



Farewell and Thank you 3 December 2009

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders) (17:50): Standing here today, I think just how quickly the 16 years have gone. I vividly remember standing in this chamber shaking in my boots and feeling sick in the stomach when I had the honour of giving the first Address in Reply of the new Liberal government in 1993, which was my maiden speech as the member for Flinders. While I still have those butterfly feelings, I have not lost any of my determination to represent my wonderful constituents to the best of my ability. I am a strong Liberal, as I believe in the Liberal philosophy of private enterprise and individual responsibility, while caring for our environment and those people who cannot look after themselves. I believe that we cannot properly look after the people and the environment unless businesses are successful, employ people and pay taxes on their profits to do it with. I thank the Liberal Party for giving me this wonderful opportunity.

The vast Flinders electorate is awesome, and I feel privileged that I have been able to live and work there and represent the people of Eyre Peninsula in parliament. There are so many issues that have come through the office over these years that it would be impossible to mention them all but, at the end of the day, it all comes down to the people. They are the salt of the earth—creative and resilient, who during the 16 years have had some good times and some bad, and we have shared them together.

When I was first elected, we were mostly reliant on farming and fishing, but we have diversified well beyond these industries, with aquaculture and tourism leading the way. We are now poised to go another step by developing our minerals. Over the 16 years we have seen the boom of the aquaculture industries. We have gone ahead in leaps and bounds, in sea-mussel farms, land and sea-based abalone farms, kingfish farms and oyster farms in Ceduna, Smoky Bay, Streaky Bay, Franklin Harbour and, of course, Coffin Bay. We have world's best practice for tuna fishing and farming. Cleanseas at Arno Bay has been able to close the life cycle that will lead to the long-term sustainability of this species. Fishing industries, including prawns, crayfish, pilchards and a myriad of other scalefish species, have been developed and carefully managed so that our products are exported to the world and are world renowned.

Roads have been sealed, boat ramps built and jetties upgraded. Establishing the ferry service between Cowell and Wallaroo was a significant highlight, and I look forward to the service resuming as quickly as possible with a new purpose-built ferry, indigenous land agreements in place and road infrastructure realigned to allow the trucking industry to take advantage of it.

Tourism has gone from strength to strength as Australians and international visitors discover the magic of Eyre Peninsula—places the locals have known and valued. The cruise industry, I believe, will become a major part of this industry in the future.

I have been thrilled to see two major wind farms built and become operational at Cathedral Rocks and Mount Millar. As one of the best wind power sites in the world, the west coast of Eyre Peninsula is poised to further develop green power for the benefit of all Australians, with Jacob Cherian's 300 megawatt wind farm ready to go at Elliston to help provide the green power needed by our mining industries.

Water, however, continues to be the biggest blight on all the positive and exciting developments that have occurred on Eyre Peninsula, and I am disappointed that opportunities have been lost by SA Water and this government despite

millions of dollars being expended. I am hopeful that the next member may be able to see desalination plants established, which are necessary to ensure the long-term viability and prosperity of our region, with the further diversification of products and value adding before export, but that no desalination plant is ever built at Point Lowly on the Upper Spencer Gulf.

No member represents their electorate alone. I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues in parliament on both sides of the chamber and their staff, and all the other staff within this amazing building, who have been so kind and helpful to me—the parliamentary support staff, Hansard, library and building staff, the attendants, the computer and technical gurus and the cleaners. I also especially include the kitchen and serving staff who have helped me put on a kilogram of weight for every year I have been here. It is just as well that I am leaving.

I want to thank the departmental staff from all government departments, particularly those public servants who have helped to make some of my plans a reality—and they know who they are. Many of the questions in parliament, letters I have written (many addressed to ministers), submissions and speeches were intended for departmental officers and, while the responses I received may not have indicated success, subsequent actions often did.

All this information is available on my website which averaged around 30,000 hits per month for many years with amazing amounts of downloads. Last month the top 10 downloads included 98 that were submissions and letters about the water issue on Eyre Peninsula—which is an indication of the concern people have about our water resources.

I especially give my thanks and my love to those who have supported me through thick and thin in good and not so good health: my husband of 41 years—I cannot beat Rory with all the adjectives, but I certainly would not be in this place without Geoff—my brother, John, my daughters, Susan and Katrina, and her husband, Shaun, Liberal branch members, friends (who have been forever steadfast in their support) and my wonderful communities across the Eyre Peninsula.

I thank my former staff and trainees, but most particularly I thank the current Flinders team—a dynamic and diverse bunch ranging in age from 21 to 78 years of age. Angela, Julie, Perry, Daphne, Bel, Melanie and Penny will assist me in packing up the filing system that has extended to 92 drawers and 88 boxes—not a bad effort for 16 years—and they still manage to locate that specific piece of paper when it is needed.

