

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 26 May 2010

THE SPEAKER (Mr G.A. Woodhams) took the chair at 12.00 noon, and read prayers.

## SHACK SITE COMMUNITIES

### *Petition*

MR M.J. COWPER (Murray–Wellington — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.01 pm]: I have a petition with 381 signatures, which conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly, and it is couched in the following terms —

To the Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled:

We the undersigned say that:

**Leased Shack Sites Communities, such as Wedge Island, Grey, Donnelly River, Broke Inlet, Dampier Archipelagos, and Israelite Bay have long been the traditional holiday/recreational destination for many thousands of ordinary Western Australians.**

**Most Shack Site Communities sprung up to accommodate the gathering of farming and town based families to enjoy holidays together in remote and idyllic fishing locations right across Western Australia.**

**Some Shack Site communities went onto becoming fully-fledged towns such as, Bremer Bay, Jurien Bay, Dongara and Horrocks, whilst some Shack Site Communities have disappeared.**

**However, some residual communities remain, with a strong sense of community and have become the preferred holiday option for many thousands of Western Australians.**

**These places are tangible examples of sustainable lifestyles, where younger generations can learn responsibility and become creative and family traditions and stories can be passed on. The loss of these communities will seriously diminish the social, economic and health well being of many ordinary Western Australian families.**

Now we ask that the Legislative Assembly support our campaign for the Government to

**Examine how other States of Australia, including South Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales have retained conforming Shack Site Communities in order to preserve these valuable assets for many Western Australians to have affordable coastal holiday destinations and continue to allow human interaction all but lost in today's society.**

I table that petition.

[See petition 290.]

## MOORE RIVER — HOUSING LOTS SOUTH OF ESTUARY

### *Petition*

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [12.03 pm]: I have a petition that complies with the standing orders and has 19 signatures. It reads —

### **NO URBAN DEVELOPMENT SOUTH OF THE MOORE RIVER**

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, say that the announcement by the Minister for Planning on 9 June, 2009, to approve of the development of 2,000 housing lots on the south side of the Moore River Estuary, is contrary to the findings of the Gingin Coast Structure Plan and to the view that has been consistently and strongly put forward by the community since 1995.

Now we ask that the Legislative Assembly recommend that the land adjoining the proposed Wilbinga Conservation Park which is subject to the Moore River Company's plans, be:

1. purchased by the Government at a fair price to the landowner;
2. be managed in perpetuity for the benefit of the whole community, for the protection of the estuary of the Moore River;

3. purchased to stop suburban Perth sprawling to the Moore River and beyond; and
4. saved from any form of urban development so that Western Australian tax payers are not forced to contribute to or subsidise the massive infrastructure costs (roads, bridges, sewerage, water supply, electricity supply) that would be caused by a development at the extreme outer limits of the city).

We make this request because of the unique aesthetic and environmental features which this area contributes towards the natural capital of Western Australia.

[See petition 291.]

### ROAD SAFETY FUNDING

*Removal of Notice — Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr G.A. Woodhams):** I bring to members' attention that private members' business notice of motion 9, notice of which was given on 20 October 2009, will be removed from the next notice paper unless written notification is provided to the Clerk requiring that the notice be continued.

### TOWARDS ZERO — ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

*Statement by Minister for Road Safety*

**MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Minister for Road Safety) [12.05 pm]:** Every year in Western Australia, around 2 800 people are involved in road crashes and sustain serious and critical injuries that will affect them for the rest of their lives. These serious injuries can leave people with lifelong disabilities or brain damage. Apart from the physical injuries, serious road crashes also cause financial and emotional stress to the victim and the victim's families and friends, as well as to the entire community and the health system. Unfortunately, most road users underestimate the number of people seriously injured on Western Australian roads and do not have an understanding of the implications it can have on the community.

To raise awareness of WA's hidden road toll, a new road safety campaign will begin today to highlight the significant cost that road trauma has on the community. In 2008, of the 2 889 people injured in WA as a result of vehicle accidents, 1 933 were from the Perth metropolitan area, 576 from regional WA, and 380 from remote areas of the state. It is estimated that the number of people seriously injured on WA roads in 2008 cost the state approximately \$1.2 billion. As a community, we should not accept road injuries as being inevitable. We all need to realise how our driving actions can have a serious impact on one another and the wider community.

This government is committed to its 12-year Towards Zero road safety strategy, and has allocated \$220 million over the next four years in targeted works through the Safer Roads and State Black Spot program to upgrade the state's road network. In addition, \$136 million will also be provided to local governments in 2010–11 to assist them to undertake important construction and maintenance works on council-managed roads. Building and maintaining safer roads is a key part of the Towards Zero strategy, which will play a significant role in all future planning, construction and maintenance of WA roads. We must all work together to ensure our entire road system is as safe as possible and aim to be safe drivers in safe vehicles travelling on safe roads at safe speeds.

### AUSTRALIAN EARLY DEVELOPMENT INDEX

*Statement by Minister for Education*

**DR E. CONSTABLE (Churchlands — Minister for Education) [12.07 pm]:** On 13 May, I opened the Western Australian forum Australian Early Development Index: Building Better Communities for Children. In Western Australia, the collection of the AEDI data has been led by the Department of Education. The Department of Education's Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning, which was established early in 2009, worked collaboratively with other agencies to organise the forum. I was very pleased to see that attending the forum were a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in early childhood development and learning: government officers, peak non-government organisations and local government, as well as policy officers, principals, teachers and community development officers from the education, health, communities and childcare sectors.

The AEDI data is collected by preprimary teachers, who complete a survey form for each child in their class. They use their knowledge of the child, the child's family and the community in which they live to complete the survey, which provides a profile across five developmental domains on the wellbeing of the child: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; school-based language and cognitive skills; and communication skills and general knowledge.

In Western Australia, 99.8 per cent of all schools and 1 466 teachers provided the data on 27 000 preprimary children. Schools and preprimary teachers are to be congratulated on this. If it were not for the role that teachers have played in collecting the data, parents, communities and other children's services professionals, across a

wide range of disciplines, would not have the AEDI data they now have on children in their community. The data shows that most children in Western Australia are doing well. However, as in other states, our challenge is that around 25 per cent of children are delayed in one or more domains of development.

The data is not the only benefit that we are seeking from the AEDI. The real value is that it brings communities together, working to improve the environment in which their children grow up. Many communities, including their schools, are now using the AEDI in the design of early childhood programs and strategies to enhance children's development. Highlights of the forum included presentations from the AEDI pilot communities in Mirrabooka, the Pilbara, and the remote community of Parnngurr, sharing their experiences of the AEDI. I was impressed with how closely schools are working with their communities to positively influence and support the parents of young children. The AEDI reminds us of how very important schools are in improving the developmental status of our children. They are located in every community; they know the community and the families. In the vast majority of cases, they have a positive relationship with parents, children and other professionals. They provide knowledge and access to many other professionals.

Governments do not raise children; parents do, but governments have to provide leadership and support to parents and communities. The Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning has begun to collate data, including the data provided by the AEDI, to provide an evidence base for monitoring the needs of our children. The government recognises the importance of learning and development for our young children.

### **ROEBOURNE — HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

#### *Statement by Minister for Housing*

**MR W.R. MARMION (Nedlands — Minister for Housing)** [12.10 pm]: I rise to advise the house of a very exciting government initiative announced in last week's state budget. The government, through its royalties for regions program, has committed \$5 million to begin the process of rebuilding and revitalising Roebourne. In 2010–11, 12 new homes will be constructed. This construction will follow the demolition of 25 homes in the area of Roebourne known as The Village. This funding will be the beginning of a comprehensive plan to address the long-term issues that have affected the community of Roebourne for many years.

The Department of Housing is the lead agency in a whole-of-government approach that aims to transform the Roebourne community. The department will work with both the government and private sectors, alongside the community, to help rebuild capacity and address social disadvantage; key government agencies have already begun this work. Throughout June, several key stakeholder meetings will be held in Roebourne to analyse the resources currently being provided by agencies and identify where improvements can be made. This ongoing process will inform further staged developments in the town. In consultation with the community, we are planning to completely transform Roebourne by creating new and vibrant spaces for the community to enjoy, in addition to increasing and better managing support services to the town.

As we have seen in Halls Creek, a long-term, sustained, whole-of-government approach can deliver better outcomes. To achieve similar success in Roebourne, bipartisan support and investment will be necessary. While Roebourne has its own unique issues, and will require unique solutions, I am confident my department has the experience and expertise required to lead this vital initiative. This new funding demonstrates the government's commitment to the people of Roebourne and confirms our intention to provide improved living standards, greater employment opportunities and better access to services in regional and remote communities.

### **LAND TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2010**

#### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr W.R. Marmion (Minister Assisting the Treasurer)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

#### *Second Reading*

**MR W.R. MARMION (Nedlands — Minister Assisting the Treasurer)** [12.13 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to amend the Land Tax Assessment Act 2002 to put in place a 100 per cent exemption from land tax for caravan parks from 1 July 2010, and increase the clawback period for reassessment of land tax from five years to 10 years from 1 July 2010, in the event of a subdivision of caravan park land.

These measures were announced as part of the 2010–11 budget. Currently, the Land Tax Assessment Act provides a 50 per cent land tax concession for caravan parks. This concession was introduced on 1 July 2005 and applies to land used as sites for caravans, park homes and camping grounds. It does not apply to caravan park land used for chalets, cabins, motels, hostels, boarding houses or restaurants. The purpose of this concession was to assist the long-term viability of caravan park businesses, following recognition that land values had risen

rapidly. The rapid rise in land values led to large increases in land tax bills for caravan park business operators, which had an impact on the retention of low-cost, affordable holiday accommodation in the state's favoured tourism destinations. The concession was accompanied by a clawback provision that required a reassessment of land tax in the event of a subdivision of caravan park land for a period of up to five years prior to subdivision.

The proposed amendments, which are anticipated to further enhance the viability of caravan parks, flow from recommendations made in the Economics and Industry Standing Committee's 2009 report into the "Provision, Use and Regulation of Caravan Parks (and Camping Grounds) in Western Australia". The standing committee found that rising land values had effectively negated the value of the 50 per cent land tax concession to caravan park operators. It recommended that the land tax concession for caravan parks that predominantly provide tourist caravan sites and campsites be increased to 100 per cent, and that the clawback provision for a 100 per cent land tax concession should be increased to 10 years. The estimated additional cost to revenue is around \$1 million per year, thereby taking the total cost of the exemption to approximately \$2 million per year. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman**.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### *Standing Orders Suspension — Motion*

**MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Leader of the House)** [12.15 pm]: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable private members' business to have priority from 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm on Wednesday, 26 May 2010.

In moving this motion, as far back as I can remember this has always happened during the budget second reading speeches week. The reason for doing it is that we obviously need to get through the whole of the second reading stage on the very important budget bills during this week so that we can have budget estimates the following week. It has been standard practice for many years. I want to be brief, because I want to get back to the budget bills, but during budget week every member of the house has the opportunity to make a contribution to the second reading debate, and opposition members certainly get as much time as they want to bring to the attention of the house and their electorates the things they want to make clear. They may want to attack the government on certain areas, and they have the opportunity to do so. There is not the need this week to have the whole three hours for private members' business, which is why it has always been condensed. I would like to think that I am confident that the manager of opposition business will be agreeable to this and let us get on to the budget bills as quickly as possible.

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham)** [12.16 pm]: I have an hour to speak to this important issue. An hour, as everyone knows, is 60 minutes times 60 seconds, so it is a quite considerable period. In the absence of the member for Alfred Cove who would, no doubt, have drawn my attention and delayed consideration of this matter, I am in agreement with what the Leader of the House has had to say. I am not being provoked by the member for Alfred Cove, so I am quite happy to say that this is a reasonable proposition put by the Leader of the House. Two hours for private members' business on a week such as this is a reasonable length of time, and the opposition will not hinder or delay the passage of this motion, unless anyone interjects on me!

