



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
1997

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 12 March 1997

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THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 11:00 am, and read prayers.

STATEMENT - SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): I have authorised the seating changes requested by the Leader of the Opposition in accordance with Standing Order No 61.

BILLS (2) - INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Professional Standards Bill

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Prince (Minister for Health), and read a first time.

2. Public Sector Management Amendment Bill

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Brown, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 11 March.

MR BAKER (Joondalup) [11.03 am]: It is a great honour indeed to join this Chamber as the new member for Joondalup. I take this opportunity to congratulate all new and re-elected members of Parliament on both sides of this Chamber. I also take this opportunity to thank you, Mr Speaker, and the staff of Parliament House for the tremendous courtesy and friendliness I have received since my election to this House.

I wish to place on public record my sincere thanks not only to the electors of Joondalup, my wife, Sarah, and my children Michelle and Jonathan, but also to the scores of hard working individuals who helped me and the Liberal Party in our election campaign. I particularly thank Mr Richard Self, my campaign chairman. He was catapulted into that role at short notice and worked on the campaign on average 12 hours a day during the two months prior to the election. Dick is a thoroughly committed Liberal, and without his tremendous assistance I would not be standing here today.

Mr Speaker, I also thank the other hard working members of my campaign committee: Mr Ray Foster, President of the Wanneroo Chamber of Commerce; Mr Tom Carstairs; Mr Ashley Hassell; Mr Russell Poliwka, President of the Regional Economic Development Group and the Joondalup Business Association; Mrs Lesley Goudie; Mrs Kath White; Mr Ian Goodenough; Mr Terry Darby-Smith; Mrs Marie-Louise Wordsworth; Mr Rocky Pinzone; Mr Ron Privilege; Mr Ravi Chander; Mr John Ryan; the members of the Edith Cowan University Liberal Students' Club, particularly Mr Tony Goodman and Mr Richard Orchard; Mr Geoff Curry; and the scores of volunteers who assisted with letterbox drops, the distribution of how-to-vote cards at the various polling booths, and the scrutineering of the count. I also thank Dr Alan Eggleston, Liberal Senator for Western Australia, for his much valued assistance, guidance and advice on all matters political over the past eight years. Last but by no means least, I thank the Premier of Western Australia, Hon Richard Court, for his tremendous leadership of our State since the 1993 state election.

Having been elected, I am now fully aware that I have much to learn in this Chamber and do in my electorate to continue to justify the confidence which the electors of Joondalup have shown in me.

I wish to provide the House at this early stage with a broad overview of the electorate of Joondalup, its geographical boundaries, and its electors. The electorate of Joondalup is a large, essentially urbanised area. Its northern boundary extends from the coast east along Burns Beach Road to the western edge of Lake Joondalup, heads south along the western extremity of Lake Joondalup to Ocean Reef Road, along Ocean Reef Road, then south via Eddystone Avenue and west to the coast, via Craigie Drive, Marmion Avenue and Mullaloo Drive. It encompasses the suburbs of Edgewater, Connolly, Ocean Reef, Joondalup, Heathridge, Currabine, Iluka, Beaumaris, Mullaloo and Beldon and has an area of approximately 35 square kilometres.

Joondalup has at its heart the areas commonly known as the Joondalup central business district and Joondalup business park, which are referred to collectively as the Joondalup regional city centre. It also has as its heart several key educational institutions such as the Joondalup campus of Edith Cowan University, the North Metropolitan College of TAFE, the Australian Institute of University Studies, and the Joondalup campus of Curtin University.

Mr Speaker, the electorate of Joondalup typifies all that is characteristically Western Australian. It is a young, growing and vibrant electorate, and the key to its ongoing success for both families and small business is the need to maintain strong trends in economic and social growth and development.

Over 30 per cent of the population of Joondalup is under 13 years of age. There are some 24 000 electors on the roll and some 60 000 residents. The electorate is blessed with several excellent state and private schools, the Lakeside regional shopping centre, and several smaller suburban shopping centres, an efficient rail and bus service, and a beautiful coastline, not to mention Lake Joondalup. It is without doubt the best region in the Perth metropolitan area for families to live in and to raise young children. Put simply, that is why my wife and I and our two young children live there.

