked. I remember calling people on my campaign committee, senior members of the branch, branches in the division. I recall ringing Lady Brand, who had been the patron of my campaign. She was a South Perth resident; I had known her husband when I was a young journalist. She was quite distressed, as well she would

be. She asked me if I thought this was really necessary. She was really distressed for the party's sake and for my sake. Some months later when, now as an Independent, I had to go back to her and say, "Look, your name still appears on my campaign letterheads as the patron. I will understand if you want to take it off. I'm now outside the Liberal Party." She asked me to give her time to think about that and then she rang back and she said, "I want to stay." Look, I could've . . . I think I did kiss her. I was so relieved because she was iconic. In the lead-up to the 1996 election, when she was sure that she wanted to remain associated with me, we were having a major fundraiser on the Swan River in the SS *Decoy* and the photographers from *The Australian* and *The West* were there and a few of the others. We had three or four hundred people getting on board and *The Australian* got this lovely photo that they ran in colour of Lady Brand and myself going up the deck over this paddle wheel and she quite mischievously said to me something like, "This'll put the cat amongst the pigeons, Phillip!" [laughs] She was a feisty lady, even now in her late 70s or early 80s. I know, because she told me, she had been contacted by Sir Charles Court, who'd gone to her home. He tried to get her to break with me, and she made . . . "Charlie", as she called him, "Charlie, it's got nothing to do with you." I can still see her saying this reporting back to me. She was an absolutely wonderful fillip at the right moment and I'm sure did a lot to stabilise support for me in the electorate.

END OF TAPE THIRTEEN SIDE A

## TAPE THIRTEEN SIDE B

This is tape 13, side B, in the interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal.

JF            So, apart from Lady Brand, were there other important people factored into your decision making at that stage when you were leaving?

**PENDAL**    I don't know that I went to anyone prominent to say, "This is what I'm about to do", other than those branch and divisional leaders whom I knew would be shocked but would be supportive. These were people, too, pulling their hair out over what they'd seen over the months. They'd seen that we'd managed to get rid of a person of Hilbert's capacity. They didn't all the time agree with me but they understood that I was doing it and many of them [were] openly saying, "Well, I wish you weren't doing this." A small number cut me off entirely, and even I could understand that because that hurt them, but they were a small number. Many of them then, of course, came over to work with me on my campaign, some of whom even stayed in the Liberal Party. Only the other night I was telling someone on election day in 1996 as I went on the round of the booths and I saw in the morning a lady called Peggy O'Neil, who was there with one of my T-shirts on and one of my hats, handing out Phillip Pendal how-to-vote cards. When I went back to the booth in the afternoon, I thought "I'm sure that's Peggy O'Neil there." She came up to me very guilt-ridden and with eyes downcast and here she had on a Liberal hat and a Liberal T-shirt, and Liberal how-to-vote cards, and she said, "Oh, Phillip, I was hoping you weren't going to be here. I hope you don't mind." I remember saying, "Peggy, I understand just what you must be going through." I think I even said something like, "Look, I feel a bit, you know, a foot in both camps too." I said, "You just go ahead and do your job." But many of the other people were by now working for me, so while there was some humour in it, there was also a lot of difficult . . . there was a lot of pathos too, because it was a big thing I'd done and to some people I had let them down, and I didn't like the feeling about doing that.

JF            Now, I would imagine that the trauma associated with it for yourself would have been quite large too because, I mean, you were a long-

time party member and senior in the party. What were some of the results for you personally of having taken this decision?

**PENDAL** Well, one of the early adverse reactions I got was from my own electorate secretary, Fay Gribble, who'd been a wonderful electorate officer, but momentarily she was quite devastated. She recovered from that and remained with me throughout my entire years. In fact, only the other night she and her husband came to our home for a meal just to catch up. It did have a big impact on me. I found it difficult to walk away from an organisation that I'd been part of for so long. I suppose if one was honest, I'd see in there, well, was there some part motivation the fact that I'd been left out of the cabinet? I think there was some of that, but I would still insist that it was largely driven by this preselection chaos and dishonesty. So, it was difficult for me. I had to sit in a different part of the Parliament. I was no longer part of a team. Strangely enough, though, as an Independent you go through a sort of transfiguration and many people then see you as being a vastly better person than you were before! So it was not all downside. There were big numbers of people, Labor voters, who would come and work for me. I would say to them (I'd chide them a bit) "What are you doing here?" They might be people to do with my church or they might be people to do with elsewhere but I knew they were Labor supporters. They'd sort of punch you on the arm and say, "Well, I couldn't work for you before but you're not with them now so now I can work with you." These were people who could never have had a Labor member elected because it wasn't an electorate like that, so they were a bit empowered that I'd sort of come across to the centre from the right and they'd come across to the centre from the left and there we were in this joint activity of getting re-elected to Parliament. So, yes, there were downsides and there were difficulties. Thankfully, my family were just superbly supportive, but there were upsides too in these strange alliances and then being asked often to go and speak at different rallies. You did tend to be targeted by people who thought you would then be all things to all men and in the end I didn't want to be all things to all men; I wanted people still to see me as essentially a Liberal, and I'd call a progressive Liberal. So that was much the outcome.

JF            Just talking about the eminent persons forum, did the members of that all stick with you?

**PENDAL**    Every one to a T. My brother was the chairman, Kerry Davey was the treasurer; John Kelly and John Horner both stuck with me. Indeed, it now prompts me to remember that by this stage John Kelly had gone off to Bali to spend his life up there opening up a newspaper called *The Bali Sun*. We needed a new trustee and Barry MacKinnon, my former colleague, came on board. Now, MacKinnon was still a member of the Liberal Party but he was now on board as one of my fundraisers. They were part of the upsides. There were lots of people who felt that they could give you help, either physical help or financial help, that they couldn't give before when you were a partisan politician. I'm not saying it was all beer and skittles to become an Independent but there were a number of advantages that I didn't have when I was a member of the Liberal Party.

JF            Did you sit down and work out for yourself what your objectives would be as an Independent because in a way that sort of thing tends to be dictated by party policy, I suppose, when you're in a party? When you're on your own, you've obviously got to have issues or things around which you focus.

**PENDAL**    I was lucky in this respect that I'd been a friend of Liz Constable's for years. I'd met her through the Liberal Party, then she'd taken her departure because of much the same sort of antics that I've described later affected the Swan division. I therefore did a lot more planning with her about what we would do in the house about trying to convey the message that Independents can make a difference. We sponsored joint motions into the house; we drew up a series of measures, particularly touching on accountability issues that we would move for in the house. We did try to make a third way, if you see my point, in matters to do with state finance, state administration, Auditor General matters, Public Accounts Committee matters. It was a strange thing over a period of time where often the major parties would then wait; having stated their position, they would then sit back to see

which way we were going to fall. It wasn't a question of playing both sides against the middle. I think for a while there we did carve out that niche. You see, the fear was that with the '96 election coming on, we would hold the balance of power. That didn't turn out to be the case. At one stage Richard Court had come to my office to . . . He would simply say, "I want you to come back." This would have been late in '95. My answer to that was, "Well, I don't think anything's been addressed since I left." So once the business of balance of power was out of the way in '96, Richard had been re-elected, we continued these tactics in the Parliament to be seen to be relevant and on the right sort of accountability issues. That took us up to the 2001 election where there was the same sort of stuff coming forward that we could end up with the balance of power. I remember getting a call from Geoff Gallop, who was then the Leader of the Opposition, because *The Australian* had done an interview with me and said, "If you end up with the balance of power, what will you do?" I said, "I'm duty bound to install a coalition government." I said, "I'm not a . . ." I said, "I think Dr Gallop is an admirable person and I like him and he was a friend of mine but I would be obliged to do that." The paper (it was *The Australian*) was no sooner out on the street than my secretary said, "Geoff Gallop's on the line." Geoff came on the line and said, "What are you talking about, that rubbish in the paper this morning, in *The Australian*? You and I could work together." I said, "I know we could work together but, Geoff, you're a Labor man and I respect that, and I'm a Liberal, even though I'm outside the party." "Oh no," he said, "We could, you know, we could work together." A week later it didn't matter, Geoff didn't need me, and in a way I'm glad because I wouldn't have installed a Gallop government if it had come down to me. But he was really trying to convince me that there was a way that I could've installed a Labor government. They might have said, "You take the Speakership and you put us into government." But a leopard can't change its spots that much so I couldn't have done that.

JF            You've mentioned the '96 election. Perhaps at this moment you could just elaborate on that a little bit because the way you have to work as an Independent coming up to an election is probably rather different from what

you'd done before. You've mentioned outings on the *SS Decoy*. How did you prepare for that election?

**PENDAL** We had to get a different structure in because in the ordinary course of events, you would set up a campaign committee that drew on from representatives of each branch, representatives of the division, and they were principally the campaign committee if you were a member of the Liberal Party. We now had to go outside to fill those jobs, but I repeat: a huge number of people came over from the Liberal Party, some of whom remained in the Liberal Party while still working for me, which I found pretty amusing, but some who were recruited in, entirely different people. We created in the South Perth electorate a precinct system and we were able to neatly cut up the South Perth electorate into something like 49 precincts so that the volunteers would take over what used to be done by the branches when I was in the Liberal Party. So a man or a woman would take responsibility for any one of the 49 precincts. They would do letter deliveries for you, pamphlet deliveries. We got them to do this ostentatiously, to have their material in a big calico bag that had "I'm a Phillip Pendal volunteer" and all of this sort of stuff. So, it was different but we achieved the end in two elections with something like 64 per cent of the two-party preferred.

JF And the eminent persons functions were still your major support financially, were they?

**PENDAL** They were. The campaign committee also raised funds with functions and so on, but the Eminent Australians Forum continued. I'm not sure what would have been the last of those functions but, yes, they continued to be very important.

JF And things like the *SS Decoy* episode, what was that all about?

