

ZEMPILAS

1 Wickepin to St James — the one in London that is, not the suburb of Perth. What a journey. That's how the Simon Trott story will be told after his appointment as the global CEO of Rio Tinto. It's not only deserved reward for effort and business acumen but also recognition of WA's iron ore industry and our greatest natural resource — our people. Congratulations, Simon.

2 I was delighted to welcome Federal Liberal leader Sussan Ley to Perth this week and to have the opportunity to spend an hour or so discussing what's important to WA, the current state of play with the Liberal Party and our parallel missions. Sussan is sharp, determined and realistic. She knows she has a mountain to climb — and also knows the definition of insanity is to keep doing the same things over and over and expect a different result.

3 Former Labor premier Brian Burke is in top form — and clearly still well informed. It might be, as he says, "a long time since I was treasurer" but he still knows what a prudent tender process should look like, and what it shouldn't. This week in this newspaper, following the appointment of a group of companies to design and build the Burswood racetrack, the 23rd premier of WA asked a question and made a comment which suggest he knows a thing or two the rest of us don't.

4 Mr Burke's question: If the design and build process is just starting, how can the cost of the racetrack be so surely stated time and time again as \$217 million? Doesn't the cost depend on the outcome of the process?

5 Mr Burke's statement: Another important question highlights the relationship with the casino ... it appears the land for the racetrack will cost nothing.

6 My comment on Mr Burke's question and statement: How interesting.

7 By the way, why is it community consultation so easy to arrange and activate when it suits this State Government, but non-existent when it doesn't? Compare the levels of engagement for

Rita's racetrack and the Fraser Suites purchase to that for the diversionary public holidays discussion. Poles apart.

8 I had a valuable visit to Mandurah and the Peel region this week alongside the area's very popular Federal MP, Andrew Hastie. The many locals we chatted with at the Mandurah Forum made it clear housing affordability and availability is a critical issue. There are just too many people sleeping rough in the region. Personal safety, particularly after dark, was another concern highlighted.

9 And what a bonus to run into my all-time favourite footballer John Duckworth and his wife Marlene at the Coffee Club. JD was my hero — and he's still in magnificent shape.

10 Do you ever wonder just how good Scott Boland could have been with more opportunity?



**Basil Zempilas is the
Opposition Leader**