

## VALEDICTORY SPEECHES

*Member for Cockburn*

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Emergency Services)** [4.31 pm]: I rise to make probably my last contribution to the Western Australian Legislative Assembly after nearly 20 years as the member for Cockburn. Come 13 March 2021, I will reach the milestone of 20 years as a member of Parliament. On that day, I truly hope to see the re-election of an even larger McGowan Labor government. I, instead, will return to normal public life after my parliamentary service that included four years as a parliamentary secretary, nearly eight years as a minister under three Labor Premiers and just over eight years as a shadow minister. Along with membership of various parliamentary committees, I have made 2 549 spoken contributions to this house. I have been warned by Speakers probably over 100 times, and despite my strenuous efforts and obnoxious behaviour, I have never been thrown out! For this anomaly, I must thank the numerous Speakers over the years for their tolerance and good work.

Not many MPs ever get a chance to deliver a valedictory speech, due to the turbulent and cyclical nature of modern politics, so I am very, very grateful to be standing here today delivering mine. My gratitude is sincere, heartfelt and genuine to those institutions and people who have allowed me to be their representative in this Parliament for so long. Firstly and most importantly, I thank WA Labor, the party that I have been a member of for over 30 years. I know, and I remind colleagues regularly, that despite how clever you think you are, or how popular you are with your constituents or local groups, it is only the party and its organisational capacity that gets you elected into office. I am very proud to have been chosen by WA Labor to represent the electorate of Cockburn for 20 years and I hope that I have returned the party's faith in me by the work that I have contributed, both locally and in government.

My gratitude is also to the local constituents of Cockburn who in five elections returned me to state Parliament, mostly with an electoral margin of over 10 per cent and once nearly 20 per cent. I was hoping, ever since I announced my forthcoming retirement, that my constituents' faith in my work for and on behalf of them over the years was deserving of their support. But after receiving hundreds and hundreds of well wishes and thanks from local Cockburn residents over the last month or so, I feel their trust in me has been confirmed. For this outpouring by those who voted for me, I feel truly humbled.

To the local Cockburn ALP members who have worked tirelessly over my five electoral campaigns and who were key to success in winning local industrial, environmental and lobbying campaigns, I express my sincere gratitude. Members like Phil, Michele and Hunter Eva; Michelle, Dean and the whole Plozza family; Ivo and Alenka Radonic; Bart Houwen; Carl Stronmen and family; Rob and Jean Bruce; Yaz, Geri and the Mubarakai family; Marko Banovic; Peter Prothero; Les Richardson; Linda Goncalves and family; and Mick Duric are rusted-on supporters who always turn out for a local campaign or an election, be it state or federal.

I would also like to express my gratitude to and acknowledge my ongoing membership of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, a critical workers' representative organisation in WA affiliated to WA Labor. It was the AMWU members of Cockburn who pushed me towards the idea of standing for Parliament. The relationship between my union, WA Labor and the local ALP members in Cockburn has been of significant benefit to the creation of jobs and industrial development in the south west corridor of Perth. The concept of the Australian Marine Complex in Henderson, which I have been deeply involved with from the very beginning, came from the AMWU. Labor policies and Labor in government supported the union idea of a common-user facility that is based around three industries with overlapping skillsets—shipbuilding and ship repair, both commercial and naval; modular engineering and fabrication for mining and resources; and oil and gas work, especially subsea. The AMC CUF has now grown into Australia's premier shipbuilding and engineering hub and has generated billions of dollars' worth of work for WA, with a state-of-the-art technical college and a workforce measured in the thousands. It just shows that great things can come from the ground up.

Other people I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to are my colleagues who I have worked with over the years here in Parliament and in government. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Dr Geoff Gallop and Hon Clive Brown who not only showed honest, true and ethical leadership in politics, but also personally helped me adjust to being an MP and then a minister. I acknowledge also the ever-diminishing class of 2001 Labor MPs. With the member for Collie—Preston and the Speaker leaving with me next year, it means if re-elected, there will be only six of our 2001 cohort left when Parliament returns in 2021. It has been a terrific experience working alongside my 2001 colleagues, with a variety of ups and downs, good times and sad times. And, of course, I would like to acknowledge my current WA Labor colleagues here in Parliament and wish you all the very best in the forthcoming election. I thank and acknowledge also my current ministerial colleagues, who have been sensational to work with—collegiate, dedicated and hardworking, and one of the best cabinets in WA ever. To Premier McGowan, whilst you have been in Parliament one term longer than I have, we have worked closely together as parliamentary secretaries, committee members and ministers. It has been fascinating and a pleasure to see you grow into the leader you are today. You have carried with you into the Premiership all the hallmarks of the really great leadership I saw in Dr Geoff Gallop—honesty, smart political but ethical decision-making, and true humanity towards those less

fortunate. Working with and for a leader who you know is in that position for all the right reasons makes it easy to give more, to try harder and to achieve. I have had the pleasure of working with successive ALP Premiers who have been just such leaders.

I would now like to touch on some of the things that I have been most proud of and believe have made a difference to the lives of the people of WA.

Spending over 20 years and two terms of government as a minister means that you have been involved with many things, some of which relate to implementing party policy and others that are just matters that arise and need resolving. Within the electorate of Cockburn, life and the suburbs themselves have changed dramatically since I was elected. Back in 2001, the suburbs of Cockburn actually smelt—and they smelt bad! Meatworks, sewage plants, foundries and cement works all gave off really bad odours. Locals had got used to the smells, but development was inevitable and complaints grew louder. Today, apart from the odd drift of caustic from Alcoa, there are no odours around Cockburn. Successive campaigns that I led to fix up Woodman Point sewage plant, forcing Cockburn Cement to install baghouse filters and the moving of meatworks and foundries have cleaned up the place completely. These changes, along with the massive industrial development at the Henderson Australian Marine Complex, which I touched on earlier, have transformed Cockburn. New estate developments such as Beeliar, which I kicked off as Minister for Housing, along with the creation of totally new centres such as Cockburn Central and Cockburn Gateway Shopping City, have created a totally new living environment in the south west corridor of Perth.

