



# PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**HON JOCK FERGUSON MLC**

*Condolence Motion*



**Legislative Assembly**

**Tuesday, 23 February 2010**

*Reprinted from Hansard*

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**MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition)** [2.53 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house records its sincere regret at the death of Hon Jock Ferguson, member of the Legislative Council, and extends its deep sympathy to his family and loved ones.

On behalf of the opposition, I express our shared sympathy to the family of Jock Ferguson, member for the East Metropolitan Region who passed away this month, aged 64.

Jock Ferguson was born on 15 January 1946 in Glasgow, Scotland. He grew up in Possilpark, a working-class area of Glasgow, and growing up he saw some of the grim reality that working-class people faced as industry closed down and jobs were lost. Jock was born to an unwed mother because his mother, a Protestant, and father, a Catholic, were forbidden from marrying. As a consequence, Jock was raised by his grandparents and would meet an adopted older sister only later in life.

Jock began working as an apprentice fitter in Possilpark and became a delegate for fellow apprentice fitters to the Boilermakers' Union at age 17. This was the beginning of Jock's long career in the trade union movement. He had a brief career in the British Merchant Navy, which took him to New Zealand and later to Western Australia. Jock began working as a fitter in the Pilbara region and at the same time became a shop steward in the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. He continued to fight for the rights of working people within the AMWU, gaining higher positions within the union until finally becoming State Secretary in 2000. His family history and his experiences growing up in Possilpark instilled in Jock a great desire to see people live fairer lives free of bigotry and discrimination. He was a man who believed passionately in the right of people everywhere to earn their livelihoods in fair working conditions.

Jock was a Labor stalwart and a massively influential contributor to the work of both the Australian Labor Party and the union movement more broadly. Jock was respected across both divides of industry in Western Australia. Employers in major corporations spoke as fondly of Jock, as did the workers and trade union officials. In his Labor movement work Jock Ferguson brought great personal principles to bear. Every decision he made had to have an outcome that was good for working men and women. Jock believed that if one made an agreement, one should stick to that agreement, even if it later became inconvenient or painful. He believed that politics should never be personal, that we should never hate anyone—love, not hate, should be the dominant emotion. He never believed that the end justified the means. He believed strongly in the value of loyalty.

Jock campaigned for the benefits of our resources growth to reach Western Australian workers and their families. He was a fierce and intelligent advocate for local content, local business and local jobs, supporting with vigour the need for public investment in the Australian Marine Complex and the infrastructure required to deliver those jobs. His commitment to principle was not merely academic. It was severely tested in practice. There were times when he was offered the sun, the moon and the earth to desert a principle for self-interest. He rejected those offers. A key example is the role he played at a critical time in Western Australian Labor Party political history to ensure that a fair approach to the recognition of native title was maintained. Jock supported all these principles with great humour and personal warmth.

In 2008 Jock chose to put up his hand to fight the election as a member of Labor's team vying for seats in the Legislative Council. He was successfully elected as a member for the East Metropolitan Region. Jock gave his inaugural speech to Parliament on Wednesday, 24 June 2009. His death denies the people of the East Metropolitan Region a bold and tireless advocate.

As a party we are the greater because we have known him, but the lesser because he has left us too soon. We will miss him for his commitment to our cause but more so for his personality and character. The sad loss of Jock from public life in Western Australia comes, of course, a distant second to the deeply sad loss his family and friends feel at this time. Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Parliamentary Labor Party I again offer Tina and all Jock's family my sincere condolences.

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier)** [2.58 pm]: It is a particularly sad moment when a serving member of Parliament passes away and so it is the case with the late Jock Ferguson. As the Leader of the Opposition said, Jock came from a very humble background in a working-class area of Glasgow, no doubt in difficult times, and began his career as an apprentice. By the age of 17 I guess his life's work was underway when he became a delegate for the Boilermakers' Union and, as we heard, he then served in the British Merchant Navy, went to New Zealand and ultimately found his way to Western Australia and worked as a fitter in the Pilbara. Through his association and involvement with the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Jock ultimately became state secretary. As we are aware, in 2008 Jock was elected to the Legislative Council.

