

New role provides historic links to Sir David Brand



Putting pen to paper at Sir David's desk.

WHEN I was appointed Secretary to the Parliamentary Liberal Party I was delighted to find myself sitting at an historic desk presented by grateful Greenough constituents to former Premier Sir David Brand.

The magnificent hand-crafted desk was gifted in recognition of Sir David's services to the local community, and is made of carefully selected timbers from the district.

Peter Dowding replaced it with a contemporary desk when he became Premier. Since then it has been used at Parliament House by a succession of Secretaries to the Parliamentary Liberal Party, including the immediate past Secretary Hon Ray Halligan and his predecessor Hon Bill Stretch.

Sir David Brand has been an inspiration to many Members of Parliament, and has lived on in the fond memories of the people of Western Australia because of his hard work and integrity. He has set a high standard for anyone who puts pen to paper at 'his' desk.

The desk has special significance to me given that my electorate office is in Geraldton-Greenough, and it pleases me to provide some historic continuity to the gift.

An even bigger Liberal presence in Geraldton

ONE OF my commitments at pre-selection was to maintain my electorate office in Geraldton to strengthen the Liberal presence.

Troy Buswell opened my new office, which replaced much smaller premises. It has a strong street profile and is centrally located for easy contact.

The old Druids Hall facade has been retained and provides a generational link to local history.

I travel to Geraldton regularly, have developed a close working relationship with the local media, and work cooperatively with Ian Blayney MLA to ensure that the Liberal message is heard.

Some of the issues which have come across my desk include extensive law and justice matters related to the manslaughter of Yalgoo grazier Bill Rowe, the call for new premises for the Meekatharra School of the Air, improvements to police radio communications, duty exemption for fishing licence transfers, and changes to fisheries management.

However, I have another electorate office which is just as important – the bush. I believe it is essential for regional MPs to ‘keep their feet on the ground’ and wear a bit of dust. Check out my promised website (and the full story on the opposite page) to



see some of my travels including the upgrading of the Bindi Bindi/Walebing Road, the Moora floods reunion, a visit to Narrogin with Communities Minister Robyn McSweeney, a new home for old machinery in Northampton, and a crop risk meeting in Bruce Rock.

Whilst my air travel is usually limited to Skywest trips over red dirt and farmland, fishing is a strong component of my electorate so I put my hand in my own pocket to fund a flight to Brussels to the worldwide Seafood Expo. See the story below.

Talking WA lobster at world expo



With Fisheries Minister Norman Moore at Brussels Expo.

THE CONTINUED sustainability accreditation of the WA rock lobster industry will be decided by an organisation which met recently at a worldwide seafood Expo in Brussels.

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) was established in 1997 by the World Wildlife Fund and Unilever to use consumer buying pressure to encourage countries to protect their oceans from overfishing. MSC accredited products are available in 42 countries, making the label increasingly market-competitive.

Ten years ago the WA Rock Lobster Fishery was the first fishery in the world to be MSC accredited, and it was re-certified until November 2011. Over 20 additional fisheries are likely to complete for certification this year, with products worth an additional \$1 billion. In Australia, Coles and Woolworths are developing policies for procuring sustainable fish products.

The London-based WA Agent General Kerry Sanderson, Fisheries Minister Norman Moore and the Executive Director of the Fisheries Department officers also attended the Expo, along with senior officers of the WA Fishing Industry Council, and Basil Lenzo who represented the Geraldton Fishermen’s Co-op.

I was able to discuss trade restrictions for WA seafood in Europe with Dr Alan Thomas, the Australian Ambassador to the European Communities, Belgium, and Luxembourg. I also spoke with aquaculture specialist Dr Patrick Sargeloos (Ghent University) and Alistair Lane (Executive Director, European Aquaculture Society) regarding onshore and offshore aquaculture options for WA, and how we can learn from the European experience.

Pre-selection promises on track



With the Premier at the launch of the Agricultural Policy.



I WAS PLEASED to be preselected for my second term as a Member for the Agricultural Region, and I sincerely thank you for your support.