Question put and passed.

### APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2010–11 BILL 2010 APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2010–11 BILL 2010

#### *Second Reading — Cognate Debate*

Resumed from 25 May.

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham)** [12.18 pm]: I am happy to rise and make some remarks on the state budget. Every budget has a theme; every budget has a message. It is quite clear that the main message that the public of Western Australia will take from this budget is that it will impose extraordinary additional costs to family standards and to people's average family bills on an ongoing basis.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, I make the observation that there are several conversations going on. I would like to hear from the member for Rockingham; I would be interested to hear what he has to say. I know that Hansard would like to be able to hear him as well. There are some members in this place who might also be interested in what the member for Rockingham has to say. If members have other conversations, please take them outside.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Massive increases in the burden of costs and charges on average families is the major theme of this government. It has become increasingly obvious in the few days since the budget was brought down that it involves a major increase in costs, burdens and impacts on the living standards of ordinary families around Western Australia. Indeed, in the 20 or so months the government has been in power, the average family

has had a \$1 500 increase in the fees and charges burden imposed upon them by the Liberal–National government. That \$1 500 increase in fees and charges does not even include the deferral or cancellation of major tax cuts that were scheduled to be implemented in a month or so.

The other consequence of this budget—the ongoing impact that people have not really commented on—is the major increase in state debt contained in the forward estimates. All members have to do is look at page 47 of budget paper No 3 to see how debt levels in Western Australia will double to \$20 billion in the next three to four years. They have already gone up very significantly since the Barnett Liberal–National government came to office. The government inherited an economy with a general government sector that was debt-free and some very low levels of debt in government trading enterprises, but it will take the state’s debt levels to \$20 billion within a few years. In the 2013–14 budget, the level of debt that Western Australians will have to pay back will be \$20 billion. Therefore, we have learnt that this is a tax, charge and spend Liberal–National government that is increasing the costs for ordinary families and at the same time is massively increasing the debt levels of Western Australia. I would have thought that the Liberal Party—certainly based on the emails I have received from some Liberal people—would say that it is against debt and is against increasing family taxes and charges. However, the opposite has occurred under this government. Look at the budget papers to see the truth; an increase in the cost of living for families and a massive increase in debt across the forward estimates. This is at a time when the revenue coming in from mining companies through royalties has increased enormously. We need look only at the budget papers and the expected 90 per cent increase in value that mining companies will receive for Western Australian iron ore they sell to foreign customers. That is a 90 per cent increase and a massive expansion in volumes. Therefore, there will be huge additional income from that source for the Treasury of the Western Australian state government, but at the same time the government assaults family budgets with this massive cost increase of \$400 or so in this year’s budget and \$1 500 across the 20 months that it has been in office.

The government did not necessarily have to have that massive increase in charges. It had other major income sources through royalty payments; a \$1 billion increase alone, as I read it, in this budget. However, this government assaults the family living standards of ordinary people around Western Australia with these massive cost increases. Page 80 of budget paper No 3 states that royalties are expected to increase from \$2.2 billion in 2009–10 to \$3.2 billion in 2010–11. That is more than a \$1 billion increase. It is probably a 40 per cent increase in the state government’s royalty take. That is a massive increase in revenue that the state government will receive. As I indicated, there is expected to be a huge increase in the value that we receive for our iron ore—a 90 per cent increase—and, of course, we can expect that that will be a major benefit to the state budget over the next few years. It will be a huge improvement.

I am pleased to say that the Premier resisted the temptation to incorporate into the budget papers the removal of concessions on the iron ore industry in the Pilbara, because that has not been agreed and negotiated, as far as I am aware, with the relevant companies. The government has to agree and negotiate any such arrangement with BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto before it puts that into the budget papers; otherwise, the government would be assuming income that may not necessarily come to pass. However, assuming that it does, there will be an additional windfall benefit to the state budget from that removal of concessions on BHP and Rio. Might I add in this context that if concessions are removed from iron ore finds in the Pilbara that are mined by BHP and Rio, it will be retrospective and will apply to existing operations. The Premier has said that some of his other plans are to lift mining royalties overall, which do not appear to be in this budget either, but he has said a number of times in this place that he wants to lift royalties overall because, according to the Premier, the mining companies are getting away with murder. If the government removes those concessions, it will be a retrospective impost, certainly in the way that retrospectivity is viewed in the current context, on the mining companies around Western Australia.

I will make a few points about royalties for regions and housing and the massive underspends in both of those portfolios in the budget and the consequences of that. I also want to talk a bit about the fact that on page 82 of budget paper No 3 it states that the government has withdrawn the agreement that was reached between the former government and BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto that there would be an increase in the royalty rate on iron ore fines prospectively for new projects. That means \$373 million has been pulled out of the forward estimates. That agreement was negotiated between the former state development minister, Alan Carpenter, and BHP and Rio, and it was put into the 2008–09 *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*. The reason the Premier has withdrawn this from the budget papers is that he expects that he will negotiate a better deal with BHP and Rio on mining fines in the Pilbara. The question becomes: what if he does not? If the government does not negotiate a better deal for mining activities in the Pilbara with BHP and Rio in the context of their joint venture negotiations, or if they say that they will not change the state agreement acts to pay a higher level of royalty, particularly in the context of what is happening federally at the moment, the government will have wilfully, directly and deliberately knocked \$373 million out of the budget by not signing that agreement negotiated by the former government.

I have a document that was obtained through freedom of information in which the Department of State Development urges and begs, on a number of occasions, that the Minister for State Development sign the deal. The department said to sign the deal and get the money into the budget or else a \$373 million hole could open up if the Premier does not. I also have the Premier's handwritten notes, which state that matters have moved on; issues have moved on. The note is signed "CB" and was dated 22 December 2009. A fax went back to the Department of State Development that stated that the Premier asked that the tax documents be returned, and that the Premier believed that matters had progressed since they were drafted. These are the documents in which the department urged the Premier to sign the agreement to get more money into the budget. The Premier decided that he would not sign it; he would negotiate a better deal. If a better deal does not come off—I hope it does—the government will have thrown away nearly \$400 million, perhaps more, out of the budget forward estimates; and that is just over four years. Of course companies will celebrate, as they will not have to pay the money that was negotiated. It is therefore a rank piece of financial and economic irresponsibility for the Premier to have not signed up to that arrangement. He was urged to by his own department. Remember, the Premier is the Minister for State Development. He was urged by his own department to do it and he declined. I have the documents with me to prove both those things. He declined to sign up to it on the basis that he would get a better deal. If that better deal does not come off, the Premier will be held accountable for failing to sign up to a deal that, although would not have achieved everything, would have been a good first step in getting to a better deal. An enormous amount of money therefore has been lost from the budget because of the Premier's bloody-mindedness in that regard.

I want to talk a little about royalties for regions. As we know, the fundamental basis of this government from late 2008 was that the National Party would go into an arrangement with the Liberal Party based on acceptance of the royalties for regions plan. I have with me a range of quotations from that time when the Leader of the National Party said that the only way the National Party would agree to an alliance with the Liberal Party was if an allocation of 25 per cent of mining and petroleum royalties above current budgeted expenditure went back into the regions. The royalties for regions plan as contained in this budget fails on both counts, and I will tell members why. Royalties for regions is now paying for the ordinary business of government that the government should be paying for. The government has just badged projects as royalties for regions. It knows that it has done that on the basis that it has fooled and hoodwinked people around country Western Australia into thinking they are getting something additional, something special or something magical above what they would otherwise be getting. That is what the government has succeeded in doing.

There is an enormous number of examples. The government is building hospitals, some of which were already planned. Kalgoorlie hospital was already planned. Albany hospital was already planned. According to this budget, the government intends to build the Carnarvon police and justice complex; that was already in the budget. The government is now labelling it as royalties for regions in this fraudulent attempt to hoodwink and confuse people in country WA that they are somehow receiving something above and beyond what they would have otherwise received. The Carnarvon police and justice complex was already in the budget.

The government has projects in the budget papers such as an expansion to the Clontarf football academies around Western Australia. The former government expanded them; they went from one to eight around Western Australia. In fact, I visited and opened a number of them around country WA. The government is making out that royalties for regions has created something that was never there. They were there; they were expanded as part of the ordinary business of government under the former government. In fact, one football academy was opened under Richard Court's government. Admittedly that expanded eightfold under the former government, but one was already there. This government is saying that it will establish eight additional academies—the same number the former government established—but somehow that will be special as it will be under royalties for regions.

The government has money in the budget for the responsible parenting home visiting service and so forth. That refers to parenting orders that I remind members the government opposed in opposition. In any event, the budget contains additional money for that program, which was established by the former government with plans to roll it out around country Western Australia.

The government is now saying it is going to put money into orange school buses to ensure that new buses are equipped with air conditioning. Perhaps when we as a government spent \$50 million on putting seatbelts into all those buses around WA, we should have said it was part of royalties for regions, as saying that is somehow magical or special. The government just labels projects as part of royalties for regions that are the ordinary business of government and somehow puts them out in the community as special. The government will air-condition orange school buses, and that is considered additional and special; whereas when we put seatbelts into these buses to make kids safe, it was nothing different or special according to the government's arguments.

The list goes on and on, but the fundamental basis of royalties for regions was that it was supposed to be something different. As we have seen, the government is funding projects in the budget that were already

planned in previous budgets or projects that are part of the ordinary business of government. That is the first part of royalties for regions. Bear in mind that I do support additional spending in the country and, as a former minister, my record was one of doing that.

I will now go to the underspend in the budget. Twenty-five per cent of royalties was supposed to be part of this program.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** This is where it gets very uncomfortable for the Leader of the National Party. I have with me the budget documents for the past few years. In the 2009–10 financial year the government committed to the people of Western Australia that 25 per cent of minerals and petroleum royalties totalled \$644 million. The estimated actual spend, as contained in this year's budget for 2009–10, is \$357 million. The underspend was therefore \$287 million. I do not recall the promise to the regions being, "We're going to spend 16 per cent on royalties for regions." I recall it being 25 per cent. But the actual proof of it is that the government has underspent by \$287 million on the amount it said it would spend.

Let us say that royalties have declined; the government said in the midyear financial review that it had because of the economic problems around the world. The government then reduced it by the three per cent efficiency dividend because other government departments had to do it. Let us assume that is all correct and it goes down to \$489 million, the government still spent, according to the budget, only \$357 million. There is therefore a \$132 million shortfall in the amount the National Party promised to the people of Western Australia. I do not recall the government saying it would spend 14 per cent, 12 per cent or 15 per cent; I recall the government saying it would spend 25 per cent. The budget documents prove beyond any doubt the truth of the matter, which is that the government has spent way less than it committed to the people of Western Australia as part of the royalties for regions program. As I outlined to the house earlier, the government has also put into the royalties program all sorts of projects, which are ordinary business of government and which would have happened anyway.

Both legs of the royalties for regions program have been proven to be a sham, and the Leader of the National Party should explain himself. I support, as I said, spending on wise and sensible projects around country WA. Most of the projects in the budget for country WA are wise. I support hospitals, I support schools and I support electricity infrastructure. I support those sorts of things, but what I do not support is the government misleading people, and what I do not support is the government telling people that it will spend a certain amount of money when it does not. What I do not support is the government saying that it will make the spending additional when it does not. That is what the Leader of the National Party has done.