I did not know Jock Ferguson all that well. Only two instances involving Jock come to mind. In the 1990s when I was the resources development minister, there was a lot of debate about local content for major resource projects; it is exactly the same debate that, I guess, is taking place today. One particular issue involved the construction of modules for the fuel and gas industry in Western Australia. I found myself agreeing with Jock. We both wanted to see the work that was involved done, and between us and the company involved we reached an understanding. While at times prior to that I had had many public disagreements with Jock, his word was delivered and the work that was done complied with the conditions he had laid down. He was clearly a person of principle and, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, when he gave his word he kept it. My other, I guess, more recent memory of Jock was when he was first elected to the Legislative Council. I must admit I was surprised that Jock Ferguson would be starting his parliamentary career in 2008, but there he was. Just as the Parliament had started, I bumped into him in the bar, as one does. I shook Jock's hand, congratulated him and welcomed him to the Parliament. I just inquired, quite innocently, whether he would be leading the charge on climate change, gay rights and saving the whale. Jock turned around, stamped his foot and said, "You'll not hear any of that from me." He was a character. I think we will all miss Jock. He was always a good-humoured person around the Parliament. He lived his life for his beliefs, and he was certainly a champion for working men and women, and somebody of whom the union movement and the Labor Party would rightly

feel very proud. I also extend from myself and from the Parliamentary Liberal Party my sympathy to Tina and to his eight children, family and friends.

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn)** [3.02 pm]: I rise to speak about the member for East Metropolitan Region, Hon Jock Ferguson, and of course my mate Jock. I met Jock in 1986. He was then the newly appointed on-site organiser of stage 2 of the North West Shelf Burrup expansion for Woodside. He had recently been employed by the AMWU, then the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union, after a number of years as a very, very effective shop steward for Dampier Salt. Organising in the engineering construction industry is a tough job. The work on-site of welding, boiler making, scaffolding and rigging in 40-degrees-plus heat is a really tough job. It is physically demanding. The very nature of construction is that it is not permanent work. It does breed tough men. Primarily, they are all men. They like their organisers hard and they like them straight talking. They got that with Jock Ferguson.

If members have not read Jock's maiden speech that was given to the Legislative Council on 24 June last year, they should do so. It describes his very, very sad upbringing in a family torn apart by religious bigotry and also the extreme poverty of post-war Glasgow. Like many Scots, Jock saw his opportunity to get away from that poverty and from that life by joining the British Merchant Navy, and he worked in the engine room, primarily as a fitter and ship's engineer, as did many Scotsmen. He recounted to me, as he recounted to many members in this chamber, the many stories about his life at sea and in the ports, bars and pretty rough areas around the world. With a background like that it is no wonder that Jock was tough and he was the right man for the engineering construction industry.

It was that sector of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union that I believe Jock had the greatest impact on. I mentioned this at his funeral last Friday, and I will again repeat it: when Jock took over as the engineering construction organiser for the AMWU, the metal industry award stipulated rest and recreation for those workers who work away from home; that is, those such as the thousands who regularly fly to the north and the east of the state every week to build this state's economy and I am not talking about a long time ago but in the 1980s, I told those at the funeral that the award stipulated 13 weeks on and seven days off. I was in fact wrong, because it was actually 16 weeks on and four days off, but people added their rostered days off into it and got seven days. They had four months away from home working on-site in 40 degrees of heat. It is not that long ago but within a period when members who have spoken were in this chamber. People had four months away from home and seven days with their families. That was what was in the award when Jock took over and that is what applied on engineering construction sites.

Of all the people in the world, Jock knew how important family was. From his own very sad and personal experience, he knew what happened when a father was separated from his home and family for long periods. It was with pleasure that I was able to tell the people who attended the funeral, and to now tell members in this chamber, that by the time he retired from the union, Jock had decreased the time spent away by workers in the construction industry from 16 weeks on and seven days off to four weeks on and seven days off. That means that parents, who are working in sometimes appalling conditions in the bush, can see their partners and families at least once a month. The thousands of workers who pass through Perth Airport each week to fly across the state might not know that it was Jock Ferguson who made their family lives so much better and more stable. They have a lot to thank him for.