**PENDAL** We would do the orthodox thing at the start of a campaign; you'd have a whiteboard out and you'd really work out the sort of money that you were looking to raise based on previous experience. You would then work out

where you could expect that money to come from. We had a direct mail, direct appeal, a “begging letter” as we called it, to go to all of our supporters. We had a mailing list of 400 or 500 people with the Eminent Australians Forum, so we might budget to get X number of thousands from that mail-out. We might budget to get funds from a function like the SS *Decoy*, in which case someone would be allocated to arrange that function. We might have a musical evening at the Royal Perth Golf Club and someone else was put in charge of that and a mailing list and getting people to turn up. Things of that nature. We at all times covered our costs and it was a terrific aid to me.

JF           Life as an Independent is quite a bit different. I want to pick up now what the realities of this meant as far as, you know, a lot of information that you get as a member comes through your party organisation, doesn't it? You had the curry club perhaps, which kept you a bit in touch with Liberals, but they would perhaps be a bit reluctant to feed you too much that was in the party interest. How else did you make sure that what you were getting . . . how were you keeping abreast of issues and things that you needed to know about?

**PENDAL**   Well, you had a good staff. I had an electorate officer, I had a research officer. These were people, too, who understood now the different dynamics about the need to work that much harder, or if not harder, that much smarter. I didn't really find there was too much downside in that regard. The party didn't provide you with all that much help or input. The party generally looked to you to provide it with the input. Things like the federal affairs policy and the environmental policy that I had authored for the '93 election, the party would wait for you to do something and then convene a meeting of the state policy committee, and then you'd be put through the hoops because you've got to argue your case with them. I always found that I went through those paces trouble-free. There was a chairman, Jeremy Buxton, who was the chairman of the state policy committee and who, strangely, was often figured as being in the Crichton-Browne camp, but I always found him very professional and he treated me well and I treated him accordingly. He was one who helped me get the policy through, a very important policy because

many in the Liberal Party looked upon it with suspicion because it was something that they were not used to having to address. You didn't so much rely at any time on the Liberal Party to be having input into your thinking; the Liberal Party generally sat breathless, hoping that you as a shadow minister were going to come up with something for them. Lots of shadow ministers did not do that, and so the party was left, you know, crossing their fingers that no-one would ever ask them at election time, "What's your policy on such and such?" So by and large I didn't find too much downside in that respect.

JF            Now, of course, to what extent would your knowledge of and experience of being a press man have helped? I guess that was native territory to you.

**PENDAL**     It was; that's a good way to put it. It was of enormous assistance. The media tended, I think, to give you a natural bias either because you were an Independent or you had dared to go out on a limb. I was never sure, and perhaps it was a combination of both from their point of view. Yes, I was able to continue getting good media coverage, particularly through *The West Australian*, and that tended then to lead into other media activities. I suppose the constant notion that people like myself and Liz Constable might end up with the balance of power made the media more conscious of our presence. You see, as we went to the 2001 election, the Liberals for Forests had been created. Janet Woollard was ultimately elected. I was asked to go to a number of functions and to support her, which I did. They were called Liberals for Forests. It meant me having to make a direct decision on the cessation of logging in old-growth forests, which I did, and took advice from people like Malcolm McCusker QC and others about just what that might entail. The Gallop Government got great credit for having done that, and they deserved it, but similarly people like myself and Liz Constable had publicly got in behind the Liberals for Forests, not really thinking they were going to win a seat in Parliament and then finding, of course, that she had displaced Graham Kierath, who used to be one of my colleagues. But by then the Liberals were really getting out of touch with mainstream thinking, and these environmental issues that I was involved in I saw them as being contemporary issues. The

Liberal leadership was way out of touch; they were issues they didn't want a bar of, but public opinion had overtaken them by that stage.

JF            Now, since we are coming on to issues that you espoused, I think that period of being an Independent also brought into prominence your support for issues related to right to life and so on.

**PENDAL**     That, I think, would have happened anyway because they were things that were brought on, I guess that no-one wanted them brought on. I mean, the issue of right to life, the abortion issue of '98 was brought on by that extraordinary occurrence of a little kid being at school in Rivervale and giving news, where so much of a family's intimate secrets appear to be revealed by five-year-old inquisitors; a little child reporting that, well, "My mum's got a baby home in the fridge". When questioned, the little fellow said that the mum had got this baby and it was in the freezer. Of course, whoever the teacher was they just froze, no pun intended. Eventually, the police got involved and found that that was the case. That was the start, the unintended start, because the acting DPP when he went into it all, in his view, had no option (and I think he was right) but to charge the woman with whatever statute she'd breached. So it just therefore coincided with the fact (this is about January 1998) that I'd been by now an Independent for three years. I would've been in that same position, to have voted the way I did, if I'd remained in the Liberal Party and, to their credit, I would've been able to do that by exercising my free vote. It's my wife's view that, well, perhaps it was always meant to be that you would have that breach with the Liberal Party, because in the end I was seen as the leader of this anti-abortion push and here I was sitting in a room like the one we're sitting in, at Parliament House somewhere, where I had a combination of ex-colleagues, ex-opponents, ex-enemies all sitting and we were on the one side. It was extraordinary not just for me but for every person sitting around. Here were people that you were deadly foes to six months ago now in mortal combat against other people who were seen as your enemies. I do think being an Independent there helped Labor members and others; it was easier for them to sit in and have me chairing this so-called coalition than had I been a Liberal member. I'm sure

that's the case. Who knows, the fates might have designed it all that way. It was not something that any of us brought on, because it was brought on by this little fellow in his classroom who led his mum to go to court. It was an extraordinary period nonetheless.

JF            Would you, just for the sake of the record, spell out who the people were then that were in the committee that you were chairing in the anti-abortion thing?

**PENDAL**    Okay. They all deserve to stand out because it was very courageous for them all, but it was, I think, most courageous for Labor members because although they technically got a conscience vote by this stage, which was an immense reform of 30 years before when no such thing existed in the Labor Party, but I often admired the courage of Labor members who I think put more on the line than any of us. I look at people like Tom Stephens, Michelle Roberts, from the Labor Party. There was John Kobelke. There were upper house members. On the Liberal side there were people like Barbara Scott; there were people like Katie Hodson-Thomas. Cheryl Edwardes, Attorney General, was part of this group of ours. I have to say that only two or three years before, Cheryl and I were opponents in the Liberal Party. I mean, she never did me any favours, but all of a sudden we found that there was common ground here. So you did have what I thought was this extraordinary group of people sitting around the table, roughly one-third of the Parliament. For one reason and another it was a matter that went on for many months. It was not resolved easily; well, I don't think it was resolved at all, given my views on it, but even when it was resolved at law, it took months and months. It was a bruising experience. If I'd thought being left out of the cabinet was bruising or if I'd thought that leaving the Liberal Party was bruising, I don't think anything held a candle to the bruising nature of this awful debate and the period that followed it.

JF            As an Independent did you miss out on things like opportunities for travel as a parliamentarian?

**PENDAL** No, as a matter of fact there was a great deal of mirth amongst my colleagues that I seemed to have an increased amount of travel. I think that was coincidental, too. Each member had access to an imprest account and it's very important, I think, that members be given that access and important that they account for it and explain to Parliament what they've done with it. I not only got those travel options but I was picking up travel options by the select committee chairmanships that came my way and through the chairmanship of the Uniform Legislation Committee. It got to the point . . . I mean, I had several trips to the United States and I seemed to be going to England all the time and the Scottish Parliament and to UNESCO. A number of my more mischievous colleagues had reckoned that I'd manufactured all of this in order to get what they were not getting. It's actually true that a number of the cabinet ministers, friends of mine, would say to me, "Oh, god, you're not going off again, are you? It's all very well for you," they'd say, "I've just put a proposition up through the cabinet and the Premier's knocked it back, me the minister for such and such, going to so and so", a destination. So it was actually a matter of some mirth for them that I had a tremendous amount of travel. Now, I must say, I'd still have traded that for a spot in the cabinet, but for all of that, it was a good consolation prize.

END OF TAPE THIRTEEN SIDE B

## TAPE FOURTEEN SIDE A

This is tape 14, side A, in the series of interviews with Hon Phillip George Pandal. This one is taking place on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2007, at Parliament House, Perth. The interviewer is John Ferrell.

JF            Phillip, when we last spoke you mentioned that, as an Independent, you got lots of opportunities to travel. A couple of times you mentioned travel to UNESCO, which I presume means Paris, and you also, a couple of times, have referred to travelling to the Scottish Parliament. I wonder if you could elaborate on both of those and tell me what you were doing particularly, both in your visits to UNESCO and in your visit to the Scottish Parliament?

**PENDAL**        The visit to UNESCO, John, came as a side trip from London, when I was in London on the heritage law review. I was the chairman of that select committee back in Perth. I could have arranged for the committee to go there. I chose, actually, to use my . . . and that would have then meant Parliament's money . . . I chose to use my imprest money, which members are allocated, to go on the London leg of that. I received some advice at the time that I should plug into the UNESCO people based in Paris, and it was going to add to the trip by \$100, or something of that nature. I met a number of people there because UNESCO, by its charter, looked at things like world heritage. World heritage had been topical for Western Australian politics with things like the possible listing of Shark Bay on the World Heritage List, but also things like Fremantle Prison and so on. So I had a range of appointments there that were arranged by the Australian ambassador to UNESCO. I recall one of the people whom I ended up meeting was none other than the daughter of my former leader in the upper house, Ian Medcalf, here. She was an officer, I think, with the Australian embassy to either France or UNESCO. They were based in the same city.