When we come to the housing portfolio in the budget, we can see that there is a dramatic underspend. If we go to page 548 of the 2009–10 budget, we find that the total estimated to be spent over 2008–09 and 2009–10—virtually the entire time the Liberal–National government has been in power—there is a total budget estimate for both years of \$668 million plus \$701 million, totalling \$1.37 billion. Bear in mind that most of that money was given to the state by the commonwealth as stimulus money. Between 2008 and 2010, \$1.37 billion was supposed to be spent on Homeswest housing and community housing for needy people. As I said, most of that money was from the commonwealth, because the commonwealth was very generous, for stimulus purposes, and also for good compassionate reasons, in putting more money into public housing. What do we find in the 2010–11 budget? The actual spend from 2008–09 was \$488 million and the estimated actual from 2009–10 is \$610 million; therefore, the actual spend is \$1.098 billion. The government has underspent \$271 million given to it by the commonwealth. It has underspent money not only given to it by the commonwealth but also money contained in its own budget for social housing, by \$271 million.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** How do they sleep at night?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** That is in the context of 54 000 people awaiting public housing in Western Australia, including more than 9 000 people on the priority waitlist. There has been a massive growth rate whilst this government has been in office. If the government says it will still spend that money because the commonwealth has given it to us, remember the price of constructing a house goes up all the time. It was at its cheapest when the global financial crisis was on and a lot of people were out of work and could have done with a job. So, the government has underspent \$271 million in housing over two years. At the same time, there has been record growth in the public housing waitlist—up to 54 000 of our fellow citizens are in need, with 9 000 in dire need. We have a new housing minister who does not seem to have a clue what he is doing, to be frank. I think we have all seen that. The amount of \$270 million-odd would build a lot of houses if the government spent the money; that is, if it had the capability and competence to spend that money.

All those things are verifiable; they are all contained within the budget. Royalties for regions has been shown to be flawed at every level, because the government has not spent what it said it was going to spend. The government has put into the royalties for regions program all sorts of things that would have been the ordinary

business of government. The most glaring example, I must say, is the Carnarvon police and justice complex which is listed as a royalties for regions project, even though it was in the former government's budget —

**Mr P.B. Watson:** The same as Albany hospital.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The government says Albany hospital is funded by royalties for regions even though it was committed to by the former government. Even the Clontarf Academy is now listed as royalties for regions funding, even though we put many of those academies out there, but we did not put some magical term in front of them. Apparently things become magic if the “royalties for regions” tag is in front of them, even though they are part of the ordinary business of government.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** What people have to realise, including country people, is that nothing is free. If we are to spend more money, someone has to pay for it. Why do members think debt levels are going up to \$20 billion on this government's watch? That is a huge increase from when Labor was in power. Why do members think ordinary families are paying an additional \$1 500 each a year on this government's watch? It is because it is doing things that cost money. Someone has to pay. The government is imposing all sorts of things on the people in my electorate—who receive nothing for it, by the way. Members should look at what Rockingham got under this government—nothing.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** It got a new marina!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am glad the member for South Perth raised that. I cannot see a marina in my electorate, member for South Perth. What the government has committed to, by the way, is a study.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** Oh, okay!

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** More planning!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We will see where that goes. Of course marinas should be predominantly, if not completely, funded by the private sector in my view. But the government has committed to a study, which is a good thing. We undertook a study as well, by the way, when we were in office. It is a very difficult project. So, we have got a study for a marina in my electorate that was committed to before the budget. The government took out of the budget a new police station planned for construction in my electorate. It also took out infill sewerage in my electorate. People in my electorate will pay \$1 500 extra a year on this government's watch. Their debt levels will go through the roof, and they do not receive anything in return. There is nothing in this budget for my electorate. It is a bit like the member for South Perth's electorate—I do not think his electorate gets anything. The good people of South Perth—I have friends who live there—have been completely and utterly taken for granted by the Liberal Party. That is what has happened on this government's watch.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Plenty of children in the member's electorate will benefit from the spending on occupational health and speech therapy.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** More budget cuts in health—that's what she is talking about!

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Does the member for Scarborough actually analyse anything?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** In any event, I will not dwell on my electorate. The people of my electorate know how badly they have been treated. Member for Scarborough, seriously: across the budget there will be good things that apply to everyone, but of course everyone likes improvements in their own areas —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** A great acknowledgement. Thank you, member for Rockingham.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** There will be. Every budget does. I do not quite understand how education will be able to do the new things required—considering that I have some knowledge of education—without any improvement in its budget and without cutting a range of programs. When the member for Scarborough says there might be some improvement in speech pathology, cuts will be made to other programs, particularly within education. It has to happen. I have never seen a government that does not spend more on education. Each year we should actually invest in education to some degree. This government's increase in the education budget is 0.1 per cent!

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Zero, when rounded!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** When we round it down, it rounds down to zero. Education, in a state like Western Australia, should be something we invest in. When we invest nothing more in education, of course there is a consequence in the long term.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am really appreciating the help from my colleagues down the back!

Royalties for regions and dramatic underspends are being used to pay for things that were already in the budget; people really do need to understand that point.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** The member should get out there and tell them!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I will tell them. As I said to the Leader of the National Party, I support valid, decent and good expenditure in the country, but I do not support lying to people. I will tell people in my electorate the truth when I go out there about how the National Party put into the royalties for regions budget certain amounts of money and it has not spent it. It has had dramatic underspends in each of the years —

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** You outline where you believe the cost shifts are and where you would spend it!

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We have just heard excuse-making from the Leader of the National Party.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** I just said, “Do your job!” You regard yourself as a potential Leader of the Opposition; do your job, with a credible budget reply, by outlining what you would do as opposed to just opposing.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** As I said to the Leader of the National Party, one thing I would not do is mislead the people of my electorate.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [12.48 pm]:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Happy birthday, by the way, member!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Thank you, member for Mandurah.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** She looks magnificent for 23!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I cannot think of anything better to do than stand in Parliament, reading a speech or talking about the issue of the budget.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Not reading it!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, no; I am not reading it. Did I say “reading”?

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** That’s why I am going to have a celebratory drink in the bar!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** This is a budget that does nothing for families. It hits Western Australian families and does nothing for people living in the suburbs. It is a budget that makes a mockery of the royalties for regions deal. It paints the picture that the royalties for regions deal was nothing but a labelling exercise, and that is all it is. There are projects funded under royalties for regions, but they should have been projects funded out of the normal course of government.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Why weren’t they?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Because we were funding all the other projects. Did the Leader of the National Party not recognise that Labor actually does better for the regions than the Liberal Party? What did he say about the Premier?

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** I’m pretty sure I made the right decision in hindsight.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The Leader of the National Party can stay with them.

The budget is also dishonest in its presentation. We heard yesterday that the Treasurer does not believe in forward estimates. How can we have a Treasurer bring down a budget but not believe in the numbers that he has presented to Parliament?

This budget makes families pay more. Families throughout Western Australia will pay massive increases in electricity and water costs. There are increases in electricity charges, but no increases in funding for the utility. We are seeing increases in charges, but no increases in services to match. Last year the total asset investment program for Western Power was forecast to be \$661 million in 2010–11. That figure is now \$640 million. There has been a fall in the expected expenditure of Western Power throughout Western Australia. There has been an increase in charges and a decrease in funding for essential investment throughout Western Australia—in particular, less investment for transformers in the suburbs to assist new suburbs to grow and less investment in infrastructure provided by Western Power. Again, we see an increase in water charges, but they are much higher than was recommended by the independent authority. There are massive increases in electricity and water charges. This year families are expected to pay an additional \$370 in household costs. As a comparison, the costs have increased from \$3 621 in 2008–09 to \$4 227 in 2010–11. There are massive increases in the costs to households. Why has the government done this? Has revenue collapsed? The answer is: no, revenue has not collapsed. In this budget year we are going to see an increase in royalty income of more than \$1 billion. That is a massive increase from \$2.2 billion to \$3.2 billion in just one year. Stamp duty has also gone through the roof. Over the past two years stamp duty on houses has increased from \$1.1 billion to \$1.6 billion. Again, that is a massive increase in revenue. The goods and services tax payments to the state have increased, compared with the forecasts that were presented last year. In 2009–10, GST revenue was forecast to be \$3.3 billion; now it is

estimated to be \$3.5 billion. In 2010–11, GST revenue was forecast to be \$3 billion; now it is forecast to be \$3.4 billion, and those figures go on. There is a massive increase in royalty income, a massive increase in stamp duty and an increase in GST revenue expectations. Basically, there was no need for the government to hit households because revenue is going through the roof. Taxation revenue is increasing. There was no need to hit ordinary families, but this government has chosen to do so, and it has chosen to do so because of Liberal Party ideology—that is, user pays. It does not believe in subsidising families; it believes in full cost recovery. It believes in charging families for full cost recovery.

I want Parliament to contrast this approach to the government's approach to mining companies. I want to talk about Oakajee. The state government is injecting more than \$300 million of taxpayers' money into a private port. It is keen to subsidise mining companies to the tune of about \$700 million, but it is not keen to subsidise families trying to cover the cost of essential services such as water and electricity.

I turn now to public transport, an area that I believe is being seriously neglected by this government. The suburbs are missing out. There are increases in public transport fares, but, again, no increases in services. Throughout my electorate of West Swan there is an essential need for improved bus services. For example, the services to Ballajura are at capacity and they need to be improved. In Bennett Springs there is a need for more services between 4.30 pm and 6.00 pm on weekdays. Of course, in West Swan and Caversham, additional bus services are needed along West Swan Road so that the seniors living along that road can access Midland throughout the day. There are only two bus services in the morning and two in the afternoon, and these seniors can get free public transport for only one bus ride—the 9.12 am bus ride. There is no connection between Landsdale and the Greenwood train station and no connection between Landsdale and the Kingsway City Shopping Centre. Of course, there are new suburbs coming up through the Lord Street corridor, and those areas will need new bus services. New suburbs cannot be built without the government providing additional bus services. There is also a need for the government to act on the bus transit way along Alexander Drive. A pre-feasibility study has been undertaken, and I understand that the government is now undertaking a new business case for it. There is a need for a rapid transit corridor along Alexander Drive to service this growing corridor.

I cannot talk about the budget without talking about the disappearing Ellenbrook rail line. As I have said a number of times previously in this house, the government is walking away from a key election commitment, and it is doing so without being honest with the people of Western Australia and the people of Ellenbrook. There is no doubt that the Ellenbrook train line was a clear election commitment given by the Liberal Party at the time of the last election. I want to go through the Liberal Party costing document released at the time of the last election. It shows that \$13 million was allocated in 2010–11, which is this budget year, and \$40 million was allocated in 2011–12. Basically, \$53 million was allocated for the Ellenbrook train line at the time of the election by the Liberal Party in its costing booklet. The midyear review that was produced just a few months later in December 2008 again reaffirmed that commitment, and actually injected a few more million dollars into the forward estimates. We saw \$16.3 million injected in 2010–11 and \$52.6 million in 2011–12. That funding was injected to honour the Liberal Party's election commitment to start the Ellenbrook train line in 2012. That was in the midyear review in 2008–09. We then saw in the 2009–10 budget that that money was ripped out. The only remaining money was \$10 million in the 2012–13 budget. The \$60-odd million was ripped out, and only \$10 million was allocated in the 2012–13 financial year for the construction of the rail line.

Now I turn to the 2010–11 budget. That \$10 million seems to have disappeared altogether and now we just have one reference in the entire budget papers to the Ellenbrook train line. At the bottom of page 440 of the budget papers, it states —

A 20 year public transport plan is being developed to identify areas for further investment in high volume 'mass transit' services, especially those linking the Central Business District and the major new centres of activity, for example the evaluation of public transport options, including rail services to service the Ellenbrook community.

This is basically the last mention we have of the Ellenbrook train line. As I have said, the costing document produced by the Liberal Party showed \$53 million was allocated in 2008, with \$13 million allocated in this budget year. The midyear review, which was produced just a few months later, also showed substantial sums allocated to the Ellenbrook train line. In 2009–10 the money was ripped out and only \$10 million was left for the Ellenbrook train line. Now, in 2010–11, that reference has been removed and there is only a one-paragraph mention of the Ellenbrook train line, with no dedicated funding that I can see. The government is obviously walking away from a clear election commitment. I think it is up to the Liberal Party, and the Premier and the local member, to tell the people of Ellenbrook what their commitment is now to the Ellenbrook train line. Is it going ahead? When will it go ahead? Why has no funding been allocated for it in the forward estimates? Absolutely no funding has been allocated for the Ellenbrook rail line, and it is a shame that the local member does not —

**Mr F.A. Alban:** I think it is a shame when you tell the same lies continually.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** A bit sensitive to it, are you, member?