Jock was responsible for myriad other incredible improvements to workers' lives and conditions, from the amazing rates of pay for offshore construction workers—the people who build the oil rigs offshore—to what appears to us today to be basic workers' facilities such as single-bed accommodation in work camps. Unfortunately, that view of the world is not shared by some companies, such as Woodside Petroleum Ltd. Workers no longer have to share a hot,

tiny room with one or two other workers, which was the norm when Jock began his organising career with the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. Back then, the workers spent 16 weeks on the job and they shared a hot, tiny room with one or possibly two other shiftworkers. That has now completely changed. People talk about the wonderful accommodation that the workers up north have. They now have their own single tiny room with air conditioning and a television with Foxtel. That is great; fantastic. At least it is their own private space away from home. They did not get it by accident; they got it through the work of people like Jock Ferguson, and primarily through the work of Jock Ferguson himself.

I will recall a lighter story about when it was sometimes difficult to tell what Jock was going on about. Even SBS television had a difficult time explaining what Jock said. During the long dispute on the second stage of Woodside's expansion of the North West Shelf gas development in the Burrup, Jock was the on-site organiser. I remember this occasion because I was watching the television and could not believe it! Jock appeared on the SBS news one night with his trademark ponytail, hard hat and walrus moustache. He was explaining the blue that was going on and, as he spoke, subtitles appeared underneath to interpret for the non-Scottish in Australia what he was going on about! As a very fierce and proud Scot, Jock was not happy. Everyone knows how fiercely proud he was of Scotland. People in the AMWU continually reminded him about the subtitles and insisted that we should have had subtitles at the AMWU meetings when he spoke!

Tina, who is in the Speaker's gallery today, is proud of Jock, as are her children and Jock's children. Alongside Tina in the Speaker's gallery is Jock's long-lost sister, Monica, who flew over from Scotland for the funeral. Monica is the sister who for many years Jock did not know he had. He met Monica after 50 years of separation. They were separated because of the bigotry and intolerance that existed in Glasgow, where he grew up. I am very glad that you could be here, Monica, and that we are able to say these few words about your wonderful brother.

**MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin — Minister for Sport and Recreation)** [3.08 pm]: On behalf of the National Party, I support the condolence motion for Hon Jock Ferguson. There is no doubt that Jock was a colourful man in public life and generally. He was a man of great integrity and a man of his word, which are fantastic attributes to have. I got to know Jock only late last year and, like the Premier, it was at the bar! He was a likeable guy. I certainly got to like him. It was not just because he was one of the few members whom I am taller than, but because he was good to chat with! I got on well with him. We shared some fantastic stories about Scotland, particularly about my father-in-law's village of Larkhall near Glasgow. I would have liked to have had the opportunity to share a lot more of those stories. On behalf of the National Party, I would like to offer our sincere condolences to Jock's family and friends.

**MR A.P. O'GORMAN (Joondalup)** [3.11 pm]: I also rise to add my support to this condolence motion and extend my condolences to Tina and the family, and to Monica also. Jock and I were friends and Jock was a great supporter of mine for a long time, long before I came to this place. As a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and also a fitter, the same as Jock, we went through many different arguments with employers, within the Labor Party and within politics. Jock has always supported me as a person he thought could get on and win elections and do the right thing for the Labor Party. I would like to thank Jock for that.

Last Saturday week I got a phone call from Hon Sally Talbot to say that Jock had passed away during the night and asking that I, as caucus secretary, ensure that every member of caucus heard about it before they heard about it on the news. It was very difficult for me to do that. While I was experiencing great sadness at that time, I also experienced great joy because the night before Jock died, my granddaughter was born. Jock's name came up on my

phone when I was ringing people to tell them about my granddaughter. I thought I would ring Jock in the morning and tell him then, instead of at midnight. I am sorry that I did not ring him as I may have been able to speak to him.

My last fond memories of Jock were at our caucus retreat in Collie in the first week of February. Jock and I got down there early on the Wednesday. We went down to the workshops of Wesfarmers' Premier Coal and spoke to the tradespeople. I was amazed at the extent with which this man had delved into all these industries. I knew that he was the secretary of the AMWU for some time, but many of the mineworkers and the tradesmen down there still remember Jock very fondly. I had a great initiation to see another part of Jock's life.