The Scottish Parliament one: I had always had a passion about true federalism. I was an anti-centralist. It was one of the things that remained constant throughout my political life. You learn to adjust and learn to modify your views, and that's a good learning process; on other occasions you find, as I'm sure you did in your life, in some fields your views would be compounded and strengthened. That loathing that I had always had for centralised government, and the dangers of centralised government, was one of the reasons that I was keen, in the end, to see how the new Scottish Parliament was working, and the extent to which it was an effective devolution, as distinct from something tokenistic. We've talked, before the meeting

began, of this being part of the Blair agenda for Scotland, Ireland and Wales. At that stage, the Irish situation seemed to be almost . . . the difficulties were almost insuperable. At the other end of the scale, the Welsh didn't seem to be too interested in devolution at all. Therefore, the Scots stood out for me, at the time, as being the real trial run to see whether that could work effectively within the United Kingdom. So I had some time there. I had a lot of meetings and interviews. They were similar to ones that I had had, too, in Washington several years earlier. I used to visit people like the National Association of Governors, or the National Association of State Legislators, in the US, and I was always coming back to the Western Australian Parliament invigorated and enthused about this . . . that people like me, in a small way, were on the right track, in a way that people like John Howard, in a big way, were not on the right track. In the end, there was no doubt in my mind that Howard turned himself into a centralist of Whitlamesque proportions.

So my visits to these places overseas that could, in one way or another, contribute to the debate about devolution or federalism, or centralism, these were intended, on my part, just to arm oneself of what was going on in the wider world, because that notion of pro-federalism always, it seemed to me, needed a lot of support and promotion within Western Australia, especially when Sir Charles Court left the scene.

JF            When you went to Scotland, what year are we talking about? It would have been pretty early in the stage of devolution, wouldn't it?

**PENDAL**        Yes, it was. It would have been around the year 2001 or 2002. The Parliament was then housed in the Assembly Hall, I think, of the Church of Scotland, or if not the Church of Scotland, maybe the Presbyterian National Assembly. They were building this fabulous new Parliament House down almost adjacent to Holyrood Palace. We had the chance of seeing the Parliament in session in its temporary chambers, but we also had the chance of being shown over the construction of this fabulous new building, and we met lots of people. I recall taking and presenting to them a Western Australian didgeridoo that still bobs up on the website, for my visit there. It was something that caused a lot of merriment amongst the members and the lords of Scotland whom we met and conversed with.

JF            Have you been back to see the finished article, as far as the building is concerned?

**PENDAL** No, I haven't, but my son, who is an architect, has. He is overawed by it. He thinks it's an amazing piece of architecture, and hopefully we will get back there and see the finished product.

JF Just to tie up, then, the business of travel as an Independent; are there any other visits that you've made that you think are significant to mention? I picked those two just because you've not, sort of, elaborated on them at all.

**PENDAL** I've always found a good reason to travel, but it was always a good reason, and it was always a reason that pretty well left you unassailable. I paid a lot of attention, in the early 1990s, to the British government's position on surrendering Hong Kong to what we then called "Communist China". I could not work out how it was that Margaret Thatcher would go to war and lose lives over an island like the Falklands, and yet allow Hong Kong to go back to the Chinese. There was a very strong pro-democracy movement within the Hong Kong Legislative Council, led by a man called Martin Lee, QC. I had an interesting visit to Hong Kong, specifically with the aim of meeting him and meeting student and business and trade union leaders, to see if there was any way that he could be given outside support. He complained at the time in the world press that it was a lonely battle. I spent some time in Hong Kong, and then subsequently when I came back, doing what I learnt in the end was banging my head against a brick wall in the same way that Martin Lee had done so, and in corresponding with people like the Prime Minister of the day and Minister for Foreign Affairs and other people. So they were sort of legitimate, but always, to me, they were really fulfilling things, just to be able to get your teeth into a few things. There was not one Australian federal member of Parliament, not one, who took an interest in that particular matter, which was a genuine foreign affairs issue that federal members of Parliament ought to have taken a concern with. Of course, federal members of Parliament were far too busy being interested in state issues, then and now, over which they had very limited control. They should have been leading that fight, not people like myself. They were very, very interesting trips to have made and had access to those people.

JF If we're sort of coming to the end of your parliamentary career, it's the time to do a bit of reflective discussion, I think, and say: how do you measure your success as a politician, but particularly as an Independent politician, as you reflect on your time in Parliament?

**PENDAL** Well, it's a very subjective thing, and for that reason it's almost impossible, and I suppose other people have got to make that assessment. It just seemed to me that I had to make do with the best of a bad deal. I felt perhaps the role of an Independent was more comforting to people outside the Parliament than it was to people inside the Parliament. It is true that people like myself, Liz Constable, Reg Davies, it is true that we appeared to be listened to more closely by both sides of Parliament as Independents than you would ever have been listened to had you simply been the opponent of the other side. Often, during debates, people would sit back and the house would quieten down if one or the other of the Independents got to their feet. I would include Larry Graham in this from the Labor side. So that for whatever reason, there did seem to be some greater silence, if not regard. I mean, there were some people on the frontbench of both sides who saw you in very negative terms and you were a nuisance and you . . . they probably thought that you were a bit full of yourself. I couldn't help that . . . their assessment there. I did get the impression, coming back to that early remark, that by being an Independent, it was more relevant and comforting to people beyond the Parliament. Journalists treated you differently, talkback radio people treated you differently. You were treated differently at public meetings and things of that kind.

JF How differently? In what way?

**PENDAL** Forty per cent of people are generally always going to vote Labor, 40 per cent are always going to vote Liberal, but there were still huge numbers out in the electorate who felt that, with you being out of the partisan fray, that you were more within their grasp and reach to get on with and to listen to. Most people somehow felt that you were more accessible and somehow more "respectable", that you were more in touch, that you weren't beholden to your party, whether it was to the right or to the left. That feeling was quite unmistakable for me in those 10 or 12 years. I have to balance all of that against the fact that I did become an Independent; it cut me off from any prospect of promotion, other than the prospect of there being a hung Parliament and where your vote might be the pivotal one. So it's like life itself; it's roundabouts and swings. I can only explain it in terms that once you've made your bed, you then had to lie in it. You had to accept the good and the downside that came with that. Would I have done it again? I'm not sure, because there were the downsides, but all I can say is that it was done and so be it. It was done.

JF I think you were suggesting to me, in a conversation off tape, that the record demonstrates how much influence you have left behind in legislation, which possibly is a measure of your success as a politician generally, if not as an Independent in particular.

**PENDAL** I think there were occasions when you could do things as an Independent that, for whatever reason, you couldn't do as a partisan member. I had two bills passed by the Parliament, and so therefore they became acts of Parliament that were introduced by me. Now, to some people they wouldn't amount to a row of beans, but to some people, other people in society, they were important. I sponsored an amendment to the Museums Act in about 1984, for the Parliament to give proper recognition to the discoverers of the ancient shipwrecks off the Western Australian coast. These people had spent their lifetimes being ignored and their achievements being unrecognised. One of the recommendations of one of the committees that I had chaired was that their names ought to be enshrined in legislation. I'm told it was the only time it's been done in the world, where the names of individual people had been entered upon the statute books. I was able to do that. I'm not sure if I was a Liberal, or by then an Independent, probably an Independent, but because it was the result of a bipartisan select committee report, the Court government was prepared to back it, and so was the Labor opposition.

I think the other quite significant thing was that not long before I left Parliament, I introduced the new parliamentary privileges bill that replaced a 100-year-old statute. It had been a bill that had been recommended by a bipartisan committee, the privileges committee of the day, but no-one had picked it up and had run with it. For a reason that escapes me at the moment, it was suggested, right towards the end of my career, that, "Listen, this is the moment. You could do it as an Independent, whereas if one of the other parties did it, there would be great suspicion." This was, in effect, repatriating parliamentary privilege back to Western Australia, and without a reliance on the British House of Commons, which by that stage, the British House of Commons' privilege was being affected by its membership of the European Community. If we were left with nothing done in Western Australia, we would end up being affected by . . . I think one example was a piece of parliamentary privilege in Malta, for heaven's sake. So I introduced the bill. I was given tacit support behind all the enemy lines, as it were, that if I introduced it, the Labor government would support it, the Liberals would support it. I was getting strong advice from the professional Clerks, and so on. I might say that it was a bill that ought to have been introduced the day that we had a special parliamentary sitting to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of sittings in this building in July 2004. It was always a regret to me that neither the government nor the opposition could use that grand occasion to introduce a bipartisan piece of legislation that was important to the Parliament historically, but they couldn't do it for that anniversary. I always regretted that, so that when, eventually, it was suggested that I might sponsor it, I ran with it, and so that was a second bill that became an act of Parliament. The world didn't stop on its axis when I did those things, but nonetheless they were still important.

JF I don't think we've talked at any length about the occasion when you crossed the floor on the matter of capital punishment. Maybe, in reviewing that situation, you could comment on that as a contribution you feel . . . or how do you feel about that contribution?

**PENDAL** I do feel that that was one of my real successes in 25 years in politics. It was 1984, the Burke government was in office, and the Attorney General, Joe Berinson, had introduced a bill to abolish capital punishment. Now, Labor governments had been introducing bills to abolish capital punishment for maybe 80 years, at least, in Western Australia. They were always defeated by conservative opponents. I was new in Parliament . . . well, by four years. There didn't seem to be the sort of controversy that leads up to things these days then, which result from such things these days. The bill was introduced. I had no compunction. There was no fanfare. I'd worked out a speech. I wrote it out, which was rare for me, because I wanted it to be a good speech. I was the first opposition member to signal in the upper house that I would be crossing the floor. That sent the cat amongst the pigeons for a while. There was a bit of a scurrying going on around the chamber, and the Labor Party at last got a sniff of victory, that this was just not going to be tokenistic. It was subsequently reported that once I had done that, several other non-Labor members followed and said they would also be doing the same; Peter Wells, and John Williams, and I think Tom McNeil from the National Party. Lo and behold, the house divided, and we were all over there with Labor members of Parliament and the bill was passed. So it was an historic date because we had supported [the abolition of] capital punishment. Western Australia had had it on its statute books for 160-odd years. It hit the front page of *The West* the next day. I think that's when, kind of, it then made me realise the wider significance of it. I was very, very proud of that vote; very proud. I think it stood me in good stead, too, years later in standing for what I think were similar issues. I was accused at the time, by people in the Liberal Party, of having a left-wing view on capital punishment. Fifteen years or so

later, I was being accused by Labor people of having a right-wing view on abortion. I was able to stand there and say, "Isn't it interesting? It's one and the same thing; it's a one, circular, continuum. It's protecting human life. I'm not the one out of step here; you, my opponents, are." They could never answer that. I must admit, that was one of the few times I felt victorious over anyone in the place. [chuckles] It was a big day. I was very, very proud of being part of the abolition of capital punishment.

