

Extract from *Hansard*
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Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Giz Watson; President; Hon Ken Baston

HON GIZ WATSON (North Metropolitan) [3.00 pm]: I thank Hon Ed Dermer for being an excellent Whip right to the very last, and thank him for also having been, in effect, the Whip for the Greens (WA) over many years. Thank you, Ed, for your consideration and your words.

I have a few things I would like to say this afternoon and I hope I manage to get through them without cracking up or losing my voice. I wanted to talk a little about the good bits, the bits that still need some work done, make some observations, and there will, of course, be numerous thankyou.

My reflections on the activities that have been part of this place have a business bittersweet quality, as despite achieving some progressive change, it is clear that much more needs to be done before we have a society and environment that receive the respect they deserve and need. Thus, for every milestone there is a further millstone to be removed. Firstly, the good bits: foremost in my list of positive outcomes is my role in the passing of legislation to provide equality to my fellow lesbians and gays. After decades of discrimination and criminalisation and many previous attempts at legislation by the Australian Labor Party, plus one attempt by the Australian Democrats, in December 2001 the Acts Amendment (Lesbian and Gay Law Reform) Bill was introduced. In 2002 and 2003, the Western Australian Parliament passed laws that gave same sex-attracted individuals and all long-term couples legal recognition in a number of areas, the main ones being: antidiscrimination protection; inheritance rights; stamp duty exemption; a system for property division after a split; accident and workers' compensation if a partner dies; partner state superannuation; recognition as next of kin; protection from discrimination on the basis of marital status; access to adoption; access to reproductive technology; and recognition as a parent of a non-biological child in some cases. My memory is that, in all, several hundred laws needed amending. These laws did not create new rights specific to gay men, lesbians and bisexuals; rather, they removed previous discrimination. The law now recognises de facto partnerships regardless of the gender or sexuality of the people involved. In the area of lesbian and gay rights, Western Australia went from the most discriminatory to the most progressive state, despite the most personal and bigoted debate I experienced in my 16 years in this place. It was an excellent community campaign, and I salute the work of Gay and Lesbian Equality (WA), Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the parliamentary working group that I enjoyed working with, the unwavering support of the then Attorney General, Jim McGinty, and the vital role of my comrade Senator Louise Pratt, who did an enormous amount of work within her own party; I acknowledge, of course, the love and support of my partner, June Lowe. I also salute the hardy souls who sat through day after day of vilification in the public gallery. If just one young lesbian or gay grows up knowing they cannot be discriminated against in law and will not be treated as second-class citizens, then my work here was worthwhile. I have a cold; I am not really cracking up quite yet!

To add insult to injury, very little of the timber extracted is converted into high-value product. For example, only 20 per cent of the total volume of jarrah logs taken from our forests and sold to industry actually ends up as high-value timber products such as furniture and flooring. The majority is squandered as railway sleepers, charcoal and firewood. Further, after decades of clearing, overcutting and general mismanagement, many of our native forests and woodland ecosystems are left fragmented, degraded and in need of protection or restoration. The already serious impacts on our forests and woodlands have reduced rainfall, and diseases like dieback, armillaria and marri canker are compounded by logging, mining and inappropriate burning.

Also, there is strong evidence that the timber industry is in decline for other reasons. Relevant external factors are a global oversupply of woodchips, changing consumer trends and the development of substitute products. On top of that, recent commonwealth legislation to introduce a carbon price and firm up a carbon credit regime has the potential to create exciting opportunities for economic development in the south west, through managing forests for carbon credits. Western Australia could potentially earn far more money from carbon credits than it could from logging. This must be explored. I note that an Australian National University study conducted by Andrew Macintosh reports that if logging stopped, the south west forests could be worth between \$600 million and \$1 544 million in carbon credits in the time frame of 2014 to 2023. What is desperately needed now is a forest conservation plan, not another so-called forest management plan that will see an increase in the allowable cut of karri.

I am also delighted to have played a role—along with the vocal and effective conservation sector—in protecting many other precious places in WA, particularly during the campaign for Ningaloo Reef and other significant marine ecosystems, as well as the great western woodlands. I acknowledge and congratulate the Barnett government for its commitment to the establishment and management of five marine parks under the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy, and look forward to their early gazettal.

Another significant change in WA law was the passing of the Acts Amendment (Abortion) Act in 1998. The bill was eventually passed after much active public debate, days of parliamentary debate, and numerous amendments to the original proposal. The act amended the Health Act 1911 and the Criminal Code to make it lawful for medical practitioners to perform abortions as long as the women concerned had given informed consent. The Association for the Legal Right to Abortion played a vital role in the law reform process. ALRA was established in 1967, and I play tribute to the many women, and some men, who over many decades kept the struggle going to ensure that women have reproductive rights in WA. Those I know and have worked closely with include Robyn Murphy, Margot Boetcher, Dorothy Anderson, the extraordinary Ruth Greble, who I acknowledge is here today, and former member Diana Warnock, who many members will know—I enjoy seeing her most mornings as we plunge ourselves into the ocean as City Beach—and Judy Straton and Cait Calcutt. I particularly pay tribute to former Legislative Council member Cheryl Davenport for leading the difficult job of carrying that reform through the Parliament. I thank Cheryl for her very nice card inviting me for a holiday to Norfolk Island anytime I am looking for somewhere to go!