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I clearly heard the member calling the member—saying the member was lying, and I think it is unparliamentary and I think he should withdraw.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Further on the point of order: I also heard the member for Swan Hills, and he did not call the member on her feet a liar. He accused her of telling lies, I think, which is significantly different.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.M. Harvey):** Member for Victoria Park, do you have something to contribute to the point of order?

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Yes, I will, if you like, Madam Acting Speaker. Clearly, when a member of Parliament refers to lies being told by a member of Parliament, that has been, traditionally, unparliamentary. The Speaker, himself, has called members on this side of the house to order on that—in particular the member for Collie–Preston. On one particular occasion I can recall, the Speaker asked the member for Collie–Preston to withdraw for the exact same offence. Madam Acting Speaker, no doubt, in the interests of precedent and the orderly management of the house, you will follow the same ruling as the Speaker of the house gave.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Victoria Park, I thank you for seeking the call to address the point of order rather than interjecting, which is viewed as being —

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** The pleasure is all mine, Madam Acting Speaker.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** — unruly when the Acting Speaker is determining a point of order.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** That's great.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** There is no point of order, member for Albany.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Comments were not made with respect to the member for West Swan's —

**Mr P. Papalia:** You will cause trouble for yourself.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** —character, because —

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Okay, I want to talk about the lies that the member for Swan Hills —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Am I talking?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sorry, I did not think —

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** You're not on your feet!

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Oh, excuse me, member for Victoria Park. I do not have to be on my feet when I am addressing a point of order.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Well, it was clearly —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** No; enough! I am on my feet now and I will thank you not to be arguing with me when I am addressing the member for Albany's point of order.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** I thought you'd addressed the point of order by saying there was no point of order.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I call you for the first time, member for Victoria Park; member for Albany, I call you for the first time.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** I was talking to the —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I am on my feet, member for Albany! Would you like me to call you for the second time? There is no point of order. The member for West Swan has the call.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Shameful!

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Thank you. Let us talk about the lies spread through the Ellenbrook community by the member for Swan Hills at the time of the last election about the building of the rail line.

**Mr F.A. Alban:** What a hero you are! You've had two grievances to the Premier; each time he has responded in the same way—the train has not been cancelled —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! The member for West Swan has the call.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Madam Acting Speaker, when someone on this side spoke when you were on your feet, you called him to order. The member for Swan Hills clearly kept talking when you were on your feet and you did not call him to order.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Albany, I did not hear the member —

**Mr M.P. Murray:** Here—do you want a bit of that?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Murray–Wellington, I call you for the first time. The member for West Swan has the call.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** Do it again!

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Murray–Wellington, I call you for the second time—sorry; member for Collie–Preston, I call you for the second time.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I will now talk to the lies that were spread about the Ellenbrook train line by the Liberal Party before the last election. Here it is: the Liberals will build a rail line to Ellenbrook. That was a clear commitment given by the member for Swan Hills to the people of Ellenbrook, and it was a commitment that was posted on the main polling booth in the Ellenbrook electorate. Basically, this was a lie spread by the member for Swan Hills about the construction of the rail line, and no-one has had the guts to go out and tell the people the truth about the construction of the rail line. As I have said, it has disappeared from the official documents of this government.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Lies!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No; the costings booklet stated that this was going to happen.

**Mr P. Papalia:** No; lies over there!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sorry, the member for Warnbro is saying that the member for Swan Hills was telling lies!

The costings booklet stated that funding would be committed to the rail line. The *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement* stated that funding would be committed to the rail line. Last year's budget papers had funding of \$10 million committed to the rail line, but now it has gone! If anyone can tell me where the \$53 million, plus the \$16 million that was committed to in the 2008–09 midyear review, has gone, and if anyone can find that for me and tell me that this train line will go ahead according to the promises made by the Liberal Party at the time of the election, please bring it forward. Please show me where the funding is to honour the election commitment given by the member for Swan Hills and the Liberal Party to the people of Ellenbrook. Do not keep walking away, trying to rephrase the election commitment. Do not walk away from it. People know what they got in their letterboxes and people know there was a clear commitment. Do not accuse me of telling lies when the member for Swan Hills made a clear commitment to the people of Ellenbrook and now he is not delivering. There is only one person telling lies about the Ellenbrook train line—it is the member for Swan Hills! All the people of Ellenbrook want is the truth to come out regarding the clear election commitment given in September 2008.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** We always tell the truth.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** They do not want the redefinition of an election commitment, or a rephrasing, by saying, “It was for the second term; it was this, it was that, it was this.” They want the truth. I urge the member for Swan Hills to be a good local member and stand and demand that the election commitment be fulfilled. I urge him to do it, please, please.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro; member for Swan Hills!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** This will only happen with his advocacy of it to the government. I urge him to please stand up for the people of Ellenbrook and ask the Premier to deliver his election commitment. Can he please stand up for the people he is representing?

Several members interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Are you interjecting?

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** No; I was just talking to him.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, no, the member was interjecting on me; please do not.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Precious!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** West Swan has other transport infrastructure that needs to be completed; there is a huge demand for transport infrastructure in West Swan—a huge demand. The former Labor government committed to and funded two projects, one of which was the extension of the Reid Highway through to the Great Northern Highway—the opening of that great project was a couple of months ago. I applaud the previous Labor government for starting and funding the new Whiteman bridge project, which still has works ongoing—it is a great project for the people of the area.

The second, highly anticipated key project is the overpass for Alexander Drive and Reid Highway. It is the number one black spot in the metropolitan area, and it also rates very highly in the Royal Automobile Club's survey on red spots throughout the metropolitan area. The project was committed to and funded by the previous Labor government in August 2008. I cannot wait for this project to commence and to be completed. I hope that the project will be completed by 2011, in accordance with the time frames announced on the weekend. There has been some confusion over the timetable for this project. It was initially supposed to commence in 2009 and finish in 2010—that has now changed to 2011.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** There has been other confusion in that the Minister for Transport stated that he hoped the project would finish in 2012. I cannot wait to see the project underway and I want it to be completed in April 2011, as previously stipulated by the minister.

The electorate of West Swan has a number of transport hotspots that mainly relate to Reid Highway intersections. The RAC red spot survey, undertaken last year, identified four red spots along the Reid Highway—namely, Reid Highway–Alexander Drive, which is now being fixed up; Reid Highway–Malaga Drive; Reid Highway–Lord Street; and Reid Highway–Mirrabooka Avenue. It is quite significant to have four major problem intersections within such close proximity of each other. I urge the government to seriously consider a transport plan for this region. Reid Highway should be a dual carriageway. The next project should be the duplication of Reid Highway between West Swan Road and Beechboro Road. With the new project that has just been completed we need to ensure that bottlenecks do not emerge on a daily basis as one lane becomes two lanes and two lanes become one lane. I urge the government to seriously consider addressing these major hot spots.

I understand that funding of between \$25 million and \$30 million a year has been allocated to the road safety program across the forward estimates, even though Liberal members do not believe in forward estimates. I urge this government to allocate that funding to areas of high need; for example, where new overpasses need to be built or even for the Malaga Drive–Reid Highway intersection. Consideration should be given to the construction of longer turning lanes and additional turning lanes at this intersection. It is an area of high need. A lot of commercial vehicles use those roads and it is not safe for normal vehicles that use that road on a daily basis.

Another red spot is at the Gnangara Road–Beechboro Road intersection. I have said previously in this place that Gnangara Road should be a dual carriageway. It should be the responsibility of Main Roads Western Australia rather than the local authority. It is a major road that will access additional industrial estates in the north east corridor. It is a major access road for the people of Ellenbrook. Again, the government needs to give serious consideration to funding an upgrade of these roads. The whole electorate contains a lot of black and red spots.

The other high-priority road project, which the member for Swan Hills is advocating, is the Perth–Darwin highway, particularly that section of it known as the Swan Valley bypass. It is an interesting project and will cost a lot of money. It is all about trying to get the trucks off Great Northern Highway. While considering this project, the government must ensure that roads such as Reid Highway and Gnangara Road are upgraded first to ensure that problems do not arise in those areas over the next five to 10 years.

I reiterate that there has been no provision in this budget for transport infrastructure in my electorate. The budget does not provide funding for the Ellenbrook train line or additional bus services. The only project that will be funded by this budget is an upgrade of the Alexander Highway–Reid Highway intersection, which has been on the drawing board for about three years. I urge the government to seriously consider improving the roads in this area. Both the RAC and Main Roads have designated these main roads to be an area full of black spots and red spots, which is what the RAC refers to them as. Reid Highway needs to be a dual carriageway. It is a commercial truck route that carries a high volume of traffic. The government must ensure that the entrances into Malaga are safer for everyone who uses them.

I will refer briefly to the other priorities in my electorate. As I have said in this place previously, Ballajura has lost its police station and it continues to be of high concern to the people of Ballajura. They have lost that police station and there has been no real replacement of it. I notice that funding is allocated in the budget for a new

police station in the western suburbs hub. That is fine in the sense that people in the western suburbs who are losing their police stations are getting a brand-new, designated hub police station. The problem the people of Ballajura have is that they have lost a police station that is being absorbed into a new police station that is a fair distance from Ballajura. The people of Ballajura feel disconnected and that the issues of law and order are not being adequately addressed.

Another project for which there has been lobbying by members on both sides of this house is a new auditorium at Ballajura Community College. It is a high-priority project that should be considered as part of the education capital works program. The estimated expenditure is \$5 million. It is about creating a community auditorium that both the students of the college and the wider community can use. I urge the Department of Education and the Minister for Education to make it a high-order issue.

The last priority issue for my electorate relates to Culunga Aboriginal Community School. It is a private school that is in desperate need of increased funding. It provides a very essential service to Indigenous students throughout the metropolitan area. Kids travel from as far away as Thornlie to attend this school in West Swan. It provides a very good service to Indigenous children. I have visited the school on a number of occasions and, basically, it needs more resources. I understand that discussions are being held between the school, the services section of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education's office. I urge the Minister for Education to look favourably upon the school's request. This school needs extra funding. Last year we tried to seek extra funding to cover the cost of transport of students to the school. The school runs two or three buses a day to pick up students throughout the metropolitan area who attend the school. If this transport service was not available, some of these students would not go to school. The provision of this transport is an essential part of what the school is doing. The school sought funding from the Department of Education, through the Minister for Education, to assist with the costs of running this service. However, it was rejected. Serious consideration needs to be given to assisting with funding the costs associated with transporting the students to the school as well as per capita funding.

Information technology is another issue confronting Culunga Aboriginal Community School. The students at this school are working with computers that are 10 to 15 years old. I asked the Minister for Commerce whether consideration could be given to providing the school with some ex-government computers. My request was rejected, which was a poor response by the minister. All I was asking for was for five old computers that probably would be dumped. The minister did not give any consideration to or show any flexibility to allowing that to happen. I urge the government to consider funding these essential services.

This budget did not provide a lot to the north east corridor—no Ellenbrook train line, no bus services and no services for the local schools. Families in the north east corridor are being hit with massive increases in charges of over \$1 000 between 2008–09 and 2009–10. Families are paying more, but are not seeing anything extra in the north east corridor. The question is: will there be better news to come? Will the next two budgets delivered by this government provide any better news? I seriously think that the answer is no, because of the serious financial difficulties that this state will face, given the amount of debt that this government is incurring.