JF            Since, I think, about 1984, you were involved with the Parliamentary Historical Advisory Committee. I know history is a matter that's dear to your heart, and possibly your contribution in that area has been significant and certainly goes beyond the time that you were actually a parliamentarian. Maybe you'd like to spend a few minutes now talking about that committee and what you've been able to achieve in the course of being associated with it.

**PENDAL**        Here, I've got to pay tribute to David Black, whom I've already described to you, off the record, as being someone not unlike of your mould, or maybe of mine, too, but we're all history tragics. I say that with affection. It was David Black who had an interest, as an academic, to get more of the history of the Western Australian Parliament written and recorded. I'm fairly sure that it was at his prompting that around 1984, it must have been then Speaker Harman, who, with Clive Griffiths as President, would have agreed to the establishment of the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee. I was invited on to it, and 23 years later I've never left. It's been the one constant in my time here, but it's just been one of those fabulous experiences. Gordon Reid was involved in it. I always used to complain that every one of the original members went on to higher things. I was the only one who crashed out. Gordon Reid became the Governor, so he had to resign. We had people like, I think, Geoff Bolton and Tom Stannage and David Black. Everyone went on to high pinnacles, so I used to joke with them, only half-jokingly, that they'd all gone on to these great promotions. Some of the upsides were that we sponsored the production, in 1991, of *The House on the Hill*. The next book, which was edited by David, was one principally written by me and him, but I wrote most of it, with him editing and assembling it. It came out under our joint names in 2004, I think it was, called *House to House*. I was very proud of that, and the Governor launched that, with some fanfare, in about October of that year. It then led on to us producing . . . and we're now working on a third, which David calls the third of the trilogy, called *Parliament: Is it a Mirror Image of the People?* That involves Harry

Phillips, David Black and myself. That has absorbed me a lot and it's been one of those things that keeps you sane when everything else about you is falling apart.

JF I think you called the first book by the wrong title; are you referring to *The House on the Hill*?

**PENDAL** I beg your pardon. The one David led off, that is the first of the trilogy; you are right, it was *The House on the Hill*. The one that I wrote with David was then *House to House*, and then finally, *Parliament: Mirror of the People*?

JF That committee continues to absorb you even though you're not a member, as it has involved people outside the house often. Would you see yourself continuing to contribute to that over the years to come?

**PENDAL** I'm in the Parliament's hands, but on the day that we launched the book *House to House*, I was made a Parliamentary Fellow. That's only been conferred on two others, and that was Harry Phillips and David Black, so I think that was the hint that they wanted me to keep on contributing there. They have now provided me with an office and facilities where I try to keep, sort of, committed to that. So, yes, I'd certainly like to think that there is a lot more for us to be publishing. I think the Parliament has actually developed into quite an impressive little publishing house in its own right, and it would be up there amongst any Parliament in Australia for its publications of serious material, and I think, to a large extent, that's a great tribute to Harry Phillips and David Black for the other separate publications that have come on.

A tiny little story: I was sitting in the chamber towards the end of my career and the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee was about to be reappointed by the presiding officers. I was sitting in the chamber and one of the messengers delivered me, direct from the Speaker's office, my reappointment. I opened up the letter and found that it was addressed to "The Chairman, Phillip Pental. Dear Mr Chairman, would you please take another term", and I thought, "Someone has made a terrible error here, unless I have supplanted David Black." I took it up quietly to the Clerk, Peter McHugh, and I said, "Did the Speaker really mean to appoint me to this?" Peter's eyes grew very large, and he said, "Do you mind if I take that back?" I said, "I think that'd be a good idea", and within a quarter of an hour I'd been demoted to . . . I think they actually made me vice-chairman on the spot. So I did get a promotion after all, even though it wasn't much of a one. [chuckles]

TAPE FOURTEEN SIDE A

PENDAL

END OF TAPE FOURTEEN SIDE A

## TAPE FOURTEEN SIDE B

This is tape 14, side B, interviews with Hon Phillip Pendal.

JF Phillip, it comes to that time where we have to talk about your retirement from Parliament. In your own way, tell the narrative that leads up to that really momentous decision.

**PENDAL** Well, when I did retire, I was 58, and so I was probably around 56 when I . . . in common with any other member of Parliament, you always have to think of things in four-year spans. It was never really an option, and it's not for most members of Parliament, to say, "Look, I think I'll give it another six months and pull the pin." There are occasions when people leave mid-term, but I had to look ahead to see whether I still wanted to be a member of Parliament at the age of 58 or 59. That would then have meant me being 63 at the end of that session. I had never wanted to be there just to be there. I found that it was a hard job. It rewarded me in many ways, but I didn't want to be sitting for another four years on the backbench. People are apt to say to you, "Look, hold on, you might get the balance of power." You're one of 57 members, and so if that occurred, then you'd be in a good position to bargain, but the chances of it happening would be fairly rare. There were other people who would lament the fact that I wasn't in the Liberal Party. These were mostly my friends. It wasn't a widespread two million people weeping daily [chuckles] about my absence from the Liberal Party, I might add. It just had to be seen as another four years at the wheel.

In the year 2000 my wife had had a stroke. She recovered remarkably from all of that, but we didn't know at that stage what the future would bring. Three or four months after, she was on the road to recovery, and it took a long time. She was out of it; she, for example, didn't know who I was. Many of her friends later suggested that that was very much to her advantage [chuckles] in getting a bit of a breather, but that happened to her. Not long after, I got double pneumonia and a collapsed lung and so I was now in the Mount Hospital. I think it probably played pretty heavily on my mind that, for heaven's sake, I don't want to stick around this place just for the sake of getting a mini-state funeral, or whatever else they give an incumbent backbencher. We, by this stage, had . . . we both felt we were very lucky to have escaped like we did, but particularly Maxine. I think all of these things, the . . . I was still bruised by that 1998 abortion debate, which was just . . . and I might say, it's not only me, but lots of other people felt that way. I think these things reminded us of

how short life is, and I think all of those things contributed. I am convinced that I could have stayed . . . electorally, that I could have won. There was nothing that was happening out there that would militate against that. We polled on regular occasions and my standing seemed to be holding up, but it just seemed, in the end, the difference between retiring in reasonably good health at 58 or maybe coming out in a box when you were 63. Had circumstances been different, had there been other things to persuade you to go on, I guess I would have gone on. Had I been in the ministry or in a senior leadership position, then those things spark you up and rev you up and things may have been different. In the end, I just think it was the right time to go.

JF           What about the actual circumstances? You left at the end of the term, so there was no big trauma about it, but how much did you have to talk about it and organise it and . . .

**PENDAL**       I did, because one of the things that I couldn't afford to do was to say anything too soon which locked me into actually going. That would have sent the Liberal Party into a flurry, because, after all, I was holding one of their best seats. I was very keen to make sure that the decision was kept close to the people who needed to know, and when the time came I think I rang about six or eight people on the day and said, "To the extent that you're interested, I'm going to announce on Sunday that I'm retiring." One little humorous incident was that I wanted to announce it from the little sunken garden at Parliament House on a Sunday afternoon. It was a green, rich, lush-looking place, and I always knew that Sundays were slow news days, so that I had decided on that. We'd had a family function at one of my daughter's houses in Guildford, and we were to go in, and all of my children were to come in and be present, and my wife as well. My eldest daughter Sasha worked, at that stage, for one of the federal ministers, so she had politics, you know, in Canberra during the week, or politics when she got home here. Unbeknownst to me, as they were driving in from Guildford and my wife and I were driving in separately, my daughter (you know, she'd obviously been almost overdosed on politics in her life) but Sasha said to the other siblings, "My God, what if, when we get there, no media turn up?" As it turned out, there was quite a big contingent, certainly enough to make it respectable, and she breathed a sigh of relief when she got there. She seemed to think that it was bad enough to retire from politics, but to retire and be totally ignored would be a terrible fate. So the announcement then went out and it

got quite a lot of publicity. Mainly the publicity surrounded two things: number one; the immense interest that the Liberals were now taking because the seat would go back to them, and there was a fair bit of other interest in that it was the retirement of the bloke who almost made it. Barry MacKinnon used to introduce me to different people as “the best Minister for Environment Western Australia had never had”. He used to say to me, “Don’t you now get back into the Liberal Party and go into a cabinet, because you can never live up to the reputation that you’ve established as someone who has had it snatched from you.” I was never sure whether I should laugh or cry at that comment, but it was a part of the MacKinnon so-called humour.

JF                   What’s the actual date of the retirement, for the record?

**PENDAL**           Isn’t it strange, I can think of things 30 years ago to the date. I think it was . . . it was in 2004, and it was some time perhaps around about May, but I’m really not sure.

JF                   So at that stage, then, how far off was the next election? You were pretty close . . .

