

Mr Frank Alban; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr David Templeman; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Martin Whitely

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 12 November.

MR F. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [9.04 am]: I will commence by first congratulating you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment, as well as congratulating all members who were elected to this Parliament, especially the class of 2008. It is a great honour and opportunity, and I hope that the excitement and awe we felt on our first day is with us every day that we are in this Parliament.

I would like to publicly thank the large number of supporters during the recent election campaign who helped to make my presence here possible. In particular, I thank my wife Shauna, who is looking at me from up in the public gallery and who was with me every step of the way during my campaign, including doorknocking the thousands of houses in Ellenbrook. I should also mention that Lara, our almost-five-year-old daughter, also doorknocked for several days with her mum and dad. She showed great potential as a future politician. Unfortunately, she was proving more popular than her dad and I had to put a stop to it! I also thank all our babysitters, particularly Lara's grandparents, Pat and Ray Davey, Mel Fernandes and Lis Cassey. We chalked up some magic moments and memories and made a lot of new friends along the way. I am sure nothing will rival the passion of a first election campaign.

For me, it has been a long journey, which started on a hot February day in 1956 when I arrived with my mother and younger brother by ship in Fremantle to 45-degree heat. It was not a good first impression! I did not care, because I was seeing my dad for the first time in over a year. My father had arrived a year earlier to work to pay for our fare and had adjusted to being in a strange country. Judging by my mother's face on every one of the 300 kilometres of endless gravel and bush to Pemberton on the back of a farmer's truck full of furniture and supplies, I knew that she had more than normal concerns. We settled in a mill house, as my father was working in the timber mill. I attended St Joseph's Convent School in Pemberton, and the sisters of St Joseph's were saints. I initially received a basic education, the equivalent of year 10. This was quite common 40 years ago as at that stage my parents were farmers. However, I share the passion of all migrants and Australians for the best possible education for all our kids. In the same week as my election, my youngest son, Julian, graduated from down the road at the University of Western Australia with a law degree. My eldest son, Juan, has a marketing degree from Monash University in Melbourne. My eldest daughter, Emily, is currently at Curtin University of Technology and my youngest daughter, Lara, will be offered the same opportunity. Not all students want or need a university degree. My wish for young Western Australians is that they are able to access the best education option that we can provide for them. We live in an extremely competitive world and education is a key to our future.

This story of migrants arriving in Australia with only a suitcase is familiar in Western Australia and to many in the Swan Valley. However, I do not remember it all in a good light; perhaps because of the war or perhaps because few Australians ventured overseas, the normally friendly Australians were not that friendly. Life as a migrant in the 1950s and 1960s was difficult. No-one ever complained. We were here to stay. The way my father described the situation in later years was that very few hands were extended in friendship and very few doors were opened for us. The Italian philosophy for success was to work longer and harder than anyone else—that would guarantee success. It is a philosophy that still works today. It is interesting to note that the racial problems stopped the moment that my brother and I both made the A-grade football team and gained places in the combined lower south west football team. It did not matter if someone was purple with pink spots as long as he could play football! We became instant Australians at that point. Nothing much has changed in the status of and passion for sport in Western Australia.

I am sure that the early Italian migrants would be proud to see that there are five members of Italian descent in this chamber today. My parents are both gone, but I am sure they are both smiling down from somewhere. I must add that I believe that we do now extend our hand in friendship and open as many opportunities as possible to our migrants.

I spent the early part of my working life as a farmer, so I am pleased to say that the electorate of Swan Hills has a large proportion of agricultural land as well as a balance of residential areas. It really has three distinctive parts: Ellenbrook, with its many estates; the Swan Valley, with its agriculture and tourism precincts; and the lifestyle sections of the hills communities. In some of these areas, development is welcome and in others, development is of concern.

Extract from Hansard

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The first part of my electorate is the township of Ellenbrook and its surrounding estates. This well-designed township has won many awards. The area was established as a potential regional centre, and being at least 20 kilometres from other regional centres is relatively isolated. So much was promised on the establishment of Ellenbrook—relatively inexpensive land, initially \$50 000 a block, with so much potential. It was claimed that Ellenbrook would be “the equivalent of Bunbury”. However, after 14 years, the promised land of Ellenbrook is better described as a land of promises, of which very few have been kept.

There was an expectation that Ellenbrook would quickly be a self-sufficient regional centre, but that expectation has stalled. Currently, 17 000 people live in Ellenbrook, but the business district is at a standstill because of a restrictive covenant that will remain in place until December 2018. Public transport, essential because of the isolation, is basic. There are no jobs worth mentioning and the population needs to travel for most of its services. This is all largely due to the covenant. I am happy to say that this government has committed to investigate the legality of the restrictive covenant. The challenge is to get Ellenbrook back on track and progressing as soon as possible. I am not happy with the current daily exodus of people who travel elsewhere for services and jobs.

The electorate of Swan Hills contains a large part of the Swan Valley. Although protected by the Swan Valley Planning Act 1995, this remarkable and predominantly agricultural area is under threat. The very essence of the valley, that is, the vineyards, is under threat because ageing farmers and the attractiveness of the area as a lifestyle location are leading to the removal of vines—they are not viable on small acreages. We will need to find an answer to this problem soon.

Tourism has been extremely successful in the valley and support for this industry, both in the Swan Valley and other areas of Western Australia, is important. Unfortunately, tourism, like agriculture, is treated as a poor relative in economic terms and does not compete with the mineral boom for attention. We should be careful not to put all our eggs in one basket. Booms do not last forever and a balance of industries is necessary for the state's income. This state needs to be able to do more than dig endless holes in the ground for our financial survival and future.

The hills area, stretching from Bullsbrook in the north to Gidgegannup, Brigadoon and Mundaring in the east, is the most environmentally sensitive part of the Swan Hills electorate. All these areas are under threat from development; not all development is bad, but a balance needs to be found. The eastern hills are an important border and complement the Perth metropolitan area. Although some development is welcome, wholesale subdivision is not. It is important to have in place adequate infrastructure such as schools, police and emergency services, as well as the basics of power, water and sewerage. However, these should be planned at the same time as the developments so that we do not establish ghettos and create more problems than we solve.

In the hills, on the rise of the scarp overlooking Bells Rapids, there is a great opportunity for the state to create a dream destination for future generations—this area is a potential tourist destination in its own right—just as Kings Park is to the people of this state. The pieces of the puzzle have not come together at this moment, but nothing worth doing is ever easy.

This portion of land—approximately 400 hectares, and the same size as Kings Park—is presently privately owned and in the process of being developed. In my opinion this development poses a considerable number of environmental challenges for developers and is of great concern to the community.

I believe that this land of rocky outcrops, waterfalls and wildlife in almost pristine bushland overlooking the Swan River, the last of such land in metropolitan Western Australia, should be preserved for posterity. We should not only plan for today, but also bank environmental assets for future generations to enjoy.

Finally, while we are busy planning and developing our state with skyscrapers, railway lines and stadiums, and performing economic miracles, it is important that we do not forget the disadvantaged, the handicapped and the elderly, all of whom are our responsibility. These people are the most likely to be overlooked in the rush of progress. My commitment is that I will not forget those most in need.

[Applause.]

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [9.15 am]: I begin by acknowledging the Nyoongah people, the traditional owners of this country. I congratulate the Speaker on his appointment and all the members of this Parliament on their election—in particular, the team of 2008. I also thank the people of West Swan for electing me to the Parliament. It is indeed a great honour and privilege to be elected to public office. I will strive to serve the community well and to promote the public interest.

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The seat of West Swan is a new seat, created after the last redistribution. I acknowledge the work and the effort of the former members who have served the area that now forms my seat—in particular, the former member for Wanneroo, Dianne Guise.

The electorate of West Swan covers many communities, including the new suburb of Landsdale; the established suburb of Ballajura; the industrial precinct of Malaga; and housing developments north of the Reid Highway. It covers half of the Swan Valley—the other half about which the member for Swan Hills just spoke—that is, the west side, which incorporates the suburbs of Caversham, West Swan and Henley Brook. Although a new electorate, the area is rich in history. We are told that the Swan district included parts of the territories of four Aboriginal tribes and we understand this land to now be the land of the Nyoongah people. In his book titled *On the Swan*, Michael J. Bourke states —

The Swan Valley had for many thousands of years been one of the best sources of food supplies for the Aborigines of the Swan coastal plain.

...

The lush grasses of its river meadows made it the haunt of kangaroos and other marsupials ...

...

It was precisely these areas from which the Aborigines had obtained most of their traditional foods ...

The valley was also the setting for the 1827 landing of Captain James Stirling. Captain Stirling was on a voyage to explore the Swan River region. He went beyond the mudflats of what is now known as the Causeway and pitched camp at Ellens Brook.

According to Bourke, Captain Stirling described the area in glowing terms, stating —

The richness of the Soil, the bright foliage of the Shrubs, the majesty of the surrounding Trees, the abrupt and red-coloured banks of the River occasionally seen, and the view of the blue summits of the Mountains from which we were not far distant, made the scenery around this spot as beautiful as anything of the kind I had ever witnessed.

While my electorate has a very rich past, it also has an exciting future. The Swan Valley continues to be a source of food in the region, with market gardens, fabulous restaurants and of course the vineyards producing magnificent wine.

The valley has become a tourist destination. It hosts visitors from Western Australia, interstate and overseas on a daily basis. Tourism in the valley continues to grow, with popular festivals and fairs drawing big crowds every year. These events, and the valley's natural attractions, make it one of the most popular destinations for tourists who come to Perth.

As well as serving the community with food and wine, my electorate is also providing new places for Western Australians to live. Significant urban development is about to take place through the Lord Street corridor. A number of new housing developments that will accommodate thousands of new residents are planned for Caversham, West Swan and Henley Brook. The suburb of Landsdale is still accommodating new homes. The Malaga industrial precinct is growing rapidly with new businesses moving to the area every day. An electorate as diverse as West Swan brings with it many challenges. As the member for Swan Hills outlined, it is important to get the balance right between catering for the increasing number of visitors and preserving the uniqueness of the Swan Valley. We need to not only maintain the valley as a great place to live, but also accommodate new commercial ventures.

As many other members of this place have said, the problem of antisocial behaviour is an issue. Hoons on suburban streets and graffiti on public buildings is an issue throughout the West Swan electorate. The electorate is also in need of a greater police presence. I know that a priority project for the police department is to establish a stand-alone police station in Ballajura.

The growing suburbs will need new schools over the next five to 10 years, and older schools will require maintenance funding.

Another key challenge for the West Swan region is to improve transport infrastructure; namely, roads and public transport. My electorate is not that far from the city centre and it contains a major industrial and commercial precinct. However, it does not have a freeway or highway connection to the central business district, making travel into the city centre far more time-consuming than it should be. The east-west connections are being developed by key access roads, such as Gnaragara Road, Hepburn Avenue and Reid Highway, but these require

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further upgrades. My electorate also does not contain a train line or a mass transit system of any kind. Given the size of the electorate and given its proximity to the city centre, this is something that must be addressed. I am glad that the Liberal Party adopted Labor's election commitment to build a new rail line to Ellenbrook. I cannot wait to see it happen. Done correctly, the new rail line will service a large number of suburbs in the north east corridor, including those suburbs in the member for Morley's electorate. In fact, when we stand back and look at the metropolitan rail map, we notice there is one missing spoke in the rail network—that is, a spoke serving the north eastern corridor. With the right route, communities such as Ballajura could be served by a new line. It would also ensure that the new housing developments in the West Swan area could be connected into a public transport system, allowing for better planning and more affordable living in the future. I look forward to working with the new government on this project. The electorate also requires better bus services into the area. Most of these initiatives would not cost too much but would vastly improve the quality of life of the community.

The former Labor government made some significant commitments to roads in the region. Labor committed to and signed the contract for the extension of Reid Highway from West Swan Road to Great Northern Highway, including the new Middle Swan Bridge. Labor also committed \$72 million to the Reid Highway and Alexander Road overpass, which is an overdue project that will help ease traffic congestion and improve safety in the area. The funding for that project is in the forward estimates. I hope that the project is not consigned to history and that it gets underway soon.

I will work hard to represent the people of West Swan. I want the people of West Swan to be given some priority over the next four years. Simply because West Swan is in the metropolitan area, it should not be seen as a less worthy electorate. I understand the royalties for regions deal and I acknowledge the need to spend throughout Western Australia, but not to the complete detriment of people living in the suburbs. I also do not subscribe to the notion that changing economic conditions means all bets are off for people living in the suburbs. When Labor won government in 2001, the budget was in deficit and the economy was contracting. That is not the case now. We are here to hold the government to account. The Liberal Party made a number of commitments, including the adoption of some Labor commitments. The Liberal Party has made some big spending promises and it has failed to properly budget for the royalties for regions deal. I do not think that people in the suburbs should suffer as a result of this.

I thank the Labor Party for giving me the opportunity to serve in this Parliament. The Labor Party is a great party representing ordinary people. It is the party of the public interest. I know that many people who voted for me on 6 September did so because I was their Labor Party candidate. I hope to continue to serve the party well and to repay the faith and trust that has been shown to me.

I became attracted to politics and the Labor Party while I was growing up. My parents were both post-war migrants from Calabria, Italy. My father was born in a small town called Melicucca. He migrated to Australia in the 1950s. When he arrived in Perth it was a very different place from what it is now. I am glad to be following the member for Swan Hills' speech because I think we have some common themes. My father spent many years helping develop Western Australia by clearing land in Wanneroo for housing developments, building stations along the Armadale and Fremantle train lines, and fencing properties for the pastoralists in the regions. In many instances, as a migrant labourer, he was not treated very well. Yet he had a very, very lucky escape. He and his three friends were offered a job in a mining town—Wittenoom. Fortunately for my father, he rejected that job offer. My dad is here today; sadly, his friends are not. My mother was born in Campoli, where she lived with her six brothers and one sister. She migrated to Australia in the 1960s and was joined over a period of time by her six brothers and her parents. Her sister moved to Switzerland. My mother took jobs in the local restaurant industry and worked as a cook and cook's assistant. My parents met and married, and established an orchard in Roleystone. They still live on that property. I spent many days working on the orchard with my sister and it was during these times that I gained a deep understanding of the philosophies and ethics of my parents. My mum and dad were not political activists, but they taught me many political lessons. When they were growing up, they never had health care and they had limited schooling. They looked on in their respective regions in Italy as some, the wealthier, did what they pleased. The member for Cannington mentioned that Labor people often debate about who was poorer. My mum and dad used to have the debate about whose town was poorer all the time in our household. I think my mum's town won the day, with probably fewer donkeys per capita than my father's town. From my parents I gained my political philosophy: fairness, opportunity, a proper distribution of wealth, and an acknowledgement that everyone has the right to live on this planet with a sense of integrity, security and economic freedom. These are my beliefs and these beliefs led me to the Labor Party.

As I stated, I grew up in Roleystone. I attended the local public schools: Roleystone Primary School, Roleystone District High School and Kelmscott Senior High School. I attended Curtin University of Technology and did a

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degree in business, majoring in economics. After graduating, I moved to Canberra to work for the Department of Finance. I then moved back to Western Australia to work in the department's Western Australian office. After that I went to work for the state Treasury department in Perth. I had the opportunity to be involved in many areas of public policy, including the production of federal and state budgets. In 1997 I left the Treasury department to work for the then Leader of the Opposition, Dr Geoff Gallop. Since that time I have worked for both Geoff Gallop and the member for Willagee, Mr Alan Carpenter. I had the privilege to be involved in a number of significant projects and policies of this state. I also had the opportunity to work for not only two great Premiers, but also smart and hard-working ministers and some very professional and talented public servants. Some of the achievements that I believe the former government can be most proud of include the Mandurah and Thornlie rail lines, the Clarkson extension, improved train stations, electronic ticketing—all huge improvements to our rail system; the health reform process; the protection of our forests and Ningaloo; the increased school leaving age; Australia's first major desalination plant and the commitment to the second; and the development of a domestic gas policy. These achievements look even stronger when coupled with the set of books the former government produced: billions of dollars of investment and net debt under control. Most importantly, this was all done without privatisation. I am not a supporter of privatisation. To me it is a lazy option of government. Governments are elected to manage, invest and to serve, not to sell. The outcomes of privatisation are never as good as promised, particularly in the areas of transport and health. Privatisation often leads to higher charges, a decline in services or taxpayer bailouts. The sale of the Westrail freight network was a clear example of this.

I will also touch upon our federal system of government. I am a strong federalist. I believe our Federation fosters innovation and creativity. It allows for our economies to develop natural strengths and diversity. Diversity is not a bad thing. I do not subscribe to the notion that to be pro-Western Australia one is somehow un-Australian or secessionist. Many countries with strong democracies, such as the United States of America, have a strong federal system. The states of America have rich history and proud identities, which, rather than detract from, enhance the nation's character. I feel that Australians are preoccupied with the desire for uniformity. Yes, uniformity is good for business but in the same respect flexibility is also good for business. If a federal industry assistance scheme is abolished, should not a state have the flexibility to step in and offer an alternative? Would we have a gas industry if all the decisions about its development had been left to Canberra? Let us work to make our Federation stronger, and as a state let us gather those benefits.

I am also a strong supporter of our education system. I attended my local public schools and I believe that I was well served by them. I believe that we, as members of Parliament, have a role to support our educators and our schools. In my electorate of West Swan I have a number of public and private schools. I have met with all the principals and have been impressed with their level of dedication and professionalism. I saw committed individuals who care deeply for the children they are in charge of. However, I believe that sometimes we expect too much from these schools. I do not believe that we should either expect or rely on the classroom to be the only vehicle for teaching values and responsibilities in the community. It is impossible to do that. When a problem is identified in society, we tend to try to fix it in the schools. We expect teachers to teach everything: values, ethics, social responsibility, physical fitness, healthy eating etc. The responsibility needs to be more broadly shared. More generally, we need to take some responsibility for our actions. Our natural tendency is to either blame or put the responsibility onto others. We react to issues by trying to prescribe everything. Governments have a legitimate role in regulating, protecting and caring for their citizens but we cannot abrogate our personal responsibilities.