I wish to tell members of my last memory of Jock. Again, it was down at Collie. I drove Lynda from the State Parliamentary Labor Party office down to Collie. She asked me why I left Ireland. I gave her many reasons but I also tried to convince her that one of the reasons I left was that I hate to sing in public. As everybody knows, if one is an Irish person and one goes to a party or a pub, one is expected to sing. I left Ireland and came out here, where people are not often pushed to sing in public. During our caucus retreat we had a meal at Harris River Estate, a local winery. Coming back from Harris River Estate, we did the responsible thing and put every member on a bus. None of us was going to blow over .08 or .05. Jock and I were at the back of the bus. Jock started singing. He was not a great singer. Jock started singing an Irish rebel song. It is called *Sean South of Garryowen*, a rebel song about my home town of Limerick. It is about the suburb that my father-in-law came from. As Jock got more and more into this song, he got more and more out of tune and the words got more and more complicated, I felt I had to jump in. I was singing as loud as I could, trying to pull him back into tune. After Jock's death I looked up the words of the song and read them. What we were singing that night was nothing like it!

As everyone has alluded to in this place, Jock was a great larrikin and he had a great passion for what he did. That is the way I would like to remember Jock long into the future.

**MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland)** [3.15 pm]: Many people spoke at Jock's funeral service last Friday. One of my colleagues commented that we learnt a lot more about Jock from what we heard from so many other people. During that service, the song *Working Class Hero* played while a photo collage appeared on a couple of screens. I thought how apt that song was; I had not heard it for some time, but it really did sum up Jock's life. He was a working class hero. The word "hero" is used very lightly these days, usually in reference to sport stars, movie stars or performers of some other kind, but Jock was in every sense a hero, and a hero of the working class. He was a hero because he won improvements in wages and conditions for working people. Their conditions of work and hours of work were certainly improved. He made a significant difference to not only the lives of workers—predominantly men—but also the lives of workers' families, who got to spend more time with their fathers and husbands.

Jock was certainly known as a tough negotiator, which came through in what was said on Friday. It was also mentioned that Jock was someone who kept his word, and who was therefore highly regarded by employers. One does not last as long as Jock did performing the kinds of roles he performed in the union movement without walking a very fine line. Negotiators are expected to get results in improvements in working conditions for the workers they represent, but they also have to keep their word with employers. They essentially have to keep faith with both sides. That is something that Jock did, and that is why he was a leader in the union movement for such a long time.

He came to Parliament with a wealth of experience. Many people who saw Jock only from the outside, with his thick Scottish accent and his firebrand ways, might only have seen a very one-dimensional character. It was interesting to hear the comments made by the Premier about the issues that Jock might have been concerned about in Parliament. Anyone who got to

know Jock at all would realise he was a very passionate man. He was as passionate about environmental issues and human rights issues as he was about workplace safety or working conditions. I will not go into all of them now, but there were many references at his funeral service to some of the environmental and human rights issues Jock had taken up over the past 20 to 30 years. It is a disappointment to the Labor side of politics that Jock will not have the opportunity to take up those issues in the Legislative Council. I am confident that, had Jock served out his term in the Legislative Council, he would have been equally vocal on human rights and environmental issues as he was on issues to do with working conditions.

Jock's passing is a great loss to the Labor Party, as it is to Steve McCartney and the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. It is clearly an unbelievable loss to Tina and all their children, and to Jock's sister Monica, with whom he was only recently united. He was someone with a wealth of life experience, he was passionate, he lived life to the full and we will miss him very dearly.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston)** [3.19 pm]: I too rise to pay my respects to the late Jock Ferguson, a person I first met during my days on the coalfields as a delegate for the AMWU. He was a man of much humour; he certainly liked the odd drink or two, although he probably liked to smoke more than drink. He was also a very fair man. Many times we would be stuck when trying to negotiate our way through an enterprise bargaining agreement and would call on his assistance to come down to Collie. It was not hard for him to jump in a car and be down there in a couple of hours. He would not only take the company to task, he would also take us to task, and did so many times. Many times he took us outside and said — I cannot repeat what he would say; I nearly did! However, it was certainly blunt and broad! He would say, "What the hell are you doing? This is rubbish. Let's get back on the job and talk it through." The companies began to take notice then, in a way, because he was not a troublemaker; he was out there for a fair deal for both parties, and that certainly made negotiations a lot easier. I saw that respect for Jock grow over the years, not only when he took over as state secretary, but also when he was a delegate and an organiser. That respect just grew and grew until he became a major political force in his own way within the WA labour movement.