Can I thank my colleague the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, for continuing this transformation by picking up on the road congestion campaigns that I ran with the member for Jandakot prior to 2017, and delivering on widening the freeway, building the North Lake Road bridge, developing the Armadale Road dual carriageway and creating the first east–west metro link from Cockburn Central to Thornlie. These major infrastructure projects will continue to change the social environment of Cockburn and surrounding suburbs.

In government, under Premiers Gallop and Carpenter, I held various portfolios and was involved in helping to deliver many amazing projects such as the design of Perth Arena, as Minister for Housing and Works, and the redevelopment of Broome power station, which along with Looma and other Indigenous towns, became the first electrical energy plants based on LNG. Along with the wind farms in Hopetoun, Geraldton and Augusta, these were some of the 12 new power plants I signed off as Minister for Energy, yet it is some of the small but life-changing projects that make public service so meaningful. As the Minister for Industry and Enterprise, the delivery of fibre-optic cable to the Central Desert communities of Warburton, Kiwirrkurra, Blackstone and other remote towns meant that I could help some of WA's most isolated people access technologies that are available to the rest of the state.

As minister in my current role, I must admit, initially—Premier!—I was left aghast at being given Corrections and Emergency Services.

**Mr M. McGowan:** I remember.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** After all, what could go wrong in these portfolios? I quickly realised, given the shocking state of the departments that I inherited, that the only way was up, and there are many good things that could and should be done in reforming these critical areas of government. Reform, however, begins by talking to those you are asking to accept change. During this term I have spent my time travelling the state, visiting every prison and every career fire station numerous times, including meeting with thousands of volunteer emergency services workers, encouraging them to embrace change and reform. This approach to doing things differently I put down to my experience as a union organiser and being off the tools, when I can talk to people and not down to them.

Nearly four years later, our prisons and correction facilities in Western Australia are now less crowded, more humane and better staffed than ever before. The shame of WA being the second worst state for the rate of incarceration of Indigenous people is being redeemed through the gradual reduction of the prison population using smart but effective programs and interventions. Only last week at Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women, I launched an Indigenous languages program that will be available across all WA prisons. Incarcerated First Peoples and others such as prison staff now have an opportunity to learn the world's oldest and WA's original languages as part of a new culturally appropriate rehabilitation process. Along with including skin grouping on the offender management computer system so that prisons recognise relations under traditional law and the amazing success of Australia's first alcohol and drug rehabilitation prisons, built and opened in this term of government, WA corrections now has a completely new approach to prisoner rehabilitation and is world leading in many areas.

Today, Western Australia has fewer children and young people locked up than ever before. Our prison capacity has increased dramatically without the need for building a new prison. We have improved security against the smuggling of drugs and contraband and weeded out more bad officers and staff than have previous governments. In concert with the transformational laws and policies introduced by the Attorney General such as fine default legislation, family and domestic violence offender monitoring, violent and sexual offender legislation and the custody notification system, I am pleased to state that over the term of the McGowan government, we have created a safer and more just WA with better policing, secure prisons and greater monitoring of offenders in our community.

In achieving these outcomes can I thank all the extraordinary officers and public servants in Corrective Services in the Department of Justice, who, along with the unions, have put in long hours and a massive effort in reforming the agency. I specifically want to mention Mr Tony Hassall, who is retiring as Commissioner of Corrective Services. Without doubt, Tony has been the best commissioner the state has ever had and we have been lucky to have his wise, humane and capable leadership over the last four years. I wish Tony and Gerry all the very best for their future.

Fire and Emergency Services under the McGowan Labor government is now a modern, holistic agency that can prevent, prepare for, respond and recover from a wide and diverse range of hazards that may befall WA communities. During this term of government, the agency has grown from basically a fire and rescue response organisation to a body that is fully inclusive of career and volunteer emergency service workers, the leading contributor to mitigation action around our towns and vital infrastructure, and the key coordinator of recovery actions following natural or human-induced disasters. Under the leadership of Commissioner Darren Klemm, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services has overcome the poor relations that existed between the agency and volunteers under the previous Liberal–National government. The commissioner and I have travelled over 100 000 kilometres around Western Australia meeting volunteers from all the emergency services, listening to their views and considering their needs and aspirations. The result of these efforts has been the creation of a more cohesive and unified organisation with a far greater level of respect for the contributions made by both career officers and volunteers alike.

In addition, during this term, we have finalised and implemented the Ferguson report recommendations, two outcomes being the creation of the Rural Fire Division and the building of Australia's first Bushfire Centre of Excellence at Nambeelup. We have concluded the long-running vehicle replacement program that will see all future fire trucks built here in WA, many of which will be constructed in Collie, bringing new jobs and a new industry to the south west. After nearly four years of the McGowan Labor government, emergency services in WA is now better prepared for serious natural disasters, better equipped and better governed. Can I reiterate for one last time for all those thousands of volunteers across our state: thank you! Thank you for giving up the many, many hours of your time, in taking you away from your family and putting your lives at risk to help our fellow citizens in their time of peril.

The lessons I have learnt over the years in government as a minister and parliamentary secretary are that no matter what portfolio you are given, you can do not only good things but also amazing things for the people of WA. You cannot, however, do these things on your own. You are always part of a team and you are reliant on good people around you. Can I express my sincere thanks to the people who have been around me for the last four years and to whom I owe such a debt of gratitude. In particular, I would like to put on record my thanks to Tom Palmer, my chief of staff; Rebeka Marton and Mia Onorato-Sartori, my senior policy officers; Ryan Emery, senior media officer; Clair Berry, parliamentary liaison; Sarah Seymour, policy adviser; Tina McDonald, executive officer; Ellyce Shaw, appointment secretary; and Suzanna Golo and Leah Hayward, admin and correspondence officers. These wonderful people, along with all those who have moved on to pastures new—including you, Ben, up there—are some of the most hardworking, loyal and dedicated staff I have ever encountered. I thank you so much.