Other speakers have said that the net debt has risen from \$6.7 billion in 2008–09 to an estimated \$15 billion in this budget year. It is an enormous increase; it is more than double. Over forward estimates it is expected to increase to \$20 billion. We will see a tripling of net state debt. It is a massive increase in anyone's terms and the government has neither a plan nor the capacity to pay for it. The result will be that families throughout the suburbs will be asked to fork out hundreds of dollars extra in taxes and charges to fund the debt that will be incurred by this government. Not only is debt out of control, but also there is a range of unfunded projects that will exacerbate the financial problems that are being developed in this budget. The opposition has a list of unfunded projects, such as the waterfront; the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children upgrade, with not enough funding set aside for the entire upgrade; and Royal Perth Hospital. Money has been allocated to the planning of the proposed new RPH, but no funding has been allocated for the development of that hospital. I understand the government gave a clear commitment to redevelop RPH, not to just keep it as a tertiary hospital. The commitment was to actually create a new wing and upgrade the fabric of RPH. That money does not appear to be in the budget.

There are the issues of the stadium and the new museum. The museum has not been discussed in great detail. However, the Minister for Culture and the Arts has set up a planning process for the redevelopment of the cultural centre, because it trashed the idea of the old power station being the site for the museum. It set up a process for a new cultural centre, including a new museum, but no money has been allocated in the forward estimates to fund it. Again, that is another problem.

Of course there are issues of potential blow-outs in projects such as Oakajee. I repeat that this is a government that refuses to subsidise families for essential services; however, it is okay for it to subsidise mining companies for the cost of a private port. There is the potential for the Oakajee development to blow out and for the Northbridge Link or hub, or whatever its name is, to also blow out.

Lastly, I will touch on the budget dishonesty that is represented in this budget. As I have said, a number of projects are not contained in this budget. That means that the Treasurer and the government are making it up as they go along. There is no belief in the forward estimates. I could not believe that a chief executive officer of a company would address a shareholder meeting by saying, "Each year, we will make it up as we go along. Here is our five-year strategy, but we are not sticking to it. It is not ours; that is just the accountant's view of the world." This is a government document, not a Treasury document. The government signs off on the budget and forward estimates. Treasury does not make it up. It is a considered document that is presented to the cabinet and has been recommended by the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee. The document is owned by the government. It is not just Treasury playing in fantasy world with its calculators; it is something that the government has signed up to. To say that something was never in the forward estimates and therefore it does not exist is complete dishonesty. No other Treasurer or CEO in Australia would be able to get away with that. It is like a CEO going to a shareholder meeting and saying, "This is our five-year strategy but it is not mine; it is just the accountant's view of the world. You know accountants, they love playing with numbers." That is basically what we got from the Treasurer yesterday. The forward estimates are signed and owned by the government. It is up to the government to justify those forward estimates and to own them. I do not believe that the government can make it up as it goes along. It did that last time and we had to fix the problems with the power utilities and the education system. There were budget black holes everywhere. This is the same thing. The government is making it up as it goes along. Each year it will try to get just enough money but it will have massive black holes in the forward estimates. It is hoping that bucketloads of royalty revenues will keep coming in and that the government will never get caught out. That is dishonest.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells)** [1.21 pm]: I rise to make a speech with a very simple theme: that the rises in household fees and charges are increasing at a rate that is causing unacceptable hardship for the people of my electorate. The rises in fees and charges could be described as a tax grab by the Barnett government. The philosophy of user pays is being extended to an extreme extent. It applies to some in our society but not to others. It applies to householders but not to the big end of town. In other words, the government does not believe in any form of welfare for householders but it believes in corporate welfare. I will return to that point later.

Every day from the moment they wake up, the constituents in my electorate will be hit by these rises in fees and charges. The increase in fees and charges will affect the amount my constituents pay for the water for their morning shower and for the cost of heating that water with electricity or gas. My constituents will face increases in the cost of public transport, if they are able to catch public transport. The public transport options in my electorate need further development so that people can avoid another huge impost on their lives, which is the time wasted being away from their family when they are sitting in a traffic jam. They spend hours of their day doing that. Being stuck in a traffic jam when getting to work seriously slashes their quality of life. Other price rises related to transport include the increase in vehicle insurance. That also adds to the general cost of getting from home to work. The government has increased the emergency services levy and the waste levy, and the cost of a home has also increased.

We have heard from the new Minister for Housing that it is his view that there should be a surge in land releases to give people an opportunity to buy cheaper properties, obviously at the extreme limits of the city. That is bad from a number of points of view. It is a recipe for the exacerbation of urban sprawl and means that people on low incomes will be living on the outer extremities of the city and will therefore spend more time in traffic jams when commuting to and from work. Those people also will be very vulnerable to future rises in petrol prices. I have spoken about that matter in the past. We must be ever mindful of that. We are lucky in one sense that the global financial crisis has meant that we have not seen the dramatic rise in the price of fuel that we would have seen if the economy was booming. If the global economy was booming, there is no doubt that the price of oil would be going up at a very rapid rate. In my electorate, it is clear that there is a desperate shortage of public housing. That is not a plea for a dramatic increase in public housing in the electorate of Gosnells. It is very important for the wellbeing of Western Australia to have an even spread of public housing. It should not be located just in Gosnells, but we do need more public housing. It should be integrated into all areas of Perth and Western Australia as a whole.

This budget could be described as a let-them-eat-cake type of budget. That statement is attributed to Marie Antoinette, although I am not sure of the accuracy of that. The true French version of it is *qu'ils mangent de la brioche*. In other words, people cannot afford bread but we are suggesting that they be given brioche instead, which is a much more expensive cake product. If we are serious about helping people, we must make sure that they can manage their budget, which means giving them assistance.

During the debate yesterday evening, it was suggested that to achieve conservation outcomes for electricity and water, it is important to increase prices because people will be scared to use electricity or water and therefore will consume less. It was said that there is an environmental benefit from increasing prices. We must be very wary of that line of thinking because the way to lose the support of the community is to put them in a situation in which they cannot afford to survive and their budgetary situation is so constrained that they face all sorts of

hardships and must make sacrifices and utilise programs such as the hardship utility grant scheme. I will talk about that scheme in a minute. That would put people in a poor situation and would not get the support of the community for the conservation outcomes that we want. If we want to bring about a decrease in the per capita consumption of energy and water, it is vital that we give people all the support possible to make their homes more energy and water efficient. It is a simple formula: educate people so that they realise that changes can be made. We must give them the inspiration to do it by giving them the technical information about how to make those changes and on why those changes need to be made. They must also be given a little bit of financial support to make those necessary changes. That is how to bring about social changes that will lead to people being more water and energy wise. Have we seen any assistance for those sorts of programs in this budget? Sadly, those programs are non-existent. Under the previous government, they were essential elements. They were announced by the Treasurer as a headline item. They were measures that we could all be proud of because we knew about the benefits that would be delivered.

[Quorum formed.]

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I am pleased that members have been able to come in from their luncheon.

To return to the point: when it comes to encouraging people to conserve energy and water, it is not just about putting up prices; it is about making sure that they have the means to be energy wise and water wise. It is absolutely essential that that be done. At the moment, the only programs that really go towards assisting people are ones that have been put in place by the federal government. Our state government is failing in its delivery of programs that will help people to become more energy efficient.

I think of the expectations that people had about this budget. We know that people had already suffered massive energy price rises, so it was an absolute surprise to see further energy price rises in this budget. However, I think people had a deal of expectation that policing policies—given the bravado with which they were delivered over the past few months—would lead to safer streets. That is certainly not the case in my community. If members were to ask people whether they felt any safer since 6 September 2008, the answer inevitably would be that no, they do not feel any safer. For all the talk we have heard about policing initiatives, we have not actually seen any benefit at all. The need is there to get police officers out on the streets. I take my hat off to the delivery of policing services in our community as it stands, but it is simply not enough. We need greater initiatives—stronger efforts. I know that in parts of Gosnells in daylight hours some shop and boutique owners still suffer the problem of people coming into their shop and being extremely aggressive, and, at times, criminal attacks. The antisocial behaviour suffered by people on a day-to-day basis while running their businesses shows that the policing that we so desperately need in our area is not being provided.

Earlier, I mentioned HUGS—the Hardship Utility Grant Scheme. I am very disturbed by the constant increase in the number of people who have to access that scheme. I think that this gets to the heart of the issue. We are failing to help people manage their budgets so that they can avoid the humiliation of having to ask a government agency for financial assistance to pay straightforward bills such as electricity bills. I note that in recent times some 77 000 families have needed assistance to pay their bills, and that situation reflects that we are not helping people manage at all.

Another aspect of great concern is the Barnett government's Economic Audit Committee report, which recommends rolling a number of benefits and concessions into one. That is a very serious threat to the viability of those concessions and rebate programs. It is inevitable that, by rolling them into one, we will see a contracting in the actual amount that people will be able to access. That is something of real concern. When we look at the budget that the average householder in my area has had to run, we see dramatic increases. In 2007–08, it was somewhere around \$3 500; in 2008–09, still under the Labor government, it was \$3 613; and, in more recent years under the Barnett government, we have seen these very dramatic rises—\$4 000 in 2009–10 and now \$4 427. And that is set to dramatically rise.

I would like to share with members some of the comments of people who I have been speaking to—some of the people who have been coming into my office to provide feedback on their view of the situation. Mrs Hubbard, of Thornlie, said to me that we should have a subsidy so that people can access solar hot water heaters and gas-solar hot water heaters. Such arrangements are in place, but they are not enough; they are not enough for people like Mrs Hubbard to be able to access them. Mr Griffin Mutty of Thornlie complains that the hikes in electricity gas costs are the number one concern in day-to-day life at the moment. Chris Eldridge of Gosnells says that we must lower power bills, gas bills and water bills for all pensioners. Pensioners are really doing it tough. The consistent complaint is that the federal government did the right thing by them and gave them an increase in their pensions, but that that money has been stolen from them by these increases in utility charges. Pensioners are struggling to make ends meet. They are proud people who do not like to complain about their financial lot, but, unfortunately, they are in situations in which my staff and I increasingly find we have to tell them about things like HUGS just to help them make ends meet. Mr W. Ashworth of Southern River commented that we should, “Stop Barnett before he stuffs the state. He has no idea how to run WA. He is only a second-rater, left over from

the Court Government.” That is an angry statement from Mr Ashworth of Southern River; he is angry because he has been pushed into this situation. He cannot survive any more on the money that he has available. Elsie Hett from Huntingdale said, “As a pensioner I would like to know how I can pay the extra costs out of my pension. It is not a matter of time to pay. The fact is you can’t pay with something that you don’t have.” That is the reality that too many people in my electorate have to face. I have many other comments, along similar lines, but I want to return to the issue of housing.

The new housing minister has said that he wants to help people buy their own home, and he is prepared to release land in a way that makes property cheaper. To me, that is flawed logic. We need good quality social housing, often in those infill-type areas—brownfield areas. We need to put good housing stock in areas close to our existing activity hubs, using the concept of transit-oriented development, to make sure that people can live close to where they work—if that is their choice. We need to improve the different housing options.

Other members have touched on the absolute failure of this budget to increase the education budget, which failure is, to me, an absolute tragedy. Investing in education has to be one of the most important things that we should do. I know that some programs in place have been given a very temporary lease on life. I am thinking of the English as a second language support program for the children of people holding 457 visas in Australia. There is in fact \$7 million of funding for that program, but it is funded only until the end of the 2011 financial year.

**Dr E. Constable:** That is \$13.8 million.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Minister, that is \$13.8 million over two years—over the current financial year and the next financial year. When we look at the forward estimates—we have heard much discussion about the credibility of the forward estimates—we see that there is nothing for the financial year that begins in about 13 months. Nothing at all! Teachers who have the specialised skills to teach children who do not speak English—and who learn English very quickly—have a job for only the next 13 months. After that they do not know whether they have a job. There is nothing in the *Budget Statements* that gives them any sense of financial security.