I am a supporter of creating a more connected and cohesive society. While doorknocking during the election campaign, I was struck by the level of security in people's homes. A number of new members raised in their speeches the sense of isolation people have. I believe that we need to get smarter about how we plan our suburbs and create our communities. We need to create more alive and inclusive suburbs. We need to revitalise and re-energise our suburbs to create a better sense of community and to make people feel safer in their homes. This is particularly relevant for older people in society, who often feel more vulnerable and isolated. One of the tools to achieve that is the enhancement of our public transport system, and another is to better plan our suburbs. It also means revitalising our older suburbs and creating safer suburbs. We need to be better at developing places for our young people to hang out at after school and on weekends. We need to focus on creating safer places where our young people can socialise and get support when they need it. It needs to be more sophisticated than just building a skate park. There are different models out there, and we should apply those models throughout our suburbs.

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I want to speak about the future. Western Australia is a great place. We have so much to be proud of. We have the confidence to take on the world, abundant resources and a great lifestyle. We have an exciting future ahead of us but we need to be up to the challenge. Western Australia is changing. We have experienced a growth spurt.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: More people are living in our cities and there are more international and interstate workers and visitors. Younger people want to stay here; they do not want to travel interstate to have an exciting life. We need to put forward a positive plan for the future. I believe that the former Labor government had a plan and that the Labor opposition has a plan. Yes, there are always competing priorities but governments must look beyond the next day and to the next generation. Our plan is to build world-class sporting, entertainment and cultural facilities; to create a foreshore development; and continue to modernise and expand our public transport system.

I have heard it said that Perth is not big enough to have a stand-alone museum and that Perth does not experience urban congestion like other cities. I fear sometimes that I have jumped into the DeLorean and gone *Back to the Future*. Prince once wrote a song called let's party like it's 1999. Let us hope the government does not govern like it is 1999.

Before I conclude I would like to thank a lot of people. I thank the previous two leaders of the Labor Party, Geoff Gallop and the member for Willagee, Alan Carpenter. They are people with integrity and honesty who understood and represented ordinary people. They never compromised their integrity or values. I respect them greatly and thank them for the opportunities they have provided me over the past decade. I also thank the many people I have worked with over the years, including Kieran Murphy, Guy Houston and Olivia Crowley, who brought a lot of enjoyment to my working life.

On a more personal basis, I thank my husband, Tim, who has been a great support to me and who took a month of leave to help me during the election campaign. The deal between us was that if I won the seat, he would get to pick a dog of his choice. We did this deal before the Obama deal, I can assure members. Unfortunately, his choice was a Rottweiler called Oscar, who now lives in our backyard, which he has half destroyed!

I thank also Daniel Pastorelli, who managed my campaign, Tristan Cockman, David and Barbara Doepel, Darren Foster, John Carey, Ryan Taaffe and Daniel Smith.

I thank also the other people who helped me on the campaign and on election day, including a cousin of mine who is a psychologist and who worked on a polling booth for the first time. I think he needed counselling after his exposure to the rawness of politics! I thank my mum, Pina, my dad, Nick, my sister, Connie, my brother-in-law, Denis, and my niece and nephew, Lauren and Matthew. I thank them very much. A better family I could not hope for.

I thank my good friends, Joanne Young, Gabriella Rogers and Michelle Auld. Joanne is in New Zealand, Gabriella is in Sydney and Michelle is in Southern Cross. I thank them for their lifelong friendship and support.

To my extended family, including cousins, aunts and uncles here in Perth, Geelong and overseas who have followed my fortunes, thank you very much. I give a special hello to my aunty from Switzerland, who is in the public gallery. Ciao, Zia.

I will finish with a quote from the recent vice-presidential debate between Joe Biden and Sarah Palin. Do not worry, members, it is not a quote from Sarah Palin! Democrat Senator, and now vice-president elect, Joe Biden was talking about his fiery relationship with the Republicans. He recalled some advice he received after a fiery exchange with a Republican Senator. The colleague told Senator Biden—I wish I could do the accent, but I will not attempt to—“Joe, understand one thing: everyone's sent here for a reason because there is something in them that their folks like. Don't question their motive.” I was struck by that comment and I hope that it stays with me. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [9.36 am]: Mr Speaker, my name is Andrew Waddell and I stand here before you today as the new member for Forrestfield. Firstly, let me congratulate you on your election as Speaker. I also extend my congratulations to all other new members of the house. The things that bind us together are far greater than those that separate us.

It is an inspiring privilege to serve the people of my electorate in this place. The seat of Forrestfield is a new seat and is made up of High Wycombe and Maida Vale to the north, Forrestfield and Wattle Grove in the centre, and parts of Kenwick and Maddington to the south. It is a wide and diverse seat with suburbs that are distinct in nature. On behalf of my constituents, I look forward to many a great debate in this chamber. I will strive to live

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up to the trust that has been placed in me by the people of my electorate and I will work hard to make a solid contribution to the state.

I grew up in Stevens Road in High Wycombe. It was a road that was bounded by unimproved bushland at the time. I went to High Wycombe Primary School and Forrestfield Senior High School. All of my earliest memories are of living, walking about and playing in those streets. I remember the friendly street parties that my parents would attend and I remember how everyone knew everyone else in the street. We all pitched in when a job had to be done somewhere. These are idealistic childhood memories but there was a real sense of community at the time and our neighbours were not strangers. Perth in the early 1970s was a different place from what it is today, and that is particularly so in Forrestfield. We felt isolated from not only the world, but also the city. They were the days before satellite TV and mobile phones. The nightly TV news was sometimes a day behind world events, public transport was scarce, and as a child even doing the weekly shopping trip to Midland was an adventure. The sense of wanting to overcome that isolation has been a continuing source of drive for me ever since.

As a teenager, I remember being part of the bulletin board scene. In particular, I was a member of the Fidonet system, which was run by computer enthusiasts in the mid-1980s. It was a simple system that allowed one computer to link with another, passing messages over local telephone calls from node to node, spanning the globe. It meant that over the course of a single day an email could circle the globe. The world suddenly felt an awfully lot smaller. In the early 1990s I was introduced to a new system called the internet. It was not the internet that members know today; rather, it was the internet that existed before Tim Berners-Lee gifted us the web and before streaming video, podcasts and spam. It was a text-based system. The first time I gophered into the MIT library to browse its collection, I truly felt that the future had arrived and that the world was at my fingertips. Once again, the world felt a lot smaller. Since then technology has continued to shrink distances. Now it is easier to watch Barack Obama's historic victory speech live from Chicago than it is to find out what is happening in the local shopping centre in Forrestfield. Perhaps that is the problem. Perhaps that is why people sometimes feel as though they are citizens of the world more so than members of their own community. I will come back to that issue.

After completing a commerce degree at Curtin University of Technology in the early 1990s, I was tossed into the real world to start my professional life. My professional life can be categorised in two sections: IR, industrial relations; and IT, information technology. I was fortunate to be taken into a graduate program at DOPLAR—that is, the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations. There I was exposed to a wide range of experiences. Some of my most memorable experiences occurred when I staffed the Wageline phones. I had to advise people about their award conditions and rights, whether they were being underpaid and what they should do if they had been unfairly dismissed. From there I was recruited as an industrial officer in the Transport Workers Union by my good friend Mark Cuomo. Whilst there I represented many workers in front of industrial tribunals. There is no training like industrial relations training to get to know the intimate daily lives of working people—their hopes, dreams and fears. I am proud to share the knowledge of ordinary working Australians with many of my Labor colleagues in this place. I shall draw upon it daily in my life as a member of Parliament.

In 1996 I took a leap and began my own IT company. IT has always been a passion and a joy. Starting my own company gave me a chance to indulge in my hobbies—namely, building and repairing computer systems, programming and generally making technology work for people. Running my own successful business taught me an entirely different set of lessons: innovation, enterprise, self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Running one's own business is about making something, taking pride in it and seeing how it contributes to the community. It is about being a business which people want to use and to which they are happy to refer others. Running my own business gave me a sense of self-efficiency and self-reliance. With that came a feeling of freedom and of knowing that I could fall back on my own skills in the future and that I could fulfil the needs of my family.

How does my background in trade unions and small business come together to form a philosophy? In the seat of Forrestfield—many members would experience this in their own electorates—there is a problem with graffiti tagging. Some places are more prone to graffiti than others, such as the Woodlupine Family and Community Centre, which seems to get attacked nearly every week, and the telephone exchanges in Midland and Forrestfield. The latter has been covered in ever-changing graffiti for the past decade or so. As I doorknocked and heard stories about graffiti tagging—where it was and how long it can take for a wall to be cleaned—I realised that most people do not know how to solve the problem. They do not like the fact that there is graffiti, but many feel a sense of helplessness and of not being able to do anything about this scourge. That is where my two backgrounds fuse together. We, as citizens, need to take personal responsibility for the collective health and wellbeing of our communities. Many people look to government as the parent. They expect that parent to step in

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and fix their problems, and they complain to the parent when something is not fair, yet they see the parent as somehow beyond control or influence. I hope to change that during my time in this house. For example, I intend to set up a website to help people track and log graffiti occurrences in Forrestfield. Members of that community will be able to take digital photographs of graffiti and post them on the website. The site will provide advice as to what steps should be taken to solve the problem. Members of the community will be able to take ownership of the problem—or they can leave it as an open-ticket problem for somebody else to solve. The website will track the location of graffiti attacks through an application, such as Google Earth, to determine patterns. The web will also enable tracking of the clean-up of graffiti to inform people living in the local area of the progress that is being made. This is an example of what I call “open-source activism”. The term “open-source” comes from software developers and refers to a community of users who develop software in an open process and who agree to freely share their work for the greater good. Many people would be familiar with software from companies such as Microsoft and Apple. Such companies own the software that they write; theirs is a closed system. If there is a problem or a bug in the system, it is up to them to fix it. With open-source, nobody owns the software; rather, a community of users contribute to its development for free. Computer software developed through open-source is usually free. It adapts more quickly to changes and generally operates more securely and robustly. I would like to apply that concept to our communities. I would like to use technology to bring our communities together in a virtual way so that people can chat about local issues and things that matter to them. We need to create an environment in which everyone can plug in to participate in a conversation, even if they do so at three in the morning. They could leave their comments for somebody else to read at, say, 10 in the morning, and there could be a public conversation over the course of a couple of days. By virtualising the dialogue we can ensure that it happens. We need to create a place in which neighbours can note and discuss an issue and actually take responsibility for it—“I will fix that one.” At the very least, they should ask whether someone has taken care of the mess down the street. They should not simply assume that somebody else is looking after it. They should not simply wait for the government to step in or for mum and dad to fix it. We can work collaboratively to solve simple problems, such as cleaning a wall. We must take responsibility for our communities. Perhaps some people want the government to provide a Microsoft or Apple out-of-the-box solution. I think it is better in the long run if we as a community start writing our own community software. We must take responsibility for our own lives. As the saying goes, “Feed a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach him to fish and he eats for a lifetime.” Of course, that is assuming that he properly manages his fish stocks!

The funny thing about talking to one’s neighbours is this: it is a great way to quickly achieve a consensus on what is right and what should be done. That is the basis of community standards. Community standards lead to community behaviours. I defy anyone in this place to tell me that that is not what the public is crying out for. Over the past few days I have heard members from both sides of the house speak about this very issue. How do we develop community standards if we do not talk to our neighbours? How do we express standards if we do not know what they are? When did we as a community agree to abrogate our right to determine standards? Surely that was the day we agreed to live behind locked and barred doors, isolated from our neighbours and frightened by the sound of a simple knock at the door. We stopped feeling safe in our homes when we stopped determining standards. We have become isolated, and that isolation is a blight and a threat to the continued functioning and wellbeing of our society. It is remarkable how few people know their neighbours. It is remarkable how few people feel they could lean on neighbours in a time of crisis. It is remarkable that in a time of unprecedented communication we do not communicate. The consequence of all this is that government and central services are expected to pick up the slack. Whereas neighbours would once pitch in, people now expect a central agency to do the work, and that comes at not only a financial cost, but also, and more importantly, a social cost. How do we as a Parliament get people to talk to their neighbours? It is not an issue on which we can legislate. However, we need to take action to turn this situation around. In the vein of some of the great community education programs such as Life. Be In It or Slip Slop Slap, we should create a “Know Thy Neighbour” program—a simple program to encourage people to get to know the people around them; a program to build trust among people who are much the same and basically have the same needs and wants. I would like to see streets where parents feel safe leaving their children to play in the knowledge that their nearest neighbour would step in at the first sign of trouble. So, my message is that we need to trust ourselves and we need to trust the global community to show what is best for itself. For us in this house it means we need to listen and we need to enable.

Some great things are already happening. I recently discovered the sustainability program at Dawson Park Primary School in my electorate. There, students have been charged with preserving and restoring native bushland. They use water tanks and are installing their own solar cells. The school is teaching the students that a sustainable lifestyle does not mean a reduction in the quality of lifestyle. This program is driven by some very

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enthusiastic teachers and committed members of the local community. They use government grants and services where available, but the program is driven from a completely local level.

Another case I experienced was last Sunday when I was at the Forrestfield Soccer Club, which was hosting a Malaysian junior team on exchange. This was an event in which the local club invited an under-15 team from Kuala Lumpur to play a series of tournaments against the Forrestfield club as well as some of the other local Perth teams. The idea was to foster a long-term relationship between the clubs and to help link up local businesses with opportunities from the Malaysian businesses, and vice versa. The event was a huge success, and a great deal of goodwill was generated for both communities, and they are both better for it today. Again, this was driven by committed local people looking after their own community. As I visit local community groups and hold forums in and around my electorate, my offers of help are often not about doing but about enabling. I will help with the connecting; I will help them seek resources; I will help bring the community together; and I will help write the letters and use my influence in any way. What I want to do is to help community groups that are willing to look after themselves and their communities.

I would like to introduce into this house a Hopi word, “koyaanisqatsi”. Translated, this means life out of balance or a way of life that calls for another way of life. Our society is out of balance. We live lifestyles that clearly call for a different way of living. Global warming alone attests to that. We, as parliamentarians, have to start thinking differently. We have to start thinking about change. We have to start thinking about communities in a different way. We need to partner with our communities. We need to trust them to set their own standards. We need to abandon the old top-down government as a parent model that tells everyone what is best for them. We need to stop staring into the Mirror of Erised. Take, for instance, the federal government’s intention to establish the so-called clean feed of internet traffic initiative. The government intends to introduce mandatory filtering of all illegal material and a second optional filter to block content deemed inappropriate for children. On the surface, the idea of a clean feed appears to be a good idea, but we must ask ourselves: what are we really trying to achieve? We want a safe internet for our children, but are we trying to substitute community standards and parental supervision with government regulation? Are we freely giving up our freedom of speech for a symbolic effort that will ultimately achieve nothing but damage the internet itself? Coming from Western Australia, as I said earlier, I have always been keenly aware of our isolation. However, in recent years that isolation has begun to break down due to our ability to interact with many other people across the world and participate in global events through the internet. To facilitate this, we need a high-speed, high-availability internet. We need it for our education, for our entertainment and for our commerce. It is not an optional item. The federal government is planning to filter the internet, and this means that our content access on the internet will be decided by a committee of bureaucrats out of Canberra. They will determine what is fit for our eyes and, in doing so, will introduce technical barriers to the proper functioning of the internet.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Internet providers and the government’s own lab tests have found that presently available filters are not capable of adequately distinguishing between legal and illegal content, and can degrade internet speeds by up to 86 per cent. Their filtering plan will ultimately slow down our access and cause considerable grief for many internet applications. For many businesses that rely on the internet and for many schools that rely on the internet this will be a disaster. Is it worth it? Will this achieve the federal government’s objectives? Will it make the internet safe? Quite simply, the answer is no. The internet filter is designed to work on web protocols. You might remember, Mr Speaker, how, earlier, I spoke about the internet before the web. There is a lot more to the internet than the web—the “www” bit we see every day. This plan completely fails to understand the fact that the majority of internet traffic today, particularly the “nasties”, are transmitted through other protocols such as peer-to-peer. We can think of a protocol as a way of communication, just as we can send a message by a lot of means such as letter, fax, email, telephone call, TV commercial or Salmat distribution. There are lots of ways or protocols for sending information across the internet. At this point, I think I need to confess that I am a bit of a geek!

Mr R.H. Cook: Hear, hear!

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I love the technical details. I bring to this place a unique set of skills, and I hope to use them for the good of WA. Sometimes a little knowledge can actually be a useful thing. Even if the government is able to successfully filter current protocol available today, new protocols will simply arise that bypass these filters almost instantly. During the Olympics there was great outcry about censorship of the internet in China. They call it “the great firewall of China”, yet there are many ways to circumvent the Chinese censorship. The internet was designed for resilience. It was designed to route around damage; it sees censorship as damage. Why does Australia need to damage its connection to the world? The net effect, if members will excuse the pun, will

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be to damage a precious resource for us. This is what can happen when technology is not properly understood. This is what can happen when a government insists on a top-down approach. Australian families do not need censorship to keep their children safe; they need knowledge and support. The government certainly has an educative role. There is a world of information that parents could use in setting the standards for their own households. However, the clean feed will make the internet slower and less efficient, hand our freedom of speech to a government committee and, ultimately, do nothing to prevent the transmission of dangerous material. Worse still, it will give our community the illusion that it does not need to worry about a serious issue.

