



Premier of Western Australia

The Hon Alan Carpenter MLA

Committee for Economic Development Australia (CEDA)

13 February 2008

[Introduction]

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for the opportunity of addressing you.

It is indeed a momentous day. Today the Federal Parliament of Australia for the first time has apologised for the pain and suffering endured by the stolen generation.

I hope as a nation we can move forward – The Federal Government, the State Governemnt and aboriginal people working together to achieve better outcomes.

Today I am going to make a major announcement – an announcement that will bring dramatic change to this city.

Not just an announcement, in fact, but a commitment.

It will represent yet another critical component of this incredible journey we have embarked upon of building Western Australia.

Making things happen. Building this State.

There is a growing sense of awareness now, I think. People are starting to get some appreciation of what is happening here.

People are, I hope, getting an appreciation that, as Premier, I want to lead a Government making big decisions in the long term interests of the state.

Bold decisions for the future.

Yes, I have to be aware of and deal with the day to day issues.

Deal with them and move on.

But there are great things happening. Look around for yourselves and see what's happening in this city and state of ours.

I laid out just some of what we, are doing in a speech last week when we announced the sports stadium and museum projects.

Yes, we are building WA.

Yes, we have a long term agenda.

Yes, we have an agenda that really does stretch well beyond the next election.

It is an agenda which will deliver benefit to Western Australians for generations to come.

And yes, it is an agenda which encompasses the entire economic, social and cultural landscape.

Let me give you one example.

When we came to office in 2001 the number of kids staying on at school was actually in decline. It was falling and had been for about eight years.

Youth unemployment was nearly 30 percent – much, much higher in some locations - and the State's economy was actually shrinking. For too many of our kids, there were no long term careers.

Far from it. Most of the kids dropping out at age 15 were sitting around doing nothing. Or nothing constructive, anyway. I'm talking about up to 50 per cent of the kids in some areas.

It was an appalling policy neglect, the effect of which, was to lock in long term social and economic disadvantage. We are still paying for it. Skills shortages, for one thing.

There was no training policy. No growth in the number of people in apprenticeships and traineeships. Years of appalling policy neglect.

We changed that. No-one else could. It needed a State Government, our State Government, to act – to change the law, in fact.

We raised the school leaving age – first to 16 and then to 17 this year.

We made dramatic changes elsewhere too.

Like bringing education and training together so kids could do combinations of school and TAFE – and employment, for that matter. What they could no longer do was nothing.

We changed the training system, partnering with business to promote apprenticeships and traineeships among our children and their parents.

The result has been an 80 per cent increase in the number of people in training.

No other state is coming anywhere near us, but we are still paying for that decade of neglect.

Anyway, I go back to where I began: our agenda to change Western Australia for the better. For the long term.

[The future – addressing the challenges]

Of course, many big challenges remain. That's what we're in the business for - to meet them.

Challenges like reforming our health system, meeting the climate change challenge, housing affordability....

Our Government has shown the appetite and the ability to work hard and meet the challenges.

And now at last in Canberra we have a Government which is prepared to work with us and not against us.

And each day doesn't set about undermining our public education system, our public hospitals, and which understands the infrastructure needs of a growing economy.

Western Australia is changing – we all are part of that and we all have a role to play.

We are growing at a pace surpassing the rest of Australia.

We've made our economy stronger, more resilient.

Our potential is unlimited.

[Transformation of physical infrastructure]

There is no better or more visible demonstration of that change than our infrastructure agenda.

Our vital State infrastructure that serves our community, drives our economy and makes WA a better place to live.

Our capital works program is breathtaking.

The Albany waterfront; the Bunbury outer harbour project and Geraldton waterfront, linking the city to the sea, are all undergoing huge changes with spectacular new waterfronts and major road projects.

Further to the north, towns like Broome and Port Hedland are also reaping the benefits with new roads, hospitals and port expansions.