Our party's victory in winning the seat of Joondalup was not so much a victory for me or for my party or its policies. Rather, it was a victory for the 11 000-odd right-minded, reasonable thinking and inquiring electors who blessed me with their vote. Despite the fact that the electorate is relatively young both demographically and in terms of its political history, the electors of Joondalup were easily able to make a responsible choice between the need to maintain high levels of economic growth, relatively low levels of unemployment, and sound financial management as opposed to unfunded, uncosted, Bankcard-style election promises. The overwhelming majority of electors of Joondalup took a responsible position and decided to cast a vote not just for their future but also for the future of their children and grandchildren. Through their everyday experiences in managing household budgets they were well aware that spending what one does not have will only cause economic and social ruin in the long term. They were rightly cynical of any political party that outspent our party in its election promises on a \$3 for \$1 basis. They were well aware that when assessing how a political party would represent them in the State Parliament that they needed only look to its past performance to assess its future performance. They were not about to be fooled by any political party which offered a passive surrender shortly before the election. They wanted to build on their future and that of their children and grandchildren, and not turn back. They were simply not prepared to hand back the good government of this state and their families' welfare to any political party which, on a state and federal basis, had a shocking record of economic and social mismanagement on a massive scale.

Mr Speaker, the electors of Joondalup were not prepared to allow their vote to be bought by any political party that was prepared to engage in a Dutch auction, because they were aware at all times that ultimately their hard-earned taxpayers' dollars would fund any election promises. Fortunately, the electors of Joondalup were not stupid. They were rightly cynical, and despite the relative youth of the electorate they were able to cast their votes in a mature and responsible manner. They were well aware that in relatively tough economic times any investment, be it in a home, a car or a political party, had to be one of the most shrewd decisions they could make, and as to the latter, they would be stuck with that decision for some four years.

Irrespective of how they voted, the electors were well aware that the key issues in the Joondalup election campaign were health, education, law and order and transport. The majority of electors realised that many law and order and social problems had been caused or substantially contributed to by previous successive state and federal Labor Governments, which in many respects had torn into the very fabric of our society and its cornerstone - the family unit. They were also well aware that Labor's political ideologies of the past had artificially contrived divisions in the family, the workplace and the broader society.

Mr Speaker, all of the electors of Joondalup simply want an opportunity to better themselves, and to improve their and their children's circumstances. More than 25 per cent of the electors of Joondalup were born overseas. Just like the first settlers in Australia, they migrated to Western Australia to make a fresh start in life, to break from the shackles of their past, their social and financial status; and with a view to improving their standing in society in general, and that of their families. Their first and primary concern was and will always be to seek financial security for their families, to house, educate, feed and clothe their children, and to create a sound future for their families. Most of those electors realise that the key to all things in life is a sound formal and, to a lesser extent, informal education. They realised that education is the greatest tool to attain upward social mobility and to improve their family's circumstances.

Mr Speaker, I also take this opportunity to express my personal views on a few matters which are of great concern to the electors of Joondalup. I refer here to the issues of unemployment, and the provision of important government services, such as health, education and transport. First, I will deal with the issue of unemployment. We are all well aware that unemployment, especially among our youth, is the most insidious, modern social plague besetting our State and nation. Unemployment has devastating social consequences ranging from youth suicide, drug use, crime, and law and order problems to lack of self-esteem, despondency, marital breakdown and moral decay. I know that it is an old cliché, but the older I get the more I understand that "the devil makes work for idle hands and minds." I am sure that members on both sides of this Chamber will appreciate the need to implement and foster policies that will create more employment, especially for our youth. With more than 40 per cent of my electorate aged under 22 years,

I am well aware of how important the unemployment issue is, and will be at the next state election. The question of course is how do we attack the unemployment issue.