At the electorate office, I could not have done my job without the support and help of Phil Eva, Michele Eva and Michelle Plozza over the years. Organising community campaigns, liaising with constituents and running a very busy office, these three great hardworking people have been the backbone of Cockburn's political representation.

Life up here in Parliament is always made easier for MPs due to the fantastic work put in by staff. I would like to recognise all the workers here in these buildings. In particular, I would like to thank the silent and often overlooked Hansard staff, who make even the most dull, incomprehensible speeches readable. You are a wonderful group; you know that! I specifically mention and thank Lance and Basil, Anthony in the bar, Roger, Mark, Anna, Deb and all the staff in the dining room, Preston and the team down in the kitchen who never get a mention and to whom we all owe a great deal—some more than others! I thank Kirsten, Isla, Liz, Anne Day and all the staff of the Legislative Assembly. I thank Sammy and the team down in the gym who have kept me fit. By the way, there are still some targets on the whiteboard in the gym that need to be overcome, Minister for Health! He still has not overcome those targets.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** I'll take care of those in the morning!

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I will leave them as posterity for the next government.

I thank the wonderful education people in Parliament House, who sometimes we forget. Finally, I thank Enno and Rob Hunter, who still have not agreed to expand the new gym or put in new equipment. That is a task for the Minister for Health in the next government.

Even before my arrival in this place, I worked for many years in getting the Labor Party elected at both state and federal level, with terrific officers and staff of the AMWU. Indeed, many people in this chamber, including myself, have only been elected because of the AMWU loyalty and commitment to our party. For this support, I thank my former shop steward, organiser offsider and now state secretary Steve McCartney, Glenn McLaren, Pearl Lim,

Alex Cassie, Owen Whittle—now at UnionsWA—Alan, Vince, Madi, Jade, Simon, Renee and all the other organisers and admin staff and, in particular, the indomitable Ann Di Giuseppe, who transferred my union membership from the United Kingdom to Australia 40 years ago.

On a much broader level of gratitude, can I put on the record, as a migrant, my thanks to Australia and the state of Western Australia for giving me a life that I could only once have dreamed about. The member for Collie–Preston and I, hopefully, are the last of the MPs to come to this place from a background of real poverty. We grew up in conditions experienced only by those from the last century. For Mick, it was a wooden slat hut near Darkan. For me, it was a tiny terrace house south of London, with no heating, an outdoor toilet and tin bath. Australia has not just been good to me; it has been a life-changer. I have had well-paid jobs as a tradesperson. I received a sensational higher education at the University of Sydney. I had the most remarkable work life with the AMWU and 20 years as an MP. My experience is unusual for most Australians, but for a Pom from my background, it has been nothing short of a miracle. For that, I thank this wonderful country and its people.

Mr Speaker, nothing can be done in parliamentary life without the support of friends and family, and I have been lucky enough to have had such support over the last 20 years. I have friends who have had to endure my recruitments during elections including Terri Riley, Anne Barblett and Don Inglis; the crazy gastro doctors Digby, Colin and Lindsay; and surfing mate Andrew Telford. Family recruitments include my brother-in-law Paul Burnham and the mother-in-law everyone should have, because I do no wrong in her eyes—do I Doris; no, I do not!—Doris Burnham. Finally, I acknowledge that I owe everything to my long-suffering family: Henry, who is here with Lizzie, thanks for all your love and support, particularly recruiting your mates during elections; Alexandra, who is in London with her husband, Angus, for all her love and unflinching commitment to all my work and campaigns; and, of course, Vivienne, the backbone and anchor of our family, whose love and unbelievable hard work has kept us together, focused and loyal to each other. Thank you so much; it would have been impossible without you.

Mr Speaker, that is it for the seat of Cockburn! It is now over to my colleague David Scaife, who has been endorsed to run in 2021. I wish David and Ellie all the best in their new life in the electorate. A huge thanks to you, Premier McGowan; my fellow cabinet ministers; colleague MPs; and all my comrades. It has been an amazing and phenomenal 20-year political life. You can all now breathe a sigh of relief that I will not be around to put forward strange and questionable people for preselection anymore! To all the ALP members standing in March 2021, work hard; go well. Bring back more Labor members to this chamber to continue the fantastic and historic work of the McGowan Labor government. Thank you.

[Applause.]

*Member for Riverton*

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton)** [4.55 pm]: Tonight is a time for reflection, for appreciation and, importantly, for learning some of the lessons of the past. Perhaps the most common personal question that I have been asked during my time in Parliament is: how did a quirky, straight-talking person from the back blocks of Michigan get to be in the Western Australian Parliament, be the Treasurer of the state and be the Leader of the Opposition? I usually answer euphemistically, “Good question”, and shrug my shoulders. Life acts and goes in mysterious ways. The question is often prompted by the widely held perception that politicians, particularly mainstream party politicians, fit into a certain mould, which I did not. They usually come from safe seats, which are, at least in my party, allocated by powerbrokers to people who work through the system. I did not come into Parliament via a safe seat; I came in via a marginal seat. I won the seat of Riverton from Labor in 2008 with a margin of 64 votes. My path meant that I came to this place on my own terms, with no favours owing, except to win the seat next time—the freedom few on either side of this chamber enjoy.

The curious would then ask: why did I decide to become a politician? The answer to this question is easier. Politics and government are vitally important and I wanted to make a meaningful contribution to my adopted community. I wanted to serve the community to which I felt I owed so much. Also, up to that date, I had spent a lifetime telling politicians what to do and how to do it, and thought it was time—to mix metaphors—to jump the fence and get my hands dirty. I do not mean to imply that those who ask why do not understand the importance of good government. On the contrary, they understand it very well indeed. Underlying the question “Why?” is in fact a general loss of respect for the political process and a bit of exasperation with the political class. I had similar sentiments when I was looking in from the outside. Having been on the inside for 12 years and becoming an insider, I believe that our system generally produces good government. I affirm this even though the political and parliamentary process can be chaotic, longwinded, frustrating and opaque. As the German leader Bismarck first warned, two things people should not watch being made if they wish to enjoy the outcome are sausages and politics!