I wish everyone the best for their future, particularly those retiring members; may you all have a wonderful Christmas and a great new year. I leave here without regrets knowing that I have done everything with honesty, commitment, good intent and to the best of my ability. I wish the next member for Flinders every success. I look forward to new challenges, with fascinating projects on the horizon, and, mostly, spending time with my husband and family members, and my gorgeous grandchildren, Mahlon and Evelyn (Evie).

Tribute Graham Gunn

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders) (18:06): I thank the Speaker for his indulgence in allowing me to pay tribute to the member for Stuart. I let my colleagues speak ahead of me this morning, and time ran out. My good friend the honourable member for Stuart is a living history of the Parliament of South Australia from a country perspective, and regularly tells stories of the many adventures he has had while representing the constituents of his huge electorates. I hope he will take the time one day to write his memoirs.

When first elected to the seat of Stuart 40 years ago Mr Gunn had few of the advantages of modern transport and technology. The difficulties of being a regional member must have been almost unimaginable. There was an air service from Port Lincoln to Adelaide, but to get there Graham had to go over dirt roads from his farm, near Streaky Bay on Eyre Peninsula. While we have a few more sealed highways now than when Graham started, we still have more dirt roads than any other local government districts in this state.

Communication was by post, telephone or telegrams, the last mentioned having now gone out of use altogether. Who could have imagined the changes that are commonplace today—emails over any distance that allow immediate response, mobile phones with all their attachments, the internet and websites. Fax machines were almost magic when introduced, yet that method of communication is on the decline. Graham has managed to cope with all these

changes and was one of the first to ask me how to use Skype in order to communicate with his much loved grandchildren.

In just one generation communication has changed forever, and Graham has been there in the midst of it. It is virtually impossible for children today to understand and appreciate how difficult communication was and the time it took to make a request and to get a reply to research information or to gather data. Then there is the speed of communication by satellite, which would have been an imaginative fairytale, like Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*, when Graham first entered parliament. Graham used his satellite phone regularly when he recently took a group of us across isolated Googs Track, north of Ceduna, through the scrub to the railway and back down the Glendambo to Wirrula Road to check possible routes for an all-weather road for future Outback tourism and mining ventures.

Advances in communication have made our world smaller. Where once it took two weeks to learn of some disaster in another part of the world, we now see the images on the same day as it happens. This, too, has affected the way a member of parliament does his or her job.

Graham was elected as the member for Eyre in the North-West of South Australia. Then, with the change in electoral boundaries that electorate was abolished and Graham came to represent the electorate of Stuart in the North-East of the state, far removed from his beloved farm. It is a tribute to his concern for his constituents that he has been able to hold the electorate of Stuart and beat off all challenges over many elections, often against expectations, particularly of the Labor Party at the last election.

This understanding and empathy for isolated families and his support for the provision of services for vast areas of the Outback have ensured him strong support in these regions. His knowledge of the pastoral industry in Outback areas is supreme, and I regularly call upon him to assist me with advice or information in my own electorate when issues arise concerning them. It is not until one has lived in such circumstances and actually had to deal with all the difficulties that arise compared with life in a metropolis that one fully appreciates his achievements and the vastness of the region he covers. It is fitting that Graham's base is in Port Augusta, the crossroads of Australia. Ceduna was in the electorate of Eyre and is now part of my electorate of Flinders, but even after 16 or more years Graham is still recognised and remembered with affection and respect across my electorate.

One of Graham's many qualities that I value is his ability to look at proposed legislation and pick holes in it, to recognise weaknesses and areas that need to be changed before a bill becomes law. When I first came into parliament, at times I thought he might be exaggerating but now, as we leave, I am well aware that he was usually right in his assessments. His understanding of country life and living has benefited everyone living outside Adelaide and its suburbs. He has been a strong fighter for them, relieving their difficulties and problems, and overcoming the obstacles raised by a lack of understanding. It would be good if every South Australian could, for a time, live in the furthest reaches of the electorate of Stuart to better appreciate the differences between city and country life. Graham Gunn's value as the member for Stuart might then be realised by many more people.

I congratulate Graham on holding the office of speaker. His knowledge of parliamentary process and the Westminster system is profound, as a number of previous speakers have stated. It takes time to learn the minutiae of procedure and use parliamentary offices with confidence. Graham's skill in these areas was valuable in fulfilling the role of speaker, in which his fairness was also evident—although I have been amused at some of the anecdotes he has told of those times, including one about mixing up the order of questions during question time and totally confusing members and ministers. I applaud his support for the Westminster system of government, which South Australia follows. Although it takes various forms and has some weaknesses, it is the best system of government in the world with the checks and balances of its two house system, and Graham has fought to keep the integrity of the system throughout his time here.