Despite what members opposite may believe, history has proven time and again that one key way of reducing unemployment is to implement and foster policies which give incentives to the private sector, especially the small business sector - the latter being the largest single employer group in our State. It is the private sector, especially the small business sector, which creates real, meaningful, long term jobs, not the public sector or for that matter the trade union movement. It is the role of the Government to promote an environment in which economic growth and development, initiative and enterprise are ably rewarded, and unnecessary and frustrating government controls are reduced. These factors inter alia will, in due course, reduce unemployment.

To attain this goal it is most important that we further deregulate the labour market, the industrial relations system and strike a better deal on all forms of taxation with the Federal Government within the commonwealth-state financial relationship. We and our fellow States must strike a better deal for the States within our federation to ensure that the tax collecting, revenue raising powers of the Federal Government are shared more equitably with the States because the States are in a far better position to accurately and ably assess and address the ongoing needs of the people and are far more responsive to their changing needs and circumstances.

Mr Speaker, if our State and nation are to progress, we must, in so far as is reasonably practicable, reduce unreasonable or unnecessary government control or intervention across the board, both in the economy and in the labour market, because ultimately unfair controls discourage initiative. If the incentive is sufficient, the individual will, through his or her initiatives and resources endeavour to increase the availability of goods and services and thereby provide more jobs in our society. On the other hand, if restrictive measures are applied against the individual, the natural human innate reaction is to reduce supply so as to seek a maximum reward for minimum personal effort and risk of capital. We live in a free enterprise system which is largely dependent upon the private sector to stimulate economic growth and development. In a free enterprise system it is the private sector which, in the first instance, creates the wealth in our society which is subsequently taxed by the various arms of government and thereby raises the much needed revenue and social dividends to fund the key areas of health, education and transport. Put simply, money does not grow on trees; it grows on individual endeavour and initiative. A healthy free enterprise economy which rewards and gives incentives to individual initiatives will grow at a rate sufficient to cater for the ongoing, ever increasing need for employment growth, especially for our youth. The lessons of history have shown that the creation of wealth and the appropriate taxation of that wealth is essential in meeting our state and national aspirations and improving our overall standard of living. History has also shown that competitive free enterprise, the free choice of consumers in the marketplace and individual efforts will maximise economic growth and national prosperity.

Mr Speaker, it is without question that government must be sufficiently responsive so that it can meet its proper obligations to its citizens in the key areas I have mentioned. It is also absolutely imperative that government should not compete with an efficient private sector. In that way it will eliminate all unnecessary burdens on the taxpayers. In view of what I have said on these two issues, my pledge to this Parliament is that I will remain true to the principles of free enterprise and a free market, and I will work in support of the individual.

One of the greatest lessons of history is that we fail sometimes to learn from those lessons. The lessons of history have shown time and again, especially in the past 10 years, that a socialist political system of whatever variety and a restrained and fettered marketplace is totally out of step with the innate worth of the individual and the need to create initiative and individual responsibility.

Mr Speaker, there can be no more fundamental truism in a free enterprise market economy than to say that we can deliver social dividends in the core areas of health, education and transport by creating wealth and then taxing it. This is the responsible way of delivering social dividends. To create wealth we must foster free enterprise. Put simply, we cannot help the poor by destroying the rich; we cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong; and we cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. It is these fundamental principles that I will always bear in mind as I perform my duties as the duly elected representative of Joondalup. It is these messages that I will convey to my electors. I will ask that they in turn convey them to their children and their children's children. These messages are the key principles that we must never lose sight of if we are to build on our future and the future of our children and our children's children and properly fund the key areas of health, education and transport.

Mr Speaker, I thank the members of this House for giving me the opportunity to speak in this debate. I look forward to working with each and every member in this Chamber in continuing to build on the sound future for the people of this State which recommenced following the 1993 state election.

I consider I have been extremely lucky to have grown up in a free society and to be a fourth generation Australian. I undertake to the electors of Joondalup to use my best possible endeavours to ably and responsibly represent them, and to provide them with the opportunities that I have been given as a fellow Western Australian.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, and the members of this House for the courtesy extended to me during my first speech in this House.

[Applause.]