In my maiden speech, I proposed the elimination of the upper house. Hon Simon O’Brien from the other place had come to listen to my speech. When he heard that, he almost fell off his chair. I could hear the screams from Hon Norman Moore from my seat! I recant. A bicameral system, with the upper house being a house of review and

a check on the excesses of the executive, is an important aspect of our system. As to the character of the political class, I think that I, like everybody, tried to do my bit by being an honest, accessible and hardworking local member and minister, and I hope that I was successful.

When I was first elected, the expectation of many was that I would not be a good fit in the role of a local member. I was a big-picture person and dry policy wonk with no background in local activity other than my children's sports and schools. To be honest, even I was uncertain whether the shoe would fit. Happily, I have enjoyed being a local member immensely. Indeed, being a local member has been the highlight of my political career. The Riverton district fitted me perfectly. It has one of the highest proportions of migrants of any electorate in Australia. Most of its migrants are from Asia, communities with which I have had a long and personal relationship. The Riverton community is culturally diverse, inclusive and aspirational, and values educational excellence like no other. It is family-oriented and loves its sports. It is the heart and soul of our state. It has been a privilege, indeed an honour, to be the member for Riverton. To the people of Riverton, thank you. You trusted me to help you. You invited me into your families, shared your triumphs and sorrows, and enriched my life and that of my family. I will cherish the trust and confidence you placed in me at the time of your need, and I hope that I have been of service to you. Thank you.

In the second term of the Barnett government, I was appointed to the ministry as Treasurer; Minister for Finance; Energy; Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs. The Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs portfolio was important and rewarding. It gave me the opportunity to help migrants do as I have done, which is to adjust to and contribute to our new home of Western Australia.

The Treasury and Energy portfolios turned out to be the portfolios from hell. It was as if all those politicians I had lectured over the years in my past profession about avoiding debt and deficits were getting payback. I became Treasurer a month before the release of the 2014–15 budget, and the state's revenue immediately tanked. I guess it was karma. Over 2014–15 and 2015–16, virtually every source of state revenue declined, with overall revenue declining each year by three points. This was the most significant reduction in revenue any Australian state had suffered since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Royalties receipts led by iron ore collapsed by \$2 billion per annum, our GST share fell below 30 per cent, and the private sector was also feeling the pain. The state's domestic economy went into the deepest decline in 85 years. The electricity sector was in a similar deep funk. Synergy was haemorrhaging, the Muja A and B power stations rebuild that I inherited was a disaster and Western Power was required to spend over \$1 billion on poles. As Voltaire said, each player must accept the cards life deals them, but once in hand, they must decide how to play the cards to win. Well, I played the hand as best I could. I cut expenses to the lowest in decades, I raised some taxes, I reformed and cut costs in the electricity sector, I made the case for reforming the GST, I pushed the commonwealth to assist with infrastructure spending and I tried to sell assets, but I lost the hand. Deficit and debt grew, the economy continued to struggle and we lost the 2017 election. I did my best, and arguably I was the best placed to play the hand. I would do it again and I have no regrets.

I then took on the role of Leader of the Opposition, not with any sense of future position, but out of a sense of duty to help rebuild and regroup a shattered team and to help the WA parliamentary Liberal team on the road for a return to government. My frustration was compounded when as Leader of the Opposition I watched the McGowan government not only receive the benefits of our work, but also take credit for them and receive huge revenue windfalls. Politics is a tough game and the victors write history. Any team of politicians is a rolling ball of personal ambition, egos, ideology and competing interests, and the team that I led as opposition leader was no different. I gave the role all I had, including my moustache—and it has not grown back!

Undoubtedly, the highlight of my time as opposition leader were the three elections that were held. We were always going to win Cottesloe, but we did better than predicted and it resulted in the excellent new member, David Honey. The Darling Range by-election was special. Against the odds, outspent on advertising by more than three to one and written off in the polls in the media, we won with a massive 9.3 per cent swing and, again, it resulted in the return of one of the hardest working members of the house, Alyssa Hayden. The federal election was also a great win against the odds. The public of Western Australia is indisputably better informed and less persuaded by spending than governments and the media give it credit for.

I have been blessed with the assistance of many people during my political career. First and foremost is my wife, Nyuk. She had her own career but put in the hard yards for me, including hundreds of functions. One year, I think that we—at least I—went to 17 Chinese New Year balls, and the biggest achievement was that I did not put on weight! I could not have done the job without her. My children have made me proud. They have succeeded immensely in their own careers and supported me in mine. No achievement can exceed the achievement of watching your children succeed.

I would not have been in Parliament or become a minister without the support and leadership of Colin Barnett. He was in the right place at the right time, and Western Australia is better for it. It goes without saying that I would not be here without the Liberal Party. It preselected, supported, guided and advised me and it mobilised the community support for me. One of the most uplifting aspects of my journey in politics has been to see and participate in the great

community event that is our elections. Win or lose—I have experienced both—they illustrate the strength of our civil society and democracy. They are a great event. During my time in politics, the Liberal Party has had two excellent directors in Western Australia, Ben Morton and Sam Calabrese. Both men are wise and skilled in the process of politics beyond their years. Ben went on to become the member for Tangney, the federal seat that entirely encompasses the seat of Riverton. He has been a godsend in that role. He is hardworking and supportive of the community.