As members here will appreciate, it is a long road into this place and there are many people who help along the path. It would be remiss of me to not acknowledge at this time those who played a pivotal role. Firstly, and most importantly, thanks go to my family—to my wife, Jenny, whom I married here in the grounds of Parliament only nine years ago. She has always known of my passion for public life and has stood by me all the way. She has even sometimes prodded me into the right direction when I have stalled. I love you and thank you for your support. Amelia, my daughter, who has allowed me to experience the world through innocent eyes once more, has been understanding of the demands placed on her daddy. On election eve, she told me that if I was not successful, the most important thing was that I keep trying. I would also like to acknowledge my parents, Grada and John. My father is no longer with us, but I am sure he would be proud that I am here today—maybe a little disappointed in the side I am sitting on! My parents gave me my start in life and gave me the very principles and values that have led me to this place and to the success I have enjoyed in my life. I thank also my brothers, Alistair and Stuart, for keeping it real and reminding me what a family bond really means. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Jim McGiveron and the Transport Workers Union; Joe Bullock and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association; and Dave Kelly and the missos. These unions took a chance on me and offered me their support in the last election. I say thank you. Let me say that I am proud to be associated with the trade union movement. It is a movement that has made a positive contribution to our society, lifestyle, prosperity and safety in the workplace that we all enjoy today. I thank also my good friend Geoff Baker for his friendship, his advice and his late-night help with planning, strategy and motivation. Lastly, I thank my campaign team who made it possible for me to get here: Natalie Machin, Senator Glen Sterle, John Davies, Peter Brisbane, Andrew Vitolins, George Sekula, Brendan McShanag and the innumerable other people who supported me in many ways. I wish I had the time to thank them all.

To conclude, I would like to once again give my thanks to the people of the electorate of Forreestfield for their support and for taking a chance on me. I look forward to representing them in this place over the coming years and I hope I repay their trust.

Amendment to Motion

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Mr Speaker, at this time I would like to move an amendment. I move —

That the following words be added to the motion —

but regret to inform His Excellency that the Barnett government has failed the people of Western Australia by abandoning plans to extend the rail line to Butler, by failing to order new railcars and by removing from Western Australia's Infrastructure Australia application all reference to public transport

[Applause.]

MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [10.00 am]: I would like to congratulate the member for Forreestfield on his speech and indeed also all the members who have presented their speeches.

To get on to the matter of this amendment, it is a very, very important amendment. The member for Forreestfield has a great reason to want to move this amendment because, indeed, public transport into his electorate is a key issue. The transport issues associated with the airport, of course, are going to be very important for that member, and the capacity to develop a rail spur to the airport and beyond to Forreestfield is going to be a critical point for his electorate. We are moving this amendment because we believe that one of the fundamental shortcomings of the agenda that was outlined in the Governor's speech was the failure to address the need to expand the public transport system. We think this is very, very regrettable for our community.

We are really going back to the position that we have seen with so many Liberal governments in the past. The only contribution to public transport by Liberal governments in the 1970s was to close down the Perth to Fremantle line, and, in that, I believe they managed to radicalise a generation of people on the progressive side of politics who understood the great importance of having a strong public transport system and the need to invest in a strong rail network.

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As a result of that radicalisation, in the 1980s and in the early 1990s people saw the electrification of our suburban rail system and the development of the northern suburbs line through to Currambine by the Labor government. This was an enormous advance; an enormous modernisation of our public transport system. What we needed to do was to keep that momentum going. But what did we see under the conservative governments of the 1990s? We saw a complete stalling of any meaningful expansion of our public transport system and certainly of our rail network. There was a meagre promise. I think we had a total of five railcars that were leased under some fancy cross-border leasing arrangement. In their second term of government, they promised that they would deliver an extension to Clarkson by the year 2000. Of course, at the change of government in 2001, no progress had been made. A plan had been developed, but there had been no work done, no contracts let or even initiated to develop the rail line to —

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is not true. I will give the member due credit for the south metropolitan area, but it was the decision of the previous Liberal government, including \$300 million allocated from the sale of AlintaGas.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I am talking about the extension of the line to Clarkson. The Liberal Party had eight years in government and not one centimetre of rail was delivered. Having done nothing for that first four years, it promised in 1996, in its second four years, that it would at least take the extension —

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: What is the Liberal Party's excuse for not producing in that second term, after having made a very, very clear commitment in 1996 that it was going to extend that line to Clarkson? It failed to do so.

It is a question of priority. The Liberal Party's prioritisation was, and continues to be, the expansion of the road network. We believe also that the road network needs to be expanded and, during the time of our government, we were able to take on and deliver those road projects, particularly those big freight roads that needed to be done, such as Roe Highway stages 4, 5, 6 and 7. We made a very serious and deliberate commitment not to build Roe Highway stage 8, but at the same time we were prepared and understood the need to invest in our public transport system. We invested in the order of \$1.6 billion making those series of expansions.

The entire public transport agenda that the Liberal Party went to the last election with was a commitment to build car parks at stations. We need car parks at stations. We need to continue to build more car parks at stations, but that cannot be the sum total of our approach to public transport. We cannot have a public transport expansion system that focuses only on the construction of car parks. We need serious investment. We need to go beyond this approach that it is only while Labor is in government that we invest and expand the system, and then we have these periods in which nothing happens when we have a conservative government, and, when Labor comes back, we have to undertake a huge project. What we need is an approach in which this is ongoing and in which we accept, just as we have a road expansion process, that we need a continual process of expansion of the public transport system.

It is quite clear, evident and logical that the next major extension of the public transport system needs to be to Butler, which was the next agreed station in the overall planning for that line that will eventually go up to Yancheep. We have learnt a lot since we built the northern suburbs line. We understand the need to integrate the land use in transport planning—again, a policy that has been torn apart. In 2001, the whole planning for Butler and Brighton—the next suburb on—focused around the development of the public transport system. The very design of those suburbs has, in fact, presumed the delivery of that rail. We now have a decision by this government that it is not going to make a commitment at this point.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Can the member inform us when that decision was made?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: This government is not proceeding at this stage, it is not committing at this stage.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The member just asserted that the current government has made a decision. I am curious as to what the member is referring to.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The government has failed to commit.

Mr C.J. Barnett: So no decision? Thank you.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The government has failed to commit to the next logical extension. The rationale that the new government has delivered for this is that it will do a 20-year master plan. Of course, I think we announced at some time around June that we had established a panel and that by 1 July 2009 we would have a 20-year program for the expansion of the rail network. However, in the interim it was very clear—we did not

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need a 20-year plan to tell us—that the next rail expansion for the rapidly growing northern suburbs was obviously required. The fact that the government might be continuing the construction work that we started under a 20-year master plan is not a reason to delay the extension of the rail line to Butler, but it is all part of a larger failure to understand just how critically important public transport and its expansion are to the very planning of our city, and how critical public transport is as an economic issue. A city that is not well serviced by public transport is a city that is expensive and unpleasant to live in. Our ability to attract and retain people from around the world who have the critical skills sets that we need and who are able to work in a knowledge economy and a global market, and the degree to which we can offer them a lifestyle and a city that works and functions well, is dependent on matters such as public transport. This is an economic issue. It is an economic issue because it goes to the ability of our city to attract human capital, which in the coming 10, 20 and 30 years will be the critical element that we need to take our society forward. It is an economic issue because the amount of locally produced gross domestic product that is spent on transport increases dramatically in car-dependent societies. The old 1970s and 1980s thinking, which we hear so often in the Premier's talk about how he will focus on only grunty, economic infrastructure, shows that he does not understand these complex arguments about the city as an economic unit and what is needed to make the city an effective and efficient economic unit. The failure to commit to the rail extension to Butler is just one example of the failure of the government to understand or prioritise in any way, shape or form public transport.

The federal government has established a body called Infrastructure Australia. It has put a very considerable sum of, I believe, some \$20 billion in total into these infrastructure funds. It has asked the states to make submissions. Before the government changed we had made a submission to Infrastructure Australia. We had put in a raft of applications for projects that centred on energy, Pilbara housing, water, common-user infrastructure at the Browse Basin, the Fremantle outer harbour development, and roads and rail into Oakajee port. One of our submissions was for the urban expansion of the future Perth public transport system. We talked about the sorts of projects that we wanted assistance with, such as a system, including passenger rail links, to support the relocation and development of the domestic airport terminal and the growth of precincts around the airport; east-west rail linkages between hospitals, airports and retail centres; a dedicated link to Ellenbrook; and an extension of the rail line from Armadale to Byford. These were the sorts of projects that we wanted to put in the mix. We had already commenced a \$3.5 million study with the federal government to look at what we needed to do for all modes of transport around a relocation of the domestic terminal to the international terminal. That work was to combine the rail infrastructure and the road infrastructure in an integrated way.

A revised submission was then put to Infrastructure Australia by the new state government. It deleted all reference to public transport, even though Infrastructure Australia had said that it was very interested in helping with public transport and that it recognised that the federal government's traditional non-involvement in public transport was no longer justifiable. There was not one reference in the revised submission from Western Australia to public transport infrastructure, yet Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia all submitted major submissions for assistance with public transport infrastructure. The whole focus of planning for the airport—bearing in mind that we are talking about not only an airport, but also a giant industrial-commercial complex that could employ 30 000 people and will have an enormous amount of traffic to and from it—will now be exclusive of any public transport component, and certainly exclusive of an expansion of the rail link.

Major cities in Europe have extended their rail lines. The argument that the Premier has put to justify this lack of focus on and prioritisation of public transport is that Perth does not need it. The thinking is that Perth is as it was in the 1970s—just a big country town; not a big city or a place that lots of people are coming to and going from. That is wrong. Perth is growing; in fact, it is the fastest growing city in Australia. I believe that even with the current economic downturn, all the indications are that that will continue to be the case; yet we now have this stop-start approach. Only when Labor governments are in power will we have any progress on public transport. When a conservative government is in power, it believes that the city does not have congestion. Suburbs are growing to the north, to the south, to the east and into the north east. We must provide for them. We will simply not be able to accommodate all those people on the roads. The pinch-points on the Mitchell Freeway will be impossible to deal with. We cannot continue to expand the Mitchell Freeway in the inner suburbs to allow this funnel to go into the city. The only way we will be able to deal with this problem is to get people onto the rail system. Members here have been arguing and lodging petitions and saying that they want the Mitchell Freeway extended even further. I can understand that, but the more people we load onto the Mitchell Freeway, the more difficult it will be to manage it. We must invest.

Mr Frank Alban; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr David Templeman; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Martin Whitely

We also need to be prepared to invest in railcars and act in a timely fashion. We have 45 railcars on order. They will start coming through this month or next month to take us through to 2011. We need to act now on the next order. We made a commitment at the last election that we would order an additional 30 railcars.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Did you order them?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: No, we made a commitment to order them. Had we been elected, we would have ordered them.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The point is that you did not order them. You were eight years in government.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Hold on! We doubled the size of the rail fleet. We brought on 93 new railcars and we ordered in 2006 an additional 45 railcars, and we made a commitment —

Mr C.J. Barnett: A commitment?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: A commitment that we would continue. We had doubled the fleet and we had then ordered another 45 railcars. We are saying that it cannot stop; there must be a continuous process. We cannot have this situation that has been occurring since the 1970s—under Liberal governments, nothing happens, and then Labor governments have to invest a great deal in the public transport system. The Premier has taken the position that urban congestion is not a problem, the affordability of transport is not a problem, and the fact that people live in the outer suburbs and are not supported with public transport is not a problem. The focus on transport affordability appears to be completely misunderstood by the Premier. I urge this government to reconsider its application to Infrastructure Australia. I urge it to get on with the job of committing to the Butler railway station. It does not need a 20-year master plan to understand that the Butler railway station is required now.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Mindarie) [10.20 am]: I rise to support the amendment, obviously, and, in particular, to focus on the need for an immediate commitment to the establishment of the Butler train line and station. I have every confidence that the present government will come to the realisation during its term that the railway line must be extended and this station built. In the time it takes for the government to come to that realisation, the horse will have bolted, in the sense that it will be too late to do it in this term of government. The reason I know that the government will come to this realisation is that, although we hear about the global slump, economists are saying that if there is anywhere people want to be at the moment, it is in Australia, and that if there is anywhere in Australia that they want to be at the moment, it is in Western Australia, given its projected growth rate. More people will come to Western Australia. The north west coastal corridor is the fastest expanding corridor in the Perth metropolitan area for housing the population. The land in Clarkson and Butler, in the extremities of the north west coastal corridor, has been relatively cheap because those areas are so far from Perth. A lot of people find it very desirable living. They are fantastic areas, given their proximity to the coast. It is not like the coast in the southern suburbs where the beaches are fairly average. The north west coastal corridor has a fringing beach. The Marmion Marine Park provides a glorious coastline and many water recreation pursuits. It is no wonder that young families want to live there.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It sounds marvellous; you should go there yourself.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I am there every day, member.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But you don't live there.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Does the member have a problem with that?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No; I just thought that, as you were singing its praises and saying that it was so attractive, you would move there to live.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I did not want to go into my personal life, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I will. As members on my side of the house know, I have a dreadfully ill daughter from a previous marriage—not my young daughter Ruby—and I choose to live next door to her during her very serious illness to be of support to her and her mother. I will not name her in this place. I do not have any problem sleeping in the house next door to her and travelling to work every day, and nor do any other members who travel to their places of employment. I will not leave my family, even my first family; I will not move an inch from them for anybody. When that matter was taken to the people, of course I got a large endorsement by the people of Mindarie—there was a swing towards me that absolutely went against the state's wide swing because of the work I do for my community. I can understand where the Premier is coming from; the way that he looks after his electorate by living there almost borders on corrupt. I say that in the sense that, although the electorate of Mindarie is struggling for schools —

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the member please get back to the amendment. He is digressing.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I am dealing with the Premier's interjection. It was the Premier who took me in this direction.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the member please get back.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Certainly; I return to the booming and very attractive electorate of Mindarie. The incoming Liberal government will come to the realisation that one of the government's greatest assets is the land it holds north of Clarkson through Landbank. This land is held by the government through LandCorp. It is a massive asset that is owned by the people of Western Australia but administered by the present government. This asset has to be unlocked for the incoming population. The only way to unlock it is to have a public transport system running to the area. Before the railway line and station was built at Clarkson, previous governments said that they would subdivide the area of Clarkson around Ocean Keys Boulevard into very small blocks on the expectation that they would build a railway station there. As a consequence of that decision—a consequence that I applaud—the area got a lot of public housing stock and a lot of houses for young people, because the blocks were relatively cheap and relatively small; I am talking about 325 or 350-square metre cottage blocks that were all hip and shoulder and fit tightly together. However, it was all doable, because at the end of the street there was a station that could take these young families to recreation venues in Currambine and Joondalup, to TAFE in Joondalup and to other important areas that people who live further south take for granted.

I note that the member for Ocean Reef has returned to the chamber. I welcome him back. I have been thinking about him and the smile that he has had on his face on the few occasions that I have stood to speak. I did not know whether he was laughing at me or with me, and it was not until one of his colleagues who spent eight years in opposition on the back bench said to me this morning, "Government sucks on the back bench. It sucks to be a government backbencher because you can't stand up and demand what your electorate really needs; you've got to go with the government."

Mr J.N. Hyde: It never stopped you!

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is the test. The member for Ocean Reef has been a little too self-effacing. I note that one of his media releases states that he looks so young that people think he is just out of school. The member needs to get that out of his mind. I refer him to the founder and spiritual leader of the Liberal Party, Sir Robert Menzies, who, at the age of 28—younger than the member for Ocean Reef—and not even a Queen's Counsel, stood before the High Court and argued *engineers No 1* in, I think, about 1932 or 1933 and changed the course of industrial law in Australia. It is not a person's age or how he or she looks; it is the force of the person's advocacy for his or her electorate. I note that when the member for Ocean Reef was first elected, he adopted his party's line—that is, it does not want any more of the northern rail line built; it wants the freeway extended. The member will come to learn that the northern suburbs are deprived of resources. This fight for resources in the northern suburbs is not so much a fight between the member's party and my party; it is a fight between the north and the south. It is a fight between our strip in the north and the rest of the metropolitan area. When the present Premier announced what the government wanted to do with rail, he said that it would build multistorey car parks. The member knows the problem at Currambine station, and it is the same as the problem at Clarkson station—a dearth of car parking. When the government of the day announced its intention for rail, it said that it would build multistorey car parks. The member for Ocean Reef should look at the press announcement in which those multistorey car parks were flagged; they were all to be built on the southern line. No multistorey car park has been flagged for Clarkson and I cannot recall one being flagged for Currambine, but I stand to be corrected. They were all on that southern line. I want to join with the member in advocacy for the north. I still have a lot of friends in his electorate and am very close to a lot of people in his electorate for whom I worked. The member has massive challenges. I want to help him with those. For example, there is no swimming facility at Burns Beach and there is no marina. I will come to that later.

I was a little alarmed to see that one of the member for Ocean Reef's first statements was a public statement toeing the party line, saying that we need to see the building of the freeway and the cessation to the extension of the northern line. He said that we do not need more rail out there but more freeway.

Mr A.P. Jacob: I did not ever say that.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is what the member was reported as saying. Perhaps he would like to correct it.