It's the same for our suburban centres

Midland, Armadale, Cockburn, and Rockingham are hubs of activity and renewal – our infrastructure fuelling private development.

We're rebuilding Rockingham-Kwinana and Armadale-Kelmscott hospitals, will begin upgrading Joondalup this year – and within the next few years will begin the upgrade of Osborne Park Hospital, and construction of the new Midland Health Campus and the flagship Fiona Stanley Hospital at Murdoch.

Here in the heart of our city, work is underway on the iconic Perth Arena, which will become our city's premier indoor sport and entertainment complex.

And nearby we have the new Northbridge Theatre, a focal point for the renewal of Northbridge and a landmark entertainment precinct for our city.

Then there's the 140 William Street project, the CBD Court Project and redevelopment of the Eastern Gateway to our city.

Of course, there are now two key additions. The ones we announced last week.

Our decision to build a new, multi-purpose stadium at Kitchener Park, Subiaco.

At a cost of \$1.1 billion, this is a fundamental long term commitment to our State's future sporting and cultural needs.

It will be an iconic stadium befitting our city and serving the community for decades and decades to come.

It will seat 60,000 fans initially, with the capacity to expand to 70,000 in the future.

It'll be able to cater for AFL, rugby, soccer and cricket and whatever else needs a venue of that capacity – like a major international athletics event for example.

The second announcement – was our decision to build a brilliant new State Museum at East Perth.

In doing so, we will take advantage of the opportunity to transform one of our most recognisable heritage buildings, the East Perth Power Station.

At around \$500 million, it will be like many of the best museums around the world, a destination in its own right.

It will be a museum of the 21st century. A museum vital to the fabric of our city and a significant contributor to the cultural life of the State.

[Investing in our human infrastructure]

But our agenda is far greater than developing physical infrastructure on an unprecedented scale.

It's also about investing in our people, in the human infrastructure of our state.

I mentioned getting education and training right. To ensure our young people are equipped with the skills required to meet the challenges of the modern economy.

Its giving our young people choices in their career paths – they can undertake world class research and development in the State or be fashion designers.

Its about creating vibrant and active suburbs, and importantly a vibrant city centre – with interesting things to see and do.

[Investing in science and innovation]

Lets turn to our science and innovation – something I'm passionate about.

We have brilliant minds here in this State.

Nobel prize winners, Australians of the Year, pioneers and leaders of their respective fields.

We have this talent.

Its all out there – the challenge is to harness it.

To build our reputation and skills across science and innovation.

We've invested more than \$220 million in our science and innovation strategy.

Brilliant research infrastructure, outstanding science leadership, and strategic industry facilities that are the envy of the Nation.

Our focus has been – and will be to fund major research facilities, that leverage funding from outside Western Australia and bring international experts to mentor our own researchers. That process is already bearing fruit.

The Western Australian Energy Research Alliance - Building on our traditional strengths in the resources sector to become a global centre for oil and gas research and development.

The Western Australian Marine Institute - a \$100 million institute using science to study and protect our unique marine life.

The Food Genome Centre. ... World class research using biotechnology, agriculture and food technology to find new ways of beating diabetes and obesity.

The new Australian Centre of Excellence in water desalination will start soon. Helping is address our climate change challenges.

We are expanding Bentley technology park – to give our innovators and their ideas more room and more support.

On top of all of these initiatives – State Government agencies already spend over \$100 million delivering applied science that underpins our key industries and social infrastructure, including agriculture, mining, oil and gas, environment, and health.

And finally, we're really recognising the fantastic work of the many scientists already working in the field, by dramatically increasing the prize money for Scientist of the Year Award to \$100,000. The richest in Australia. Our scientists deserve our support.

[Creative industries and people]

And so too do those employed in our creative industries.

Our local music and fashion scenes are setting the pace.

Again we have so many examples of individual brilliance and talent in WA.

So much potential. All it needed was a spark.