I turn to what could be considered a big-ticket item for people in the Gosnells electorate.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I have touched on the issue of transport and the need for better public transport facilities and infrastructure. There has been much discussion in the Gosnells community about extending the Thornlie train line to a station at Nicholson Road and Ranford Road. A freight line already runs in the direction of the proposed extension. I was disappointed when I heard the Minister for Transport say recently that he does not believe there is a case to extend the rail line. That is a huge disappointment for those who must contend with the very wearing traffic congestion problems that occur at the Nicholson Road end of my electorate. People who use that part of Perth to get to their place of work suffer long delays and would dearly love to have a public transport alternative. It would make a huge difference to their quality of life. Unfortunately, the government does not have the vision to extend that public transport infrastructure. A Nicholson Road station could be developed in a way that is a perfect example of transit-orientated development. We should build not only a train station with a huge car parking lot; such a station should have shopping facilities and a residential development. We could create a community hub with a sporting facility nearby. It would be a great way to develop our city. Unfortunately, we are not seeing that level of vision. I am pleased to note that the member for Southern River agrees that the Thornlie train line should be extended. He must have been sorely disappointed to learn from the Minister for Transport that it will not happen in the short to medium term.

I refer to stage 8 of Roe Highway. I was amazed to learn that for all the discussion there has been about that \$550 million project there is no provision for it in the *Budget Statements*, except for the community consultation aspect of it. There is no money in the forward estimates to pay to get the job done. Perhaps there is a plan to hit the budget of 2015 with a bill for what will be significantly more than \$550 million. It seems like the government is in fantasy land. The budget for stage 8 of Roe Highway is taken up with an incredibly costly program of some \$20 million that will involve talking to people about their transport needs in that part of the metropolitan area. It is a Rolls–Royce community consultation program, but with no funding to deliver on the project. I am pleased that the project is not proceeding, but why would the government want to go ahead with expensive community consultation if it is not going to pay for the program?

From my reading of the *Budget Statements* I have found that the text presents a message that is very accurate and that it presents a situation that I agree with. The transport pages in the *Budget Statements* state that —

A growing Perth metropolitan population, together with urban sprawl and underlying car dependence, continues to result in a range of environmental, social, economic consequences including traffic congestion.

It expresses sentiments that I have already expressed in this speech. It was with some degree of optimism that I turned to the amount being allocated for improving transport with the hope I would see something for the TravelSmart program. That excellent program has done so much to help people realise their public transport options. It has helped them learn more about riding a bike, walking, car pooling or organising themselves in a different way. As of 1 July that program will no longer be funded. There is nothing in the *Budget Statements*—I refer members to page 419 of the *Budget Statements*— to indicate that it will be funded. I will pursue this matter during the estimates committee. It appears that the TravelSmart program is coming to an end. I hope that funding for TravelSmart is buried somewhere in the figures. It is very worrying that that program is not being properly looked after. The Perth bicycle network has been allocated \$2.6 million over the coming years. That is not enough when one considers that cycling makes up much more than one per cent of trips around Perth. Cycleways should be allocated at least one per cent of the overall transport budget. That is simply not the case. The government is not sufficiently looking after that form of transport.

I have touched on the issue of water, especially as it relates to householders and how they have to deal with price increases in their budgets. I turn to the Department of Water, which is suffering a decreasing budget. The Director General of the Department of Water, Mr Kim Taylor, was recently sacked. Some 10 years ago he was my boss at the Department of Environmental Protection. He is one of the most competent people that I have come across in the public service. He is an outstanding people manager with enormous capacity to implement programs and comprehend technical details. I was sad to learn about his sudden removal from the position of director general. However, when I see the budget allocation for the Department of Water, I understand why he may have been frustrated with the government's policies. The Department of Water's budget for this financial year is \$73 million; however, it will decrease to \$66 million in the following year. How on earth could he be expected to deliver complicated programs when his department's budget has been slashed? Likewise, the budget of the Swan River Trust is decreasing as the meagre \$12 million that it has been allocated in 2009–10 will decrease to \$10 million the following year. It is the same pattern for the Department of Environment and Conservation. Its budget for the 2010–11 financial year is \$183 million. Given that the Environmental Protection Authority has been removed from the Department of Environment and Conservation, there is a need to increase its capacity while the agency is being fully established and while it is recruiting new people. I note the intention to add five people to its staff. There has been a failure to properly increase its budget.

I am also interested in the key performance indicators attributed to different agencies. It is a real shame that we do not see a detailed elaboration of key performance indicators as they relate to what the outcomes of a particular agency should be. For example, why could there not be key performance indicators that monitor how Environmental Protection Authority projects are improved through the environmental impact assessment process? We hear so much resistance to the good funding of that process, through complaints by agencies and by corporations that believe it delays them in getting projects done, but there is seldom recognition of the fact that through that rigorous process, when it is properly done and is adequately funded, we can get better projects for this state that deliver economic gains and proceed in a way that causes as little as possible environmental loss.

Another issue that has caught my eye is the situation with Verve Energy. We can see in the budget papers that some \$391 million is going to asset investment. Some \$388 million is going towards fossil-fuel plants development and only \$2.6 million towards renewables, and, indeed, they are wind-diesel systems. We could say that of Verve's budget only 0.66 per cent is going towards renewables. That comes on top of some of the very strange things going on at Verve in relation to Muja A and B power stations. The previous government decommissioned Muja A and B, because the technology is at least 40 years old, is highly inefficient and has the emission standards of 40 years ago. It was a very different world 40 years ago. We have seen this in response to recent parliamentary questions: when we asked what was the emission level of Muja A and B when they were decommissioned in April 2007, the answer was 1.279 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent a year. Then when we ask what all the emissions will be when Muja A and B are recommissioned, the answer comes back as about one million tonnes. There is no improvement at all. We are sticking with technology and providing big amounts of money, such as \$82.6 million for the recommissioning of Muja A and B, only to retain the technology and the emissions standards of 40 years ago.

This budget is one that fails to deliver on the things that Western Australians are most concerned about. It certainly fails to deliver on environmental objectives. It fails to deliver as well on the equity side of things. The fact that we are still talking about a Western Australian government putting some \$339 million towards Oakajee port, which could have been built using private money, is a disgrace. It is corporate welfare. That port could be built using private sector money, not public sector money. It should not be built using taxpayer money. We have to expose this inequity that is in our Western Australian government at the moment. It is a government that believes in corporate welfare but does not believe in looking after householders who may be struggling.

**MR P.B. WATSON (Albany)** [1.52 pm]: It is a great pleasure today to talk on behalf of my electorate about the budget. There is not really much to say, because we got very little. It was the same with the previous budget. All my seniors and my young families got was \$375 a year more in costs.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** And \$166 million for a new hospital.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Let us talk about that.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** It was more than Cottesloe got.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Okay. The previous Liberal government costed the Albany Regional Hospital at \$135 million. Everyone told that government it was not enough. We promised \$90 million for the first stage and \$66 million for the second stage. All of a sudden the Premier came out with the figure of \$135 million. Then we talked about royalties for regions. Let us talk about royalties for regions. The Liberal Party promised \$135 million, and that is fair enough because it is an election promise. Then the Treasurer said that there was \$30 million of royalties for regions and to take off the \$135 million and give it straight back to the government. All it was doing was cost shifting. We are not getting any more in Albany than we were promised.

As for water and electricity prices, it is all right for the Premier to sit in Peppermint Grove and have all the flash things that he has as Premier on his big wage. I have people in Albany who are really struggling to pay their rent and rates, and now they have this extra charge. The Premier does not care about that. All he is worried about is pandering to the mining companies. He does not worry about the people on the street and he never has. That is probably why he only became Premier by mistake.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** I worried about your constituents; which is something you did not do.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Let us put it this way: the Premier is in a safe seat, why does he not get out to a marginal seat and see what it is like to be a real member of Parliament? He would not last five minutes because he would actually have to talk to people. He would have to get off his backside and introduce himself. He would have to get away from the top end of town and get out and talk to real people. He would really struggle. I saw him in Albany.

**Mr P. Abetz** interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Excuse me! Do not start on us, Hitler.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The member for Albany referred to the member for Southern River by an unparliamentary term. The member for Albany should withdraw those comments.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.M. Harvey):** There is no point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** We had the Premier come down to Albany for the opening of the Anzac Peace Park. Young kids wanted to get photos. I have never seen anyone so uncomfortable because he had to get near to people who touched him.

**Mr T.K. Waldron** interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** He was very uncomfortable. The parents, the teachers and the kids all commented on it, so I hope he visits Albany more often. I want to talk about the cost of living allowance —

**Mr T.K. Waldron** interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I have seen the minister play football—he was a very good netball player!

The cost of living allowance was promised over four years and now it is going to be over only three years. What has happened to the first one?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** That is not true.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Yes, it is. There will be only three years by 2013. Just check the budget. Has the revenue collapsed? Why are these battlers of mine in Albany struggling? The tax revenue has increased, but what does the Liberal–National government do? It attacks only those who can least afford it. In Albany there is no money for roads. The budget for education went up by 3.1 per cent. It is interesting because since the Liberal–National government has been in power, when the federal funding that has come into Western Australia is taken out of the budget, very little money has gone to where it is needed. There is no funding for a ring-road in Albany, which was a very important part of election promises made by the Liberal–National government. We have not heard anything more about the gas pipeline.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You will not hear anything about it.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** Another promise gone.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Yes, another one.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! The member for Albany has the call.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I will tell the people in Albany that when I try to stand to voice my concerns to the Premier all he does is laugh and crack jokes. I would like to talk about Ross Jones. I would like to congratulate Ross on his untiring service to Foodbank, Albany. Ross has never been a person who waits for things to happen. He just goes out there and makes them happen. He has lobbied long and hard to improve the facility and service for the less fortunate in our community. The dedication and hard work that Ross has shown has made him a role model in our community. On behalf of the people of Albany, I congratulate Ross on a job well done. Ross has just retired. I would prefer to have someone like Ross Jones by my side than the Premier any day of the week.

I would like to congratulate Albany accountant Vicky Taylor for winning the H&R Block franchise high-achiever award. The award recognises the ability of the franchise to achieve a higher number of tax returns than in the previous year. Last year saw a record number of people submit tax returns thanks to the lure of the Rudd government's \$900 million stimulus.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! Thank you.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Vicky achieved a higher number of returns this year than last—something that many other franchises across Australia were unable to do. She has been running the business for six years and has recently completed a Master's degree in commerce and is looking forward to expanding the business and building on her success.

Local business owner Jodie Souness has gone from a small-time internet stockist to a corporate supplier. Her cooking board game, Champion Chef, is now the official game for electrical goods multinational Electrolux. It started when the personal assistant to the Electrolux general manager ordered a couple of games and was impressed by it—so much so that Electrolux is now using that game as part of its corporate team building, with Electrolux managing director John Brown describing Champion Chef as the ultimate team-building exercise. The exposure that Jodie has received from the purchase of just 16 games by Electrolux has been immeasurable and has had her riding a wave of increasing sales success.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 3487.]

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### BRIAN PONTIFEX — SALARY AND ALLOWANCES

#### 259. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's new chief of staff, Mr Brian Pontifex.

- (1) Why is the Premier paying him a base salary of \$285 000 per annum?
- (2) Does the Premier think he deserves such an extraordinary salary—roughly \$90 000 above the base salary of his predecessor, Deidre Wilmott; and, if so, why?
- (3) Did the Premier make the decision to pay him this amount of money, and did it go through the merit panel processes?
- (4) What additional payments, such as motor vehicle, superannuation and allowances, does he receive; and will the Premier provide that additional information today?

#### Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

(1)–(4) I am delighted that Brian Pontifex is working as my chief of staff. He is an outstanding person.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** So is he!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Yes, he is. He is an outstanding person.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** How can we cope with the intellectual giants opposite!

Brian Pontifex is extremely well qualified. For example, he was chief of staff to justice minister Chris Ellison when Chris held that position. Interestingly, he has worked for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on anti-corruption measures in Europe through that body. He has higher qualifications in law. I think that he is an outstanding person and has a lot to contribute.