As for my colleagues, thanks for the memories. The highs, the lows, the thrills, the spills, the wins, the losses, the planning and the scheming, the laughter and the pain. I would not have missed it for quids. Good luck. Remember, politics in the end is a battle of ideas, not personalities. To Anthony Spagnolo, the Liberal Party’s candidate for Riverton, I say, “Earn it”, and I trust you will. Godfrey Lowe and Michael Goddard have supported me from start to finish. I have had outstanding electorate staff—I mean outstanding—including Lyn Mitchell, Ben Kunze and Tracy Cant, as well as ministerial staff, Simon Helm, Natasha Cheung and Luke O’Callaghan. Denice Rice and Andrew Gaspar stood by me during the many lonely days as opposition leader. I thank them all.

A warning: I came into the public debate in the late 1980s, first as a public servant and then in the Institute of Public Affairs, in part, because of WA Inc mark I. Indeed, I am one of the few people in this place who remembers firsthand those times. Members opposite who are too young to remember should read the reports of the royal commission into WA Inc for their own edification. I and the Liberal Party won in 2008 to a significant degree because of WA Inc mark II. Now, as I prepare to leave Parliament, I see signs of a potential repeat. I recognise that what I will say may make some squirm and cause others to write me off as a partisan sore loser, but it needs to be said, and few other than I can or will. The McGowan government is far too close to select powerful commercial interests, particularly in the media and the property sectors in the state. There is a reason why other states have banned political donations from property developers. Governments control planning and own vast tracts of valuable land, and property developers stand to gain mightily if they receive special treatment from either planning determinations or access to government land. Experience here and in other states shows that without adequate safeguards, some politicians and developers succumb to the lure of largesse and do deals to their collective advantage but to the great disadvantage of the community. In response to the experience of WA Inc, successive WA governments, Labor and coalition, have put in place processes that have greatly reduced the discretion of ministers over planning, tendering and land disposal decisions, and increased the level of transparency of these decisions.

These safeguards, particularly most recently under the cover of COVID-19, are being eroded. This is dangerous. I am not advocating a ban on property developers but the enforcement of transparency and tendering guidelines.

The fourth estate plays an essential role in our political system. It is one of the primary means by which the public is informed about the activities, performance and capabilities of governments and oppositions. To be effective, the media sector should be diverse, competitive and independent of commercial interests. These are not the characteristics of the media in this state now. The traditional media is highly concentrated with one outlet having a near monopoly on newspapers, combined with the dominant free-to-air TV. This is not healthy. Channel Nine is starting to expand in this state and I wish them well. The ABC, which was established to counter weaknesses in the commercial media market, has become very nationally or eastern states-centric. I urge the ABC hierarchy to put more resources into our state.

One of the contributing factors to WA Inc mark I was the takeover of media outlets, TV and newspapers, by commercial interests and then using those outlets to provide political leverage in pursuit of commercial gain—read the royal commission. It is an important and healthy characteristic for the Australia media landscape that most media outlets are independent in terms of ownership and operation of non-commercial interest. That is the general characteristic of our media and it adds to its quality. In Western Australia, the dominant commercial media outlet has ownership links to a large range of commercial operations in this state. These operations have many dealings with state and federal governments. That is not surprising or threatening and, indeed, is appropriate. The concern lies with the potential use of media outlets to advance non-media commercial interests. The solution lies not in special regulation or prohibitions but strict enforcement of, again, transparency and tendering guidelines. If we do not learn the lessons of the past, we are bound to repeat them.

Mr Speaker, I have said what I needed to say. Now I move on. I leave this place with a sense of satisfaction, knowing that at all times I did the best I could for the people of Riverton and of this state, that I worked hard for my constituents and that I remained true to my values. I wish all here well.

[Applause.]

**The SPEAKER:** People in the back, there is going to be a swap now. We will bring the next lot in. I am trying to be diplomatic here! Members, tighten your seatbelts; the member for Murray–Wellington—no, sorry! I withdraw! You are right to go, member for Collie–Preston.

*Member for Collie–Preston*

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Seniors and Ageing)** [5.14 pm]: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Wow. It is pretty hard to start! I will have a drink first. It is not very often I get stuck for a few words.

**The SPEAKER:** You will be all right, Mick! Sorry, member for Collie–Preston.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I rise this evening to make some comments ahead of my retirement in March and the 2021 state election and to reflect on a few issues and some of the work that has been done over the last 20 years—who would believe that? Who would have thought that of a young bloke born in the small town of Duranillin, where mum and dad and my sister lived in what now would be called a shack. Fran Logan, the member for Cockburn, mentioned that when I showed him some photos. He was astounded, but had a very similar upbringing. We share a lot in that area. Mum and dad worked hard to support their family. Mum used—oh, shit!—to turn sleepers, which meant you got on the end of a sleeper and turned it over. The person came through and marked the sleeper so it could be passed, then you got paid for it. Mum was about that high. At times, she worked so hard—oh, shit; I am like a sook! I am just trying to compose myself because of memories like that. Honestly, my parents were doing it for me and my sister. After a time, they moved to Collie because they wanted us to get an education. That was a task and a half. For a person in their first year of high school, as I was when we came into town, I was not the most studious person, as you could put it. After a report card that had an average of 33 per cent, I went back and repeated the first year. I am standing here today—amazing! But I must say that in the next year, my average was 88 per cent. I think dad’s hand across my ear was partly to do with that. As the first minister from the seat of Collie or Collie–Preston—respects to Gordon Hill and Julian Grill, who both became ministers. They lived in Collie but were not the members for Collie.

I suppose I will get the other harder part out of the road first—that is the thankyou’s. Up the back are my kids, wife and grandkids. Not all of them could get here because some of them are down in Collie and it is a bit hard to get up this way, but Melissa, Heidi, Bree, Jerrie, and their partners, Steve and John are here. Who let you in! I have seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; here is my first grandson. I had a bit of a run. I had four daughters and then four granddaughters. We thought it would never happen, but look what we got. He is a pretty good one. There were times, in my marginal seat, when I could not afford to miss a function so the family suffered. There were missed birthdays, anniversaries and the like. I still miss anniversaries even when I am reminded, but that is another issue. I think one is coming up now for 47 years of marriage—nod please? It is 49 years of marriage! Thanks for the prompts up there. It has been a tough road at times living on the edge of my seat, margins that I will talk about a bit later.