Two months ago we announced the “Ignite Package” - the single biggest ever funding boost to Western Australian cultural and creative industries.

The \$73 million injection, over and above the \$160 million already budgeted, will provide unprecedented support for our most creative people. Support in so many ways.

Better facilities.

Greater reward and recognition.

More and better performances and productions.

So many different components – different parts of this package – that will amaze you.

A prestigious international competition to build two major sculptural works in the city.

Australia's richest indigenous art awards.

Australia's richest literature prize - the Premier's Australia-Asia Literary Award.

A Major Production Fund- with \$5 million to enable WA artists and companies to think big and create exciting new works.

More funding for our Screen West – to help develop our local television and film production industries.

More funding to allow the opera, ballet and symphony – to widen their repertoire and stage more performances.

A new capital grants fund – to help upgrade theatres and other facilities around the State.

And the centrepiece, of course- \$15million for a new legacy fund for the Western Australian Art Gallery.

The new fund will expand the collection with local indigenous and non-indigenous art, and renowned contemporary work.

It will also be used to lever matching donations from the corporate sector to purchase new art. That fund should be \$25-30million.

All these measures can stand alone as separate, exciting initiatives.

But together they represent a massive boost to the cultural life of Perth.

They will make our city a far more interesting place to live.

[Changes in our city]

All of this means of course our capital is undergoing a dramatic transformation.

In a decade you will hardly recognise it.

We are building a modern, vibrant, world class capital city – with world class cultural, sporting and tourism facilities.

A city has to be more than something to see – it has to be an experience.

It has to be an experience.

That's why our creative industries is so important.

But there are other elements.

Retail trading hours.

Yes they are too restrictive.

Yes I do want to change them.

Just like we changed our very restrictive liquor licensing laws.

It wasn't easy.

But we did it – battling the vested interests both inside and outside the parliament.

Those changes are already having effect.

We now have a better system to establish small bars – as well as enabling every café and restaurant to serve alcohol without food.

Effectively turning every café into a small bar.

Our changes have been a huge success

Already more than 60 small licensed venues have been approved, including 9 small bars.

Another 36 applications are current being assessed.

[New announcement – Next stage of Northbridge Link]

I said at the beginning of my speech that I was going to make a major announcement today.

Two, in fact.

I want to detail our latest plans to give our city more life, more vitality.

To make it a far more attractive place to live and visit.

As I have said the transformation has started.

The new railway – together with the two new underground rail stations and together with the developments they bring have already given some sections of the city – a new lease of life.

The railway has connected the community in our southern suburbs to the Wellington/William St and esplanade precincts.

On top of the William St station we are building a new tower – that will provide office space, new shops and new entertainment venues.

It will revive that part of town.

Still within this precinct - between Wellington Street and Northbridge we are building the Perth Arena.

It will be a 14,000 seat concert and entertainment venue, spectacular visually and a magnet to the community.

But we don't want it to stand in isolation.

Our planning mistakes of the past have seen us build structures with no integration with their surrounds.

We are not going to make this mistake with such a brilliant building.

At the moment, right next to it, we have the derelict and run down old Entertainment Centre site.

The whole area is run-down.

We have to do something about it.

Today I am committing funds for the work needed to create a genuine forecourt for the Perth Arena, upgrade of Wellington and Milligan Streets and to create a road transport link that will allow the long-awaited development of the old entertainment centre site.

It will also open up for development, a parcel of land that separates the Perth Arena and the old entertainment centre – which we hope will become a new hotel for Perth.

From the State Government point of view - it's a surprisingly small amount of money- \$9 million – but it unlocks a large area for re-development.

Incorporating the Perth Arena this effectively constitutes stages 1 and 2 of the Northbridge Link proposal.

More importantly, this converts a formerly derelict wasteland into a one of the great focal points of our city.

The project will begin in 2008-09, and is expected to be completed in 2012.

It allows the private development of the Perth Entertainment Centre site.