Key promises in my pre-selection speech have been honoured:

- I have maintained and strengthened the Liberal presence in Geraldton by opening my enlarged office – and kept four wheels on the ground (and two wings in the air) to make personal contact with my constituents across the Agricultural Region.
- I have designed and launched my friendly, magazine-style website (see below).
- My promised *Mid West and Wheatbelt Policy* was developed and submitted, but was not launched due to the snap election (further details below).
- I have maintained a strong Liberal country voice in the Parliament (see next page).
- My other commitment was to continue this newsletter. Given that the public has instant access to me through the website, my newsletters will now have a special branch focus. This edition was delayed until my website was launched and coincides with the start of the new term of the Legislative Council.

I look forward to continuing as a strong Liberal voice on behalf of the Agricultural Region.

Mid West & Wheatbelt Policy

PRIOR TO THE 2008 election I wrote to all the shires in the Mid West and Wheatbelt inviting them to contribute funding and development suggestions for consideration in the proposed Liberal Policy for those regions.

Thirteen shires provided detailed responses, and the issues raised by them were collated under shared concerns such as infrastructure, agriculture, health, education and policing. A comprehensive draft policy was developed using these responses as a hands-on guide, with specific real-life examples to illustrate need. However, Labor called the snap election before the Policy could be released.

A list of the collated shire responses – which ran to sixteen pages of condensed dot points – was then sent to Royalties for Regions Minister Brendon Grylls, to give him an overview of grass-roots Local Government and community needs in the Mid West and Wheatbelt. I was subsequently pleased to welcome the first of the Royalties for Regions funding allocations which totalled \$97,500,000 throughout Western Australia.



Ellis online

MY PROMISED website has now hit cyberspace and includes:

- A 'Hot Topics' site with the latest breaking news on government initiatives
- An 'Issues' site with friendly photo links to short magazine-style stories on electorate issues
- A 'Photo Gallery' with an overview of me out and about the region
- An 'Electorate' site with Agricultural Region details
- A 'Media' site with copies of my published articles

You can also visit the 'Newsletter' site, 'Parliament' site (with links to my speeches), a 'Links' site (to take short-cuts to the Liberal Party, the WA Electoral Commission, the WA Government, the Health Department and others), and a 'Contact' site to email for help or make comments. It is also a great way to keep branch members in touch with what I am doing - so I hope you will go to www.brianellis.com.au to see that I am indeed 'On Track'.



Homepage of website.

Making your voice heard in the Parliament

THE ELECTION results were a reassuring outcome for democracy in Western Australia.

Many people I spoke to were worried that former Minister Jim McGinty's so-called 'electoral reform' may have locked our State into a Labor government for all time. People in the bush were also concerned that their country voice would be lost.

Thanks to Mr McGinty, six Legislative Assembly seats were taken away from the country and eight extra seats were created in the city. The Lower House now has sixty nine city seats and only twenty six country seats.

It is a tribute to the Liberal Party, and an indication of the public disillusionment with years of Labor government, that we were able to pick up seats that Labor had expected to win.

Mr McGinty also intended to abolish two of the three country Regions in the Upper House. If Labor had retained government, and he had his way, only one third of the Upper House would have a country voice.

It is therefore with some relief that I was able to congratulate Hon Colin Barnett as Premier, and the Ministers who form the current Cabinet. It is also a pleasure to be speaking from the Government side of the chamber.

My contribution to parliamentary debate since the last newsletter includes speeches on issues such as GM crops, surrogacy, stem cells, rural labour shortages, regional electricity mismanagement, Geraldton Regional Hospital services, and fisheries management. At the time of publication I have prepared a speech on mandatory sentencing for assaults on police officers. I have also made several comprehensive speeches on regional services and issues through the Address in Reply after the opening of each Parliament, and Budget Reply speeches.

Up to the last election I kept the former Labor government accountable on matters including regional electricity supply, mining approval processes, abattoir facilities, police communication systems, Mid West support services for victims of crime, regional teacher shortages, and country mental health services.

You can track my speeches and parliamentary questions in full by going to my website www.brianellis.com.au

I have also served on several parliamentary committees. These include:

- Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations: (5 Dec 2007 – present) including writing the Minority Report on the Inquiry into Public Sector Expenditure (the "3% efficiency dividend").
- Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review (6 Nov 2008 - present (Elected as Deputy Chairman: 26 November 2008 - present.)

(NB: Membership of Standing Committees will be reviewed following the commencement of the New Legislative Council on 22 May 2009 and this information may have changed by publication date.)