**Mr P. Papalia:** What about Deidre?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** What about Deidre? Deidre did an excellent job. She resigned. People do that sometimes.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** She did. She resigned. Mr Pontifex is a —

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan** interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Go out and doorknock! What does the member do when she knocks on a door? She says, “Hi. I am Alannah from the Labor Party. I am here to cost you your job”. Is that what the member says out there?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** They certainly don’t say they like Colin Barnett!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale, I formally call you for the first time. I know that the member for Rockingham is interested in the answer to this question, but I would suggest members on both sides allow the Premier to answer the question.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** If anyone takes the time to read Mr Pontifex’s CV, they will see he has outstanding qualifications and experience. I find him a person with an enormous work ethic, great intellect, and high integrity—high integrity; that is something good to have. He is a term-of-government employee. He is not a public servant. He is a term-of-government employee. If the government goes, if I go, he goes. That is the way it works.

In terms of the negotiation over his salary, I took absolutely no part in that—and I do not.

**Mr M. McGowan:** Who did?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I know it might be difficult for members opposite to grasp the concept and to understand the difference between a Liberal–National government—a government that respects the public service and makes a clear distinction between term-of-government employees and the public service—and their government. There is no secret. That is his salary. Look at his CV. He is a very well qualified and excellent person, and I am proud to work with him.

#### BRIAN PONTIFEX — SALARY AND ALLOWANCES

##### **260. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. How does the Premier explain to teachers’ aides, cleaners and gardeners, who are paid one-tenth of Mr Pontifex’s salary, why he is offering them only a 2.5 per cent increase?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Premier, I would give you the direction that there is not necessarily a relationship between these two questions that have been asked formally by the member for Rockingham in this question time, but if you choose to answer the question, Premier, I will give you that opportunity.

##### **Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:**

If opposition members wish to take up the issue of cleaners and gardeners, who, I concede, are relatively low-paid workers within the public sector, one would think they would ask a question on that, rather than ask a question about the salary of my chief of staff. If they cannot grasp the issue, do not ask the question.

#### STATE BUDGET 2010–11 — ABORIGINAL HEALTH FUNDING

##### **261. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs:**

I first want to acknowledge the children from Hocking Primary School in the member for Wanneroo’s electorate who are in the gallery at the moment.

Today is Sorry Day, and tomorrow is the commencement of Reconciliation Week. Can the minister outline to the house the measures that the government has put in the budget to improve the conditions for Aboriginal people in this state?

##### **Dr K.D. HAMES replied:**

I thank the member for the question. Today is Sorry Day. Members will notice I am wearing what I thought was a poppy, but I am reliably informed by guests in the gallery that it is a hibiscus. I am also wearing a good Aboriginal tie from the Aboriginal store in town. Today is Sorry Day, in recognition of Aboriginal people, and tomorrow is the commencement of Reconciliation Week. A lot is happening in that space, both at state and local government level. The City of Perth is holding a special day in Wellington Street. Aboriginal flags are being flown throughout the city. I think there is a growing sense of respect for Aboriginal people as we work towards reconciliation.

In our budget we have some particular funding packages. One package, which has been announced previously and was part of the Closing the Gap funding, is \$117 million of state government money that we will be rolling out throughout the rest of this year.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** The Aboriginal budget has been cut—not increased, but cut!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** It has not been cut. The member can get to that in the estimates. An amount of \$117 million will be rolled out to Aboriginal people throughout the coming months.

**Mr R.H. Cook** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Kwinana!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** That funding will particularly be used to address issues such as mental health among Aboriginal people, issues such as drugs and alcohol, and issues such as sexual health. We are working with the Aboriginal Medical Service. Instead of the WA Country Health Service having to try to be all things to all people in the bush, we are working much more closely with Aboriginal people, particularly great people like Sandy Davies in the Geraldton region, who runs the Geraldton Aboriginal Medical Service. We are working with people like that to expand the level of services that they provide across the state. I announced yesterday the \$26 million that will be going to ambulance services across the region, particularly in the member for Kimberley's electorate.

**Mr R.H. Cook** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Kwinana!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** That will provide a large number of extra ambulance services.

There are some other specific programs that Aboriginal people in those remote regions will find very, very good. There is an amount of \$1.2 million for the Pilbara Cardio Vision program. That program will help Aboriginal people in the Pilbara who are suffering from heart failure and acute coronary problems. We are also putting in more than \$40 million for mental health programs, \$35 million to improve access to primary care, and \$17 million for early childhood development. Those programs will assist in recognising the needs of Aboriginal people in this state.

**Mr R.H. Cook** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Kwinana, I hope you are going to ask a question today. I look forward to your questions. But at this stage I formally call you for the first time.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rather than take any note of those vacant interjections, I will be more than happy to deal with them when we get to estimates, when all those questions will have very clear and easily understood answers.

This is about putting in a lot of money to assist Aboriginal people. One of the things that I am particularly pleased about is the \$22 million from royalties for regions to provide remote Aboriginal health clinics. We went to Mullen and had a lot of consultation with the Aboriginal people there. The clinic there is in a tiny little donga. There is no separate area for men's health in particular and for women's health.

**Mrs C.A. Martin:** It is a little sea container.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Yes. It is a little sea container. It is totally inadequate. The first two will be in Mullen and in another community that we have not decided. We will be deciding where that money will be spent. More than \$6 million will be spent in the first year. We will be putting in place decent health clinics for Aboriginal people in those remote communities so they can get proper health care.

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS — FUNDING

##### 262. **Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Minister for Education:**

I refer to the minister's attempt last week to explain why she has cut the funding of the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations by \$70 000 in this year's budget.

- (1) Has the minister ever looked at WACSSO's website?
- (2) Has the minister read WACSSO's publication "The Effective School Council"?
- (3) Is the minister aware yet that WACSSO stands for the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations and organisations are defined in the WACSSO constitution as more than parents and citizens associations?
- (4) Is the minister aware that the current 2007–10 service agreement between WACSSO and the Department of Education—that is, the minister's department—requires WACSSO to provide free training to all members of the school community, not just P&C members, and that training sessions are open to any school, not just those schools with an affiliated P&C?
- (5) Why —

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I will accept four questions. I will give you an opportunity to ask a supplementary question later.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Mr Speaker, the fifth question is brief and is the key part of the question. I am tired of you protecting this minister.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I have given a ruling. Other people in this place would observe that generally we enable four questions to be asked, depending on their complexity. I am counting that as the fifth question. I will certainly give you a supplementary question.

*Point of Order*

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Mr Speaker, I ask for your ruling or information as to why you are cutting questions short when you regularly allow ministers to waste time speaking for six to seven minutes saying absolutely nothing.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Dr E. CONSTABLE replied:**

I think it is really interesting that the member has asked me almost the same question two weeks running.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Mr Speaker, unfortunately, the member for Midland accused the Minister for Education of telling a fib. That is not the case and I would ask her to withdraw that.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I rule on that point of order, I did not hear that accusation, if it was made. I am sure the member for Midland will know whether she made it or not. If you have, member for Midland, I would ask you to withdraw. If you did not, I do not have any further comment to make.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Last week I recognised the good work that WACSSO has done for many years. It is a peak body. One of the things that I omitted to add to my answer last week, which I will inform the house of now, is that not only does WACSSO receive a substantial sum of money in its grant—indeed, it has been cut—but it also receives about \$93 000 worth of in-kind support for telephone, office space and so on.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** They've always done that. That's not new.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** It may not be new but I think it is worth putting on the record.

- (1) In answer to the member's question, yes, I have looked at the WACSSO website.
- (2) Yes, I have looked at the publication on school councils.
- (3)–(4) WACSSO's main role as a peak body is to represent the P&Cs but with schools being the complex organisations that they are, WACSSO shows an interest beyond just P&Cs to other things happening in schools. We will often see the president of WACSSO commenting on a range of things in the media, for instance, when asked to do so.

As I read the website and understand, WACSSO's main role in terms of school councils is to provide support to parents who might be representatives of that council. They do not have an overarching role in running those councils. School councils do not have to engage WACSSO to do that. It is only if they wish to do so. Yes, I have seen the website and I have read the publication.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS — FUNDING

**263. Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Minister for Education.**

Mr Speaker, in asking a supplementary question, I seek your indulgence to lay three documents on the table of the house. The first is the publication entitled "The Effective School Council" by WACSSO; the second is schedules 2 and 3 of the service agreement between WACSSO and the minister's department; and, finally, the third is the school council training schedule as delivered by WACSSO for the past few years.

[The papers were tabled for the information of members.]

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Why did the minister tell us unequivocally several times in question time last Tuesday that "WACSSO does not provide training to school councils"? She can check the *Hansard* record; she said it at least three times. Further, she said that WACSSO is involved with P&Cs, not with school councils, when it is part of her department's agreement with WACSSO to deliver the training.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE replied:**

It is quite clear that the main role of WACSSO is as a peak body for P&Cs.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Why did you mislead the house last week?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** In a voluntary capacity, school councils may seek —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** It's not voluntary; it's part of the agreement with your department. They don't get the money if they don't deliver the training.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I have not finished the sentence.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You've misled the house and you should apologise.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** If school councils wish to have a dialogue with —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You're either incredibly dumb or you have an incredibly thick hide. You misled the house on at least four occasions in your answer last week.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I have given you the opportunity to ask all the questions you wanted to ask. I am giving the minister the opportunity to answer the questions. It might not necessarily be the answer you want to hear but I would ask you to listen to the minister. I call you formally for the first time.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** To finish my sentence, school councils do not have to involve WACSSO in training their members.

## INDIGENOUS VISITOR ACCOMMODATION — KALGOORLIE

**264. Mr J.J.M. BOWLER to the Minister for Regional Development:**

Can the minister advise the house on the steps the government has taken to address the lack of short-term accommodation for Indigenous people visiting large towns such as Kalgoorlie and how this will benefit Indigenous people in my electorate?

**Mr B.J. GRYLLES replied:**

I thank the member for Kalgoorlie for this question. To be talking about Indigenous visitor accommodation on Sorry Day is an important issue and shows the strong focus the Liberal–National government has on this. The member for Kalgoorlie has been a very strong advocate for doing something to improve the services for Indigenous people visiting the Kalgoorlie community. In anyone's judgement, the existing facility at Ninga Mia is substandard and unacceptable. For far too long in Western Australia, substandard and unacceptable facilities such as Ninga Mia have been ignored. Any government that wishes to focus on Indigenous welfare and health could not have ignored issues such as Ninga Mia. I am very happy to say that the Liberal–National government is a government that has not ignored that situation. We will build a new Indigenous visitor facility in Kalgoorlie. The current facility is just not up to scratch. This government is focused on all Western Australians. Indigenous visitor hostels are absolutely vital. We know that many Indigenous people live in remote parts of the state. When they attend funerals, access health services and take care of other issues in centres such as Kalgoorlie, they need somewhere to stay. If we do not provide them with an adequate place to stay, the situation ends up dysfunctional, and that is what we have seen in places such as Ninga Mia. The government, in partnership with the local government, Kalgoorlie council and the federal government, is putting money on the table to fix that facility.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, I do not know that you should necessarily be having conversations with somebody across the other side of the chamber during this question. I formally call you for the first time.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLES:** The Liberal–National government, through the royalties for regions program, has put \$13 million on the table for Indigenous visitor hostels. Kalgoorlie will be our first focus, with a 30-bed centre. This will be a very welcome addition to the member for Kalgoorlie's community, and we thank him for his very strong and passionate advocacy for the Indigenous people of his community. We do not stop there; another area in which this is clear is Broome. No-one can have visited Broome without having seen the challenge of itinerant visitors who congregate on town facilities such as the ovals and sleep in the sand dunes, alongside Western Australian and international holidaymakers staying in \$500-a-night hotel rooms. We have Western Australians camping in the sand dunes; how could that have been ignored for so long? It will not be ignored any longer. Hopefully the commonwealth government will look to support us in Broome, along with the local shire. I put it on record that when I went to speak with the Shire of Broome, it put this issue front and centre, ahead of all other issues. The local leadership in Broome wants to see something done. We will build a 50-bed facility in Broome for Indigenous visitors. We are working with the Indigenous community in Broome to find an appropriate location for this facility. The most important thing, however, is that the Kalgoorlie and Broome issues have been ignored for far too long, and the Liberal–National government does not ignore these issues. Indigenous visitor accommodation will be a focus; we will build these facilities in Broome and Kalgoorlie, and we look forward to

talking to people in communities across regional Western Australia about where we should be building the next Indigenous visitor hostel. Members opposite had a great opportunity to do something. Rather than just talking about Indigenous visitor accommodation, they could have actually done something about it and put some beds in place. The Liberal–National government is doing just that.