**PENDAL**           It was probably six or eight months to an election, which then put the Liberal Party into a spin, with all sorts of people wanting to contest the seat, knowing now that it would go back to them for the first time in a decade. I gave a bit of a hand to one or two people behind the scenes that I hoped would follow me. I was openly putting out the message that this seat . . . the Liberal Party should be working to appoint someone who is going to go into the cabinet, or probably become Premier. That was the sort of seat it was. Without wanting to put the mockers on his future, I actually ran the idea past Greg Craven, who was then the Professor of Law at Notre Dame University, as someone who would become an immediate Attorney General in a new Liberal government. I think, for a while there, it had some attraction, and he was the right age and qualification. I did feel it was a seat where they should be getting a minister or a possible future Premier. In typical Liberal fashion, that was never gained. They had one preselection that was, I think, messed up. They eventually endorsed John McGrath; oddly enough, a former journalistic colleague of mine. I think the only downside to John was that he was coming into politics too late. I have to, in all respects, admire the verve and the vigour with which he’s done his job since he was elected. They’ve got a very hardworking member of Parliament.

JF            Following your retirement, there are certain accolades that you have received. I wonder if you could just talk about them for a few moments. I think you have a parliamentary medal; is that correct? Or a parliamentary accolade?

**PENDAL**        I was made a Parliamentary Fellow, which was a sort of a new honour instituted by the President and the Speaker. It had previously been awarded to David Black and Harry Phillips, and was awarded to me. It came with a gold lapel badge. I was very proud to get that. It was only the third ever awarded, and then it gave me an entree to Parliament House and its facilities even in a way better than I would have got even as a retired member. I was chuffed to get that.

JF            Apart from the . . . well, it's recognition for a start, I guess, but apart from that, the main advantage is the access to Parliament House?

**PENDAL**        Yes, yes.

JF            Subsequent to that, you got some recognition from the church; I think you were the recipient of a papal cross.

**PENDAL**        I was, yes.

JF            That was related to your time in politics. Talk about that for a few minutes.

**PENDAL**        It was a surprise. I got a call from one of the young bishops, Don Sproxton, early in 2005, asking would I accept an honour from the Vatican if it was offered. I was nonplussed because I'd never been in that position before of saying, "Well, I don't know what the answer to that is." Bishop Sproxton, he was only a new bishop, so he was probably as inexperienced in making out these soundings as I was in responding. It was commonly called the papal cross, it was the . . . the Latin term looks more impressive than the English term, but it's the cross of the Church and the Pontiff. I believe it was amongst the last in the world approved prior to the death of John Paul II. Ironically, as it turned out, it was conferred on me and another member, Bill McNee, on the night that he was being buried in Rome. The date was set for it being awarded at a function at the cathedral, long before the death of the Pope had occurred. So they decided that they would not change the date of the conferral of the

honour, and instead do that, and then there was to be this pontifical high requiem mass for John Paul II that followed that. One of the humorous upshots of that was that in the week the Pope died, the front page of *The Record* had five tiny little photos in an otherwise blank page, saying "Who will it be?", obviously meaning that these are the five people in the running to be the next Pope. At the foot of the page there was a picture of me in respect to the papal cross, and so I had a bit of fun. I'll probably be punished for this later. I had a bit of fun putting a big arrow from the top blank boxes, and a big arrow pointing down the bottom and sending it to my friends to say that if I was departing Perth soon, they would soon know why. [chuckles] I was thrilled. There are not many of them given. I've since seen, in the church directory for Australasia and Oceania, the previous recipients. I was thrilled because I often thought it was a lonely battle, not just for me, but for other members who stuck up for these things; they were difficult times. I've used the word before, "bruising", but it's the only thing I can think of that gets the point across. I've had my moments with some of the ecclesiastical leaders, and I have not been slow in letting them know a few things about how I felt on some issues, so to have it rounded off with that, it was a great thrill.

JF I wonder if . . . perhaps accolades ought to be finished off before I go on to the next little branch that I was going to enter. You became a freeman of the City of South Perth in 2006.

**PENDAL** I did.

JF Yet another accolade. Tell me about what that meant to you?

**PENDAL** The freeman role is listed in . . . I think it's listed in legislation as being the highest honour that local authorities can confer on one of their citizens. They approached me about that, too, and asked me would I accept it. I noted that it's conferred on you as being an honorary freeman. I said, "Does that mean I still have to pay rates?" The mayor, John Collins, sort of said, "Yes, I'm afraid that you are still going to have to pay your rates." That was voted on, I think, in 2004, the year I announced my retirement, but it was kept secret from me for quite a few months and then conferred on me on Australia Day in 2005. So I was thrilled that they thought that I'd done enough for the city to warrant that. Now I think about it, it did all come at once. There were those three awards, but I suppose people would understand

that I certainly was thrilled to get the papal cross. That's a very handsome gold cross, set in a ribbon of the Vatican's colours of yellow and white. To some of my more disrespectful Catholic friends, I would say to them that, "We're going to invite you over to breakfast and I'll be pinning this on my pyjamas so that you can do a few genuflections before me." For all of that, it was . . . I didn't expect any of those three things from the Parliament, the city or the Holy See, but it was nice to get them. It's like anyone else; I guess it's nice to be recognised.

JF            Perhaps we could spend a few moments talking about the church and your association with the church. What is usually mentioned in this context is the right-to-life issue, but that really is only something that flows on from the basic theology of the church. I've wondered . . . most people have no trouble accepting theology or belief as it is, sort of, handed out to you as a child, which obviously you have accepted readily. The biggest challenge, I think, is to maintain that, or to . . . as you question it, naturally enough, as you mature. So I wonder if you could spend a few minutes talking about how your Christian journey has been, in a way, in terms of your own adherence to the faith.

**PENDAL**        I think that's true, what you've said. I was a Catholic initially because of my mother and my baptism. I was later a Catholic because I saw the practical application of that in things like the YCW, and that helped shape and mould me. Then I remained a Catholic because it appeared to me to answer as many of the questions that are capable of being answered in the human condition. Does some of it still puzzle me? Of course it does. The only way I can explain it is that sometimes people would say, "How can you possibly believe in, say, the resurrection?" I would say, "Do you believe in God?" and that person might say, "Yes." I'd say to them, and I still say to them, "That's the big hurdle to get over. All the rest is supplementary." I mean, if a person can believe in God, then that, to me, seems to be the fantastic hurdle. I think the Christian faith is misunderstood by a lot of people. I think a lot of people still bring to it the learning that they got as a child. I think, as you've explained it, it was a good way to put it. I think there's an ongoing capacity to test and to read. I remember once meeting a lawyer in Perth and having him to lunch at Parliament House, and it turned out that he, too, was a Catholic. He said to me something that stuck in my mind. He said, "Even if you put aside some of the more difficult theological things, the things that are demanded of you as a Catholic or a Christian, if you pulled aside the religious element to it, if that's possible, then it does become a

good way to live your life; treat other people properly, seek to do good, to respond to things like the Ten Commandments.” Harry Phillips was telling me, only recently, that when he put forward a document for civics in some broader field, he also mentioned the Ten Commandments. That sometimes comes as a bit of a shock to some people, but I look at the Ten Commandments and I say, “What’s the matter with that? That’s not a bad rule of life”, which was really what this lawyer was saying to me. He felt that it was a way of running and ruling your life as a serious Catholic that was nothing but to the good. So, I mean, we tend to get a bit of continued bad press. [chuckles] People, I guess, still see the church in terms of . . . many people would say, in terms of its teachings on contraception. To me, that’s a tiny, weenie little bit down to the side that’s not unimportant, but it’s a pity that it becomes the reflection of the whole. By and large, I just have felt comfortable. I speak to people who have been raised in that way and have even rejected all of that, but who still praise what they learnt in terms of the principles of social justice. I’ve heard several members of Parliament do that. So the richness of it, the heritage of it, I think it’s a great beauty . . . again, not without some challenges and disappointments and troublesome elements to it. That’s the best I can describe it.

JF                    How do you feel in the light of recent books like the Richard Dawkins attack on Christianity? Are you familiar with his criticisms?

**PENDAL**            I’m pretty well up with most literature, but just help me there because I’m not with that.

JF                    He’s the fellow who is sort of saying it’s about time the church stopped trying to tell us that God exists, and so on, because science has well and truly demonstrated that this is impossible etc.

**PENDAL**            Yes.

JF                    Does this have any real traction with you?

**PENDAL**            No, it doesn’t, because I guess in going back to that comment I made to you earlier, I’d say that I’m in at least as good a company intellectually as he is, or people of that ilk. I respect their views, but I think some of the finest minds in the history of the world have willingly and comfortably accepted the notion of God, but it’s

not obligatory. I would tend to look at someone like that and feel, "Well, what is it that you're trying to prove?" If many people do have that belief system, and that it sustains them and it's used as a power of good for the world, what possible value is there in pursuing a study that says, "You've got it all wrong, He doesn't exist"? I guess that's the fundamental nature of a belief system. Can I believe that all of this just happened? No, I can't. I'm comfortable with that first point, that there had to be a starting point. Evolution? I don't have a problem with evolution. I'm not sure that I subscribe to it and I'm not sure that I don't. It was always taught to me that at some point in the history of the world there was a spiritual dimension breathed into man, and we call that the soul. Do I find that difficult? No, not really. That's why I can return to that earlier point, when some people say to me . . . like, I used to love debating infallibility. I remember asking, as a kid at school, way back, I might have been 10 years of age, "The infallibility, Sister", said little smarty pants Pendal, "Does that mean that the Pope can say that the window has got to be on that side of the church and that he can't be wrong about that?" I knew that I was being a clever dick when I was asking the question, and whichever nun it was probably supported my view about myself. I was trivialising what was a serious issue, but even a serious issue that many adults didn't understand what teachings like that meant. In the end, I say to myself that a lot of that teaching process is less difficult to accept once you get over that first real hurdle. Now, if one doesn't believe in God, then all the rest, or none of the rest, follows. But if you do, I don't find it difficult in accepting those core things.

END OF TAPE FOURTEEN SIDE B

## TAPE FIFTEEN SIDE A

This is tape 15, side A, in the series of interviews with the Hon Phillip George Pental, this one taking place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2007 at Parliament House, Perth, the interviewer being John Ferrell.