I am also delighted to have played a role in enacting some of the strongest laws protecting the community from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke through carriage in this house of the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill. Through that role it was a pleasure to work with organisations such as the Cancer Council of WA, the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, the Heart Foundation and the Australian Medical Association. I am also pleased to have been able to use our numbers in this place, back in 2006, to block moves to dissolve the WA Alcohol and Drug Authority.

I have long championed, and, hopefully, demonstrated, the importance of cycling for health and environmental benefits, and hope that we may at last be reaching a tipping point in planning where cycling is given suitable priority. It is essential that we not only invest more in dedicated cyclepaths, but that we also make key commuting roads bicycle-friendly. Also, more needs to be invested in cycling infrastructure in regional Western Australia. I wanted to particularly acknowledge the good work done with the Department of Transport to organise the annual ride that involves members of Parliament and local government members, which I think has played a significant role in raising the profile of cycling among members of Parliament. I note that these days, several members of Parliament are committed cyclists.

Another area that I have pursued is recognition of the condition of multiple chemical sensitivity, or MCS. A surprising number of people suffer from this condition in Western Australia. They are constantly vulnerable to even small exposures of a frightening array of chemicals; chemicals that indeed most people do not react to at all. A significant number of MCS sufferers have developed this condition after exposure to the cocktail of 261 chemicals emitted by Alcoa's liquor burner at the Wagerup refinery. These people deserve to be relocated from places such as Hamel and Yarloop to create a proper buffer from the industrial area there. As a condition, MCS continues to be poorly understood and sufferers are not supported. There is a need at the very least for laws to recognise the condition as a disease.

Uranium mining: funny I might mention that! Many Western Australians continue to recognise that uranium is not just another mineral to be exploited. They understand that mining uranium starts a nuclear fuel chain that inextricably leads to highly toxic waste and potential weapons of proliferation. Western Australians recognise that there are environmental and health problems at each stage of that fuel chain, whether it be in the mining and processing of uranium and the resultant waste dumps, its use in nuclear reactors and resultant highly radioactive spent fuel rods, nuclear weapons, or the requirement to keep toxic waste isolated from the environment indefinitely. I am proud to have introduced legislation to prohibit the mining of uranium in Western Australia three times—in June 2000, August 2002 and in 2008. Surprisingly, and to me disappointingly, the first bill was defeated in 2003 by the only other political party to have an anti-uranium policy, the Australian Labor Party. In 2007, I introduced a third, much more limited, bill, requiring the Labor government to implement its own stated commitment to prohibit the mining of uranium on mining leases granted since 22 June 2002. Again the ALP defeated the bill, choosing instead to rely on a non-statutory policy position of the then Premier, Alan Carpenter.

As we long predicted, the ban was lifted swiftly at the stroke of a pen by the incoming Liberal–National government in 2008. Despite the state now being open to the mining of this highly toxic mineral and all the exaggerated claims of uranium miners, not one mine has yet transpired. In fact, a number of major players have abandoned uranium mining. In 2012, BHP Billiton cancelled the planned expansion of Olympic Dam, disbanded its uranium division and sold the Yeelirrie uranium project in Western Australia for around 11 per cent of the nominal value of the uranium resource. Also indicative of the state of the industry was Cameco’s February 2013 announcement of a \$162.5 million writedown on the Kintyre project in WA, as a result of a weakening uranium market. Far from there being a renaissance in the nuclear industry, the world uranium price has dived from almost \$US140 a pound in 2007 to just over \$US40 a pound today. In Europe, 150 nuclear stations are scheduled for closure—whoopee—and, shamefully, Australia is inextricably linked to the ongoing nuclear crisis at Fukushima, where we understand that rats chewing at power cords threaten to disrupt the vital cooling process for the spent fuel rods, so it stumbles from crisis to crisis. This is because there was Australian uranium in each of those four reactors.

Nuclear power is in retreat in Europe, Japan and the United States of America. The industry is pursuing India as a customer—a country that has nuclear power, refuses to sign the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has an appalling track record on nuclear safety. A decade into the nuclear renaissance, the global nuclear capacity has not increased. There may be modest growth, but utilities will have to build several hundred reactors in the coming decades just to replace the current cohort of mostly middle-aged reactors. The huge capital cost of these new reactors is proving to be the industry’s Achilles heel.

Another area I have introduced legislation in is the area of cat management. A Greens initiative that was eventually recognised and delivered by this government—congratulations; it was long overdue—was legislation to limit the number of unwanted cats in Western Australia. The Minister for Local Government was the actioning minister. I think at one time about six of them went through. I had to try to persuade each minister that this was a good idea, but I was unsuccessful, including, I seem to remember, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, who was not persuaded about the merits of cat legislation. Having undertaken a considerable amount of groundwork and community and stakeholder consultation, drafting and redrafting—I note with the valuable assistance of the now Hon Lynn MacLaren, who was at that time my research officer; who also knows way too much about cats!—I introduced a Cat Bill into this house in 2003. Although the bill was never formally debated and ultimately lapsed, I believe it advanced the push from conservationists and cat welfare organisations for laws to provide for the welfare of domestic cats while at the same time reducing the negative effects of cats on native wildlife. Again I congratulate this government, in particular the member for Jandakot, Joe Francis, for successfully steering cat legislation through this Parliament. It was not an easy task. It was the only piece of legislation about which I received a death threat! Beware all those who want to enter into the area of cat management; it is fraught.