Mr A.P. Jacob: I never commented on the railway line in any way, shape or form.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Those words were attributed to the member. I accept that it might be a false attribution. I will go to those words and take issue with the reporter who misquoted the member. However, what the

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government did affects the families in the member's area. The bureaucracy and previous governments have said that they will provide housing for the young of Perth and keep expanding Perth. I can remember when Ocean Reef was on the edge of suburbia in the 1980s—yes, my hair gives it away—and it was being developed. Given the member's age, he may have been brought up in Ocean Reef because that development started in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It is now a settled suburb where the children of the original residents have grown up. Those children are now looking for housing. They do not want to go to the south side; they want to live in close proximity to their families. They drift a bit further north. They cannot afford Ocean Reef so they look at Quinns Rocks or Brighton where they can still be in contact with their grandparents in Ocean Reef and Iluka.

The member for Ocean Reef and I have a common interest. Many of my constituents end up being the children of the member for Ocean Reef's constituents. I know that because I represented both areas. Previous governments have said that they will subdivide the area into small lots to generate a dense enough population to make the train economical. That is what was done in Clarkson. What the developers called Somerley was subdivided into small cottage blocks. After that land was subdivided and sold, the rail came on stream in 2004. I am sure the member's experience at Currambine is similar to mine at Clarkson. The train station at Clarkson has massive patronage between 7.00 am and 8.00 am and then it dies off until between about 4.45 pm and 6.20 pm because the trip to the city takes 40 minutes so there is a time lag with commuters arriving out there and having to leave early. As the Premier knows, the joint venturer includes LandCorp, which is a joint owner of all this land on the coast that will be subdivided. Some members of the families of the member for Ocean Reef's constituents will eventually buy this land and public housing will be put out there. The member should not forget that it is his party's policy not to spread public housing through all suburbs equally but to push it into the cheaper areas. I do not agree with that but it is the party's policy and as it has the mandate, I will not criticise it.

The government says that the dollar can go further and the land can be bought cheaper if it is bought in Butler rather than Cottesloe. We are bringing all these people out to these areas, both the young and people relying on public housing—that is, the people who are less affluent. It is not like the old days when these areas were within 10 kilometres of the central business district. When I was a uni student, we used to rent digs over in Shenton Park. Shenton Park was made up of the old subdivisions after World War I when poor people were getting those little blocks. Now the punters have moved beyond Ocean Reef out to Butler and are touching Yanchep. All these people who are 40 kilometres out of the city want to go to the Skyworks and watch the cricket. Their kids want to go to the football and the theatre, as they do, but the possibility of these families doing this is next to zilch without decent public transport. It is not a simple case of saying, as the member for Ocean Reef did, perhaps misreported, that he just wants more freeway and buses in Kinross and Currambine and other areas within his electorate. I applaud that and I support it. This is not a case of the member against me. We need an integrated system. The proposed Butler extension is only five kilometres to the next big dense housing hub. Half of those five kilometres has already been built. We are talking about only 2.6 kilometres because the Nowergup servicing yards are 2.4 kilometres past Clarkson. The line already goes 2.4 kilometres past Clarkson. The City of Wanneroo has already built the rail bridge over Hester Avenue that runs from Quinns Rocks up to Wanneroo Road. Because this work has already been undertaken, the liability of the Western Australian government to pay back Wanneroo \$3 million for building the bridge has already been triggered. The government already has to pay Wanneroo back \$3 million for building the rail bridge. Half of the track is already there. I agree that only one line of the track is built but all the electrical infrastructure for the second line, including all the posts, are in place. The rail bridge is there. To complete that line, we would only have to clean out the member's bar and the afternoon tea room and give them all a pick and a shovel and we could almost do it in the week we have off. It would not take a great effort to complete 2.6 kilometres of rail line. We know that the previous government had a commitment to extend the rail line but not a contract.

[Leave denied for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We know that preliminary earthworks have already occurred. I will be submitting a freedom of information request to the Public Transport Authority, but I am informed that its advice to the present cabinet was that if it does not commit and sign up to the Butler extension, not one metre of track will be laid anywhere in the metropolitan area during the life of the present government. The government will have the reputation of being the stoppers at the end of the line.

If the member for Ocean Reef advocates this policy throughout the northern suburbs media, he will be an advocate against infrastructure on the northern strip. It is not a reputation he wants. None of us owns these seats. People say that Quigley got a swing in Mindarie so that seat is more a Quigley seat than a Labor seat. That is wrong. It is wrong to say that it is more the member's seat than Ocean Reef and that Ocean Reef is a safe seat. The people who have these houses and the people who are on the make out there want to see delivery. If the

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member fails to deliver on the marina and a few other things in his electorate, his constituents will be looking elsewhere. That is the nature of the electorate. They are not rusted on.

If the member for Ocean Reef votes against any proposed infrastructure for that northern strip, he will earn a reputation that he does not want early in his career in this place. I am not asking him to vote against the government on this amendment; we have to reach across the chamber a bit. I know his limitations. They are not limitations of age or intellect; they are limitations of discipline, sitting on the back bench. When we were on that side my seat was next to where the member is presently sitting. He will have to work doubly hard in the party room against the government to get this 2.6 kilometres to open up the land bank. It is the people of Western Australia's asset that the developers will not be able to sell and it will not attract the real return for all Western Australians and that will not help the member for Ocean Reef with the developments needed at Kinross College. It will not help him with the building of the auditorium or the manual arts centre at the Ocean Reef Senior High School, and I know how badly they are needed. These things will not be able to be achieved if our assets are locked up. Central to unlocking the asset is 2.6 kilometres.

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [10.41 am]: I find it absolutely amazing that the members for Armadale and Mindarie can point the finger at this side of the house because when they were in government they chose to bring the Mandurah line, contrary to expert advice, straight up the freeway instead of through Canning Vale.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. ABETZ: That was the expert advice that was given to the government. It is important to note that the Western Australian Planning Commission approved the planning of the areas of Canning Vale and Southern River based on a railway station next to the Canning Vale markets at Nicholson Road, Canning Vale. The traffic on the roads in that area is constantly chaotic because the construction of the roads requires them to be dovetailed with the building of the railway stations. The Labor government chose not to opt for the railway line to go through those areas and, instead, spent an extra \$600 million to \$800 million realigning the freeway. If the previous government had followed that expert advice, there would have been sufficient money to construct the Ellenbrook railway line. I will certainly be fighting for the construction of the Canning Vale railway station.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. ABETZ: The experts said that the railway line should have been constructed under the freeway and proceed to Mandurah via Kenwick. How many passengers are there on the existing Mandurah-Perth railway line? In comparison with the number of people in Canning Vale and Southern River who would use the rail line proposed by the experts, there is practically none.

The opposition is speaking with utter hypocrisy and the people of Canning Vale and Southern River deserve a railway station. I suggest that people are moving out of those suburbs because of the previous Labor government's failure to follow expert advice, thus wasting money. People in my electorate waste so much time being stuck in traffic jams, every morning and every night, because of the absence of a railway system.

MR A.P. O'GORMAN (Joondalup) [10.44 am]: In support of the amendment I will go through a few facts. In 2001 the Western Australian Planning Commission predicted that in 2006 the population of the City of Wanneroo would be 105 500; in 2011, 129 700; and in 2016 it would be almost the same as the current population in the City of Joondalup—that is, slightly over 160 000. In 2006 the City of Wanneroo already had a population of 115 500 and it is predicted that in 2011 it will be 158 000 and by 2016, 185 000. It is imperative for the electorate of Joondalup that the extension of the railway to Butler proceed.

The rail line runs through the middle of Joondalup and separates the member for Ocean Reef's electorate and my electorate. If we do not proceed with the Butler train station, another 1 800 cars will use the already congested freeway daily. The freeway does not begin to congest at Hutton Street, which is a bottleneck; it starts congesting at Hepburn Avenue, Whitfords Avenue and Ocean Reef Road. Every morning it takes a few minutes longer to travel on the freeway. This morning it took me just on 45 minutes to get from Joondalup to West Perth. That demonstrates how congested the freeway is. The rail line relieves some of that congestion. We need an extension of the rail line so that we do not have an extra 1 800 cars on the Mitchell Freeway.

I do not have the traffic figures for Marmion Avenue or Wanneroo Road, but my experience from trying to avoid the congestion on the freeway by diverting west to Marmion Avenue or east to Wanneroo Road is that the traffic is no better. We absolutely need this extension.

Forty-five additional railcars are on order and I understand that four or five of those cars had been allocated to service the Butler train station. We need to ensure that vehicles are taken off the road. It is in Kinross, in the

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member for Ocean Reef's electorate, that the greatest congestion would occur from not having the railway system extended to Butler.

I agree with the petition presented by the member for Ocean Reef this week calling for the extension of the freeway. That is fine, but how will the traffic be filtered? It cannot be filtered at Ocean Reef Road, because already it is congested. I repeat that it chokes up at Whitfords Avenue, Hepburn Avenue and Hutton Street. The extension of the rail line and the additional carriages would relieve that pressure. Additional benefits will arise from that. We would have shorter travel times to get people from the outer suburbs, where the government intends erecting affordable and social housing. The problem with that is that we are pushing those people further out into the sticks, away from the services. If that is done, we must provide public transport infrastructure.

The petition presented by the member for Ocean Reef called for more public transport in the form of buses. That is great, but if we do not have the infrastructure at the proposed Butler train station for those buses, there will be more congestion on Connolly Drive and Marmion Avenue to get into the Clarkson train station. Already by seven o'clock or 7.30 in the morning the Clarkson train station car park is full. The Currambine train station car park is full by about 7.30 am. At Joondalup there is minimal car parking because it was always considered to be a destination station.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Will you support more car spaces on the northern line?

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Absolutely, I will support more car parking spaces, but in preference to that I would like more bus services to run into those train stations.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I am happy to know you support us on that.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The government has not planned any yet.

Further down the line is the Edgewater train station and the car park there is full by seven o'clock in the morning. At Whitfords and Greenwood, in the member for Kingsley's electorate, the car parks are full by 7.00 am or 7.30 am. We need bus services down the line towards Stirling.

I trust that the members for Ocean Reef, Kingsley, Wanneroo and Hillarys will support the extension of this rail line so that the people in their electorates can access the road network and public transport network. More buses into the Clarkson rail station will cause more congestion. If those buses were servicing into the Butler train station, we would have less traffic through Kinross and the development of Somerley, which is in Clarkson. It is something that the northern suburbs have to have. It is not good enough for the government to not commit to this. We must continue to expand the rail network, not just north and south, but east and west and even, eventually, a circular route around the city. The more cars on our roads, the greater the congestion, the greater the amount of greenhouse gas emissions we create, the greater the amount of energy that is used to produce more cars, and the greater the amount of space is required to park those cars. It is fine to say that we will provide more car parking, but there is a point at which we cannot put in any more parking. At the moment, Joondalup has 120 bays, and there is no more land around that area to put in more parking.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Build multistorey car parks.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: There is not a lot of space in Joondalup. Edgewater train station has 600 or 700 bays and it needs a second deck to add another 600 or 700 bays, but that will not be good enough. We also need more buses and public transport. I urge the members for Ocean Reef, Kingsley, Wanneroo and Hillarys to support the opposition in getting this train station up and running. One of the other benefits of building it before the road network is that people are then educated to use the public transport network. That is what has happened in Clarkson. The train station was built before most of the housing was constructed, and the people in Clarkson and the surrounding suburbs of Mindarie and Quinns Rocks use that train station and public transport network in preference to their cars. An added advantage of building the Butler train station ahead of the development of housing stock in that area is that we educate people to use public transport. One of the big problems in Western Australia is that every time we want to go somewhere, our first thought is to get into our cars and drive there. Our first thought should be: how are we going to get there? Do we walk, ride, use public transport or use the car? My first option is to walk, my second option is to ride a bicycle and my third option is to use public transport. My fourth option should always be the car, because it is the most expensive on both the hip pocket and the environment. I commend the amendment to the house.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [10.52 am]: I respect and acknowledge members opposite from the northern suburbs who have raised the issue of the rail extension, road extensions and the provision of car parking, and members on this side have similar views. Why would I have difficulty with that? The public transport system needs to be continuously improved and expanded. That includes extensions of freeways and rail

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lines. It relates to improving parking facilities, and the frequency and timeliness of bus services. There are many aspects to the investment in and management of those services. I return to the amendment that was moved by the opposition. It states —

but regret to inform His Excellency that the Barnett government —

I do not particularly like the term “Barnett government” —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: What do we call you?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Just try “the government”, or “the Liberal-National government”. I do not personalise things, but that is the opposition’s choice. The amendment continues —

has failed the people of Western Australia by abandoning plans to extend the rail line to Butler ...

I ask members opposite to tell me when this government made a decision to abandon any plans for extending the rail line. Can they please inform me? I have not missed a cabinet meeting or any discussions with the transport portfolio, whether it be with the minister or the parliamentary secretary. I am curious to know when this government abandoned which plan.

Mr M. McGowan: So you will build it?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No. This is the opposition’s motion. The opposition is implying that —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: When you came into government you said that you had no commitment to extending the rail line.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This motion says that we have abandoned the plan. I assure members on both sides of the house, particularly those from the northern suburbs, that this government has made no decision to abandon the extension of the rail line to Butler.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: No decision means abandoning it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Armadale should calm down. The previous government had seven and a half years, and it did some good work; I will acknowledge that the south metropolitan line is excellent. However, this government has simply not made a decision on it. This is day 51. We have made a lot of decisions. Yesterday we announced the Muchea saleyards project, something that had been stalled for five years under the previous government. By day 50, we had announced that project, and construction will start very shortly. It will be underway in a few weeks. The previous government cleared the site and that was it; it stopped again. That decision was made on day 50, and today is day 51. I assure members that I have had no discussions to this point with either the Minister for Transport or transport officials about the rail line extension to Butler. There has been no discussion, and there has been no decision; so, to assert that somehow this government has abandoned plans is just false. There is a false premise to this motion. Had the opposition thought about it more carefully and brought an amendment into this place to the effect that the opposition urges the government to proceed with the extension to Butler, it would have been a positive motion that the opposition could have spoken to with some credibility, and the government might have agreed and said, “Good idea; it should be supported.” However, the opposition did not do that; it made a false claim. For the benefit of new members, whatever they say goes on the public record. If they want to make these statements, they will be recorded in *Hansard* as making false statements, and we will remind them of that. Members should not make false claims in this Parliament, and this is a false claim. There has been no decision, and no discussion in cabinet—not a word—about the Butler rail extension. We will get to it early in this term of government. We will look at the project and we will look at the timing. I want to refer to the cabinet papers. This year’s *Budget Statements* for the Western Australian Planning Commission state, under “Major Achievements For 2007-08” —

Acquired the land and commenced forward earthworks for the future extension of the northern suburbs railway at Butler/Brighton.

Yes, there was a plan to acquire land and do preliminary earthworks on what is obviously the next extension of the northern rail line. The *Budget Statements* also state, under “Major Initiatives For 2008-09” —

Complete forward earthworks for the future northern suburbs railway extension at Butler/Brighton.

I recognise that land was acquired and some preliminary earthworks were done. That was sensible, with such a project.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: A master plan was developed.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Can the member tell me where this has been funded in the forward estimates?

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Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: We made a commitment and we made a decision to fund it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: When did the member make the commitment?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: We made the commitment during the election campaign.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: So the member did not think about this urgent issue sufficiently to put it in the budget in May?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: The master plan was completed in July —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: In July? It is now November.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: It was completed in July 2008, and immediately after that we made the commitment.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: May is the fifth month of the year, and it is now the eleventh month. So, just six months ago, the then transport minister failed to put into the forward estimates funding for the railcars and for the construction of the line.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: We were waiting for the master plan to be completed.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member was waiting for the master plan. The member did not put it into the budget in May. The Labor Party made a commitment, but that was during the election campaign. Now the opposition walks into Parliament and accuses this government of abandoning a plan. We are honest people. We naturally opened up the previous government's budget and looked for the forward estimates. When was the construction due to start? What did we see? Blank—nothing—blank. The forward estimates are pages and pages of things that the Labor government did not do.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You have said quite clearly that you have no commitment to the project.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Why did the opposition not come in here positively and call on this government to continue the work on the extension of the railway line that the previous government had commenced?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You said that there is no urban congestion in Perth, and that we do not need to expand our public transport system. That is what you're on the record as saying.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The opposition keeps on saying what I say. Why do they not let me say what I say, and then they can say what they want to say, and they will stop confusing everyone. We have new members in the house trying to come to grips with Parliament, and look at the example the opposition sets.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Because we want you to be honest about what you say, and it will be very hard for you to be honest about what you say. You have been on the radio numerous times saying that we don't have urban congestion in Perth, and therefore we don't have the need to invest like they do in Sydney.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I assure the house that this government will very shortly look at the issue of the rail line and the freeway extensions in Perth, and we will make a proper, considered decision. We recognise that the Butler-Brighton project is the obvious next extension of the northern line. The government has said that it will review all capital works projects across every portfolio. The opposition chose to jump to the conclusion that all those projects are somehow in jeopardy. Any responsible new government will review the entire capital works program and that is what we are doing. As we make decisions, as we did this week on the Muchea saleyards, we will announce them and we will do them. The saleyards project is a classic example of something that goes back probably 10 years. The initial studies were done at the end of the previous Liberal government and they went on and on. All we have to show for it is a cleared site, a gate and a sealed road leading to the site; that is about it. The Minister for Agriculture and Food started the actual construction of the saleyards within just 50 days of our being in government. He got to grips with the issue, reviewed the costs and did all the work, discussed it with Treasury and made a decision about a proposal, which he brought to cabinet. We decided to go ahead with it. The saleyards will be built; they will be opened in January 2010. There will be no further delay; it will happen. The opposition will find that this government will, quite properly and in a considered way, look at all projects, assess them, review their history and make a decision. It is called good government.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Can you explain why Infrastructure Australia is deleting public transport?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I would love to; I thank the member for the lead. The Labor government put its proposals to Infrastructure Australia. Its highest priority was the Pilbara power scheme. Is that true? That is my understanding. Did metropolitan members think about that and look at it carefully? Did they speak to Rio Tinto

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or BHP and ask whether they thought it was a good idea? I wonder whether they did. Did they test it? Did they decide whether taxpayers funds, commonwealth and state, should be used to build what is basically private infrastructure for the two biggest mining companies in the world? Did they run their eyes over it? Did they test it or look at it? Did they even ask those companies whether they wanted it? Did they even question what would trigger it? Did they come to the conclusion that it might be triggered if the companies made a decision about the electrification of long-haul rail lines? Did they even test it to that point? They do not know.