I have heard a few stories in this place about his broad accent. I have one of my own. He came down to Collie and he called a meeting. We had a meeting in a carpenters' shop that was about as big as this chamber, and 100 people crowded in. He was standing at the front of the meeting with his ponytail and coloured shirt. Of course, he had a cigarette and was blowing smoke over everyone. He launched into a 15-minute speech and then said, "Now I have to go." That is what we thought he said! "I have another meeting to go to, but you've heard what I have to say." As he walked out the door, one of the wags at the back said, "Now can we start the meeting and can we have it in English?" But the point was made, and on the coalfields we will be forever in debt to Jock. It is sad that his passing was too early, I believe. He still had a lot to contribute.

Certainly, from my point of view, over the years when I stood in the so-called unwinnable seats, he still supported me. Whether he raised some funds for me or just came down and said, "Well, at least you're waving the flag. Keep up the good work", that was the nature of Jock. Personally, in a funny sort of way, when I was up against the odds, I enjoyed it when he came down and just gave me a pat on the back and said, "Keep at it. It's about the labour movement and you're here." I will remember my friendship with him into the future.

I extend to his family my deepest condolences, and also condolences from the guys on the coalfields. We had a beer or two after the funeral. I did not drive home, but there was one person who was sober and he drove home. We reminisced for the two hours on the way home. There was not one nasty word said in the car; they were all good thoughts. That is the way

that we would like to think that Jock will be remembered. With those words, I extend my sincere condolences to the family.

**MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale)** [3.21 pm]: I want to join in this honouring of Jock Ferguson. He really was a fantastic guy. His family can be very, very proud of what he achieved. I think the member for Cockburn really summed that up. The practical, tangible changes that he made to people's lives will be his lasting legacy. It was a fantastic funeral that in itself was a great tribute to Jock. The thousand or so people who attended the funeral went there with a feeling of solidarity, but even more than that was the spirit of love. Each and every one of the persons who got up to speak obviously not just respected Jock, but actually loved him. I think to have achieved what he achieved and at the same time to be not only respected but also loved is a monumental achievement.

I want to acknowledge Tina. As a fellow east metropolitan member of Parliament, I saw Jock at a variety of functions, and almost invariably Tina was there accompanying him. Whether it was at five o'clock in the morning at the Armadale RSL club or on a Sunday afternoon at the Armadale library, Tina was always there supporting Jock. The children are all magnificent. I particularly enjoyed a long discussion I had after the funeral with Jimmy. He said that never once in his entire life had his father said a cross word to him. I think it is amazing that a person could create such a positive spirit within his children.

However, I have to say that I disagree with the member for Joondalup, loath though I am to do that. I was on the same bus with Jock, and he and I were singing Irish rebel songs. As Martin Whitely would say if he were here, I am a great judge of the singing voice. As Jock and I were singing *The Old Triangle* and *We're off to Dublin in the Green*, I thought he had a fine voice! He was a great man.

I wish to acknowledge all his family: Tina, Ian, Jimmy and all the children; and, also, Annie, who was a very important part of his life. Monica, also, was very, very special for Jock. In this honouring of him, I wish to say that he was a good man who achieved much, and, most of all, he made this world a better place.

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [3.26 pm]: I rise to make a few comments about Jock. I have a different perspective from some of the members on this side in that I did not come from the industrial side of the Australian Labor Party. When I was a young man trying to make my way in the ALP, Jock was always a great mentor and a great leader for people who combated, as we did, in our part of the Australian Labor Party.