I owe a big thanks to many other people and I will run through them. Catrina Teirney, now Catrina Campbell-Fraser, was my 2001 campaign manager. When I look at it, she was really only a kid when she came down and helped me out. I did not know what a campaign manager was during the previous two elections. She worked through that with us under the guidance of John Cowdell. I have to thank him for talking me into standing for the third time. He said, “What if someone else stands up and wins and you’re standing on the footpath when you could’ve been that person?” I also thank him for his generosity in kind and for his financial generosity when we did not have an income stream as such. I thank Bruce Roberts, who was the branch secretary for many years and also the shire president for quite some years. We had a lot of fun teasing the National Party and the well-entrenched Dr Hilda Turnbull, who held a huge margin. We had a bit of fun and we went to branch meetings to think of what we could do next to upset and annoy her because she used to get a bit toey from time to time. I thank Peter Bentley, and Gary and Evelyn Benton. Gary was the branch president for 10 or 12 years. I thank him for that.

I thank Tom Palmer. Members might have heard his name. He is a chief of staff. When he came back from England, I had just lost a staffer and he fitted straight in. I must say that at one time I thought he was going to kill me. I had given him a pretty hard week. It was around election time. He put his hands around his head and said, “Oh for f-sake, just let me have 10 minutes to myself to think!” I must have been a pain in the bum, to be quite honest. I thank Sally Talbot. Her advice in the early days was sometimes heeded but sometimes not. I thank Sally for always putting up with me. I thank Stan Liaros, who has been a long-time member of the Labor Party and has worked very hard behind the scenes. When I needed someone to talk to, I could ring him. I thank Kristy Smith and her husband, Bevan, and the kids. Kristy was my electorate officer for seven and a half years. She sorted the town out by herself! She was tough and very focused on the job, but she was an absolute legend in organising the diary and, by geez, if I put an entry in the diary without asking her, I copped it!

I thank John Borlini, Kenny Woods and Bill Fraser, my mates who have been in the background. If I needed to go on a fishing trip, needed a load of wood or some ding snaggers or something like that, they would turn up. I thank Rhonda Roberts, a young person who has also worked hard for the Labor Party for a long time. I thank the Collie–Preston branch members and those in the wider Forrest federal electorate. Ross Verne may be up the back of the chamber. He wrote a nasty article about me in the *Collie Mail* one week, and the following week he wrote an extraordinary paragraph about the town of Collie. His writings are exceptional. He has come down from Collie and worked with us along the way. He is now in another office, but when he was needed during election time, his work was extraordinary.

From more recent times, I thank John Carney. He put his hand up to be preselected. He missed out and kept on working with the party. You cannot ask for more than that. I thank my current staff Vivienne Moloney, Leonie Scoffin and Stuart McGuckin. I think Steve McCartney is in the public gallery. I thank him for his support and for being a backstop at times. A few good shepherds have kept me from being flattened or knocked out—one or the other! Thanks for that and thanks for the financial support along the way. Steve was there when I needed a hand. From the early preselection days, I thank Keith Peckham and Jim Davidson from the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, which is in my veins. I thank the Collie miners' union officials and members.

I thank Emma from my Perth office. Put your hand up, Emma, please! Anyone who is not in Parliament would not recognise her. She can be a pain in the butt, there is no argument about that! I thank her for her hard work, for keeping me on the straight and narrow and making sure we were on track. I bet she had some sleepless nights, especially when I would ring her and say, "We're going to do this." She would say, "No, you're not!" and then we would have this big argument. She has had to put up with me. She has gone home cranky, or late, because I have got things back-to-front and she has tried to straighten me out. To Shae Rya and her kids, thank you for your help. I thank Michael Watts for the steady pair of hands that was needed in my office from time to time—actually, a lot of the time! I thank Matthew Kavanagh; he is poor cricketer but a good research officer! Clint Thomas is one of the blow-ins; he has been in and out. I think my office, especially my ministerial office, could be tagged as the training office because as soon as we got someone going, someone else would pinch them. Anyone who knows Alex Hamilton knows that there are two things that she is not allowed to do when she is on the job. The first is not to drink. The second is to only give us an idea and do not go into detail because—I will not read that! I thank Caroline Claeys, Elizabeth Went, Meredith Graham and Karen Stacey.

I thank all the staff from the Department of Communities, VenuesWest, the Western Australian Institute of Sport, the Combat Sports Commission and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. I will not name anyone in particular because we have all worked together over the past few years and it has been a team effort so it would be remiss of me to forget someone. I thank everyone from the five agencies who contributed, whether it be attending a meeting, writing a briefing note or walking behind the scenes to keep things running smoothly. Thank you!

I bet I have given the Hansard staff a few headaches over my time, not only by yelling. It is a great pleasure when you have had a pretty bad day and you have made a speech and you think, "Geez, that's rubbish" but you pick up *Hansard* and it is pretty good! Thank you to all the Hansard staff. I must say, some Hansard staff have been here longer than me. They do not look as though they have been here longer than me, but they have been.

I thank the parliamentary staff up and down the passageways. They are always pleasant. I have to tell the story of a couple of barmen who used to work in the bar. I walked in and one was doing the dishes over here and the other one was on the till. They looked at each other and then they looked across and they were not going to serve me. I am sorry for what I said to you, but I was glad to see you get off your bum and do the job!

**The SPEAKER:** I think you said something else, too, minister!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I am not allowed to swear!

The staff have to deal with different people and put up with different personalities and they do a magnificent job. Thank you to all them.