I also thank Graham's wife, Jan, for her support over the almost 40 years of her husband's parliamentary service. In this work one's partner must be 100 per cent committed and supportive or the relationship can fail. Graham is proud of his sons' achievements, along with their attachment to his own love of farming. The family's cohesiveness is a tribute to Graham and to Jan's strength as a wife and mother under what must have been very difficult circumstances at times.

I must also mention Graham's staff and the support they have given him, particularly Helen Stribley, who has been Graham's loyal and efficient assistant in Parliament House for many years. Helen's knowledge and experience has also been invaluable to me and my staff during my time as the member for Flinders.

The quality of life in country communities depends on volunteers, and therefore I am sure that Graham will quickly become involved in his region in ways in which he will use his experience and knowledge for the benefit of the groups with which he works. I know that I and many others will not hesitate to use his considerable knowledge in the future.

I thank Graham for his assistance to me personally and for his service to his constituents and to the people of South Australia. I wish him well in his retirement from parliament. I support this morning's motion and ask that my tribute be included with those of my colleagues.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Grievance: PENFOLD, MS E.M.

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (15:25): It is indeed a pleasure to rise once again today, having already been a participant in the motion acknowledging the contribution of the member for Stuart, to make a brief contribution this afternoon in relation to the member for Flinders. Next week, it will be 16 years since she came into the parliament, and she has served her electorate as truly as the member for Stuart, if not for quite as long. I know, from when I came into the parliament some 7½ years ago, that Liz was someone who was really passionate about her electorate.

When you compare the size of my electorate with those in the metropolitan area, it looks pretty big, but my electorate is miniscule compared to the electorates of people such as the member for Flinders. She has something like 74 schools in her electorate. I struggle to get around all of the schools that I service.

The member for Flinders has devoted her life to the people in her electorate, often in quite adverse circumstances. Shortly after she came in here she was beset with quite a significant health problem, but she soldiered on and worked hard and tirelessly for the people of her electorate. She has continued to do that throughout her time in this chamber. She has passionately advocated the interests of the electorate.

If you look back at the record of the questions that she has asked in this chamber, they have always been about the interests of the people she seeks to serve. So intent is she on that service that, when you look at her office—and I know some members of her office may be observing today, some may be listening, and some may read it in the *Hansard* afterwards—I am sure that she engages a huge amount of extra staff out of her own money. She must be the only person who actually pays money for the pleasure of being in here rather than getting some sort of a stipend for being here. She invests so much because she thinks that her electorate is the most wonderful place in the world, and she wants to see it do well.

She has been an example to us all in terms of her behaviour in this place. Can I just tell you some of the things that she says? Not many of us have a website on which we talk about our philosophy. Her philosophy states:

- To do my best for the Flinders electorate at all times.
- I will go 'the extra mile' for those who need special assistance.
- The door to opportunity is marked "PUSH"! I will 'push' with persistence.

Her goals are listed as:

- To listen to the needs of the community no matter what their political belief or financial status—

which is more than I can say for some people in this place—

- To consistently build employment, education, health and family relationships.
- To work for the positive benefit of the people of the Flinders electorate in harmony with business, local, state and federal governments.
- To help provide balanced management of the region and the environment.

I do not think there could be in this place someone who works harder or more passionately for her electorate. I, for one, will be sad to see her go. I know that Peter Treloar will be an excellent member when he comes in here to replace her; but, in the meantime, we have had 16 years of exemplary service from the member for Flinders, and I wanted to take a few minutes just to acknowledge that today.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Point of order. My point of order is that I understand that, because this is a grievance debate—

The SPEAKER: Order, there is no point of order!

The Hon. S.W. KEY: —we will not have the opportunity on this side to compliment the member for Flinders for her service.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs REDMOND: Thank you. I will put it on the record that the member for Ashford simply wanted to make a note that members on that side would happily join in this were it a motion. I thank them for that sentiment. In doing so I also acknowledge Lea Stevens and Trish White, who, of course, are also seeing their last day in the parliament today.

Can I say about the females in this parliament that we actually get on pretty well as a group; much better, I would say, than the boys, on average, and I think all the girls would agree with that. Sadly, this government has not treated its females quite as well as it might have sometimes. That said, the point of my grievance today is to bring to the attention of the house the incredible contribution that Liz Penfold has made to this place and particularly to the electorate of Flinders, and, in doing so to acknowledge not only her but her husband, Geoff, and her staff.

People (other than those who work in this place) do not understand what a tremendous commitment it is. In fact, I think it was the new leader of the federal opposition who, in an article I read some months ago, pointed out that those of us who come in here as members are volunteers but our families are conscripted, and it is often singularly unfair to them. So congratulations and our best wishes, Liz.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!