One of my aims when I arrived in this place was to work in the spirit of consensus but also to stand firm on matters of principle. On working in the spirit of consensus, the quality of Western Australian laws, as we all know, relies heavily on members’ ability to work together. Although it is not much publicised in the media, a great number of bills actually pass with the support of all parties—probably about 80 per cent. I am proud to have played my part in helping this house reach agreement on numerous bills and on a variety of amendments to bills as well. Indeed, on my calculation—I lie; on calculations by one of my research officers!—I have contributed to debate on 380 bills in my time in this place. No wonder my hair has gone the colour that it has! In terms of standing firmly on matters of principle, I am proud also to have been a member of the only party that has consistently supported judicial discretion and opposed mandatory sentencing and, together with Labor and the majority of National Party members, to have opposed the stop-and-search laws. I am also proud that my office has been a supporter of the parliamentary intern program and has hosted, over the years, 30 interns on a range of topics. I congratulate the education officers in Parliament who do a great job in keeping that program

going. I also acknowledge the work of Janice Dudley at Murdoch University who I have worked with over many years.

The next thing I want to raise is the committee work, which is a lot of work actually. As we know, much of the important but often invisible work of Parliament is done within its committees. From the commencement of my time here, I have invested considerable effort in our committee system. I started as a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation in June 1997 and went on to spend 12 years on that committee, including eight years as the deputy chair. I concur with Hon Linda Savage's comments in her valedictory speech that it is of serious concern to see the demise of that committee. During the last Parliament, I was very concerned when that committee, in effect, became dysfunctional—let us not mince our words—not just for the immediate but also for the long-term consequences of a very important committee in terms of the scrutiny of legislation. There were many occasions during the last Parliament when I referred bills to the Standing Committee on Legislation in the hope that that committee would be reactivated to do the work that it was designed to do. In my experience, the reports by the Standing Committee on Legislation have provided significant additional research and public input into important areas of law. Not to have that committee functioning, no matter what members might think about it, is a disservice to the public of Western Australia who, hopefully, we are here to work for.

I also jumped straight into the challenging area of native title law, being a member of the Select Committee on Native Title Rights in Western Australia from September 1997 to November 1998. In 2003, the Greens provided the numbers to support the establishment of a Select Committee on Advocacy for Children. Between June 2003 and July 2004, Hon Barbara Scott, Hon Kate Doust and I examined the case for a children's commissioner in WA. The report of this select committee report provided much of the groundwork and momentum for the establishment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia. The commissioner in my view has proved to be an important and much needed advocate for children and young people, and I congratulate the commissioner, Michelle Scott, on the excellent work that she is doing on behalf of children and young people in Western Australia.

In September 2005, the Greens again provided the numbers for the Select Committee on the Adequacy of Foster Care Assessment Procedures by the Department for Community Development. Hon Robyn McSweeney chaired that committee, and Hon Sue Ellery and I were the members of that committee. We concluded that particular inquiry in August 2008.

Between November 2006 and August 2008, I chaired the Select Committee into the Department of Education and Training. Between May 2008 and June 2009, I was a member of the Select Committee into the Police Raid on the *Sunday Times*. I am looking at Hon Adele Farina, who was also part of that exhaustive committee inquiry. That inquiry went some way towards setting the scene for laws that we passed through this place recently, the so-called shield laws for journalists. I think that committee played a role in highlighting the need to provide protection for journalists for their sources.

I was also a member of the Select Committee into the Appropriateness of Powers and Penalties for Breach of Parliamentary Privilege and Contempts of Parliament, along with Hon Norman Moore, I seem to remember, from November 2008 to June 2009. This committee inquired into the appropriateness of the powers and penalties provided for in the Parliamentary Privileges Act 1891 and the Criminal Code in respect of breaches of parliamentary privilege and contempts of Parliament. The recommendations of that committee have yet to be implemented. I do not know whether any of the recommendations have been implemented; I think not. That does concern me. It is often the case that the momentum is there with a select committee and the tabling of the report, but the actual carriage of the recommendations through this place stalls, for various reasons. That really is a business that should be sorted out, because it is only a matter of time before another circumstance will arise in which the Parliament will come under scrutiny, and potentially criticism, for having such limited options to deal with matters of contempt. We cannot brush it back under the carpet. We need to address that issue, and I would encourage members of this incoming Parliament to look at that report. My recollection is that it was a unanimous report. I do not think there was any dissent from the recommendations of that committee.

Hon Norman Moore: I agree with you entirely.

Hon GIZ WATSON: So hopefully there will be broad support for the changes that are proposed. It just will require the time of the chamber to put them through.