Parliament itself is a bit of a bubble. Members make a lot of acquaintances, but they do not always come out the other side with a great deal of true friends. We have acquaintances and, sure, we can have a beer with them. Sure, it is hard, but sometimes it is a place where games are played, and that saddens me to some degree. It happens on both sides because people talk crossways and sideways. We are in a bubble and it is very difficult for people who are outside that bubble to understand that we actually talk to members on the other side. They only see what is on television. The other thing is getting too involved with people because sometimes you get burnt. I learnt that very early on in the process. To anyone who has been a true friend, thank you. I do say that there are many, but there are a lot of what I call acquaintances. I will leave it at that. It is very hard for people who do not work in this area to understand that bubble and the pressure of the bubble and the pressure of elections. What seems to be a simple issue outside this bubble can be so complicated by the parliamentary process. I think we all understand that.

It is worth reflecting on the campaigns that I have fought in for more than 30 years now. The seven elections that I have contested have been interesting, to say the least, with my first win in 2001 by just 34 votes after three counts. Since then, there have been a number of redistributions of my electorate. In serving my electorate, I have made sure that I have kept on my toes. I have covered nine different shires during my time as the member for Collie—Preston, in various versions of a seat that seems to have been chopped up every time—Capel, Dardanup, Harvey, Collie, Donnybrook, Balingup, Boyup Brook, Waroona and Boddington—so, members can see, from one end of the scarp to the other. In one draft of my seat, I had half of Busselton. I am sure Libby Mettam put in a complaint about that. I was glad about that, Libby!

In my first election in 1993, I got a flogging. It was 55 per cent to the National Party and 44 per cent to the Labor Party. In the second election I got an even bigger drubbing—59 per cent to 40 per cent. Only two parties contested that election—the National Party and Labor—and the Libs did not put anyone up. I got an absolute flogging and went away with my tail between my legs for a while.

But in the 2001 election, I got up with 50.1 per cent of the vote—a small number of votes when we look at it—with 5 947 votes, and Hilda Turnbull got 49.9 per cent, with 5 913 votes. That was a difference of 34 votes. They wanted to count the vote a fourth time but a decision was made that it was all over and I got the phone call at 10 o'clock on a Thursday night. Wow! I did not know who to ring or what to do. I went for a walk outside and came back and could not believe that we had actually won.

My first caucus meeting was not the first Labor caucus meeting after the election, because I was not invited to the first one. They did not think I was going to win. When I did turn up, all the plum jobs had gone. To make matters worse, Jim McGinty called me, the Speaker and Shane Hill to tell us to enjoy ourselves for the next four years because it would be the end of it because he planned to instigate one vote, one value.

**The SPEAKER:** Jim who?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** That was a really good introduction to the Labor Party—walk in one door and you are going out the other. I can say that my colleague from Albany and I worked our bums off to hang on to those seats and we are still here 20-odd years later. So, Jim McGinty, suck that one up!

After completing my apprenticeship as a mechanic, I worked in places such as Dampier, Port Hedland and Millstream before starting work underground in the coalmine. I spent 12 and a half years down the hole, learning to see in the dark, and another 12 and a half years on the surface in the open-cut mine. It was hard work but it was for good wages and there were mates that you could rely on.

When I was elected to Parliament, it was a huge change to my lifestyle. I even needed to buy a suit for the first time. When I came up to Perth to meet the Labor Party gang after the elections and all the photos were being taken, I did not have a jacket. After some quick delays, one of the orderlies was walking past, and we “gangbanged” him and got the jacket off him and I got my photo.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Gang tackled, I mean! If members look at the photo, they will see that the sleeves were down to about here, but I did have a jacket on.

**The SPEAKER:** I think there was a “withdraw” in there, Hansard, and he has put in another word.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Life as a member of Parliament is certainly interesting. I remember one time I was at a senior citizens Christmas eve dinner in Burekup and the guy sitting next to me dropped dead. Two guys had been talking about how one had had a hip replacement and the other had an elbow operation and then this guy slid down. His sister was shouting, “Help me!” I thought he was messing around, but he was dead. He was laying there, so I got down with my best parliamentary style and started to give him mouth to mouth and heart compressions. All of a sudden he started to wriggle. He opened his eyes and said, “What are you doing?” Then he said, “I don’t even vote for you.” When I saw him later he said the same thing, “I don’t know why you brought me back. I wanted to die and you go and bring me back.” You cannot help some people, I tell you!

In the 2005 election, I received 59 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. The electorate then included Brunswick Junction, Harvey, Waroona and Boddington—down that way. But, again, the aeroplane came and the boundaries were changed. I went from 9.3 per cent to 0.4 per cent and was bumped to the bottom. What do you do? You pick yourself up, dust yourself off and have another crack. The rub is that at the next election two seats were amalgamated into one. One was Steve Thomas’ seat and one was mine. He had the bottom half and I had the top half. There is a lesson in this for anyone going to an election. A fortnight out, Steve was putting it around that he had got the polling that they were in front and he put the cue away. They stopped doorknocking. I doorknocked right up to the morning of the election and got up by 400 votes. The lesson for anyone who is out there campaigning is to make sure that you do it right to the end and keep your name out there.

At the 2013 election, the Liberal Party just about sent their bankbooks broke trying to put me out. I have never seen so many mail-outs in my life. I was counting them. I knew how much they cost. They were \$5 000 a pop and they were doing five a week. Phew! I nearly fainted. But it came down to the position that I won by 56 votes. That was probably my most memorable and the best win in my political career. Even with the work that was being done against me, there was a six per cent swing to the Liberal Party at that election. I managed to hang on, so I am very, very proud of that. I see a note here that I must thank the Leader of the Opposition for getting me across the line with those 50-odd votes because she would not commit to a police station at Capel. That is where the swing came from, so thank you very much. I say that tongue in cheek. That is politics.