MR MacLEAN (Wanneroo) [11.22 am]: It gives me great pleasure to be in this place today to give my first speech in this House.

Mr Marlborough: We are delighted the member is here as well.

Mr MacLEAN: They told me the member for Peel is a clown, so it is okay.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on taking up that position. Knowing that you are a former teacher, I hope that you will not be reminded too much of your former occupation from the Chair. It is with great pleasure that I support the Address-in-Reply. I will continue the tradition of thanking those people who assisted me to come to this place. Specifically, I thank my campaign chairman, Mr Ray Halligan, who spent many hours in the campaign office doing the odds and sods jobs that allowed me to keep busy out on the road. I thank Mr Mick Nanovich, who is a former member of this place. He was an inspiration. His knowledge of the workings of this place and of the area of Wanneroo were invaluable to me. He was a great support to me. I thank not only Mr Tony Whight but also and, more importantly, his wife Dot, who excused him from painting the house during the election campaign so he could work with me.

The new seat of Wanneroo resulted from splitting the old seat of Wanneroo to become the seats of Joondalup and Wanneroo. Whereas Joondalup reflects the new in that it is nearly all urban, Wanneroo reflects not only the old, with traditional land use in market gardening and pastoral pursuits, but also the new with large areas of urbanisation in Clarkson, Merriwa and Neerabup, as well as established areas such as Marangaroo and Landsdale. I can remember when Marangaroo was no more than banksia woodland.

The history of Wanneroo commenced with the early settlement of this colony in the 1800s. Wanneroo was a cattle grazing area. The high watertable and lake lands provided good grazing for cattle, even in the driest of weather. Wanneroo very quickly became a food bowl for the new and growing area of Perth. Vegetable and salad growing became extremely important, even though in those days it took a full day to travel from Wanneroo to the Perth markets. The growers would leave late at night, or in the early evening, to avoid the heat of the day and sometimes not reach Perth until the following afternoon. The track, as Wanneroo Road was then, was no more than sand. In later times it was paved with jarrah log ends. These could be seen in Wanneroo Road until recently, especially around the Dog Swamp shopping area where on hot days the asphalt receded into the cracks of old log ends. That resulted in the removal of the old log ends and the construction of a new road, leaving very little evidence of the old Wanneroo Road.

Market gardening is a major industry for Wanneroo, and the area has produced some tremendous leaders in that industry. Wanneroo was the first site of a frozen vegetable plant in Western Australia. The plant was run by Mr John Crisafulli, who has been farming the same area for 40 years. He and his family now grow what are possibly the best cut flowers available in Western Australia. Wanneroo's climate is very suitable to strawberry production. Strawberries make up a major part of the industry. Strawberries are also a very high export earner for Western Australia, to not only South East Asia - strawberries eaten in the best restaurants in Hong Kong and Singapore probably come from Wanneroo - but also the Eastern States. That annoys them tremendously.

Wanneroo is changing. East of Wanneroo Road is earmarked for development into the twenty-first century. Many of the smaller market gardens are being developed as housing projects. This is both sad and exciting for people in the area. It is sad because it is changing the character of an area that has existed for over 100 years, and exciting because it brings new potential to an area that has been a cinderella to the Joondalup based Wanneroo City Council for 17 years. The rapid urban growth in Wanneroo has created problems. As I said earlier, I can remember when the suburb of Marangaroo was no more than two houses and banksia bushland; it is now a fully developed urban area. The area of Landsdale was market gardens and little else. It is now a thriving suburb. The development of the Crisafulli property east of Wanneroo Road will provide housing, schools and parkland. That will end some 40 or 50 years of primary production on that land. Development will not end there.

It is envisaged that in the future the town of Wanneroo will have a population of over 50 000 people. That will be a centre in its own right. It will not be the major centre for that area. Joondalup and Alkimos are both regional centres. At the moment Alkimos has a population of eight people.

Rapid urban growth exacerbates the problems that people experience in normal life. Transport has become a major problem in this area because many of the connector roads are developer driven. Because councils are unable to fund or forward-fund the development of these roads, which was the practice in the past, major connecting roads are left