It is true to say that political relationships have peaks and troughs and that they wax and wane, and I, similar to everyone in politics, have experienced those peaks and troughs. But I must say that, regardless of the issues before us, the warmth of the friendship and the relationship with Jock never waned. He was always open and friendly. That was greatly complemented by the friendship I had with Tina, whom I had met through the National Native Title Tribunal. The combination of Jock and Tina provided warmth when, at times, one was struggling for opportunities to see a smiling face.

Jock never stopped smiling. I was delighted when he came to Parliament with the rest of us and he continued to smile. It is a great tragedy that he was with us for such a short time in Parliament, because it was clear that he was really enjoying his time here and he was really enjoying the place that he was in with Tina and his family, and we wish it could have continued. As one of the many people who had been touched by Jock, and particularly by the anecdotes that we heard last week at his funeral, I want to say how much I will miss him, and I express my deepest sympathies and condolences to Tina, and Jock's family.

**MS J.M. FREEMAN (Nollamara)** [3.28 pm]: I also want to pass on my condolences to Tina and Monica, and all of Jock's family, at what is obviously a most difficult time. I was

privileged to work with Jock in the union movement, and I also served with him on the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, which were great ways to get to know Jock in two different settings. He supported me in my position of assistant secretary, which is important for a woman working with many male union officials. He was always very supportive and allowed me to make my point, and he enabled me to be part of the decision-making process. He was also an important part of the campaigns I was involved in to defend the pay and conditions of workers, and the “Rights at Work” campaign. I valued working with Jock and I valued his wisdom in the organisation of some of the many rallies that were held during that period to ensure that workers had a voice and that it was heard. I have no doubt that Jock had been heard on many occasions, and there can be no doubt that Jock liked to stump up and talk to the workers, and, when he did, they felt that he could tell their story well, and he captured all of their hearts.

I will especially remember Jock for his support of women in the union movement. He employed women union officials in the Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union, which was something pretty unheard of at the time he came into the union. It is difficult to be a woman in a male-dominated union; it is a much easier path for someone such as I who has come through a union that has a lot more females. It is a culture that can be quite difficult and he was very supportive of those women. Those women have gone on to be great leaders in the union movement: one is now the assistant secretary of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union; the other is now the secretary of UnionsWA. He should be remembered and commended for that. As we know, he was a fierce defender of local jobs and local content. I was involved with him during my time at UnionsWA as he continued to negotiate and pursue that goal.

Finally, he was just a great bloke with a wicked sense of humour and an enjoyment of life, which he showed even in the face of great adversity. I am sure there were many times during negotiations over disputes that he thought that this time the bosses might finally get him! But he always smiled and continued on for the benefit of the workers and not for himself. As the member for Midland said, he had a career that he and his family can be proud of, and I wish to express my deepest sympathy for his loss.

**MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot)** [3.32 pm]: As Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation I had the absolute pleasure of working with the late Jock Ferguson for the past seven months. Jock always made a considered contribution to the proceedings of the committee. His dedication to the rights, safety and welfare of workers was always in the forefront of his mind. Philosophically, Jock Ferguson and I were often worlds apart, but as we understood where we both came from, we had an outstanding working and sociable relationship. We both found common ground in our previous roles as sailors who served in boiler rooms on ships and, as such, he will always have my respect. I will remember fondly his cheeky grin as he baited me in conversation. I will sincerely miss him calling me “comrade”. He is perhaps the only person who could get away with it. My deepest and heartfelt sympathy goes to the Ferguson family, and to the Australian Labor Party for the loss of a great fighter for its cause; his loss has come way before its time.

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington)** [3.33 pm]: I worked with Jock at the Trades and Labor Council on various campaigns in the 1990s against the legislation that the former Liberal government brought to this place, which we resisted and eventually defeated. I also worked with him in the training arena. It is well to reflect on the position of the Amalgamated Metal Workers’ Union and Jock Ferguson, who was its representative in the 1990s when it argued to the then Liberal government that it needed to up the level of training for the resources sector. Whilst the resources sector at that time was in the doldrums, the union’s view was strongly that it would move forward later and that there would be large demand for workers, but the Liberal government in this state was not training people to take up those opportunities.