As a new government, we have our own priorities. That is not surprising. We were voted into government and the opposition was voted out. What did we choose for Infrastructure Australia? It does not specifically relate to royalties for regions, but we made the decision to focus on the development of Western Australia and on projects outside Perth. This state is the size of Europe—2.5 million square kilometres. Three out of four Western Australians live in Perth. Does the opposition think that that is sound for our future and for the future of our children and grandchildren? In the middle of the last century, half the people —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You have a Pol Pot policy, do you? You're going to make it really unpleasant to live in Perth and that will drive them out!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Pol Pot was a mass murderer. Millions of people lost their lives under Pol Pot. I find that comment inappropriate.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: I find it inappropriate that you are the nastiest member of Parliament; you make personal asides to people.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Now I am a Nazi, am I? I am compared to Pol Pot and Adolf Hitler!

Mr M. McGowan: She said "nasty", old man!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Oh, all right.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You are. You make personal asides to members the whole time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We will move on from the Cambodia reference and return to Australia.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: So there are all these people living in Perth who shouldn't have anything—is that what you're saying?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not know. I am trying to speak, but the member for Armadale has not changed. She is comfortable back in opposition; that is where she is at her best, and it is where she belongs.

Our priorities for Infrastructure Australia are, firstly, development of the Ord River scheme. Again, this is a project on which no substantial progress has been made for the past eight years, so we are going to go ahead with it. We will see activity on the Ord River during this financial year. Our second priority will be to ensure that the Oakajee port and rail project happens. That will be made more difficult by the international financial situation, the share price situation for the companies involved and the fall-off in the price of and demand for iron ore. It will now be more difficult to make it happen, and this is an example of the previous government having missed the golden opportunity it had over the past three years. It did not grasp the opportunity to build Oakajee when it was easy to do so. It will now be harder to build it, but we intend to pursue it. I hope that the federal government will support that. Our third priority —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: What a lot of nonsense! There wasn't the product there! In the Oakajee —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member has had her go. I would love her to move another motion so that she can speak again. We enjoy it.

Our third priority is for Infrastructure Australia to join with the state government to sink the rail line through the centre of Perth. This is a project that has been talked about for literally 100 years. If the rail line through Perth can be sunk, the Perth business district will be able to connect with Northbridge and the arts precinct. There will be immense opportunities for the development of property, both government and private. Investment will flow. I hope to see a town square that will be the heart of the city, like those in all the great cities of the world. Part of that development may well be underground as well; not only the rail line but also perhaps the bus station. I would have thought that that was related to public transport. It will improve the area and draw people into the central part of the city from both Northbridge and the CBD, and it will build on our public transport infrastructure. However, because we put five or six priorities at the top of the list, including housing in the north, Indigenous housing and improving the road access to Perth Airport—which again relates to transport—the opposition immediately tried to imply that every other project in the state would be abandoned. That is not the case. The government has simply made a priority of these projects: Ord River, Oakajee, the Northbridge link,

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roadworks around Perth Airport, housing in the Pilbara and Indigenous housing. What is wrong with that? We took some time to consider these priorities. I have spoken to the Prime Minister about these projects and to Rod Eddington, the chair of Infrastructure Australia. I will advocate these projects at the COAG meeting at the end of this month. I hope the federal government joins with us, but the opposition should understand that the state government will still pursue these projects. Obviously they will be completed more quickly if the federal government joins in.

In contrast, the other major states are concentrating on so-called decongestion projects, because they have greater problems with congestion—particularly in Sydney and Brisbane, and to a lesser extent in Melbourne—than we have in Perth. That is not to deny that there are congestion problems in Perth. There are congestion problems on the freeways and in my own electorate of Cottesloe. Stirling Highway grinds to a halt at about eight o'clock in the morning. This is the reality; it stops, and that is something that has happened within the past three years. There are more people on the roads and more people coming through that corridor. Yes, there are congestion problems, but they are not on the scale of the problems in Sydney and Brisbane.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: That's what will happen if you don't invest.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes. The government does not intend to abandon plans to extend the rail line to Butler. On the subject of failing to order new railcars, the former Minister for Planning has admitted that the previous government did not order new railcars either. It is true that the government has not ordered —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: We were —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The previous government had not ordered them.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: It was in the queue to be done, and you've got to keep doing it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We are accused of failing to order new railcars after 51 days in office, and the opposition was in government for seven and a half years. Why did it undertake the preliminary earthworks but not order the railcars?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: We have already ordered the railcars for Butler. They were ordered in 2006.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: So why is the member going on about us failing to order new railcars?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Because you need the next lot of railcars to be ordered, otherwise in 2012 you will not have any new trains. You've got to actually think ahead; you can't stop for four years.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This is breathtaking stuff. This is fantastic. This is amazing.

I wish the opposition had come into this place in a positive, happy frame of mind. I wish it had come in here and moved a motion to encourage the new government to support the extension of, and to make a decision to extend, the rail line to Butler and Brighton, and to order the railcars that will be needed—I take the member's word for that. Why did the opposition not come into this place positively and advocate that? Instead, it accused us of abandoning something that we have not even looked at yet in our first 51 days in government. We will get to it—do not worry about that—and in good time.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Like you were gunna build the line to Clarkson and you were gunna build the line to Mandurah. You were gunna do it!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member is so much more in her comfort zone over there, is she not? She is happy now. She can yap away. She looks more at ease there, more comfortable and more in her natural environment.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You are such a pompous prat.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: A pompous prat.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: You are. They are born to rule.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will conclude with this: I assure the people of the northern corridor, particularly through the Butler and Brighton areas, that this government will in due course, and quickly, look at the issue, along with all capital works projects. Members opposite should not fret. The difference is that we will look at it, consider it and make a decision. When we make that decision, we will announce it and tell the opposition about it. If we make a decision that the opposition is happy with, I hope it will applaud and congratulate the government. But, please, the opposition should come into this place with positive motions about what it wants for its constituents

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and for the area. That is what it should do. It should not come into the chamber and make false statements. It needs to tell the truth in Parliament. I would have liked to support —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: When are you going to apologise for all those unfounded accusations you made against me? When will you apologise for what you said about me?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I would have liked to support this amendment, but it needed to be positive.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [11.11 am]: I note the comments of the Premier and of members on both sides of the house on this amendment. Certainly, the amendment highlights to the new government the importance of the expansion of the public transport network throughout the Perth metropolitan area and, of course, down to the regional city of Mandurah in the Peel region. We have seen the huge success of the southern suburbs rail.

I was intrigued to listen to a number of speakers, but I was particularly intrigued to listen to the new member for Southern River. I will not attack the member, but I think it is very important that he perhaps takes heed of the words in the Premier's speech, which were that all new members—indeed, all members—need to make sure they think before they jump up and say something that is perhaps not factually correct. The member for Southern River mentioned in his speech the issue of the Kenwick line, and what we considered to be, particularly the people in the southern corridor, the Kenwick deviation, and it being the preferred route for the expansion of the railway system. The member needs to understand very clearly that that is incorrect.

When the new Gallop government and the new Minister for Planning and Infrastructure were elected to government in 2001, one of the first questions that was asked of the rail planners was, "Why can't the extension of the southern suburbs rail be along the freeway? Why can't that happen?" In fact, it was the rail planners themselves who said quite clearly and quite categorically to the new Minister for Planning and Infrastructure that it could happen and that it was in fact the preferred option. It was preferred for a number of reasons. For me and for other members who live along the southern corridor and who are now serviced wonderfully by the extension of the southern suburbs railway, clearly, one of the key reasons was that it would open up access to the railway for a hugely growing number of people who lived along the southern corridor. Of course, all the people in the electorates and the communities who are now enjoying the southern suburbs rail experience, from the new stations in the city to those along the freeway, in both Labor and Liberal constituencies, and down to the regional city of Mandurah, can see very clearly why it was important. Therefore, I think the member needs to heed his leader's comments about thinking before he stands and comments and making sure that what he says is correct.

One of the great problems with the Kenwick deviation, particularly for those people living in the southern corridor, was that they would not have a direct route to the central business district. It would also not allow people, particularly those whose places of employment were in and along that southern corridor, to access those places of employment in a direct fashion. That is what the southern suburbs rail has allowed.

I am afraid that the member used a word that is used very carefully in this place, and that is "hypocrisy". I have to remind the member for Southern River, and other new members in particular, about the record of parties' achievements when in government. I need to remind the member that it was his side of politics—it was before the member's time in Parliament—that decided that public transport was not important in the 1970s. That resulted in the closure of the Fremantle line by the Sir Charles Court government. It closed that line. What a detrimental impact that had. But not only that; factual history also shows that during the term of the previous Liberal government, the Richard Court-led government, its investment in public transport, particularly in the rail network, was such that absolutely zero millimetres were added to the metropolitan rail transport network—zero millimetres. There was not one millimetre.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: But they were gunna do it!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They were gunna do it! However, not one millimetre was added. But not only that; the party that is on this side of the house has always been pro-public transport and has the record to demonstrate it. What did the previous Labor government before the Gallop-Carpenter government do about public transport? It electrified the entire Perth metropolitan rail system. It extended the system to the northern suburbs, which is what this amendment is particularly focused on. Therefore, members opposite should not come into this place and have a go at us about being hypocritical. There ain't no hypocrisy over here, sunshine, because this party is proud of its record of public transport investment, it is proud of its delivery of public transport investment, and it will continue to advocate into the future, in this place and in the other place, for the people who are in the growing areas of the state, including the magnificent regional city of Mandurah. Therefore, I ask the member for Southern River to be very careful and to take heed of his leader's comments about the need for members to think

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before they jump to their feet. If members are going to say something, they should make sure it is right. What the member said was wrong.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [11.18 am]: I also join other Labor members in supporting this amendment today. There is no doubt about the success of the public transport system in Western Australia during its expansion by the former Labor government. Now it is the turn of the incoming Liberal government to build on that success and to make some decisions about actions that are required immediately. There is no question that the provision of an additional 30 railcars to our network is an important commitment to the people of this state. That was one of the important commitments the Labor Party made and it is not something that the incoming Liberal government has indicated it will meet. That commitment is very important to the people of Perth. If the government does not continue with that commitment, we will end up with an overcrowded system and no ability to put a train line into Canning Vale because no rail cars will be available to go on that line. The reality is that a station will not be built in Canning Vale during the first term of the Liberal government. No matter what undertakings were given by the member for Southern River to the people of Canning Vale, a train station will not be built there during the first term of this government. There is no possibility of that occurring. One reason for that is that the incoming government has not adopted the Labor Party's commitment to purchase an additional 30 railcars. We know the position of the Liberal Party on trains. We can get a simple view of that from Hon Simon O'Brien. In debates during the first term of the Gallop government, Hon Simon O'Brien indicated that the planned rail extension to Mandurah should be cancelled. We know what commitments the Liberal Party has made to trains in this state. If the member for Southern River reviewed the record of the two parties on public transport, he would reach only one clear conclusion—that the Labor Party is the party with a genuine commitment to public transport. A station will not be built in Canning Vale during the first term of the Liberal government. Indeed, the member for South Perth also spoke about a South Perth station. A station will not be built in South Perth during the first term of the Liberal government. We know that that will not happen because the other side of the house has not made a commitment to public transport. Priority will be given to building additional roads in this state but not to building additional public transport infrastructure.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for South Perth knows that a train station will not be built in South Perth in the next four years.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Can you give us the source of that quote?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am the source of that quote. A station will not be built in South Perth during the first term of this government. The Premier could prove me wrong; he could build the line to Canning Vale. Let us see that happen. However, the government should first extend the rail line to Butler. If the government wants to help the people of the northern suburbs, it will do the member for Ocean Reef a favour by extending the line to Butler. It needs to make a decision on that now. It has a couple of years to get this organised. Now is the time to make the decision on the extension to Butler. Unlike the construction of a station in Canning Vale, the government could build a station in Butler in the next four years. If it made the decision now to do that, the people of Western Australia would see that station in place in the next four years.

I was also interested to hear the Premier raise the issue of infrastructure access to the airport. A very important piece of infrastructure clearly needs to be built to the airport; that is, a spur line. There is a very good reason for that: the people of the electorate of Forrestfield need a train station. The government will not be able to build a train station for the people of Forrestfield if it does not build a line that also includes the airport. The airport is not in my electorate but it is very close to my electorate. There will be thousands of workers at the airport because the owners of the airport see the opportunity to not only use that land for an airport, but also undertake property development. There are plenty of warehouses at the airport now. Office parks and other infrastructure are also intended. If workers at the airport site do not have access to efficient public transport, which could be provided by a rail line to the airport, they will end up crowding the roads that my constituents and the constituents of the members for Belmont and Forrestfield use to get around the city. They will have the Premier to thank for not putting in a submission to Infrastructure Australia to allow for the construction of public infrastructure, including a rail line, to support private investment at the airport. The rail line to the airport could extend to Forrestfield. Once that occurred, there would be rail access to the city for people in the eastern suburbs. The members for Kalamunda and Darling Range might think about their constituents, who do not have access to efficient public transport. I know people from the member for Kalamunda's seat who must catch three buses and a train to get into the city. If a train station were built at Forrestfield, they could catch a bus to the Forrestfield train station and then catch a train to the city. That would be a much more efficient system. It would get them off

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 13 November 2008]

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Mr Frank Alban; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr David Templeman; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Martin Whitely

Orrong Road. Constituents of the members for Victoria Park and Belmont have trouble dealing with congestion on Orrong Road. That congestion would be reduced if the rail line were built because some people would drive to the Forrestfield train station to catch a train to the city.

The fact that the incoming government is not giving proper priority to Infrastructure Australia and what it could do for this city's development shows the type of government we will have. We all know the Liberal Party's pedigree on public transport. An amount of \$450 million would have been the price tag to renew existing infrastructure and to double the number of trains that would have passed houses in Queens Park and Beckenham. Every time a house rattles in Beckenham as a train goes past, the constituents in that area are thankful that the Liberal Party did not get its way and was not able to double the number of trains that would have travelled through Beckenham every morning. If that line had been built, people travelling from Mandurah would have gotten off the train at Cockburn to catch a bus into the city, because that would have been quicker than catching the train all the way into the city. However, the empty train would still have travelled into the city. That is what would have happened if the Liberal Party's plan to take the Mandurah line through Kenwick had succeeded. Empty trains would have run through Kenwick, Beckenham, Queens Park and Cannington because people would have gotten off the train at Cockburn to catch a bus up the freeway and into the city. No sensible person would take a train from Mandurah to Kenwick to get to Perth.

The commitment given by the member for Southern River is not realistic. A train station will not be built in Canning Vale during the first term of the Liberal government because there is no possibility of that infrastructure being ready in time. The member for Southern River should not get caught up with the idea that his mates will look after him. They will not look after him! However, his mates could help the members for Ocean Reef, Mindarie and Joondalup by committing now to the construction of the Butler extension. The government should not review that decision or sit around and wonder whether it is a good idea. It is a good idea. We know that it is a good idea because it was a commitment of our government. It is the right commitment. It is time that the Liberal government got on and made a decision instead of trying to find excuses, looking for scapegoats or telling people why it is not its fault. It should just make the decision on the Butler extension because the commitment was made by the previous government and it is the right decision. The same should happen with the decision on purchasing 30 extra railcars. My daughters go to school on the train. Overcrowding is their number one complaint. Thank God the member for Armadale ordered 45 railcars two and a half years ago and that they will start to be delivered next month. What will happen when the forty-fifth car arrives? Where will the forty-sixth car be? The Labor Party made a commitment to purchase an additional 30 cars to help deliver a better rail system to this state and city. The government now has that opportunity. The member for Southern River should not worry about the construction of a station in Canning Vale because that will not be built in the next four years. However, we could have an extra 30 railcars. He should stand up in the party room next week and tell the Premier that the 30 extra railcars sound like a good idea, because everybody who uses the train system would benefit from that. That is a good idea.

Infrastructure Australia is a great initiative of the federal Labor government. It is putting the resources of the nation into building infrastructure for all people. It is not worrying about the blame game or saying that it is a state responsibility. Instead, it is getting on with harnessing the ability of the nation to deliver \$40 billion of additional infrastructure. We can do better than the submission of the state government. Private sector investment in infrastructure is very important. The Carpenter Labor government got the agreement of the partners in the Oakajee port for private investment. The Oakajee port is very dear to the heart of the Premier. He spent eight years as Minister for Resources Development and Energy but not a single bulldozer moved any sand to create a port at Oakajee during that time. We got into power and signed a contract with the private sector to deliver the Oakajee port. The private sector was keen to invest in that infrastructure. When he was Leader of the Opposition, the Premier made comments about not wanting foreign investment in the Oakajee port. I felt that that was appalling. We need direct foreign investment. That investment is important to Australia and will continue to deliver outcomes, but the then Leader of the Opposition did not want Chinese investment in the port. That is not right. That is not appropriate. We have the opportunity to find direct investment to support the private port in Oakajee but, no, we will ask the commonwealth to pay for it. Guess what? The commonwealth will not do it. It will not take money off taxpayers—off me and everybody in this room—and put it into a project the private sector will do anyway.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Has Labor put that to the commonwealth? Has Labor actually been undermining the state's position?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is not going to happen. It is a reality.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Has Labor been undermining Oakajee?