JF            Phillip, we have left to pick up on things you've done in the way of writing and things you've done in the way of community service, and they are the two major areas that I think are left to talk about in some detail today. So, perhaps to start off with, I mean you were a journalist before you went into Parliament, so writing was your trade, but I was interested to hear you talk about your decision to write family history, for example, with the book *A Clean Break*. What led to that and so on?

**PENDAL**        *A Clean Break* came not long after I had been elected to Parliament. I think my interest in family history arose because of the early death of my father. As I look back, I was more than usually desperate to try and fill in a past that really had disappeared with my father. As well, around the same time, I made the discovery through a cousin of mine that my paternal great-great-grandfather had been a convict who had arrived in 1855. I was absolutely fascinated to think that we'd derived of that stock. So, in the end I had published this quite modest book called *A Clean Break*, which were the two essays of my father's family, having made a clean break from England early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to come out and start a fresh life in Western Australia, and then my mother's family being set up in WA by a man who'd made his own clean break, but he'd had the clean break made for him by the British Government of the day. It was a combination of those two essays that began what became a lifetime interest in family history, and I've since published another book called *Leave Granted* on my maternal great-great-grandfather, Joseph Buswell. Ultimately I hope to do something more substantial on my father's side as well.

JF            Did they run to very many copies in the editions?

**PENDAL**        I think, no, I might've got 250 or 200 printed, or something. They seemed to last an awful long time. They didn't hit the New York book list of the year! I had them put into a few libraries but they were taken up mainly by family members. That first one, *A Clean Break*, was as I look back on it now a very modest affair, but nonetheless as late as two weeks ago a family member in Tasmania got in touch with me to get a copy of it, so there's still a minuscule call on it within the family.

JF            There was other historical writing you did, probably I imagine in the way of articles and so on, which were West Australian history. For example, I wondered about your essay on Sir Eric Smart. I think you did that as part of an edited edition of works by various people for, was it for 1979?

**PENDAL**        Yes, it was for the sesquicentenary. I was working then with Sir Charles Court as one of his press secretaries, and I recall that, I think it was Lyall Hunt, was the editor of the book to be called *The Westralian Portraits*. These were a selection of prominent West Australians. I was rather taken aback actually, given that I had no serious academic background to speak of, when I was approached by Lyall Hunt to do the story on Eric Smart. I rather suspect that might have been because all of the more famous historians had got their claws into the more famous of the early West Australians, but I didn't mind because it was an opportunity to do something serious. I did that while I was still working for Sir Charles Court, and that was eventually published for the sesquicentenary. It was quite an important bit of writing for me because of that lack of an academic background and training, but it sort of gave me just a toe in the door to be taken seriously on serious history matters.

JF            I have to confess that I haven't read that essay, but were you ... what were you really saying about Smart?

**PENDAL**        I remember the opening of the chapter, which my wife who's very much into art only re-read in recent months and she was very surprised at my artistic allusions, because I tried to paint Smart as like a Michelangelo or one of the grand painters of the day, where he did all the big broad brush strokes and outlines and the vision bit, and then he had all the artisans come in and do all of the more detailed work. When I was ready to write on Eric Smart, that's what occurred to me about him. He was a South Australian by birth, if I remember correctly, and he'd come west. He could see this huge potential on the light lands in and around the Geraldton area where he later settled, at Erigulla Springs I think it was. I did see him in those terms, and that's how I portrayed him, and my wife later expressed some surprise that I even knew anything about those sorts of artistic things. That chapter saw him, or portrayed him, in those terms.

JF            Did you ever meet him?

**PENDAL** I did, strangely enough. I met him several times. He died quite young. I think he might have been still in his late 50s. As luck would have it, my sister and her husband as a young married couple went to work on his farm at Erigulla Springs in the mid '60s, my brother-in-law being employed by him as his mechanical superintendent for this huge empire of farmlands. So I also had that sort of help understanding on what sort of a person he was and what made him tick. I met him on a couple of occasions, but as I look back now, I can't ... it's a long, long time ago and they were at functions, I think, to do with ... that may have been to do, now that I think about it, with the by-election that was called for Sir David Brand's seat around about November 1975, so I was able to draw on those experiences, but there was a lot written about him, too. There was a lot of scientific journals, Department of Agriculture people that I could still talk to who had dealt with him when they were young agricultural scientists. I recall another journalist working for the Premier's Department, John Lawson. John, who was a lot older than I, was the editor of *The Countryman*, and a very good agricultural journalist, so I was able to tap into him about this man who had made this sort of commitment and impact. So I drew on all of that.

JF His main claim to fame is that he was probably the biggest graingrower of the state, wasn't it?

**PENDAL** Yes. I think it might have even gone beyond the state. I think he might have been the biggest graingrower, by that stage, in Australia. Given that we were one of the world's largest granaries, then that put him to the forefront so that his name meant something I think on the world scene.

JF Another one that you wrote about, and I was a little bit amused to note this, you've done an article or an unpublished biography of Bert Hawke.

**PENDAL** I did.

JF I wondered whether that was self-choice or whether that one was foisted on you by somebody else and why you would have chosen to do that.

**PENDAL** It occurred when I was on the *Daily News* from about 1969 through till about 1974, and again when I look back on it I think it was a make-up effort for this lack of tertiary studies. I was a young journalist at the *Daily*, I was interested in

politics, and I was working and reporting on the last days, the last months, of Sir David Brand's Government and the opening period of John Tonkin's Government. I was interested in writing a political biography. Sir David Brand by then had only just retired, or been defeated as Premier, and it seemed to me that that was too close an event to effectively write about. I then started casting around and I in fact began looking at Frank Wise, who was the former Labor Premier. I knew Frank Wise because he was now in this Parliament but in the upper house on his return from the Northern Territory. I'd half inclined to think that I would like to do something on him. However, I settled on Bert Hawke, because he seemed to me to be a more interesting individual than Frank Wise. Frank was a bit on the vain side, you might say, and I picked that up even at this stage. I might say, in Churchill's mannerism, that he had a lot about which to be vain, because he was a very accomplished man. Bert Hawke seemed to me to be a much more human individual, and even at that stage when Hawke had been out of office by, say, 12 years, I would still hear people on the Liberal side of politics speak highly of him. So I contacted him. He lived in a little flat up in West Perth, the world's tiniest flat. I couldn't believe that this was how a Premier would end up, but he was widowed by then. He had always lived in really modest circumstances. I loved the idea, and I've since made this discovery in Northam, that he defeated, of course, Sir James Mitchell as Premier, and as I later discovered when I went to try and find Bert Hawke's house, it suddenly struck me that he lived opposite Sir James Mitchell. So here was a street in a little town in Australia that had produced two heads of government. Now, I mean not a lot turns on that, but I was a bit fascinated to think that that was the case. However, I approached Hawke to see if he would take part in a series of oral history interviews, which he did. I then had access, of course, to all the files of WA Newspapers because I was still working there. I used to use all of their equipment to troop off and interview him with *Daily News* tape recorders. Any spare moments I got I used to go downstairs into the dungeons of the place and go through old newspapers and so on. I got to know him well. In the end, it was knocked back for publication by University of WA Press, and when I look at it now, so it ought to have been. I would say that it was about 85 per cent of a good book, but I just never got around to getting back to it. I enjoyed it; I think he was a very, very significant person in West Australian politics.

JF            Right. There are other things that you've written now that I'd like to refer to. There are a couple of things that were related to South Perth - *Vanishing Village*. Tell me about *Vanishing Village*.

**PENDAL** I was the president of the historical society and as with most historical societies you would have a person coming to give a presentation at a public meeting say once every two months. They would be talking about some part of South Perth history, maybe it was early days playing in the river. It might have been the early days of the zoo. It could have been the ferries on the Swan River. We had a whole series of speakers over four or five years. It got to the point where I felt that we had this huge resource, because we had the taped versions. We got access to a member of the society who was prepared to transcribe them, and then I spoke to the treasurer, a very good friend of mine, who was also the treasurer of my political campaigns, and said "How would like it if you worked with me – we'd both be called co-editors – and if I actually edited these talks down and then if your job was to do the commercial side and get the thing printed?" We did that, and to this day it continues to sell well. I've now learnt of course that that genre of nostalgia people love. It went into a second printing. The money that's been raised has now allowed us to restore an original South Perth tram. That's being done at Whiteman Park and will come back to South Perth next year. We're about to go into a second version, not a reprint but a second version with another 20 or 25 stories, because they've accumulated in the years. It sells well in and around South Perth as a little Christmas gift or something of that kind. It preserved a lot of really, I think, good bits of social history that otherwise would have been lost.

JF You've had a couple of things to do that were related to the church – *A Thing of Beauty*.

**PENDAL** That was a small book that was published in 1986 by the Catholic Church in South Perth to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Columba's Church, that lovely Spanish mission architecture church sitting on the top of the hill. The parish priest was keen to ... someone had donated to him money to have a book of that kind published. It wasn't a huge thing, it might have run to 24 pages, but the donor was prepared to spend good money on good colour photography. That was published in 1986 for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that church, and they still continue to use that for visitors and people who get married there and things of that kind. So, that was a labour of love as well.

JF You did another one, too, more recently, *Hands That Heal*.

**PENDAL** Yes. *Hands That Heal* is quite a major work. It's just under 100 000 [words]. It's the history of the only genuinely community-owned hospital in Australia. Based in South Perth, this hospital was created post-war, in the days before there was a Narrows Bridge, in the days when it was a lot more difficult to get access to medical help. Through literally a series of accidents a group of local people got together and decided to raise money to open a hospital in South Perth. It continues to operate to this day. It receives national accreditation. It has all sorts of complicated operations being done there in, I think, three or four separate operating theatres. The book became something of a social history of the practice of medicine and nursing from the '50s right through to the year 2000. I was actually really proud of that work and that was published and launched one year ago by the former Chief Justice.