I was also a co-opted member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges from June 2005 to November 2012. I would like to note, as others I think have, the particularly successful review and adoption of the new standing orders by the Legislative Council. That was a long process—again I am looking at Hon Norman Moore and Hon Sue Ellery—and many hours were spent discussing the standing orders, as probably should be the case. It was a long, exacting and often tortuous process, over probably two years, to achieve that end. I think that most normal people would find much of the standing orders a bit esoteric, but they are the rules by which we operate in this place. That review of the standing orders has resulted in clearer rules, and in non-

gendered and contemporary language, which some of us worked very hard for. I have enjoyed being part of that committee to deal with, I guess, the internal workings of the Parliament and some of the challenges that we have in terms of governing ourselves.

Finally, in my committee work I have particularly enjoyed chairing the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations from June 2005 to November 2012. I would like to particularly thank my most recent fellow members of this committee. First, I thank my deputy chair, Hon Phil Gardiner, who was always an excellent deputy. I knew that if for some reason I could not be there, he would step straight into the breach. Actually, I must mention a couple of things that arose. I would come back from not being at a particular meeting, and suddenly there was going to be an inquiry into something, or there was something controversial, and I would think, “Gee; that seemed to happen when Hon Phil Gardiner was in the chair a couple of times”. You have done an excellent job, Hon Phil Gardiner, and I enormously enjoyed working with you. You have contributed an extraordinary amount to this Parliament in the short time that you have been a member of this place, and I appreciate your capacity to have an open mind, because that is very important, and also your capacity for hard work on that particular hardworking committee.

Hon Liz Behjat was also a member of that committee. It was not necessarily an easy job to be the only government member on a non-government dominated committee that was constantly prodding the state’s finances. But, Hon Liz Behjat, I have really enjoyed working with you on that committee, and I appreciate your fair play in that role and the fact that you truly operated as a parliamentarian, because one of the good things about committees is that hopefully we can take our party political hats at least half off in the work that we do there.

I also thank Hon Ljiljana Ravlich, an absolute stalwart, who always does her homework and always has been up since four o’clock in the morning writing the necessary questions to slowly grill any public servant who dares walk through the door—legendary—and also Hon Ken Travers, who does excellent work and has a fantastic knowledge of state finances. Of all the committees that I worked on, this was the one on which I thought we finally got all of that combination working well.

Hon Ken Travers: With your good leadership!

Hon GIZ WATSON: Thank you; I appreciate that. So I say thank you very much to the excellent and hardworking committee members for putting in enormous hours and dedication, for their support for me as chair, and also, dare I say, for occasionally having some fun.

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich: Very rare!

Hon GIZ WATSON: That is not true, honourable member! I will tell members a story, then, because the member has just made me think about it. There was an occasion when the committee came back together for the first time after the summer break, and there was a spontaneous outbreak of hugging. I did not initiate it, which was actually quite unusual, but it was lovely to see, to the extent that the staff felt that they were missing out, so we actually had to include them as well. That is an indication of what can be achieved in a parliamentary committee with a little bit of fun.

I want to particularly pay tribute to the staff of the committee, because, of course, all this committee work cannot be done without a huge contribution from the committee staff. I pay tribute to all the committee staff. They do a very professional and extraordinary job. I think I have worked in various committees, both historically and currently, with practically every committee staffer, and there are too many to thank individually. But I would particularly like to thank the staff members who have supported the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations: Lisa Peterson, Carolyn Malouf, Renae Jewell, Samantha Parsons and Steve Hales. They have done an excellent job.

I now want to go onto the bits that need a bit more work. At the top of the list of unfinished business is responding to climate change. I wish I could leave this place secure in the knowledge that this government, and indeed this Parliament, is working to address climate change—cutting our carbon emissions, mitigating the impact of carbon pollution and adapting to a dryer climate. But sadly this is not the case. Accelerating climate change and reducing rainfall is upon us now. The south west of Western Australia is drying. We can see the changes occurring before our eyes in the south west, with significant die off, across the landscape, of mature eucalypts and other species—flooded gums, marri, jarrah and peppermint. We only have to drive through that area to see it. According to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, rainfall in the south west has already decreased 15 per cent since 1975. Stream flow has decreased by about 45 per cent. CSIRO’s climate modelling predicts that the south west will get hotter and drier again by 2030, the most likely range being an additional seven to 14 per cent decline in rainfall. Not only is the drying climate already impacting on the health of our forests, agricultural land, wetlands and threatened species, it will increasingly impact on human health and wellbeing.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has confirmed that Australia just had its hottest summer on record. Perth has just experienced its hottest April on record. Alarm bells should be ringing as we note that the Bureau of Meteorology has had to add two new colours—deep purple and pink—to its interactive weather forecasting chart. Its temperature range had previously gone up to only 50 degrees, now it extends to 54 degrees. David Jones, the head of the bureau’s climate monitoring and prediction unit, is reported as saying that the scale has just been increased today and he anticipates it is because the forecast coming from the bureau’s model is showing temperatures in excess of 50 degrees. The Australian Climate Commission recently acknowledged that Australia’s recent “angry summer” was worsened by climate change. Penny Whetton, senior principal research scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation recently said that such record temperatures will become the new normal in 40 years, as we are facing five degrees of warming by 2070 unless we significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Every major international institution, including most recently the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, tells us that exceeding two degrees of warming will cause unprecedented human suffering.