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Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I do not have to make any submissions.

Point of Order

Mr P. PAPALIA: I draw the Acting Speaker's attention to standing order 96 and note that the member is not calling for interjections or acknowledging interjections, and I ask that the Acting Speaker discipline the Premier.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is a simple fact, and people can come up with any excuse, scapegoat or straw man argument about this matter. The private sector should be allowed to invest and regardless of whether that is foreign direct investment or other direct investment, we should not be afraid of it. We should let the market determine what the outcome is. I noticed that the member for Riverton nodded. I know he has not made his speech yet, and I am not asking him to say a word, but I know his view on this topic. The member for Riverton is very learned, because he is nodding his head and agreeing with my comments. I do not ask him to interject but I acknowledge his position on this matter.

The state government did not ask for financial support from the commonwealth for things that are very important to this state, such as investment in rail lines to the airport and Butler, and investment in those 30 extra rail cars so that in five to seven years' time, when the member for Southern River finally gets his train station, there is actually a rail car to turn up at it. These are things that the state government should be doing; it is no good to come up with excuses and to blame somebody else. The Labor Party —

Mr C.J. Barnett: We haven't blamed anyone!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We are not in government.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Who's blamed anyone?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am giving the Premier the opportunity to stand in this place today and say that he will order those 30 extra rail cars and that the government will agree to extend the rail line to Butler.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [11.31 am]: I rise to support the amendment. There was a clear lack of enthusiasm for public transport in the Liberal Party's election policies—now the government's policies. Public transport barely rated a mention in the party's policies before the election. There was some commitment to car parks at train stations, and I will come to that issue in a moment. Clearly, this is still a government that is struggling to move on from the days of Sir Charles Court—the era that closed the rail line to Fremantle.

I take on board the member for Southern River's comments about the need for a Canning Vale rail station. However, the feasibility studies on that have not been made public. Other options such as light rail need to be investigated and, who knows, potentially a line might be built through to the Mandurah line so that we would have a different system from our present radial system; that is, a rail line that goes across. We must move on, obviously, from the failed Los Angeles model. Thankfully, under the previous Gallop and Carpenter governments, we were well on the way to doing that. Fantastic work was done with the Thornlie station. I acknowledge the roles that the previous member for Kenwick, Sheila McHale, and the member for Armadale—the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure—played in establishing the rail line that is now so popular with the residents of my electorate and provides a very valuable service. It is exactly the sort of work that needs to be built on.

The deletion of the core issue of public transport from the Infrastructure Australia application is a mistake. Collectively, Western Australians travel 39 million kilometres by car each day, and on current trends that will grow to about 60 million kilometres by car each day by 2029. We are still stuck in that Los Angeles model; we are a car-dependent society. For the government to deny anything to do with public transport really shows that the government at the moment is locked into the mindset of the past.

Some mention has been made of the greenhouse gas contributions of cars.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Just move a couple of decades closer to the present—try that—then maybe later in your career you can make it back.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Presently, we see that cars contribute about 12 per cent—a very contemporary issue—of this state's greenhouse gas emissions. What has not yet been mentioned in this debate is the contribution of motor vehicles to photochemical pollution—to smog. We all know about the serious health implications of the smogs that arrive episodically; they have a serious impact on human health. Therefore, from the human health

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point of view, anything that gets people out of cars and into public transport must be a good thing at the more immediate level, as well as at the global greenhouse gas emissions level. Furthermore, of course, there is the issue of reliance on oil. Presently, this city is far too dependent on oil and its derivatives, especially petroleum, for transport.

Mr D.T. Redman: Do biofuels matter?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Biofuels, if used in a niche way, can be examined, but not if it involves the conversion of crops that would be used for food consumption, which would displace food production for biofuels. However, there is obviously scope for biofuels, if used at a niche level.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: We do not want huge fields of genetically modified canola replacing good food production simply because that GM canola might be suitable for biofuel production; that would not be a model to follow.

I return to a point I touched on that the government's main public transport platform was about providing car parking space at train stations. Yes, there is a need for car parks at train stations. I attended a seminar given by the Sustainable Transport Coalition of Western Australia and the Bicycle Transportation Alliance at which Jim Krynen from the Public Transport Authority presented some very interesting figures on the actual usage of train station car parks. These figures indicated that 60 per cent of the car parking space used across the rail network is used by people who travel as little as 2.5 kilometres to get to the station. Before the Premier leaves, I indicate that at the Claremont train station, 47 per cent of the car parking space was occupied by vehicles that had only travelled 800 metres. Therefore, we clearly have a problem educating people to get out of their cars and use other forms of transport if they are travelling such short distances to get to a train station. Other transport options are available to them.

This amendment is about the extension of the Butler rail line. It will clearly be of value to the people who live in Butler. We must ensure that our public transport system continues to grow; it is worthy of investment. This amendment about the deletion of public transport from the Infrastructure Australia application should be supported.

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Minister for Planning) [11.37 am]: This amendment moved by the opposition is pretty rich and we would say cheeky because, as the Premier has pointed out, this government has not made a decision to, as the amendment states, abandon plans to extend the rail line to Butler. Indeed, I agree there is justification for the rail line to be extended to Butler and further north. What is more, I have no doubt that it will happen. Obviously, we need to work out when this will happen as these projects do need to be funded and be paid for. If it was a priority for the recently in office Labor government, the government could have funded it. It was not funded. Maybe if Labor had been re-elected and were still in government it would have been funded. Who knows? It is a hypothetical question. The fact is, we are now on the government side and a decision will need to be made at some stage about when this extension is given the go-ahead to provide the taxpayer funds to undertake the project. That is the reality. I am sure it will happen, the question is when, obviously, and it does need to be considered and, indeed, will be considered by the government.

Comment has been made about the planned extension of the rail line to Canning Vale. It was going to go to Canning Vale through to Jandakot and on to Mandurah under the plans of the previous Liberal government. Labor changed the route when it came to office, as it was entitled to do. The reality is that the funds to extend the railway line to Canning Vale had been allocated. Indeed, as I understand it, the Labor government initially intended to retain those funds to extend the rail line and to construct a railway station at Canning Vale. When it assumed office, the Labor Party decided to reallocate the funds that had been put aside for that project. It extended the rail line to Thornlie and built a new station at Thornlie. However, the funds that had been allocated to extend the rail line to Canning Vale and to build a station at Canning Vale were reallocated by the Labor government and, presumably, used to fund the Perth-Mandurah railway down the centre of the Narrows Bridge and the freeway. I suggest to members opposite—particularly the member for Gosnells if he has not already done so—that they should ask the City of Gosnells what it thought about that decision. It certainly was not impressed, because the funding for that project, which had been allocated, was removed by the Labor Party when it assumed office and diverted elsewhere. The people of Canning Vale—there are thousands of families in Canning Vale—and the City of Gosnells were not impressed by that decision.

It is all very well for the opposition to be high and mighty about how wonderful it has been in providing public transport and extending the rail network. Indeed, in government it continued the project that was started by the

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Mr Frank Alban; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr David Templeman; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Martin Whitely

previous Liberal-National government to build the railway line to Mandurah. However, it did not follow through on the commitment to extend the rail to Canning Vale and to build a railway station at Canning Vale. Members opposite should be honest enough to acknowledge that that was Labor's decision. The fact that the rail line was not extended to Canning Vale and no station was built at Canning Vale is entirely the responsibility of the previous Labor government.

It is also worth pointing out that a big announcement was made about the Northbridge Link project. I recall that big announcement even though I did not have responsibility for that area when we were in opposition. Just before the 2005 election the then Premier Geoff Gallop made a big splash about going ahead with the Northbridge Link project, which has been talked about for decades. He announced that funds would be provided if the Labor Party were re-elected. The reality is that very little was done about that project after the Labor government was re-elected at the 2005 election. The commitment that was made by the then Premier and the then Minister for Planning and Infrastructure was not followed through. Clearly, the Labor government broke an election promise in its second term.

The project will be given priority by this government. It will need to be funded, of course. A proposal has been put to the federal government as part of the Infrastructure Australia arrangements to share the cost of sinking the railway line in the Northbridge Link area so that that long-awaited project can finally go ahead. I very much hope it goes ahead. It is certainly a priority for me, the Premier and this government. We have a wonderful opportunity to provide much better urban development, to make better use of the land and to achieve better links between the Perth central business district and Northbridge. I am sure the member for Perth, at least, understands the importance of that.

As I said, the amendment moved by the opposition is pretty rich. It is day 51 of the new Liberal-National government. We have not abandoned the notion of a railway line to Butler. It will be considered as one of the capital works projects in the Perth metropolitan area and around the state. Many projects need to be given priority and need to be funded. An extension of the railway line to Butler must be considered. It has not been abandoned by this government.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham) [11.45 am]: I would like to say a few words as the member for Rockingham and the shadow Minister for Planning. I want to address the rewriting of the history of the southern rail link that has gone on during this debate. I have heard the Premier say on a number of occasions, both in this house and in the media, that the Liberal Party was responsible for the southern rail link project. People rewrite history all the time, particularly when it has been a long time since the event in question. Memories fade and the players involved in an event and the people who cover it move on. I was a member of Parliament when this was an important issue for my electorate of Rockingham.

The southern railway was built through Rockingham to Mandurah. It is probably the most significant and expensive project undertaken in the history of this city. In terms of urban amenity, it was the most important project undertaken in Perth's history. I refer to not only the southern railway, but also the northern railway extension, the rail extension to Thornlie and the purchase and provision of 90 or so additional railcars to meet the expansion demand. In effect, within the space of five years, the Labor government doubled the capacity and length of the urban rail network, which had been in place for 100 years. Members opposite have said that the southern railway was a Liberal Party project. Unlike members opposite, I live in the area and I know it well. When one drives down the freeway, one can see a short tunnel under the freeway. That short tunnel, which had no rail in it, represents the Liberal Party's only contribution to the rail network of this state during the past 100 years.

Members must understand that the building of that railway required legislation to be passed by Parliament. That legislation went through this house on 19 September 2002. The third reading debate—the final stage of a bill passing through a house of Parliament—in the Legislative Assembly happened at 1.55 am on 19 September. It passed at that time of the morning because of the opposition's extensive filibustering. Indeed, the Liberal Party referred the bill to a standing committee to delay its passage. The third reading debate went on virtually all night. The then Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, took up the case. Government members, a number of whom are sitting in the chamber at the moment, spoke against that legislation. The vote was taken at 1.55 am and the legislation was passed. Labor members voted for it. All Liberal Party members voted against it, except for the then Leader of the Opposition, who was not present at that hour of the morning. He had obviously gone home. All his colleagues, however, voted against the legislation that would enable the construction of the railway.

Point of Order

Mr Frank Alban; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Tony O’Gorman; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr David Templeman; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Martin Whitely

Mr M.J. COWPER: The member for Rockingham is trying to rewrite history.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I refer to the standing order that relates to misleading the house. The member is trying to rewrite history. The relevant legislation passed through this house in 1999.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN: That particular one is rather embarrassing.

That evening, the Railway (Jandakot to Perth) Bill 2002 passed through the house. The Liberal Party voted against it. When members opposite comment on who supported the railway and who did not, they need to reflect upon that fact.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (28)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr J.C. Kobelke	Mr A.P. O’Gorman	Mr T.G. Stephens
Mr A.J. Carpenter	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr V.A. Catania	Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr A.J. Waddell
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr J.A. McGinty	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.B. Watson
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr M. McGowan	Mr E.S. Ripper	Mr M.P. Whitely
Mr J.N. Hyde	Mrs C.A. Martin	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (30)

Mr P. Abetz	Dr E. Constable	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr F.A. Alban	Mr M.J. Cowper	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr M.W. Sutherland
Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr J.M. Francis	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr J.J.M. Bowler	Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr P.T. Miles	Dr J.M. Woollard
Mr I.M. Britza	Dr K.D. Hames	Ms A.R. Mitchell	Mr J.E. McGrath (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr T.R. Buswell	Mrs L.M. Harvey	Dr M.D. Nahan	
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Mr A.P. Jacob	Mr C.C. Porter	

Amendment thus negatived.

Motion Resumed

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [11.54 am]: Firstly, I congratulate the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Acting Speakers and all members on their election or re-election.

John Williamson was once asked why he had never written a song about the Wallabies. He simply replied that it was because he had never been asked. I find part of his song *A Number On My Back*, also known as *The Wallaby Anthem*, entirely appropriate for me at this time —

When I think of all the men that played,
That took the knocks and made the grade,
The legends that the game has made,
I can’t believe I’m here.

...

Could it be a dream,
My father’s son that’s me,
Humbled by the truth I am,
A Golden Wallaby ...

If members substitute “bush MP” for “Golden Wallaby”, they will understand that is about how I feel!

For all of us here, I find Robert Frost’s poem *The Road Not Taken* also quite appropriate —

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, just as fair,

Extract from *Hansard*

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Mr Frank Alban; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr David Templeman; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Martin Whitely

And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

I think all of us here have reached that fork in the road and I hope that we can all make a difference.

European contact with the region I come from started in 1629. The flagship of the Dutch East India Company, the *Batavia*, was wrecked on Half Moon Reef on the Abrolhos Islands on her maiden voyage. A group led by Commander Francisco Pelsaert took the longboat and set off for Batavia, now Jakarta. While they were gone, some 125 people were killed in a mutiny. Pelsaert returned and restored order, and the Dutch left again for Batavia, leaving behind a couple of small stone forts and little else except the remains of the *Batavia* and her many cannons.

The next European to pass through the mid-west was George Grey, who was wrecked at Gantheaume Bay, at the mouth of the Murchison River, in 1839. Grey followed well-defined pathways that, after development, grew into stock routes. Grey noticed groups of relatively well-built huts, some intense land use, things such as yams, and a relatively large population of Aboriginal people. Grey also found wells dug to a depth of 10 to 12 feet along the paths he followed.

We now know that the mid-west is home to many different Aboriginal groups: the Nanda people from the northern coastal part; the Ngadju people from the southern coastal part; the Amangu people located in Geraldton and the greater Geraldton region; the Wadjari people from the Murchison and Mullewa; the Badimia people from Yalgoo, Paynes Find and Mt Magnet; and the Western Desert people from Wiluna and the edge of the Gibson and Little Sandy Deserts. Collectively, the region's Indigenous people are known as the Yamatji people.

In 1846 Augustus Gregory explored north of the Avon Valley. In 1848 he travelled as far north as the coal seam at Mingenew and, later, further north again as far as the Murchison River. At the Murchison River he discovered galena, or lead ore. Lead mining started in 1848. Augustus Gregory was given the job of surveying the town of Geraldton, with 25 to 50 half-acre lots, on a townsite of 1 280 acres. Also included in his instructions was to find a suitable place adjoining a good landing space and a good site for a public jetty. Augustus Gregory then left WA and mounted two more expeditions—one went from the Victoria River to the Gulf of Carpentaria and thence to Rockhampton and Brisbane. It took 18 months and covered 8 000 kilometres. His last expedition was in search of Leichhardt, from west of Brisbane to Adelaide. In memory of this remarkable man, I have established the Augustus Gregory Awards, which are available to any of the 19 schools in my electorate to recognise the boy and girl students in their last year of primary and secondary school who have made the most improvement in their final year. In all his explorations, Gregory never lost a man or a horse. He was a superb organiser and planner and never came into conflict with the Indigenous people he encountered. I am pleased to say that Geraldton Secondary College has given these awards, and I personally congratulate Jordan Dalgety and Lot Tagive for winning them. Although these dry facts do not mention conflict, there must have been some. I think Geraldton can lead the country on achieving reconciliation between our peoples, and I will do my best to help bring this about.

My own family's history is similar to that of the region. The first member of my family, David Blayney, arrived from Wales in 1858, and over the generations my family have mostly been farmers. Both my parents served in the Australian Army in World War II. They belonged to a generation to whom we owe much. This generation stopped Australia from being invaded and rid the world of fascist governments that were among the most ugly and evil that the world has ever seen.

I had a simple, peaceful farm upbringing, from which I have developed a love of reading, a love of the bush and, I regret, a relative disinterest in sport, with the honourable exception of the Fremantle Football Club.

Mr Frank Alban; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Andrew Waddell; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr John Quigley; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr David Templeman; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Acting Speaker; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr John Day; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Ian Blayney; Ms Margaret Quirk; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Martin Whitely

What drives me? Why am I here? Why am I on this side of the house? I will quote from the chapter written by Ian Hancock entitled "The Rise of the Liberal Party" in *The Australian Century*. It states —

The 1949 success of the Liberal Party as a party committed to anti-socialism, national development, the mixed economy and free enterprise, welfare and individual rights, created a revised agenda for Australian politics that would last well into the next decade.

I contend that it lasted significantly longer than that. Let us go forward to 1996, and I will quote from *The Longest Decade* by George Megalogenis. It states —

I have always believed in an Australia built on reward for individual effort with a special place of honour for small business as the engine room of our economy. I've always believed in a safety net for those amongst us who don't make it. I've always believed in the family as the stabilising and cohering unit of our society. And, I believe very passionately in an Australia drawn from the four corners of the earth, but united together behind a common set of Australian values.

The speaker he quoted was, of course, John Howard.

And so to what our colleague Hon Bruce Donaldson refers to as my "lovely little electorate". Geraldton is a different electorate now; it has collected half of the old seat of Greenough's population and has the same boundaries as the newly created City of Geraldton-Greenough, which are those of the old Shire of Greenough. The electorate is about 50 kilometres wide and 50 kilometres from north to south and includes the Abrolhos Islands.