JF And is that a commercial work or was that a labour of love too?

**PENDAL** Well, it should have been a commercial work but I didn't charge them, but I learnt my lesson after that and I realised that for things like that you could be picking up \$50 000 here and there. It did serve to ... it was published just at the right time to be noticed by the Catholic education authorities in Western Australia, and I was given then a paid commission to write the history of Catholic education from 1843. I'm in the process of doing that job now. The hospital job also led to me being asked, commissioned, to write the history of the Royal Perth Golf Club, and that's in the process of being completed now. So out of these labours of love did come some with some reward as well.

JF I wonder if you would spend a few minutes now, because as well of course you've been working on the political publications that the Parliament's done. You've pretty well authored the second one of that series, didn't you, *House to House*? I wonder if you'd like to speak a little while about the way you go about a big project of that sort. I mean, everybody approaches writing in their own characteristic way, but ...

**PENDAL** Well, I must say I've not done any one job the same as the previous job because as you would imagine from your own knowledge as a historian, I at least have learnt from each project, but I do know that I was confronted with that issue in beginning the research on the history of Catholic education in Western Australia and that my real difficulty there was in dealing with something that was occurring over a

160-year period. In the end I found what was terribly helpful was to begin to create a time line of what did happen in 1843 and why that was the pivotal date. Then I began, before I did any serious writing, trying to complete the time line so that I had some idea of when major events were occurring. Strangely enough, because of the arrival of different religious orders, because of the geographical layout of Western Australia, it almost was the case that something was happening every year. Then if you put in the political element, the time when the colonial governments were helping church schools, and then the abolition of that in 1895 and then the re-emergence in the 1950s, once I had all of those dates in, I could then see certain patterns that would emerge over certain periods. So I found the creation of the time line the boon for me because it helped me see when were the peaks and the troughs, when were the huge bits of activity, both externally out of Western Australia and internally within WA, so that's the way I went about that. It has taught me a lesson now for what I hope will be future projects to look at that time line process. I'm even trying to talk the publishers into running the time line as a chronology in the back of the book, as a ready reckoner to someone as to what year such-and-such happened. That was basically what I learnt on the job, going along.

JF                    And when you get to writing it, when, where and how do you write?

**PENDAL**        I write at home in my study, which also serves as a big library. It's a place of quiet. I hate any noise and I've even made myself a bit unpopular on occasions to ask my wife to turn down the classical music and she said, "That can't possibly be intruding into your thinking", but it does. Once I've segmented, whether it's the hospital book, whether it's the Catholic education where I've just completed 60 000 words, or the golf club or the Parliament book *House to House*, once I've divided it physically on paper as to what I'm going to deal with in that chapter (and there has to be some sort of logical sequence of events) I do spend a lot of time in my opening three or four paragraphs, because it seems to me that that's what's going to hold the reader's interest, if you're going to hold them at all. So I spend a fair bit of time trying to be as colourful as I can. I was a bit taken aback when my first 60 000 words came back on Catholic education. One of the fellows supervising me (and that's my word) is Clem Mulcahy, a historian in his own right and he's still the principal of a Catholic college in the northern suburbs. He came back and he said that he thought I was on track and he was enjoying it and it was a good piece of work, but he said, "You've got to do something about this purple prose." I was a bit thrown, but once he had pointed that out to me, I realised I was too reliant on this

flamboyant, colourful, even extravagant language, because he would say to me, "Do you really mean that in the use of those words?", and then I would guiltily sit there and look at it and think no, I've gone over the top. It's probably the first time in my life that I've had a real understanding of what purple prose was - that it was that sort of writing that by itself began to distract the reader from the real substance of what you're writing. So I was able to get back and start to "de-purpleise" it, and I found that he was a harsh critic but it was a good learning curve for me because he had both the academic training and the professional interest that was still helping me to develop a less flamboyant style. He kept stressing to me, for example, you've got to remember that this work will probably become major reading for undergraduates looking to teach in Catholic schools, so it's an important work. So when I heard that, I certainly sat up and took notice.

JF                    Do you work longhand or do you go straight onto the computer?

**PENDAL**            I go straight onto the computer. My Hawke biography, which was being done 35-odd years ago, I did all onto a little typewriter that I bought as a young journalist and, of course, that was mistakes and all, unlike the computer now where you can be correcting on the spot. I like to, once I've got that broad material off to one side and I know where I want to take a chapter and I've got the data sitting alongside of me, I'm fairly sure that once I get a good start, then the rest of it will flow well.

JF                    And do you write chronologically or are you writing bits of it at different stages of the story?

**PENDAL**            Well, I am finding that I'm writing in the narrative style and so therefore I'm not doing a chronicle. A chronicle really is, I think, just an old form of sort of journalism, whereas the narrative style that the Catholic education people asked me for was something that they'd picked up from this hospital book. It so happened that one of their senior officials lived in South Perth and got access to it and had said it's something like that that we want. So mine tends to be in that narrative style, where inevitably you're sometimes referring back to past events, but without being repetitive, and sometimes even flagging future events, again so that you're not being repetitive. I was surprised to learn ... any of us don't think that we have a style. At least I never thought I did. I just thought well I write the stuff. I sit down and write it. A lady who lives in the block of units who's very close to my wife (in fact she died only yesterday)...

TAPE FIFTEEN SIDE A

PENDAL

END OF TAPE FIFTEEN SIDE A

## TAPE 15 SIDE B

Tape 15, side B, interviews with the Hon Phillip Pendal.

**PENDAL** This lady came back to my wife and said later that she'd been educated in France, she'd worked for the French Government and she'd had connections with De Gaulle, so she was pretty well credentialled. She came back and said to my wife that she'd thoroughly enjoyed the hospital book and she thought my style, which I honestly never thought I had, was very much like Truman Capote. Around that time, I might say, I saw the film on Truman Capote, and as I look back I'm not sure if she was paying me a compliment [laughs] or not. It is difficult, and I don't know if you find this, it's difficult for you to get your own head around the fact that you have a particular style. I don't think I have, because it's the only way I know how to do something. Maybe that's because I don't have an understanding of the finer points of literary composition either. Nonetheless, other people recognise you as having a style even if you don't see it yourself.

JF Was this lady herself a writer?

**PENDAL** She was. Indeed, up until the very last weeks of her life she was attending courses with my wife, so that I was fairly sure in the end that she was paying me a compliment.

JF Her name?

**PENDAL** Marguerite Chesbrough. As I say, strangely enough she died only yesterday. It was just this morning I went to see her husband. She was a lady around her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and, as I say, a very gracious, very typically elegant French person.

JF Phillip, turning now to some of your other interests in community work I'm thinking of in particular, I wonder if you could sketch for us what is involved with your chairing the AIDS Pastoral Care Centre?

**PENDAL** It's probably true of all members of Parliament, because I think I found this in common with them, that it was always a great pity that our work almost demanded that you had lots of fingers in lots of pies, but in a superficial way. I mean, you might be patron of this outfit or patron of something else or the chairman of

something else, but it was always a matter of some distress to me that you just seemed to be starting to get on top of that then you'd need to leave to go to something else. This constant demand at an electorate level, which is something the public mostly doesn't see, then means that you're really being quite flighty and superficial. There were several things. I was asked in the mid 1990s to chair by the Catholic Church the Fund for FAITH. The "FAITH" I think was Families Affected Through HIV Positive, or something. I should remember that because I did become quite involved in it. I was asked to chair it by the Sisters of St John of God. It was the Catholic Church's response to the AIDS crisis. Ironically it was the only place in Western Australia that offered pastoral care for HIV sufferers. I used to like to gently remind people of that because of the church's views on gay relationships per se. We were always anxious to point out that our job by that stage was not to lecture people; our job was to give them a helping hand. That's what the mission of the church was. So I chaired this Fund for FAITH for probably three or four, maybe even five years. I never thought that I was very successful at it. It was a very difficult area to raise funds. I think that were it not for the church and for the Sisters of St John of God, the thing wouldn't have got to where it was. We operated a premises in Rivervale and it was like a drop-in centre mainly for HIV sufferers. It became a sort of little memorial grove for people who had died and sometimes would have their ashes buried there or a plaque put on the wall out in this little enclosed garden. We had a good group of people and we eventually asked Marlena Jeffery to be the patroness, which she did magnificently. Eventually, it must have been after the 2001 election, I just felt that I had to start to divest myself of some of these things and I handed over and they got Judge Antoinette Kennedy, I think, to take over from me as chairman. It was a bit of an eye opener and it was one of those jobs that wasn't a glamour job, but it met a serious crisis of the time. I think that I was very privileged to have been given that task. It probably took off some of the harsher edges of some of my own attitudes and I think that was to everyone's benefit.

JF            Other things then that you've been involved in, other community projects. The thing about Vietnamese war veterans' memorials, what did you have to do about that?