The response by this state government has been to ignore and downplay the changes and threats. Despite WA being a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions this government says response to climate change is a federal matter. On top of that, successive governments have invested in the refurbishment of the Muja coal power stations, an outrageous waste of money. Originally costed at \$150 million, it now stands at more than \$250 million and rising, with no completion date or final cost—more than \$250 million squandered on nineteenth century technology and polluting coal. What would \$250 million-plus have bought in clean energy?

Nationally, the latest clean energy index report tells a story of rising emissions and simultaneously falling electricity consumption across Australia. The key driver of increased emissions is growth in consumption of fuels, particularly bulk fuel for mining and aviation. However, output from coal-fired power stations is down and being squeezed out by the uptake of renewable energy and natural gas. The weaker demand for electricity, together with the shift to cleaner fuels, which has been noticeable over at least the last four years, largely explains the continuing fall in electricity-related greenhouse gas emissions. Perth households are leading the way with the installation of roof-top solar panels and the CSIRO tells us that wave power alone could meet Australia’s electricity needs five times over. The Australian Energy Market Operator also has recently found that it is technically feasible and affordable to run the national electricity market with 100 per cent renewable energy. The AEMO’s analysis identified that concentrating solar thermal power—technology the Greens have been championing, particularly in this last election—with molten salt storage is a key enabling technology as its thermal energy storage provides reliable around-the-clock power. What is lacking is the political leadership to make these renewable options reality. The lack of interest and commitment on this critical issue is astounding; it is inaction that we will all rue. This is an area in which being visionary and being practical are the same thing, and I implore this and future governments to immediately embrace this challenge.

The next issue I want to mention is biodiversity protection. We are consistently failing in our international obligation to protect WA’s unique plants and animals. In Western Australia there are 419 plants and 233 animals listed as “likely to become extinct or rare and therefore in need of special protection”. There are 21 ecological communities listed as “critically endangered”, 17 as “endangered”, 28 as “vulnerable” and three as “presumed destroyed” in the Threatened Species and Ecological Communities database. Only 20 per cent of Western Australia’s biological subregions meet the objective of 15 per cent or more reserved and 11 per cent of the subregions do not contain any formal reserved areas.

This is why, among other reasons, I introduced the Biodiversity Legislation (Priority Reforms) Bill 2012 to update the antiquated Wildlife Protection Act. Unfortunately, the bill lapsed but not before the government gave a commitment to introduce legislation of its own. I note that the opposition did the same. I urge the electorate to hold this government accountable to provide world-class biodiversity conservation legislation fitting for our internationally significant flora and fauna.

It is also worth noting that another piece of legislation that I introduced into this place was legislation to protect areas such as Margaret River from coalmining. Again, that was legislation that did not gain the support of other parties in this place. But I flag that that issue will not go away either. The question of the conflicting land use between things like coalmining and bauxite mining and, indeed, the potential impact of fracking in the state will see these issues arise in various communities again before too long. As much as I appreciate that it has been taken up by this government as a policy position, it is a bit like the uranium mining situation, easily changed by the stroke of a pen, a change of minister or a changed policy position. I am suggesting that somebody else might like to look at how we provide legislative protection, particularly for prime agricultural land in this state, and give the community a voice in determining what land use they want in their area.

The next issue I want to touch on is sustainable agriculture. I note the recent heightened attention from the Premier and the media to the state of agriculture in WA, and not before time. The viability of traditional farming practices is under sustained pressure from the high value of the Australian dollar and reliance on export earnings,

increasing costs, pressure from the giant retailers, continuing degradation and loss of fragile soils from erosion, salt and acidity, and reduced and more erratic rainfall. I note that the Premier said he could not make it rain. In fact, he is wrong. Clouds like trees, and he could do a lot to recreate the conditions that generate precipitation by refunding landcare work to reduce soil degradation and salinity and restore belts of native vegetation. New carbon farming and biodiversity initiatives also have the potential to diversify and supplement farm incomes but have been flatly rejected by the state government. As the Centre for Policy Development's recent paper "Farming Smarter, Not Harder: Securing our agricultural economy" states —

Without action to adapt to more variable and extreme weather, by 2050 Australia could lose \$6.5 billion per year in wheat, beef, mutton, lamb and dairy production.

With my background in environmental management I would never have guessed how much of my energy over the past 16 years would go into criminal justice matters! In the bidding wars between the other parties over who can be toughest on crime—I note from the motion debated earlier today that perhaps a truce has been called, which is an excellent sign—we have often been the only voice for rigorous scrutiny and an evidence-based, compassionate approach to this complex area of policy.

In December 2011 the outgoing president of the Law Society of Western Australia, Hylton Quail, wrote the following in *Brief* magazine —

Over the decade and a half that I have been involved in considering parliamentary criminal bills on behalf of the Society, most of them have promised 'tougher' laws in what seems to be a never-ending 'law and order' auction. As these initiatives are often perceived as electorally popular, they have rarely been subjected to close parliamentary scrutiny by major parties other than the Greens. Yet, with each passing year these new laws change the nature of our essential liberal democracy.

I am heartened that there is renewed interest in justice reinvestment. Taking a cooperative approach across all departments—education, health, housing, social welfare and justice—to address the causes of crime, is a far more just, sensible, compassionate and economical approach to criminal justice. Western Australia incarcerates people at twice the rate South Australia does, and I would like to think Western Australians are sick of forever throwing money at endlessly enlarging our prison capacity. Unfortunately, people are easily led by populist rhetoric geared to play on their fears, and I hope the current government might rise above this and provide some true leadership on this issue. On that note I thank Hon Simon O'Brien for his motion today, which points in that direction.

Throughout my time in Parliament I have strongly advocated for an alternative approach to reducing the scandalous rate of imprisonment of the custodians of this country, Aboriginal Western Australians. I have also called many times for the implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which have been gathering dust for 22 years. We have been reminded of the failure to act on these recommendations and the faults in a privatised custodial service by further outrages such as the wholly preventable death of Aboriginal elder Mr Ward in the back of a scorching transport vehicle owned by the state and run by the international prison corporation G4S.

That was after there had been a number of warnings about the condition of transport vehicles. I sounded the alarm by advising the house, well before Mr Ward's death, of an incident at Sandfire where a transport vehicle had overheated while Aboriginal prisoners were still inside it. This information had been provided to me by an executive member of the Aboriginal Legal Service. While I will watch with interest the approach within prisons of the new Minister for Corrective Services, there is an ongoing urgent need to stop people going into prison unless it is really warranted. Increasingly, evidence suggests that imprisonment does not deter, and results in worse behaviour than the behaviour that was actually the cause of the sentence. This fact has been highlighted numerous times—in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report, in the latest report of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, and in the evidence of criminologists including Professor Richard Harding, Professor Neil Morgan and Associate Professor David Indermaur.

Another area that still needs work is the issue of violence against women. Over the years, I have used my position here to be a voice for women and children affected by domestic violence. It is a depressing fact that women continue to be assaulted and killed within their homes, most frequently by family members or partners; 85 per cent of the victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence are women; and it is still the case, in a wealthy community like ours, that every day, half of the women and children who apply for refuge are turned away due to a lack of safe accommodation—the most basic of human needs. This has to change. I was pleased to play a small part in the amendments to the restraining orders legislation, in particular ensuring that the voices of those people who work at the coalface of this difficult issue were heard and reflected in the legislation.

Another significant area in which Western Australian laws were made antiquated and dangerously inconsistent is the area of sex work. I was proud to provide leadership in the push to decriminalise sex work in Western

Australia. In 2008 this Parliament passed legislation that effectively decriminalised prostitution, but the legislation was never proclaimed and lapsed under the incoming Liberal–National government. It is entirely predictable that any renewed push by this government to further criminalise sex work, as has occurred in Queensland and Victoria, will result in the sector being pushed further underground and into the arms of organised crime. One of the consequences will certainly be poorer public health outcomes and greater safety risks for sex workers. Meanwhile, Western Australia’s unofficial containment policy continues in some form, despite the fact that it was supposedly officially abandoned and despite the fact that it has been the subject of adverse comments and criticism due to its lack of clarity, the absence of legislative foundation and the potential to afford opportunities for corruption. The police have retained a unit within the organised crime division of WA Police that is responsible for liaising with operators and workers at sexual service premises. This unit maintains a database of sex workers, despite the fact that it is not an offence to be a sex worker in Western Australia, and that these people have not committed any crime. It is highly inappropriate, to say the least, for WA Police to retain this database—a permanent potential blackmail list—and to continue the unit’s practice of contacting and obtaining the identity of sex workers and other information. In my view, sex workers should have the same right to privacy as anybody else.

I leave troubled by the lack of transparency around the role of private donations and the influence this may have on policy and politics in Western Australia. When I say “donations”, I mean not only gifts, but also fees paid for service—for example, political fundraisers where purchasers receive ministerial contact in return for the cost of a seat. In WA, mining company donations to the WA Liberal Party went from less than \$100 000 in total in the mid-2000s to more than \$1.2 million in 2010–11, forming around one dollar in five of the party’s revenue. There is a serious question to be answered about the influence of such donations on the Liberal–National government. I am also troubled by the vast inequality in electoral spending and the effect this has on our democracy. It is becoming harder and harder for political parties that decline the donations—and the influence—of corporations to compete in election campaigns. The Greens will continue to advocate for a cap on election expenditure to provide a more level playing field.

The Legislative Council and its members in my view need to remain vigilant in protecting the powers and privileges of this place. Over my time here I have been deeply embroiled in understanding the history and ongoing role of the parliamentary system. While not, of course, perfect, the Legislative Council continues to play a vital role on behalf of all Western Australians by holding inquiries, scrutinising the operations of departments, working with parliamentary commissioners, interrogating the budget, accessing information withheld from the community and holding the government to account. Again, a lot of this work gets done within the committee system. It is of grave concern that the last Parliament saw a number of challenges arising in a number of committees.

During my time here there have been a number of challenges to the powers of the Legislative Council from either overzealous corporations—or their legal counsels—paid lobbyists and bodies such as the Corruption and Crime Commission. I am proud to have played some part in defending the Legislative Council, often in difficult circumstances. I believe the powers of the Legislative Council remain intact, but vigilance will always be required to maintain those powers.

I want to also stress the important role of independent commissions in this state. The Ombudsman, the Auditor General, the Commissioner for Children and Young people, the Inspector of Custodial Services and the Equal Opportunity Commissioner all provide important advocacy, advice and oversight in their particular areas.

Finally, some thank-yous. I have enjoyed working with, and having been hugely supported by, my friends in the Greens; I am delighted to see many of them up there in the public gallery, and thank you very much for joining us this afternoon. They are too numerous to name, but I want to say that I love the Greens, I love the party and I love our commitment to the values of consensus and nonviolence, our commitment to social justice and the environment, and our commitment to working closely with the community. I hope I have been able to demonstrate some of the values of my party in my work here. I am deeply indebted to all the staff who have supported me in my work. I will start firstly with the staff here at Parliament—the chamber staff in particular, who I probably see more often than members of my own family and who feel like members of my family! Thank you for the friendly, professional and always timely assistance that you have provided over the years I have been here. I particularly want to thank Brian for his advice on my cricketing skills from time to time, when we had occasion to be playing the media. My skills did need some work, so thank you, Brian! I also thank the Clerk, Malcolm Peacock, for your support and advice and the professional work that you do on behalf of the people of Western Australia. I have valued it greatly. On that note, I also acknowledge the support and advice of two former Clerks, Mia Betjeman, and, in particular, Laurie Marquet, who was Clerk when I first started here. He was always a source of information and advice, whether it was the advice I was actually looking for or some other bit of useful information about the history of the separation of powers, or the French Revolution! Usually, if I went for a five-minute piece of advice in Laurie’s office, I would emerge an hour later thinking, “I must

remember all that; it was probably really important!” Seriously, I learnt a lot and I know my colleagues at the time, Hon Chrissie Sharp and Hon Jim Scott, also benefited from Laurie’s advice, and we miss him.

As I have already mentioned, the committee staff do an extraordinary job. More broadly, the staff of the dining room, the telephonists—everybody in this place—provide the most extraordinary service in a very professional way; I cannot fault the support that is offered to members of Parliament here. It has been a delight, and I will miss all of you very much—particularly some of the dining staff who, again, I feel are part of my family: Deb, Steve, Vince and Ozzie. They will be greatly missed, and I will have to come back and have lunch just to see them. I want to thank the many friends I have made in this place from all the other political parties I have worked with here. I have learnt from them and disagreed with them and we still remain friends. I note particularly the formidable parliamentarians such as Hon Norman Moore, whom I respect for his extraordinary and tenacious contribution and his honourable conduct. I think I have said this before, but when Hon Norman Moore gives his word, that is what will happen. I might not always like it, but he has been consistent. I respect the amount of work that it must I respect the amount of work that must have been done by someone who has been in this place for as long as you have, Hon Norman Moore. I wish you all the best for some more time to do other things. I also note other leaders from other political parties with whom I have enjoyed working. I did some committee work with Hon Murray Criddle. He left very suddenly from this place. I certainly enjoyed working with Hon Murray Criddle. Hon Kim Chance was the previous Leader of the Labor Party in this place. We also spent many, many hours working together. There are many other members of the Labor Party, in particular, whom I have worked closely with over many years. I of course need to particularly note the honourable comrade, Hon Sue Ellery, who I think after many years of protesting might now understand the value of a good hug.

Hon Sue Ellery: No!

Hon GIZ WATSON: She still denies it! Thank you, friends, for the work we have done together. I also thank Hon Adele Farina. We have talked about a lot of issues together, particularly in the area of criminal justice. I valued her advice and discussions. She does extraordinary work on behalf of her constituents.

I also want to thank, of course, my Greens parliamentary colleagues for their support and wisdom, not just the ones here in the state Parliament but also those who have gone before. In particular, I note the former Senator Jo Vallentine who has kindly joined us here this afternoon. Jo has been an inspiration and a long-term friend of mine for many decades. Thank you, Jo, for the leadership you have shown. I also thank former Senator Christabel Chamarette, and Senator Dee Margetts, who also, of course, was here as a member for Agricultural Region for a term. Senators Rachel Siewert and Scott Ludlam continue to do a great job in the federal Parliament. I wanted to acknowledge our pioneering Green in this place, Hon Jim Scott, who came into this place as the first Green. It must have been a tough gig, but he did a great job. To former members Hon Chrissy Sharp and Hon Paul Llewellyn, who represented the south west and in whose footsteps I hoped to follow but did not quite get there, you both did excellent work in this place. I also thank my colleagues here. I think to the detriment of the Parliament and public life, Hon Alison Xamon will not be continuing here. Alison has done an extraordinary amount of work in this place. She understood straightaway the opportunities that arose by being a parliamentarian. Her capacity to get her head around an issue or a bill and to produce excellent contributions to debates here has been noted by many people. I think it is a sad loss that Alison will not continue here. I wanted to acknowledge her work in a number of areas. She has worked very closely with mental health advocates and has earned their respect, as she deserves. In juvenile justice she was always right at my heels, waiting to take my portfolio and to debate juvenile justice issues. That is great; that is keen. She has been a very fine advocate. Her passion for workers’ rights included raising the issue of industrial manslaughter in this place. She has also made contributions in the area of urban bushland, has raised concerns about fracking in this state and more generally has spoken about critical issues around water. Thank you, Alison; you have done a great job and I wish you all the best in whatever you do next. To Lynn and Robin, who will carry on in this place and carry the Green vision forward, I wish you all the very best; I am sure you will do a great job. I look forward to watching your work and progress from somewhere else.

Finally, I want to give my heartfelt thanks to my electorate staff, who have done extraordinary things over the years. My first electorate officer was a woman called Carole Hutchinson. Previous to working for me she worked for Fred Chaney and then worked for Reg Davies as a then independent member in this place. It was fantastic to have Carole working with me in that first term in Parliament. Even though I thought it was interesting that this person was coming from, in effect, the conservative side of politics, when I asked her what she thought her political leanings were, she thought about it for a minute and said, “I think I’m a Marxist.” That was a perfect fit! Carole was an excellent asset to me and to the party in that she knew how the Parliament worked, so I was able to land on my feet. I thank her enormously for what she was able to contribute. At that time my research officer was Hon Robin Chapple, so thank you, Robin, in that capacity as well.

I want to thank and acknowledge Trish Cowcher, who job-shared the position of electorate officer for eight years. She was then poached to go and work with Senator Scott Ludlam. She does not claim that she was poached, but I think it was definitely poaching! Sue Hall also worked for me for eight years and then went on to work for Hon Lynn MacLaren.

My most recent staff have been extraordinary. If anybody has commented on the amount of detail and research that has gone into some of my contributions in this place, that has been the work of two extraordinary researchers, Irma Lachmund and Tonia Brajcich, who are both legally qualified and are both sharp, capable, energetic, indefatigable and extraordinary. I am going to miss you both very much, because we were a great team. Thank you.

Part of that team also, of course, was Nina Jurak, who has been my electorate officer. Nina has been an extraordinary anchor for our office. She is always ready to do the utmost and was always ready with a joke when we were feeling a bit flat, so thank you, Nina. Members will know in their own work how much constituent work gets done by our officers without us necessarily seeing it happening. There have been many times when I have got feedback about the service provided by my staff in my office, which has been fantastic. I have been told by people that they had tried every other political office and that mine was the only office that actually took on their issue, had a look at it and provided some resolution for them. Thank you, team, and all the best for whatever happens next.

I also acknowledge and thank Cameron Poustie, who worked in the last Parliament for all Greens members and assisted us with the legislative program. Cameron made an extraordinary contribution and I am very sorry that he is not now going to be a member for North Metropolitan Region, because he gave it a good crack. Thank you, Cameron.

I wanted to also acknowledge some of the many relief and temporary staff I have had in my office from time to time over the past 16 years, as members can imagine. I want to emphasise in particular a number of young women who have worked in my office. Some of these young women started out by doing an internship and then did some work in my office, and they have gone on to be and will be extraordinary contributors in the political landscape. Most recently Jess Panegyres did a fantastic job working on forest-related matters. She is a brilliant young woman who will go far. I am sorry that she has been poached and gone off to Sydney, but I am sure she will have a great future. Roxanne Moore also did an internship with me in my office. She has had a fantastic career. She wrote an internship for me on the need for a judicial commission in the states—something I meant to mention in my speech. I have put that on the agenda for work still to be done in dealing with the criticisms that happen from time to time about the role of the judiciary. New South Wales has an excellent system of a judicial commission, and it is long overdue to have something like that here. Indeed, the former Attorney General thought it was a good idea too but probably not a high enough priority. Rox did that particular report and she went on to work for the Chief Justice. Now she is just about to go to America as a Fulbright scholar, so best of luck to her. Amy Green also did fantastic research for me and will go on to great things, and also Jess McColl, who worked in my office. My partner, June, did a bit of talent spotting at the University of Western Australia and engaged her in Greens politics. She now has very high-powered job working with Senator Rachel Siewert. It is great to see young women get involved in these important issues and the politics of the day.

I want to acknowledge you, Mr President, in terms of your role and what you have provided in this place in the last Parliament. You are an excellent President—having experienced a number of them, which is no criticism of the other ones. Your commitment to a consensus approach is excellent and this Legislative Council is in safe hands with you in the Chair and I acknowledge the work that you do.

My last thank you is to my family. “Hi” to Mum and Dad who are watching me on the screen in Albany, if they have worked out the technology—I hope they did. They may be in their 80s but they can still work the technology, which is pretty good. They have been a constant source of support and inspiration to me. They remain politically active and interested and are forever giving the member for Albany a list of things that he needs to do. The member for Albany has said to me, “I saw your mum the other day. She still wants me to do this.” They remain very engaged in the political process and were active in the recent election campaign even at the age of 87 years, so thank you very much.

Finally to my partner, June, who has put up with me working ridiculously long hours and being preoccupied with public matters for 16 years. She has been an invaluable source of advice, support and, to top it all off, an excellent campaign manager. I first met June when she was the campaign manager in 1990 for my first campaign when I ran for the seat of Forrest in the south west; I was so impressed that the rest is history. Thank you, June. Perhaps we can have some time to do other things now rather than being preoccupied with Parliament. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]