Firstly, I would like to pay credit to the previous member for Geraldton, Mr Shane Hill. Shane was the member for two terms and was known in the area as an enthusiastic ambassador for the city. Before him was Mr Bob Bloffwitch, who had two terms and also worked hard for the city. Previous to Bob was Mr Jeff Carr, who is still liked and respected in the area for his hard work for us over many years. Likewise, the electorate of Greenough was served by our Speaker, Mr Grant Woodhams; Mr Jamie Edwards; Mr Kevin Minson; Mr Reg Tubby; and Sir David Brand. All were hard workers and all were liked and respected in the electorate and the wider region.

Of all the regions represented in this place, I think Geraldton, the surrounding area and the hinterland probably face one of the most exciting futures. The first challenge we face is building the new deepwater port of Oakajee and its associated railway and infrastructure. Initially, Oakajee will send out one 100 000-tonne ship of iron ore a day. Some projections are for a lot more. The ore will come in from Jack Hills, Wiluna West, Weld Range, Karara and other mines. Along with this will be needed new powerlines, more low-cost housing and all the other services that are needed as a population grows.

The single comment I make is that there is a desperate need for a simpler, faster approval process for mines and infrastructure, because our current processes seem to be in place to drive away investors, rather than to encourage them. I recently had in my office representatives from Gindalbie Metals Ltd, which literally needs a couple of ticks to invest \$1.8 billion. Our miners are extremely valued community members. I recently visited Iluka Resources Ltd's plant at Narngulu, which processes mineral sands from Eneabba. The plant at Narngulu, just east of Geraldton, employs 180 people directly and many more indirectly. It has recently decided to upgrade its apprentice scheme and has increased expenditure in this area by \$600 000 per annum. It is an active participant in many community events. Iluka has recently decided to make Geraldton its base for processing sand from South Australia. This will mean an investment of \$60 million and will guarantee its operations locally for another 10 years.

Thankfully, grain farming is having a good season after two disasters in 2006 and 2007. Over the years, Geraldton has established itself as the second-largest grain port in Australia. Adaptation to climate change is vital for the future of farming, and the availability of well-paid mining jobs to the east of our marginal farming country will be a huge help. It is also critical that our plant breeders can use any technology available to them to speed adoption, and I ask our government to do as the governments in Victoria and New South Wales have done and remove all barriers to genetically modified crops.

The primary industry that is currently going through a hard time is our crayfishing industry. Many people have talked to me or rung me to discuss the pot reductions brought in by our government. Making these decisions can never be easy, but I consider that the industry has a good future. I look forward to working with it and its people to achieve this.

Most members probably do not know that Australia's first scheduled air service from Geraldton to Derby was operated by West Australian Airways Ltd. It was operated by Sir Norman Brearly, using Bristol Air Tourers, and started on 5 December 1921.

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Our region once again looks to the sky, but this time with a very different purpose. The mid-west is competing with southern Africa for the square kilometre array project, which will be an absolutely awesome radio telescope. The forerunner of the square kilometre array is the Australian square kilometre array pathfinder, which will be built at Boolardy station, east of Murchison settlement. This area is truly radio quiet; it is one of the most radio quiet areas in the world. ASKAP will comprise up to 40 parabolic dishes, forming an array of antennas. Construction will start in 2009, with full operation by 2013. In its first six hours of operation, ASKAP will gather more information than that which has been gathered by radio astronomy in the past 50 years. In one week ASKAP will generate more information than that which is currently on the worldwide web. However, the successful operation of ASKAP will be merely a step towards hopefully gaining the full SKA. The SKA has been formed by a collaboration of 19 countries and will have an expected budget approaching \$2 billion. The area of the dishes will be around one million square metres. Half the dishes will be in the radio quiet zone, which has a radius of about 80 kilometres around the station, with the rest spread across Australia and New Zealand, up to 5 000 kilometres away. The five key science projects that have been identified for the SKA include extreme tests of general relativity from the study of pulsars and black holes; the evolution of galaxies, cosmology, dark matter and energy; probing the Dark Ages—the first black holes and stars; the cradle of life—searching for planets and life; and the origin and evolution of cosmic magnetism. Many of these developments are exciting.

Another important thing for Geraldton this year has been the discovery of the wreck of HMAS *Sydney*, which sank during World War II with the loss of all 645 men on board. The local Rotary club wishes to complete the fifth element of its deeply moving memorial on Mt Scott, which overlooks the city, to commemorate the discovery of HMAS *Sydney*. I am sure that all members would support it.

Finally, I would like to mention the Geraldton Universities Centre. Currently, it offers courses from the University of Western Australia, Curtin University and Edith Cowan University. The Geraldton Universities Centre could grow into a solid local institution in its own right by researching via the Square Kilometre Array, studying the impact of climate change and developing exchanges with our new mineral customers in northern Asia.

The first function I attended as a member was to celebrate the one-hundred and tenth anniversary of the independence of the Philippines, which was held by the Mabuhay Club. Recently, I attended the local mosque to celebrate Eid, the end of Ramadan. These events demonstrate the kind of electorate I come from—diverse, open to the world and ready to take a leap forward. My electors are mindful of Geraldton's history, but they are not overcome by it. I face the challenging time as their local member, but I look forward to it and I think we will do it well.

I take this opportunity to thank my wife, Barbara, my wider family and the people who helped me to get here. In particular, I thank my campaign chair, Len Carroll; treasurer, Rod O'Connor; and committee members Julie Boschetti and Graham Greenaway. I also thank Jackie Gill for her help in advertising and Gordon Thompson and Ruth Keamy for assisting with my campaign. Finally, I thank Zak Kirkup and Ben Morton from Menzies House for their help and advice.

[Applause.]

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [12.11 pm]: I add my congratulations to those of other members in this place to the member for Moore who has assumed the role of Speaker. I am confident that he will serve the office with distinction, integrity and impartiality. I add that he should not feel constrained should he desire, given his penchant for poetry, to deliver his rulings in rhyming couplets.

I welcome and congratulate the newly elected members on both sides of the house and I hope, leaving partisan sentiment aside, that they serve their electorates capably and with passion. To the new members with the furnace of partisan politics still warm after their election victories, I make the observation that the most effective politicians in this place are those who work cooperatively with members from both sides of the house. The realisation that what we have in common is greater than our differences is important. No place is that more evident than within the setting of parliamentary committees, where valuable work and inquiry takes place within a bipartisan climate of achieving common goals for the good of all Western Australians.

I am delighted to see my colleagues who were re-elected. As a member in the North Metropolitan Region and mindful that there was limited opportunity for valedictory speeches, I should acknowledge absent friends. In particular, Dianne Guise, the former Deputy Speaker and member for Wanneroo, who was elected in 2001. She was an enthusiastic and staunch advocate for her electorate. Similarly, Judy Hughes, the former member for Kingsley, was dedicated and assiduous in her efforts to represent her constituents. I wish them well in their future endeavours. I will sadly miss Shane Hill, who I liked to call "Mr Geraldton". He can be justly proud of what he achieved for his electorate in his two terms as a member of Parliament. Similarly, Jaye Radisich was

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diligent, energetic and possessed that brand of youthful optimism, believing that anything was possible; a frame of mind that I believe led her to run for the unwinnable seat of Swan Hills in the first place. Vale to my fellow rooster, Tony McRae, who abhorred inequity and racism and who could always be relied upon for a thoughtful and robust contribution to debate in this house. Vale also to Paul Andrews, who was unstinting in raising the profile of the wretched state of organ donation rates in Western Australia.

I congratulate the Premier and his cabinet and wish them well in their endeavours at a key stage of Western Australia's development.

In recent times I have had cause to reflect on the utility of what we do in this place. With the indulgence of the house and before addressing substantive issues, I will make some remarks about our role as members of Parliament. It is one of the privileges of being a grumpy, old woman that unsolicited opinions flow very freely. I am also galvanized into speaking about parliamentary standards after recent public comments made by the Premier.

Over the past few days there has been a frequently made observation that politicians are not held in high esteem in the community. That is not entirely true and it is one of the great paradoxes of politics that many people are prepared to think kindly of their local member and will, in many cases, vehemently defend his or her conscientious efforts, whilst at the same time being scathing of politicians in general. How is this gulf created? If we are held in contempt by the general community, why make the personal sacrifices and take the flak that we do? The trite and glib answer might be to blame our low standing on the media. I do not believe that to be the case. We are architects of our poor reputation. The press might have been implicit in destroying the standing of members on both sides who, by and large, are conscientious, honest and sincere, but the media is not solely responsible. If we choose to focus in this place on the personal flaws and shortcomings of our colleagues and if we obsess about drinking habits, travel entitlements, parliamentary salaries and on fetishes and eccentricities, we are all diminished. If we navel gaze—I apologise for using that term as I believe we have a few former Navy officers as members in this house—and focus on other members' frailties instead of on serious policy matters, it is not unexpected that all of us will ultimately suffer. These preoccupations send out the wrong message. We are all seen as equally culpable and the public, not unreasonably, concludes that, in the meantime, we are not focusing on the important issues; the things that really matter to them.

The frequent lament about Western Australian politics is that there is a paucity of considered public discourse on key issues. Why is that so? Possibly because we feed the media with an unnourishing and unsatisfying diet of sleaze and innuendo, such that they are sated, and do not dwell on the important policy challenges confronting the state. Everyone in this house has the capacity to set and change the agenda.

It also means that community leaders fill the vacuum that we leave by not engaging in these serious debates. Individuals such as Fiona Stanley, Lieutenant General John Sanderson, John Worsfold, Don Voelte, Linda Dorrington, Fred Chaney, Tim Winton, Lisa Scaffidi, Wayne Bergman, Andrew Forrest, James Pearson and Peter Yu are rightly lionized for their leadership by fostering community discussion on key issues of concern for Western Australians. This is not a bad thing and their contributions are invariably valuable, thoughtful and often thought-provoking. However, the question could be posed: is that not our job?

The flipside of the standards dialogue is that we set impossibly unattainable goals for ourselves and by doing so we set ourselves for failure and opprobrium. Who amongst us has never had a little too much to drink, lost the odd demerit point, used colourful language or told an inappropriate joke? In public office doing one or all of these things consistently and whilst in the workplace is clearly unacceptable and should not be condoned. For all of us to come into this place, hands on heart, and pretend that it has never happened to us, nor will it happen in the future, is simply ludicrous. I believe a kind of McCarthyism has descended on Parliament. I am reminded of the plea of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* when he implores —

If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?

In other words the members in this place are a reflection of our broader community—flawed and human—although, as an aside, possibly not as ethnically diverse as it should be. Clearly, we should strive to act with decorum, integrity and dignity and be sensitive to others all or most of the time. My argument is that in isolated cases where human frailty prevails, we should not collectively abandon our public obligation to keep on message and to pursue a policy-based debate. This brings me back to the paradox of why individual local members of Parliament rate more highly than the genus politician-at-large. Personal acquaintance with or close observation of the work of a good local member enables the public to realise that we are ordinary individuals who are no better or worse than anyone else in the community; we just have a job to do. It is in the role of local member in the electorate that we make those worthwhile and life-affirming human connections.

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I must say how privileged and grateful I am to be returned as the member for Girrawheen. As has happened in other electorates, the complexion of the seat has changed after redistribution, with the suburbs of Hamersley and Warwick now included. I was encouraged to hear my colleague the member for Cannington mention his long-time friendship with the federal Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Stephen Conroy, and I may well enlist his help to make representations to finally resolve the long-running saga of the Hamersley communications towers. The residents of Hamersley have been patient. It is a complex issue, but with persistence and mutual goodwill I hope some progress can be made.

Concerns have been expressed from across the electorate about the adequacy of public transport. Although the previous government opened the Greenwood train station and increased the frequency of some bus routes, an underlying issue is the dominance of the north-south orientation of public transport. Many people need to travel east-west. The popularity of the trains means that there are parking pressures at the Warwick and Greenwood stations, and I will maintain a watching brief on how this situation can be ameliorated.

I am gratified that as a result of the collective advocacy efforts of the community, the strong support of the City of Stirling and a contribution by the state government from the community sporting and recreation facilities fund, the Balga swimming pool finally opened earlier this year. I very much commend previous ministers Kobelke and Kucera for their efforts. The pool is a wonderful community asset and it is a tangible sign that positive change has arrived.

I digress briefly to recognise the work of the Balga Action Group, which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. Its members have been tireless and fearless in their advocacy for a better Balga. They have achieved much, and none more so than one of its founders, Syd Rostron, who passed away earlier this week after a long struggle with illness. My sympathies go out to his wife, Muriel, and I know she will be comforted by the knowledge that the community had a chance to formally acknowledge Syd's work and generosity at the anniversary celebration dinner held just a few weeks ago, a dinner that Syd conceived and organised. Rest in peace, Syd.

The closure of the Blackmore and Hainsworth Primary Schools in Girrawheen was not a popular decision—I think this was reflected in the vote at some of the booths—even though they will be replaced with a multiservice delivery, state-of-the-art school at Roseworth. I fully understand the way in which education gives our children real opportunities and choices for their future, and we must be vigilant to ensure that we do not settle for second best. I was reminded the other day of a conversation the current Premier, as Minister for Education, had some years ago with Marangaroo residents who were anxious to build a new school on the eastern side of Marangaroo. The school was opened in 2005 and now has more than 550 students. I am told that the then minister was not very sympathetic to representations from the community and allegedly told the locals that the school would be built over his dead body. I am very pleased to advise the house that, despite the Premier's robust health, Rawlinson Primary School is nevertheless thriving!

Some of the concerns of constituents across my electorate coincide with my role as shadow Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Road Safety. These issues include visibility of police, the prevalence of graffiti and the death or serious injury of so many young Western Australians on our roads.

It is appropriate to reflect on my all-too-brief time as a minister under Premiers Gallop and Carpenter; it was a privilege and an honour. Although I held a range of portfolios—including disability services, multicultural interests and citizenship, women's interests, federal-state relations and, most latterly, corrective services and small business—I am not unreasonably disappointed, having started a range of initiatives, that I cannot see them through to completion. In the small business portfolio we had begun working closely with local government to scrutinise the alarming volume of local laws with a view to making a concerted effort to cut complexity, red tape and delays for small business.

Western Australia consistently rates badly in national red tape surveys. I hope also that trialling of the business cost calculator, to assess the impact on small business of proposed laws going to cabinet, is rolled out more broadly. Western Australia's active participation in the Council of Australian Governments' business regulation committee should also continue. I intend to continue in this place my crusade to simplify the compliance environment for small business. There may be capacity to expand the terms of reference of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation to oversight regulation to ensure that it is not overly burdensome on small businesses. I also hope that the tax cuts promised by the government—which were not detailed during the election campaign—might include some concessions to lift the threshold for payroll tax. In the booming economy there has been some bracket creep, and in recent years some small businesses that previously fell outside the threshold are, for the first time, having to pay that tax.

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Responsibility for the State Migration Centre also fell under the small business umbrella. The previous government ran the successful Go West campaign to recruit workers from the eastern states. It also ran campaigns overseas for skilled migration and business investment. Obtaining enough skilled workers for Western Australia is not a short-term challenge and requires sustained and targeted effort. Similarly, we need to assist local enterprises to attract and retain staff. There are some extremely innovative small businesses throughout Western Australia that have taken unusual measures to attract and keep staff. I take this opportunity to congratulate Burswood Resort and Christina's restaurant in Victoria Park, both of which have recruited a number of women from the Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women. This relationship has proved mutually beneficial and I commend these and many other businesses for their progressive and imaginative approach to finding loyal and hardworking staff.

This is a good segue to corrective services, which was another of my former portfolio responsibilities. This portfolio was extremely challenging. There is still much to be done. It continues to be a source of shame and regret that Western Australia has unacceptably high levels of Indigenous imprisonment and recidivism. Although Indigenous people make up only three per cent of Western Australia's total population, they make up 43 per cent of our prison population. Reducing that disparity should remain a government-wide priority, if for no other reason than that the cost of this imprisonment is enormous, both financially and socially. The issue is not confined to corrective services; there is systemic inequality in Western Australia, and the complex combination of drivers of this demand cannot readily be unravelled. Chief Justice Wayne Martin is showing some great leadership on this issue, and I am hopeful that the Attorney General, despite his comments recently reported in *The Australian*, will exercise his characteristic intellectual rigour to reach an understanding that we must persist to reduce this symptom of broader social disadvantage, inequality and racism.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I intend to introduce in this place a private member's bill to amend the Prisons Act, which will mandate programs for Indigenous prisoners. This is modelled on similar legislation in Canada, which has become a factor in the halving of Indigenous imprisonment rates in that country over the past 15 years. The proposed Derby Prison incorporates a number of other innovations that have worked well elsewhere. It is my fervent hope that this project will succeed.

I sincerely thank those who have worked with me at the ministerial office, especially those who had some responsibility for policy. I thank Simon Ward, Kylie Turner, John Lamb, Mia Krznic, Jaide Lancaster, Ryan Taaffe, Stuart Latter and Simone Rodwell. It was a wild roller-coaster ride, and I thank them for sharing it with me.

At the electorate level, can I say how much I appreciate the indefatigable and loyal Michelle Sweet and Ingrid Telikostoglou. They both make it an absolute pleasure to come to work, and I thank them.

Finally, I make one observation, and I do so without rancour, about our future. On 6 September, Western Australians were unequivocal in their judgement of our performance. But government by default is not going to be ultimately satisfying for the electorate unless there is some consistent vision and direction. I listened in vain for a coherent vision or theme in the Governor's address last week. What is the agenda; how and when will it be delivered? I accept that this government has had only 50 days. That might not be long enough to deliver very much, but it is certainly ample time to communicate long-term goals and visions, and I do not consider that that has occurred. Government by whiteboard is not sustainable. It is not going to cut it unless there is some underlying rationale, strategy and broader philosophy. That is what leadership is all about.