**PENDAL**       Well, it's strange you should raise that, because it's still very current. In January 1968, a schoolmate of mine was killed in Vietnam, Alec Bell. He was a conscript, he was 22 years of age and he'd been a boy I'd grown up with in East Victoria Park. We both went to the Christian Brothers College. Prior to that he'd

been to the convent school. I hadn't, because I had come up from Bunbury. When he died, it just blew our minds to think this is only six years earlier we'd been at school with this boy. About 10 years later, for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I got onto a few of my classmates and said we really have to do something to commemorate him. I was a bit obsessed with this notion that he hadn't got a chance like the rest of us to make good in life so therefore, to the extent that he did make an impact on life, then we had some obligation to preserve it. So we raised a bit of money and we had an unveiling in 1978 on Remembrance Day of a memorial flagpole and plaque at a very fabulous ceremony at the school. Both parents were there, his extended family. We had Vietnamese vets, Korean War veterans and all the current schoolkids, so it was quite a grand occasion. We always believed ... it was largely driven by myself and a fellow called Alan Mitchell, who later became the bailiff in Bunbury, so he was pretty good at rounding up a bit of money if people were a bit slow in coming forward. Years later, in Victoria Park, as I was about to leave Parliament, there was a very famous landmark shop called the Isaia wine shop on the corner of Miller Street and Albany Highway. The state government had to take it over and bowl it down because they wanted to widen the intersection of Kent Street leading into Albany Highway and across the road to Miller Street. As soon as this occurred, I jumped in and thought this was what we'd been waiting for, for a place to get named in Alec Bell's honour. So about three and a half years ago I started corresponding with the Town of Victoria Park with the aid I got of other people to come in and back me up. The upshot was that in the end the council said no. Clearly they had someone else in mind to name it after. As I was leaving Parliament there was a young bloke elected in Geoff Gallop's place as a Labor member, Ben Wyatt, who my wife had taught at St Columba's school. So I thought, now, he's the member for the area and I'm senior to him and he might think it's worth responding to a grey-haired old bloke. He has been wonderful. Because of his state land, he's eventually gone to Alannah MacTiernan, and we're now waiting for the city council to do what we hope is going to be the right thing. That will then have stretched over nearly 40 years since Alec's death, but we still got in in 1978 with what we think was the first private memorial to any Viet war vet in Australia. We just might eclipse that with this park being named after him in Victoria Park. The strangest thing (and you will enjoy this as an historian) the park has been cleared of the buildings, the grass has been put in, but there's one remaining piece of vegetation from the wine shop days that they've left there and it's one lone pine.

JF            Isn't that incredible, yes.

**PENDAL** I might say that Ben Wyatt, who as a young Labor member is a member of the Army Reserve, and when I originally earlier this year enlisted his help he drove past it and he was just chilled by this. He rang me back and said, "Phillip, do you know what's on that?" I said, "I think I know what you're going to say. What is it?" He said, "The lone pine." What a mind-blowing coincidence. I think that might've really encouraged him to put in his best effort.

JF Yes, interesting. Well, now, can we move to your involvement in the South Perth community again briefly. Can you talk about your involvement with the South Perth Historical Society, but I think related to that the May Gibbs Trust?

**PENDAL** Because of my involvement in the historical society, I always had been imbued with the history of May Gibbs and I had known where May Gibbs's home was, The Dune, long since demolished. If you lived in South Perth and you were imbued with its history, you couldn't fail but to be a bit knowledgeable about the May Gibbs Trust. In the early '90s, a journalist from the local paper, Sue Emmett, said to me one day, "Phillip are you aware of all of these paintings of May Gibbs owned by this family member and her doctor husband in Sydney?" My ears pricked up. It was Sue Emmett who led me to this. The day that Pope John Paul was to visit Sydney for the Mary MacKillop beatification process ... whenever I'd go to the eastern states for purpose A, I'd always build in B,C,D and E, you know, to get the most out of the trip. I'd contacted, therefore, this family, Dr Neil Shand and his wife, Marian. Marian was I think a second cousin or a niece of May Gibbs. May herself had died in 1969. Anyway, I asked could I come and see the collection, and I have to say I was gobsmacked with what I saw. Paintings and caricatures by the hundreds. Every drawer they would open there'd be more of them; every cupboard was filled with these things. So I started to get the idea that we should have these repatriated to Western Australia, and particularly to South Perth.

JF Were they done here when she was here?

**PENDAL** Yes, quite a few of them were, and some had been her subsequent work. Some were also of her father, Herbert Gibbs, who was a very fine artist but had never reached the level of eminence that she had. I then went to a friend of mine, the Mayor of South Perth, John Hardwick. He was a senior Alcoa official and a former Army officer. We'd always got along well together and I flew this idea past him that couldn't we do something. I said that I'd been to see it; it was just a stunning

collection, it was national in its significance, and there it was sitting, and I thought I reckon that we could get these people to part with some of it for a reasonable sum. Eventually the Shands had come back to me and said in about the middle of the 1990s, okay, we are prepared to let about 150 pieces go. We will give you a good price but it means all or nothing; you can't come over and pick the eyes out of it. The price was \$36 000, which I have to say even then, and I was no art dealer but I knew when you divided 150 into \$36 000 you had to be getting a good deal. In any event, it was this enormous reservoir of South Perth history. He agreed to accompany me back and we went on a trip back. We were due to see them the next year on Melbourne Cup day and we always felt very virtuous that we were the only two blokes in Australia who never went near a betting shop or to the Melbourne Cup because that was the day in Sydney we were scheduled to see the Shands. John Hardwick came in, saw the collection, spent several hours there, said nothing, gave nothing away. We shook hands with the Shands, walked out the front, because our taxi was waiting, and I said to the mayor, "Well, what do you think?" He said, "I'll tell you what, Phillip", throwing his head back in the direction of Western Australia and towards the South Perth City Council, he said, "I'll tell you what; if they don't want to buy it, I'll go halves with you!" [laughs] So I knew that we had it. The arrangement was that the council ... we thought we'd go and raise \$36 000. In the end, the council took some advice and they said, "No, we'll buy the collection. What if you head up a trust and raise money for its conservation and restoration and framing and mounting?" which we did. We raised about \$80 000, very painlessly. At the opening of this magnificent exhibition, I think about January '97 or '98, we had invited David Malcolm, the Chief Justice. The council had to get the collection insured for \$125 000 then, so it had increased many times in value. We've kept in business to find other paintings, tap other sources, get donations, and the trust continues to this day. We always get big crowds whenever there's a properly curated May Gibbs exhibition. I was really thrilled that this collection, which had been out of Western Australia for perhaps 80-odd years, we had managed to repatriate it back into South Perth. It's now housed in a little heritage house that she would have gone into. It was one of the few major buildings near her home, about 120 metres away from her home. We used as the slogan "Bringing May Gibbs Home to South Perth".

JF            I gather it's housed in such a way that the dangers from fire and all that sort of thing are taken care of.

**PENDAL** South Perth City Council really did do the right thing by ... it enlisted federal and state government grants. The building was taken back from ... it was owned by the council but it was rented to a local dentist. The council resumed it, spent a big sum of money bringing it up to art gallery standards. We had the WA Art Gallery involved. We had professional curators involved all the time. We also had the advantage that because it was the old municipal building from 1895 or something it contained within the centre of the building a huge vault that was several feet thick and surrounded by concrete and a huge vault door as thick as several bricks. The council actually store a lot of them in very good conditions, and the rest of the building is properly temperature controlled and so on.

JF Wonderful. Just picking up, are there other community things in South Perth that bear mention that you've been involved with? You were president, you said, of the historical society there for some time.

**PENDAL** I was. I was the inaugural president and held that job for 10 years and then handed it over to Kerry Davey, who'd been our treasurer. I'd enjoyed that immensely, and through this book *Vanishing Village*, we were also in the business of preserving and republishing local history, so that historical society has gone on to bigger and better things. As a matter of fact I once chided Kerry Davey that he had the temerity that once I left he began building it up to such an extent that he got far more people attending meetings than I ever had in my day, which I thought was a bit insensitive of him to up the ante on me! He did a terrific job and he's just handed it over to someone else now.

JF Finally, I think you've had quite an involvement from time to time with the Royal Western Australian Historical Society. Can you talk for a few minutes in relation to that?

**PENDAL** I was co-opted onto their council, it might be three or so years ago, and as a result went onto the readings and publications committee. Then I became editor of *Early Days*. That happened in my first year of retirement when I was involved in too many things. Like a lot of people who retire, you don't know where to draw the line because you've not been down that path before, so I did one year as editor and I asked not to be reappointed. I remained on the readings and publications committee, and I'm still on there helping in that regard. Again, I think

they do a terrific job in publishing what they do, *Early Days*, in a professional manner, so I would hope that involvement is going to continue.

JF I believe you are entertained by cricket in your spare time, if you have any!

**PENDAL** I'm a member of the WACA. I do love cricket. I mean, I enjoy football too. I played cricket as a little kid at the Marist Brothers. I'm certainly always a better cricketer in my mind than I was in reality! At the time that my own children were growing up and I was finding it difficult to remain in touch with them because of my work as a member of Parliament, I found that it was a good thing with my son Simon that he enjoyed cricket. He was actually a good wicketkeeper in his school days. So the membership of the WACA became a good way of just him and I going out on an outing to a Test match or a one-day or a Shield match. My father was a great lover of cricket. He had been brought up in Nelson Crescent in a house that had fronted the WACA. This would be going back into the 1920s. I remember going to the WACA with him when I was a little boy, so I'd always liked it. He always claimed it was a gentleman's game and my son remembers now the story of me taking him to a Test match about 1985, but it was the day that a streaker ran onto the ground and Terry Alderman took off after the streaker and eventually fell and broke his collarbone, I think, or shoulder. I think that was one of the things that put an end to his Test career. It turned into quite an ugly incident between some of the Australian and British spectators, so much so that my son (he was quite a small boy) became quite frightened by this and he wanted to go home. So we started to go home and I remember him saying to me, "And you call this a gentleman's game?" [laughs] So my dad's words were re-visiting both of us that day. But, yes, cricket I did enjoy and still do enjoy.

JF Now, we've come really to the end of the things that I wanted to canvass with you, so I want to say at this stage just what a pleasure it's been to have this opportunity to speak to you and get to know you a little bit. Thank you for speaking so frankly and for entertaining me to a cup of tea every time. It's been a real pleasure and I look forward to seeing you again from time to time.

**PENDAL** Well, thank you. I actually feel the same way. It's nice to go through something like this where it's not a chore, and you're obviously a fellow history tragic,

as I call them, and it's been a lot of good fun touching on a few areas that I never thought would see the light of day, but they were good, so thank you.

END OF TAPE FIFTEEN SIDE B