The timing of this development will depend on the owner but could include cafes, bars, shops and offices, with at least one hotel and residential accommodation for more than 1,500 people.

The public open spaces will be outstanding and particular attention will be paid to creating high quality streetscapes.

Sinking the railway line remains an ambition- but there is only so much that can be done at once.

[New announcement – Perth Waterfront Project]

And that brings me to my second announcement today.

It's the one people have been waiting years and years to hear.

Yes, we are going ahead with the complete transformation of the Perth Waterfront – the Perth Waterfront project.

Let me repeat that, it worth saying at least twice: Yes, we are going ahead with the complete transformation of the Perth Waterfront – the Perth Waterfront project is a goer, at last..

Our city deserves a world class waterfront precinct – that’s interesting, bustling and alive, a focal point. That’s what we are going to get.

But more importantly our city needs to develop its waterfront.

The river is our greatest natural asset.

Its time we embraced it – as other cities have embraced their own.

We want a place where we can take our international visitors and showcase what our city and State is about.

The Swan River is set to make a spectacular comeback.

Today, we are committing to the redevelopment of the foreshore and releasing our preferred design for public comment.

As you can see from these images, the overall conceptual design is nothing short of spectacular.

The design will re-orient the city towards the waterfront and bring major new activity to the foreshore. It's a tribute to the consortium of creators, headed by national firm Ashton Raggatt McDougall.

I think anyone looking at these pictures will see that it has great potential to create an exciting tourism and entertainment district

The first stage of the project will transform the Esplanade and the waterfront between William Street and Barrack Square.

The key feature of the design, as you can see here, is generous, well-designed public spaces with unrestricted access to the riverfront.

There are two major public places – the first is Esplanade Square.

The Square is designed to connect, capture and enhance the bustle of the city, bringing it to the river, while the second major public space, Esplanade Circle, is about the beauty of the river. The island you can see inside the circle, is in the shape of a Swan.

Together, the Square and the 500-metre circumference Circle, which is about the size of the WACA, to give you some perspective, will give the best of the river and city experiences in the same place.

Getting here will be very easy – with not only public transport available via the bus port and ferry terminal but also the new underground Esplanade station.

A much enhanced Supreme Court Gardens will be extended eastwards towards the Perth Concert Hall providing a larger space for major public events.

Stage 2 of the development will encompass the stretch of land that runs West of William Street around to the Narrows Bridge. It's currently marked by the giant flagpole.

If you were at the opening of the Perth International Arts Festival the other night, you were probably sitting on the site.

This offers a mixture of hotels, apartments, offices, restaurants and cafes linked by footpaths and bike lanes along Mounts Bay.

I'm sure the striking design will get people talking. And it should.

That's why we will seek public feedback.

But I am very confident it will be positive.

But, let's be clear, we are committed to this project, a new Esplanade Square, the Esplanade Circle and an expanded Supreme Court Gardens.

What you see now is what the Government will deliver.

And we are committed to development near the water's edge.

There will be lots of commentary on the look of some of these buildings.

The exact height, number and design of the high-rise buildings you've seen in the images will be subject to consultation and feedback and an approvals process.

The timing of their construction will depend on private sector interest.

And I'm sure there will be interest.

Planning for the Waterfront Project will begin immediately.

It is expected that major works for Stage One will commence during 2011/12 with completion scheduled by 2015.

The total cost of stage one is estimated at this stage to be around \$300 million, with the State Government contribution expected to be recouped through land sales.

[Changing face of Perth – current projects]

The next 5-10 years will be momentous in the development of this State.

Our agenda is long term. Planning for the next generation, not the election.

We are changing Western Australia for the better.

I want to be a Premier who leads a Government which achieves great things. Great things that will benefit our State for generations to come. The opportunity is there. To do these big things, huge projects, enact a long term agenda, we need time. I need time. Longevity. These projects are really exciting.

I need good people with me. This is something for all of us. We've only just begun.