Jock was proudly on the left in the Labor Party. There are people in society who will criticise somebody on the left of the Labor Party as being pro-Communist, or something like that. If the worst criticism that somebody could make about a person like Jock was that he dedicated his life to those who had the least, that is no criticism at all.

Finally, as secretary of the Labor Party, it was my job to try to come to an agreement that the majority of the party would accept. When in government, Labor governments always have this tension between the demands of government versus the expectations of our membership. That was no less apparent in the Carpenter and Gallop governments. There is no question that Jock Ferguson, in his role as the secretary of the AMWU, was one of those people whom I could go to to try to find a way through our various internal disputes. Not everybody in the Labor Party sees eye to eye all the time, but it is to Jock Ferguson's credit that he could always be part of a solution. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has a very clear memory of the pivotal role that Jock Ferguson had in determining outcomes at our 2003 conference, when we had to negotiate some issues relating to the power industry. I am not going to say what it was that Jock said to the Leader of the Opposition, but he remembers it very clearly, and we laughed about it enormously afterwards. However, it is fair to say that Jock was a tough negotiator for his point of view, whether as an official of the union negotiating with employers or advocating his position within the Labor Party with members of the Labor Party. I think that every member of the chamber should know one thing: they should read Jock's inaugural speech to see his life experience and background. He was somebody who was not afraid to say what he felt; if he felt that things were wrong, he would tell people so.

It was commented in the media during the lead-up to the 2008 election that it was strange that the Labor Party would select a 63-year-old man for parliamentary service. I think that is quite extraordinary. Many places in the world respect people who have a lifetime of experience and allow them to make that contribution to Parliaments. My wife, who will make her own remarks in the other place, commented often about the fact that Jock had come into his own in the other place. I think we should all look upon the contribution that Jock Ferguson made that has been so sadly cut short and reflect on the opportunity that we miss because we discount the capabilities and life experience of a person like Jock.

To Tina and your family, and to Monica whom I am sorry I have not met until now, I say that we in the Labor Party and in the Parliament are sad for Jock's passing. I know that sadness is nothing like the feeling that you have, but we do share in some small way the loss that you have suffered.

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham)** [3.37 pm]: I want to speak briefly, and, in doing so, I thank the Premier and the Leader of the House for allowing us this opportunity to acknowledge a member of the other place; it is unusual and it is good of the government to allow that to take place.

Jock was someone who seems to have been around always. I do not remember the first time I met Jock, I cannot recall when it was, but in my experience he was always someone who was there—someone I saw at meetings and events and who always had a bevy of people with whom he was associated, and who always seemed to be a very popular person. I do remember the last time I saw him; it was in Collie a couple of weeks ago on the Friday of our meeting in Collie. Whilst we were meeting inside, Jock was outside with his car with its bonnet up. His car had broken down and he could not get back to Perth. I remember the last moment I saw him: I walked past and I asked him what was wrong. He said that his car had broken down and he was waiting for the Royal Automotive Club. I said to him, "Well, you're a metalworker, aren't you? Why don't you fix it?" He said to me, "Fitter, comrade, fitter!" From that I have taken that a fitter cannot actually fix a motor vehicle, so I learnt something from the last time I saw Jock.

The thing I would say about Jock to sum him up is that Jock was authentic. Jock was authentic to his background, he was authentic to his occupation, and he was authentic to his profession; he was authentic to everything he did in life. Jock came from a humble background and the thing about Jock is that he never forgot where he came from. He lived his life remembering where he came from, the people he had grown up with and the people he was committed to helping; namely, people with a lot less than most of us. Therefore, to devote oneself and one's lifetime work to helping those who live harder lives than others is a fitting tribute and a fitting and good way to have lived one's life, and that was what Jock did.

I pass on my condolences to his family: to his sister Monica, to his children and to his lovely wife, Tina, who is in the gallery today. Speaking as someone who punched above his weight in relation to the woman he married, I can also say that Jock punched above his weight in relation to the woman he married. Tina is a lovely woman, and, as people can see, there is a lovely person here today to celebrate his life. Jock was very lucky to have Tina, and we would like to acknowledge all the support that she gave him and that his family gave him as well.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, I ask you to stand for a minute's silence to honour the late and honourable Jock Ferguson.

Question passed; members standing.

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