After that election, I was behind on the Tuesday and sitting out the back with my wife—for once in our lives we were agreeing on everything and deciding what to do in the future—when the phone rang. On Wednesday morning I was being told that I was 150 votes in front. I said, “I thought I was 150 behind and I thought it was all over.” What had happened was the Collie electoral officer had left Collie on the Saturday after the election, gone to Perth and had not put the pre-poll votes into the Electoral Commission until the Monday morning. That swung it completely around. I had gone from “I was gone” to “Goodbye, Liberal Party.” I did feel a bit sorry for Jaimee Motion because she had done her acceptance speech without winning the election. It was one of Tom Palmer’s final gigs, I suppose, in my office when he said, “Can I ring them and ask them if they are looking at the figures?” The night before, the campaign manager for the Liberal Party had rung us and asked whether we would concede. Tom said, “On the figures we’re looking at, we’re just in front.” We would not concede. Tom had the pleasure of ringing them the next day when we finally got in front and asking them to concede. That was Tom’s little bit. He thought it was quite good, and so did I to be honest.

Another incident is when we were doing the rounds with the Premier. Three or four of us got on this bloody great bus and went to Bunbury where we were meeting some people. After, they took off and left me behind. I had to ring my wife in Collie to come and pick me up to get me home. Thanks for that, Premier!

**The SPEAKER:** He was heading to Albany!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I will have to rush a bit. At the start of the 2017 election campaign, due to another boundary change I started at minus three. As I said, at one stage I was minus four because I had a bit of Busselton in there, but they moved it back. I got across the line by a large amount. That showed the faith the Collie people have in me—83 per cent of the people in Collie voted Labor. What do you say? Thanks.

Something I am very proud of is that in the whole of the electorate—I am not picking out one part over another—there has been a \$100 million spend on schools, education and facilities. I would like to thank all ministers on both sides for that spend because it means a lot in country areas to have those sorts of facilities. I can walk away knowing that the kids do have the proper facilities to go forward.

But there are some things that really do worry you about the speed of government. Thirty years ago—it might have been 35 years ago—I was elected to local government and my platform was that we would fix the Collie Roundhouse and get rid of the asbestos. Guess what? It got finished last week! I worked to move that along. Lake Kepwari was one of the things that nearly got me buried after the election, when I got the Premier to say that it would be ready in six months. Well, I wish I had never said that because we got an absolute belting over Lake Kepwari. But again, a few years on, we are nearly there. I do not think I am leaving the electorate underdone.

I thank the Premier and all the other ministers for understanding whereabouts Collie is in the transition period. There has been some criticism of the funding that has been put out there, but we have to change. The town knows that we have to change, and we are changing. We can look at different things like the electrical licensing centre with 10 jobs; the relocation of the frontline fire services, which the minister talked about; the building of heavy-duty fire engines in Collie; a new training centre for firefighters; and Australia’s first training centre for driverless trucks. We are trying to get away from the past and get on with what we have to do into the future.

I am also very happy to be able to say that Donnybrook got its share as well. That card-carrying Liberal member and shire president, Mr Piesse over there, and I have had a great working relationship, and I mean that. He has been willing to work with us to make sure that the town of Donnybrook goes forward. That is really good.

With the department of seniors, we have worked very hard on elder abuse. We have put money into that. Finally, we are starting to get the message through that it is not about a whack on the ear; most of it is about financial abuse. We are now getting people trained up in the banks—they are doing it themselves—in the police and in those sorts of areas.

The other part I am very pleased about is that we have pushed money down to grassroots sport. Too often, the money is spent at the top. Okay, we might get results with premierships and those sorts of things, but what about the kids at the bottom who do not get that chance? We have worked very hard and have followed on from KidSport and those sorts of things to make sure that kids at the bottom get a go. There is no better place for a kid who is having problems than to be on the sporting field to work through them.

The other one is gender diversity. The process that we put forward that all boards should have 50 per cent women has been picked up Australia-wide.

I will get through to the last bit. It is no secret, Premier, that I was not the number one pick in the cabinet. This is when I talk about friends in Parliament. During the early stage, I had a bit of a rough start. People tried to disrupt me because they had other ideas. Bad luck! When an old dog can bark, he can still bite. To the public servants who work so hard, thank you for that. To the ones who are disruptive, go and get another job! It is simple.

Finally, to the Premier, I am sure you had some doubts about my capability to hold in my temper at times, but I hope I proved you wrong. I say thanks, Premier.

I have only got a minute to go. The divide between country and city in this state is only growing. Towns are getting smaller and regional centres are getting bigger. I do not believe there is enough consideration for country members in Parliament, and I am sure the Nationals WA would agree. I remember the special family nights when country members used to have priority. That has now gone. Even today, it is impossible to bring the kids into Parliament for extended times as there are no facilities for families to relax in after travelling up or down from the regions to spend the day with partners and for them to have a rare dinner with their family. For example, most of my family would have visited Parliament only half a dozen times in the 20 years that I have been here. The regional accommodation allowance went up in recent years and that change was much appreciated, but there is little help for members who want to actually get back to their communities at the end of sitting weeks. If you think of the extra hours that I spent travelling, take time to think about Josie, who has spent extra days, because she should be able to get away and get up to those areas. That is something we have to look at in time. In my years here, I have done just under a million kilometres in travel in cars up and down the road. I brought a few cars back in sugar bags after using them in the paddocks for a while, but it is still there. I was able to stay in my electorate, but if I had a young family and got a ministerial job, I do not think that would be possible. I think we need to look at that very, very seriously.

My last remarks —

**The SPEAKER:** I hope so!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** — with respect, Mr Speaker, is that Fran Logan and I are probably the last of the two tradies who are in Parliament and we are both going out at the same time. I ask the Labor Party to think about that—think about the 72 per cent of non–university degree holding Australians who should not be excluded from coming into Parliament. I think it is very important that we keep the grassroots of the Labor Party in there and make sure that opportunities are given to those people. As a tradie, honestly, what else can I say? I walk up the backyard now and look at the toolbox and faint. I do not want the grease under my fingernails anymore! But in saying that, it has been a tremendous ride. Many, many people have helped me through that, on both sides of Parliament. It has been something special.

Again, Mr Speaker, thank you for your service to Parliament. I wish you well in your retirement. To departing members, I also wish you well. To those continuing, may you have a good election campaign and may you keep the election campaign out of the gutter and keep it up there, so that the rest of our state can be proud. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]