In his seminal work *Death Sentence: The Decay of Public Language*, Don Watson defines the word "commitment" as follows —

Commitment is the worst kind of politician's word. To say they are *committed* to something does not mean they believe it (If they did, why not say so?); or that they will do it (If they will, why not do so?). It is a standard weasel word, a weed which spread with the fashion for mission statements, new management theories and sports psychology. There is deceit, including self-deceit, at its heart; but, as with all weeds, *commitment's* main offence is to the landscape. It is the ugliness of it and the ubiquity. It might not fool us, but it does depress us.

I heartily agree with Don Watson and believe the word "commitment" should be banned from the political vocabulary. I have to say that recently the word is being used with reckless abandon. We all accept that there is much to do and that it cannot all be accomplished at once, but the "C" word is an obscenity, and if there is no sincere and earnest intention to do something within a set timetable, I wish people would just say so.

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In the movie *The American President*, the character President Andrew Shepherd, played by Michael Douglas, says this about his opponent, Bob Rumson, played by Richard Dreyfuss —

We have serious problems to solve, and we need serious people to solve them. And whatever your particular problem is, I promise you Bob Rumson is not the least bit interested in solving it. He is interested in two things, and two things only: making you afraid of it, and telling you who's to blame for it. That, ladies and gentlemen, is how you win elections.

Members, in the spirit of my opening remarks, I reiterate those lines —

We have serious problems to solve, and we need serious people to solve them.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.33 pm]: I start my inaugural speech in this house by congratulating you, Madam Acting Speaker (Ms L.L. Baker), and all members of this house on their election to this house. It is an honour to be here, and I look forward to many good debates and good work.

Madam Acting Speaker and fellow members, my name is Mike Nahan, and I come to this house as the member for Riverton. The electorate of Riverton is framed by the Canning River in the north, the Canning Vale industrial centre in the south, the safe Liberal seat of Bateman in the west and the safe Labor seat of Cannington in the east.

Riverton is a quintessential Western Australian community—suburban, middle class, aspirational, family oriented and politically pragmatic. The area was first subdivided 40 years ago to accommodate people drawn to the state during the first iron ore boom. It has grown in spurts with each successive boom, including this one. From the start, the area attracted a large number of overseas migrants—first British, then people of Chinese descent from South East Asia and Tamils from Sri Lanka, and in recent times people from India and China. As a result, it has a very large number of overseas migrants and the highest proportion of residents with Asian ancestry across our electorates. Now, as in the past, people are drawn to this area primarily because of its ethnic diversity and tolerance, safe suburban lifestyle, spacious and affordable housing, good transport links and, importantly, excellent public schools. These attributes define and unite the area.

There was a strong, and I believe accurate, view in the electorate that many of these attributes were being allowed to wane. That is why I am here and that is why there was a change of government. It is my task to ensure that these attributes in Riverton are preserved and enhanced—a task I take on with pleasure and honour.

Two concerns stand out in the priorities of Riverton—empowering public schools and completing Roe Highway. The electorate has in Rossmoyne and Willetton high schools the state's top two public schools. They excel academically and in terms of the quality of education. The excellence of these schools is a key reason why people live in the area, and come to the area and stay in the area. The schools draw in those who place a high premium on academic achievement and good public education. While other electorates have seen a massive exodus of students from the public education system, this has not happened in Riverton. Indeed, only 10 per cent of the children from Riverton attend private secondary schools—less than a third of the rate of comparable areas.

The high quality of public secondary schools and a supportive community have contributed significantly to the quality of the electorate's public primary schools. Nonetheless, the performance of Riverton's schools is being restrained by a lack of funding and excessive bureaucracy. I look forward to working with the government to address both constraints to enable public education in Riverton to excel further.

We must complete Roe Highway. The need for an efficient ring-road through the southern metropolitan area to the port of Fremantle has been known for over 40 years. The route was identified and the land zoned for the route over 30 years ago. Seven stages of the ring road—Roe Highway—have been built with the help of the commonwealth, but it stops abruptly at Kwinana Freeway, clogging the freeway and pushing thousands of heavily laden trucks onto suburban roads each day, endangering lives and health, imposing high costs on shippers and consumers and destroying suburban roads. It was, and it is, a planning bungle of the worst order. It is set to get worse. Even if a substantial share of the port traffic is transhipped by train, truck traffic from the port is set to double over the next seven years, and will remain high thereafter. We must now complete the task with Roe Highway stage 8. This can be achieved while protecting the environment along the route. I look forward to working with the government to achieve this vital piece of economic infrastructure.

My journey to this house is perhaps different from that of most other members. I am, as they say, from the “ideas business”. In the past 30 years I have enjoyed challenging work in academia, in the public service, with think tanks in Australia and overseas, in consultancies and in the media as an economist, policy analyst and commentator.

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I never aspired to be a politician, even though my work often brought me into the political sphere. But times have changed, and my commitment to Western Australia convinced me to throw my hat in the ring. The transition to politics will be interesting, but it will not be a case of abandoning ideas for politics, for I am determined that the two shall not be mutually exclusive. It is my intention to use my experience and skills to help ensure that we in the Liberal Party keep true to our values and combine good policy with good government and good politics, and principle with pragmatism.

I am a Liberal—a classical Liberal—not from birth or social affiliation, but from the observation of what makes for a good society, from a belief in the rationality of free men and women, and from a belief that accumulated power tends to be abused. I believe in the natural right of individuals—that people should be free to choose to work, pray, play and shop, and that people should be allowed to own and enjoy property willingly and of their own volition, as well as the fruits of their own labour. Respect for these rights is, I believe, the foundation of good society and good government. I also believe that with freedom comes responsibility; that is, the right to choose must come with the responsibility for the consequences of one's choices. Rights and responsibility are two sides of the same coin. Too often, and with tragic consequences, rights have been allowed to be divorced from responsibility. Of course, there are limits to individual freedom. Freedom is not absolute and in its nature must respect other peoples' freedom. Within the limits of humane society, we must take responsibility for ourselves and for our community.

I believe that open, competitive markets, although imperfect, and, at times like now, volatile and harsh, are the best means of allocating resources, creating jobs and wealth, ensuring freedom and prosperity and preserving the environment. The growth in wealth and prosperity around the world over the past 20 years, which has produced the largest movement of people from poverty in human history, is testament to the benefits of economic freedom. Australia has just gone through the most protracted period of sustained economic growth in its history, led by Western Australia, thanks primarily to the market-based reforms introduced by state and commonwealth governments during the 1980s and 1990s. The recent collapse of world markets has understandably cast doubt on markets and economic freedom. However, it would be a serious error for us or governments generally to reject open markets for greater government control and ownership. The current malaise was brought about in part by regulatory failure, both in government and elsewhere.

I am a migrant from America married to a migrant from Malaysia. I came to Australia out of choice and knowing what the rest of the world has to offer. I have spent my life wandering the world and Australia, both physically and mentally, trying to understand what makes for successful government, how different governments solve problems, and what works and what does not work. The issues and challenges facing this house are not unique. The world is a vast laboratory, which we must explore and learn from if we are to reach our potential.

The Western Australian economy thrives and wanes on the strength of its global links. Indeed, Western Australia is one of the most globalised economies in the world. We must be global in our focus and cognisant that the world is an intensely competitive place that rewards success greatly and treats failure ruthlessly. Western Australia is blessed with large resource wealth, but so are many other places. Indeed, our advantage springs more from our openness to markets, rule of law and entrepreneurship than from our resource base.

I am a sceptic of large government. While governments play an essential, indeed pivotal, role in creating and sustaining a good society, they have an inherent tendency to interfere when they should not, to do what they should not, to act when they should not, to tax too much and to regulate too much and poorly, and they have an innate incapacity to comprehend the consequences of their own actions. Markets do fail, and they are failing badly around the world now. Governments also fail, and their failures are often more pronounced and devastating than that of markets. The tendency for governments to do too much and to interfere too much not only harms people, businesses and families, but also distracts them from the real priorities. Large government is too often essentially a smokescreen for inaction on difficult priorities.

I know from my very brief period as a local member that the demand for more laws, regulations and money from the public is unrelenting. Saying no, as Sir Humphrey would say, is electorally "courageous". However, at times we must say no, so that we can say yes when it really counts.

I am an optimist. To me, the future, particularly in Western Australia, is filled with boundless opportunity limited only by our imagination, desire and willingness to work hard and smartly. I am a baby boomer, a member of the luckiest generation that has experienced opportunity, wealth and peace only dreamt of by previous generations. I was born of parents of the best generation—the generation that was young during the Great Depression and came of age in World War II. They knew the pain of tough economic times and the horror

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of war. They also knew firsthand that adversity could be overcome and prosperity and peace achieved through hard work. My parents instilled this belief in me.

Like other members, I have witnessed firsthand nations and states with seemingly insurmountable problems transform themselves. I have watched in amazement as China rises out of poverty, war and dysfunctional despotism. I have watched Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan transform themselves from poor, war-torn colonies into First World economic dynamos. I have watched Victoria rescue itself from being a rust-belt state. People, governments and societies are capable of incredible things if they are allowed and have a mind to do it.

Western Australia has huge potential. It has the resources, the people, the firms, the links to world markets, a good reputation, good but stretched infrastructure and a world-class quality of life. It has the potential to be one of the most prosperous and vibrant places on earth.

We are heading into the most challenging economic time since my father's generation. The recession that is unfolding around the developed world will hit us in Western Australia. We will not be fully shielded by China. This will be a huge shock to the electorate. The last election was waged in a boom mentality, with the dominant theme being how to redistribute the largesse created by the boom. The boom is now over. We are entering a period of rapidly declining growth in wealth. State revenue is falling and demands for assistance will rise. Fiscal stress will be a reality. We can already see the change in budgetary positions in the eastern states. We will face difficult times. It will require tough choices and real leadership. It will require an emphasis on getting value for money and a focus on the priorities of health, education, public safety and transport. However, the economy will recover.

In the difficult times ahead, we must continue to plan for the time when the funds flow again readily into resource development. We must continue to focus on improving access to land and resources, building economic infrastructure and developing Perth as a regional services and research centre for the resource sector. During the boom, many were lulled into taking economic development for granted. It would be an even greater error during the difficult times ahead to not give economic development top priority. We often forget it, but economic development and growth are the foundations of a vibrant, sustainable society. Growth creates wealth and opportunity. Wealth and opportunity create the capacity and desire to protect and enhance the environment.

The essential building block of society is the family. Society's definition of the family is becoming looser and more flexible. Governments are responding and interfering more in the definition, rights, responsibilities and choices of families. These are some of the most difficult and pressing issues awaiting us. It is my view that governments interfere too much, particularly in the provision of welfare. These actions are undermining the strengths of families and augmenting, if not creating, many of our most pressing issues.

For many years, I have written and spoken in favour of federalism. Governments need limits. A vast country like Australia, with its great variety of people, industry and resources, needs variety in government. Multiple layers of government give rise to the need to allocate resources and responsibilities amongst governments. Australia's founding fathers recognised this and founded a federal constitution with defined roles and responsibilities for the states and the commonwealth. I believe the original allocation fits this nation well even today. The Constitution, however, was flawed. It gave the commonwealth access to an excessive share of taxing powers. As Alfred Deakin warned in 1902, the Constitution left the states —

... legally free, but financially bound to the chariot wheels of the central government. Their need will be its opportunity

The states have become financially bound to the commonwealth as Deakin predicted. Contrary to Deakin's prediction, the states have also lost freedom and responsibilities. The impact on the status and performance of the states has been profound and negative.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It has allowed the commonwealth to: intrude where it should not; accumulate funds for itself; redistribute funds according to its political interests, rather than the needs of the economy and the wider community; and leave the states dependent on handouts and a dysfunctional set of taxes. This has undermined our system and the quality of government. The states have not been innocent victims. Too often they have acquiesced, taking Joh Bjelke-Petersen's view that the only good tax is a commonwealth tax. The states have often failed to innovate in the delivery of services, creating scope and demand for a commonwealth intervention. Too often, the states have lost without contest the battle of ideas.

I hope to work with members on both sides of the house to reform and repair our federal system. It is up to this Parliament, in my view; we in Western Australia must take the lead. We have the most to lose. Western

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Australia's share of goods and services tax revenue is set to decline precipitously over the next few years, just when we need it most. Of course, we cannot do it alone. It will be very difficult to do, and it has been tried before. But it is a task that we must pursue with vigour, innovation and persistence. If we fail in this challenge, this Parliament will become but an appendage of the commonwealth and our electorate will be the worse for it, as will the nation. The focus of reform, in my view, should include this Parliament and the way it is formed. It might seem presumptive for a new member such as me to argue the case for change, but bear with me. I would like to have a debate on mandatory voting. Although I recognise that it is a firm feature of Australia's democracy, mandatory voting does, in my opinion, allow political parties to rely on compulsion, rather than persuasion. It allows parties to take people for granted. Even more radically, I suppose, I think it is also time to have a debate about the structure of our Parliament; specifically, do we need a bicameral system anymore? Should the Legislative Council be retained; and, if so, should it be converted into a house of review with part-time members appointed for their expertise, rather than their political affiliation, such as the House of Lords? The Parliamentary Education Office and the Constitution Centre do a great job in informing people of our system of government and I congratulate them. I believe debate about its renewal will give people a greater sense of ownership of the system.

I was raised on a dysfunctional hobby farm in the backblocks of Michigan, where I grew up one of 13 children. Life in that large family was colourful and chaotic, as life in large families can only be. It gave me an affinity to people on the land, an aversion to hard physical labour and a love of nature, and it also drove me to see the world. My Catholic upbringing instilled in me a belief in the sanctity of life, the innate goodness of people and the need to help my fellow man, particularly those less fortunate than me.

I admire many political leaders but two local lads from the bush stand out as those I hope to emulate; namely, John Hyde, the one-armed pundit from Dalwallinu, and Peter Walsh. Both men forcibly stuck to their principles in the party room and caucus. They provided leadership and ideas, gave backbone to government, shared a passion for good policy and were committed to their communities.

I thank the Liberal Party and the people of Riverton for the trust they have placed in me. I am well aware that the people of Riverton have put me on a short leash. Many people worked to get me here, and I cannot thank them enough. I was amazed and humbled by the number of strangers who offered to help me. I refer to not only members of the Liberal Party and those who live in my electorate, but also those who are not members of the Liberal Party and who do not live in my electorate. I thank them all and promise to honour their efforts. In particular I thank John Corser, who gave me advice and guidance; Mike Goddard, for his friendship and time; Harold Clough, who in his own way urged me to have a go; and, Willy Packer, for his enthusiasm, amongst other things. I could not and would not have taken this journey without the love and support of my wife, Nyuk, who is in the public gallery, and our children Keavy and Key. True to form, Nyuk has deleted my words of appreciation for her from my speech.

I commit myself to represent the people of Riverton and to contribute to the wellbeing and growth of the great state of Western Australia.

[Applause.]

MR M.P. WHITELY (Bassendean) [12.57 pm]: In his absence I congratulate the member for Moore on his elevation to the position of Speaker. I am sure he will do an excellent job and that he will display the degree of impartiality that is required of the position.

This is my third term as a member of Parliament. It is a little strange to be sitting on this side of the house. It is also strange to be in Parliament without some of my good mates who joined Parliament with me in the class of 2001. I refer to Paul Andrews, Shane Hill, Tony McRae and Dianne Guise, whom I miss and for whom I have enormous respect. They are my friends. We went through some difficult times together. I am saddened that they are not here. I also pay my respects to Graham Giffard and Judy Hughes.

I will start my speech on a positive note by congratulating the Premier for making a wise decision. I am pleased that the Premier appointed a Minister for Mental Health when he established his cabinet positions. That was a good initiative. Mental health requires detailed attention and often it was given second priority when it was rolled up in the health portfolio. I congratulate the Premier on that decision. I also congratulate him for appointing the member for Eyre as the Minister for Mental Health. I have had long conversations with the member for Eyre. Frankly, I am encouraged by the sorts of things that he has said privately to me and publicly in the chamber. I think he will offer a balance between a holistic and a medical approach to mental health. I will

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watch his activities closely and cast an eye over the decisions he makes. At this stage, I am encouraged by the Premier's placement of the member for Eyre in that position.

The time I have to speak before we adjourn for lunch is obviously short. I will talk more after question time. My speech will concentrate on a proposal. I believe that politics should be a competition of ideas rather than a popularity contest or a contest that involves other aspects. In that light, I propose that we as a Parliament consider engaging the Western Australian Electoral Commission to conduct preselection ballots for all registered political parties. Under my proposal, political parties would continue to set their own rules and determine their own entitlements to vote; however, the WAEC would sit above the process and ensure the integrity of the process. By ensuring the integrity of the process, I refer not only to the ballot, or conducting a vote, but also to the auditing and verifying of individual entitlements to vote. My proposal is that the WAEC not only conduct the vote, but also ensure that the electoral rolls of particular parties have integrity. The obvious argument against that proposal is that political parties, as separate legal entities that have voluntary memberships, should be able to govern their own affairs. However, the law requires the Western Australian Electoral Commission conduct elections for a multitude of organisations. Often unions in Western Australia are required to conduct ballots through the Western Australian Electoral Commission or, if they are affiliated nationally, through the Australian Electoral Commission. I have a copy of the "Western Australian Electoral Commission 2006-07 Annual Report", which states that in 2006-07 the Western Australian Electoral Commission was responsible for overseeing elections for 10 unions.

[Continued on page 318.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm