

In conclusion, I should like to thank my family; my wife Dawn, and my three sons, Matthew, Adam and Nicholas who have supported me in my quest to enter Parliament. I wish to thank my Legislative Assembly colleagues, Robin Cooper, Alan Brown, Rob Maclellan and Ron Wells, who have all been ready to offer advice and support during the election campaign and before, and their respective campaign chairmen who saw to it that we were all working as a team.

A special thanks must go to the grassroot members of the Liberal Party, including those from my own branch of Balnarring-Merricks, who at every election do the mundane tasks that must be done.

Finally, I thank all of the people of South Eastern Province for the trust that they have placed in me to represent them in the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Victoria.

I look forward to making a positive and worthwhile contribution to Parliament and to the Kennett Liberal team.

The Hon. LICIA KOKOCINSKI (Melbourne West Province)—Firstly, I congratulate you, Mr President, on your election, and I endorse the Governor's Speech. On behalf of the Australian Labor Party, I was elected to the Legislative Council to represent Melbourne West Province. Following the pomp and ceremony of today's proceedings, it is easy to forget that the electors of Melbourne West did not vote for me personally, but voted for a representative of the Labor Party. If it had not been me, it would have been somebody else from the Labor Party. I do not say that I had no personal following, but I am here as a Labor representative. Keeping that fact clearly in my mind, I shall speak as a Labor representative of a solid Labor area. The voters have a clear expectation of Labor to deliver in that area.

The area I represent covers approximately 2000 square kilometres and has approximately 110 000 enrolled voters. It has residents who earn less than the average income for the Melbourne statistical division, and has more than 20 per cent of its constituents living on welfare benefits. The area has growing pockets of elderly people, with a great urban sprawl which most likely contains the growth for the future of the metropolitan area over the next five to ten years.

The voters' educational level is lower than for the rest of Melbourne, as is the level of employment and job status. It also has within its boundaries some of the largest and most wealth producing industries in Victoria, such as petrochemical plants and many other industries. More often than not the wealth that is generated in the area leaves the district and does not return.

Melbourne West Province is also characterised by a high ethnic population. I shall spend some time concentrating on this area. Although 33 per cent of the population were technically born overseas, the real extent of the ethnic population is that approximately 45 per cent, and in some places 50 per cent, were either born in non-English speaking countries or were born here, but had parents born overseas.

Multiculturalism is a fact of life in the western suburbs as it is in other areas of Melbourne. Consequently, the area has special needs and considerations, and I refer honourable members to the former Minister for Ethnic Affairs, Mr Spyker, when he enunciated Labor's policy in this field.

Multiculturalism to me is not about food, clothes and dancing; it is about learning from other people from different backgrounds. It also means the slow melding of the different cultures in this country over many years to create a different Australia. As we progress into the next century, we will have a different Australia from what was created by the first arrivals.

To me, it means Australians and others taking the best from different cultures. Whether it is in attitudes to the family unit, respect for authority or in the different ways of handling problems, multiculturalism also recognises that one cannot change people completely. We now recognise the enormous harm done to individuals when Australia followed an assimilationist policy.

What the Labor Party recognises is that people from different nations retain much of their earlier cultures and their way of thinking, but also have specific and identifiable difficulties living in Australia. Labor's policies are clearly targeted to assist those people and have various policies in place. The Home and Community Care Program—HACC—is one such program that can be targeted to our elderly and house-bound migrants. Therefore, local government is well placed to handle many programs. One of the initiatives for the ethnic community is the development of multicultural centres and the development of neighbourhood houses. One popular program is the establishment of multicultural clubs through the centres, and with the ageing of the ethnic community the centres will be used by those elderly people.

Local governments in my area employ ethnic services liaison officers—and this is encouraged by the Labor government—to ensure that the services supplied not only are relevant to the ethnic communities, but also are responsive to their needs. The trick is to ensure that these positions are not merely token positions, as they can so easily become, where a person can just sit in an office and be called an ethnic liaison officer and everybody thinks that person is doing his or her bit, but that is not the case. As a Legislative Council member whose electorate includes five municipalities, my job is to ensure that those officers do their job and that they are accountable to their ethnic communities and to their councils.

Young people from ethnic backgrounds often have various problems. I heard one liaison officer say that the youth worker said, "Well, they speak English, so they don't have any problems". That was crass. It is often assumed that because one speaks English one can cope with the problems of living. I know from my own experience, because I was not born in Australia, that young people have problems, and it is like straddling a barbed-wire fence; they straddle two cultures and two identifications and find difficulty in becoming fully accepted in either. I had that experience as a child.

It is essential to continue the expansion of English classes for both newer and older migrants. In particular, it is necessary to continue the on-the-job classes, classes which the government is committed to expanding.

The expansion of the neighbourhood housing project will give migrant communities the opportunity of developing English classes. As part of programs for those who are not in the paid work force, English learned in the home taught by voluntary tutors can break down the isolation caused by a lack of English. In particular, that is the case with women who have small children. Those women find it very difficult to get out of their homes because, in many instances, they do not have the money to get out, they speak little English and they have small children to look after. The home tutoring scheme has been a successful way of breaking down that isolation—as are the neighbourhood houses.

My pledge to the ethnic communities of the Province of Melbourne West is that not only will I represent them in the House but also I shall bring to the attention of the government the issues which arise from time to time and which require action.

I have mentioned some characteristics of the western suburbs. Recently I read through newspaper clippings on the western suburbs which are kept in the library. What depressing reading that was! Honourable members will be aware of the depressing problems of the western suburbs: high rates of sickness; lower rates of school retention;

lower levels of employment qualifications; high rates of occupational disease and accidents; pollution of the waterways and of the environment; and dirty industries. The list is endless, and the file is fat!

I am convinced that the people whom I represent have a government that is prepared to take action on those problems; and great strides have been made in the area of conservation because of action taken by the former Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, who was also my predecessor in the House.

I worked closely with the honourable member for Williamstown during the election campaign. I pay tribute to her, because not only did I learn a good deal about conservation but also I learned how to handle myself in public, particularly in the western suburbs. I am grateful for the opportunity I had of working closely with her in the election campaign.

The western suburbs have some beautiful natural attributes; and many of them have been enhanced as a result of the work of the honourable member for Williamstown. Also, the Western Region Commission has gone to great lengths to both record and prioritise the local, State, national and international significance of those attributes. They must be protected; and many people in the area have fought to ensure their protection. In particular, I am referring to the foreshore surrounding Williamstown marina.

Progress has also been made in the western suburbs in the area of health. There has been a large expansion of health services to the western suburbs, an achievement for which the Minister for Health is largely responsible. Although I am not a health practitioner, I have had experience of the health problems of the western suburbs because of my involvement in the District Health Council program.

I congratulate the members of the Western Region Commission for the work they have done. Recently they published a pamphlet called "*The Way Ahead*", which is an honest account of the attributes, both good and bad, of the western suburbs. It goes one step further. The publication lists the means by which the positive attributes of the western suburbs can be strengthened, as well as listing strategies to resolve the problems. I urge all honourable members to read that publication. I have endorsed the strategies of the Western Region Commission; and I have signalled my intention to assist the commission to implement its strategies.

In representing Melbourne West province, I intend to be responsible to and accessible to my constituents to assist them in raising their standard of living. I shall play my part in making the western suburbs a good place in which to live, suburbs of which they can be proud and suburbs in which their children will want to live. Labor government is the most appropriate catalyst for such action.

The Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Central Highlands Province)—Mr President, I thank you for the opportunity of making my maiden speech during debate on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech at the opening of the first session of the 51st Parliament.

I look forward to serving with the members of the Chamber. I am delighted to have the opportunity of congratulating you, Mr President, on your election and I look forward to working in the House under your guidance. Your knowledge of Parliamentary procedure is such that all honourable members will learn a great deal. I shall summarise what I have said about you by quoting the words of Lord Chesterfield:

Politicians neither love nor hate . . . interest, not sentiment directs them.

It is with some apprehension and humility that I address the House, because I am fully aware that I do not have the experience of the more senior members of the