STATE BUDGET 2010–11 — EDUCATION FUNDING

**265. Mr E.S. RIPPER to the Minister for Education:**

This question might be particularly apt, given the last answer. I refer to the projected 0.1 per cent growth in education expenses and to criticisms made by the now Premier, when in opposition, of a previous Labor budget, in which he stated —

The budget includes a 2.3 per cent increase in education expenditure. There must be a real increase in education expenditure every year, simply because education is vital and that in any given year the school population will increase ...

That is what the Premier said in 2002 in respect of a Labor government budget.

- (1) Given that the minister's static education budget itself identifies 12 areas of major spending growth, will the minister now be required to make significant cuts to services and jobs in other areas of the budget?
- (2) Will the minister detail to the house where she will cut services and jobs?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE replied:**

- (1)–(2) The first and most important thing to point out is that in the previous year, there was an increase of 11.1 per cent in our budget, so this year we are holding firm on that budget. Over two years there has been an 11.2 per cent increase in the education budget. In 2009, there were 3 741 new enrolments in our schools, most of them in kindergarten, pre-primary and grade 1. This year, we have not had anywhere near that increase; it is 240 students, so that is a very small increase.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** You set aside money in your budget papers for student growth!

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** In the previous budget there were a number of one-off expenses, including some Building the Education Revolution program funding, which was about \$93 million. With the one-off amounts in the budget last time, it is possible to provide funding for some very important programs. Let us look at 457 visas, for instance. The previous government put its hand up and went to the commonwealth government begging for money a couple of times, with no luck, so it just let those kids languish without providing anything for them. We will provide for students on 457 visas. There will also be funding for independent public schools this year, and funding for schools with a half-cohort in year 8 —

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** In your own budget there's no mention of BER funding of \$93 million. It's a BER figure of \$5.9 million, not \$93 million!

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** All will be revealed next week. The Leader of the Opposition should come to the estimates hearings, ask his questions, and he will get his answers.

STATE BUDGET 2010–11 — EDUCATION FUNDING

**266. Mr E.S. RIPPER to the Minister for Education:**

I have a supplementary question. Why will the minister not answer the question and identify which services and jobs will be cut in the education portfolio, because there will have to be cuts on the basis of the information in her own budget papers?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE replied:**

Once again, the Leader of the Opposition is scaremongering.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** We are working very hard on a program of efficiencies in education, and no programs for children in classrooms will be cut.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Not only are you cutting, you won't be accountable for it! How hopeless is that?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The Leader of the Opposition should come to the estimates hearings.

## JUSTICE SYSTEM — AT-RISK YOUTH

**267. Mr I.C. BLAYNEY to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

With respect to government policies aimed at diverting people at risk—including Indigenous youth—away from the justice system, can the minister inform the house of some of the excellent new initiatives in this area that are outlined in this year's state budget?

**Mr C.C. PORTER replied:**

I thank the member for his question. I take it that the point of the question is to provide some detail about the measures in this year's budget and how they target people in the community who we know to be statistically at risk of offending. There was a very intelligent contribution from the member for Warnbro last night—a completely idiotic interjection, if I may say, on the Minister for Regional Development. His interjection was along the lines that we have a program of providing short-stay accommodation for some Indigenous people visiting Kalgoorlie and Broome, but that we are locking up other Indigenous people. That, effectively, was his interjection. Fact number one: the rate of Indigenous imprisonment under the previous Labor government increased from 34 per cent to 41 per cent. Under the Liberal–National government, it has decreased.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members!

**Mr C.C. PORTER:** Why does the member for Warnbro think it is that Indigenous prisoners unfortunately come from Kalgoorlie and Broome? Amongst other reasons, it is because there has not in the past been sufficient accommodation for people visiting those communities. Now, when we have an excellent program such as this, which is actually directed at decreasing Indigenous imprisonment, the best that the member for Warnbro can do is carp with a mindless interjection. Although he will talk about these things—opine, complain, and be compassionate in theory—he will not support practical things on the ground that will actually decrease Indigenous imprisonment. Does the member think that program should go ahead? I certainly believe it should, because it will decrease Indigenous imprisonment. One of the things that the Minister for Regional Development has realised is that a lot of the imprisonment —

*Point of Order*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** It is the usual expectation in this house that members have their questions answered. The member for Geraldton asked a question, and the minister seems to be having a conversation with the member for Warnbro rather than answering the question asked by the member for Geraldton.

**The SPEAKER:** There is, in fact, no point of order, but it also disturbs me, member for Cannington; if I were the member for Geraldton, I would want an answer to the question. Minister for Corrective Services, I am looking forward to the answer.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr C.C. PORTER:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The last thing I want to do is disturb the member for Geraldton!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members!

**Mr C.C. PORTER:** In this budget, we have targeted a range of initiatives for people in regional communities who are at risk of committing crimes. One of the things that the Minister for Regional Development has realised in distributing royalties for regions funding is that the regions account for about 10 per cent of the state's population, about 16 per cent of reported crime and, interestingly, about 25 per cent of the prison population. That means that people in the regions suffer greater amounts of crime within their communities than their population suggests they should, particularly serious crime. When members look through this budget at the way funds have been distributed, they will see that we have targeted people at risk in the community, particularly people in Indigenous communities and rural and regional communities. The program that the minister outlined earlier is one such program. I will go through the programs. Under community service there is \$43.5 million for support and protection services for children and young people, support for individuals at risk or in crisis and additional child protection staff. There is \$27.9 million for responsible parenting in regional areas. There is \$6 million for the Foodbank project. There is \$195 000 for expanding school breakfasts. There is \$49.7 million for improved access to community child health services; a big part of that is speech pathology. One aspect that members will find is that if children cannot speak properly or cannot speak in a way that their peers expect them to, that causes them huge problems in adjustment and criminality.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.C. PORTER:** When we look into education, we are providing extra funding for the tutoring of subclass 457 visa children—again, a highly important program. There is funding for infrastructure spending on schools in the regions—again, highly important for crime prevention.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members!

**Mr C.C. PORTER:** There is \$13 million for short-stay accommodation. There is \$15 million for Aboriginal housing in the Kimberley. By targeting education, health, welfare and housing, we are actually doing something about crime prevention and rates of crime, rather than just talking about doing something with respect to those things.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.C. PORTER:** Finally, one of the excellent initiatives, which again has been funded through royalties for regions, is that we are devoting in excess of \$49 million for expanding the youth justice services—which have been running very successfully in Kalgoorlie and Geraldton—throughout the north west of this state. That will undoubtedly reduce rates of juvenile incarceration. Again, whereas we have had talk from the opposition about what should happen, we have here an actual performance in targeting funds to regional at-risk communities in areas that we know contribute to crime. It is an absolutely exceptional budget for crime prevention.

#### WATER CHARGES — INCREASES

#### 268. **Mr F.M. LOGAN to the Minister for Water:**

I draw the minister's attention to the answer given by the Premier yesterday to a question from the Leader of the Opposition in which he told this house that he had acted to bring water charges in line with the real cost of supplying the service, that the fixed charge for water had fallen, and that the consumption charge had risen; therefore, some may have a relative benefit out of it. He also said publicly that he agreed that the increase could have been managed better. I therefore ask —

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** When did I say that?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** You did.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** When?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** On ABC radio. I have you quoted.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members! The member for Cockburn has the call.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I ask —

- (1) Will the minister tell this house exactly how much fixed water charges have fallen and how much water usage charges have risen, which will result in an overall tariff increase of 17.7 per cent?
- (2) Will the minister explain why the water tariff increase of 10 per cent for the 2010–11 budget, recommended by the Economic Regulation Authority for the smooth management of water increases and tabled in this house last August, was not followed?

#### **Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:**

I thank the member for Cockburn for the question.

- (1)–(2) Everybody on this side of the house values water and knows that it is so very important to responsibly manage it.

**Mr E.S. Ripper** interjected.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** It is important that we manage it, and I have said this before in this house—and the member for Cockburn has giggled—about a finite resource in Western Australia.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** You just answer the question.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** All the predictions from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and all the predictions into 2030 indicate that we have a drying climate.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** There are only two questions. Don't tell us about rainfall. Just answer the two questions; answer them.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** It is important that we recognise the cost of providing water. I also say that we are far from cost recovery for the true cost of providing water—far from it in Western Australia. Again I have said that we are not in the area of the Murray–Darling basin but we have learnt lessons from the Murray–Darling basin. The message is that we have to value water and we have to move towards looking at the true cost of providing water to Western Australia.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** How much have fixed water charges fallen and how much have water usage charges risen?

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** If the member for Cockburn would be quiet for a while, Mr Speaker, I will provide the answer for him.

In water charges for households—this side of the house is very aware of them, unlike the other side of the house—there is an annual service charge. The other component of the water charge is a usage charge; that is, a volumetric charge. This government and the ERA recognise that we could reduce the annual service charge and increase the volumetric charge. That is a good message to sell. It is about good use of water. It is about water efficiencies, without a heavy hand. I might suggest to members that the annual service charge for the average standard family—mum, dad, two kids, a dog and a cat—has gone down \$13.08. It went from \$240 in 2009–10 to \$186.60. On the other hand, recognising the issue of the cost of providing water and sending the right message, the usage charge for 300 kilolitres—the usage of the average standard family—went from \$240 to \$331.95, an increase of \$91.95. If we take \$13.80 that we took off the annual service charge from \$91.95, we get \$78.15 for the annual standard family cost over a year. The member for West Swan has said that my speech in the past has been a “let them eat cake” speech.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** How does that relate to the ERA recommendation of 10 per cent?

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** It is not a “let them eat cake” speech; it is about responsible management, recognising the cost of providing water.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** How does it relate to the ERA recommendation of 10 per cent?

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** I have to tell the member for Cockburn that we are about 20 per cent away from true cost recovery in potable water sources supplied to Western Australians.

Several members interjected.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Finish answering question (2).

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** I will finish with this: the ERA does its analysis and recommends to government, and it is the government’s decision on what is a responsible pricing structure in moving Western Australia forward in the responsible management of the water resource in Western Australia.

#### WATER CHARGES — INCREASES

**269. Mr F.M. LOGAN to the Minister for Water:**

I have a supplementary question.

Will the minister tell the house how much it costs to produce a kilolitre of water and how that relates to the increase that the minister has put forward?

**Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:**

I will humbly submit that that is an oversimplification of the situation.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** No, no; answer the question.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** There are some sources of water that we will deliver for less than \$1.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** How much does it cost to deliver to our houses?

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** There are more sources of water. As the member for Cockburn would know, from the second desalination plant it is truly more than \$2. This is a mix and provides an average cost of water.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** You don’t know.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** Of the different sources of water we have in Western Australia —

**Mr F.M. Logan:** It’s over two bucks. He doesn’t even know.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** — surface water that runs down into the dams is relatively cheap water.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** How much does it cost to produce a kilolitre of water?

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** The one from a desal plant is much more expensive. It is a mixture of these to get an overall uniform price of water in Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cockburn, I formally call you to order for the first time. Likewise, I am going to formally call you for the first time, member for Joondalup.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES — INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

**270. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Local Government:**

As the minister knows —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the member for North West to take his seat. Member for Albany, I have given the call to the member for North West. There are opportunities for you in this place to get the call, but not at this stage. I formally call you for the second time.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** As the minister knows, I have an ongoing interest in ensuring that services are provided to Indigenous communities. I am also aware that historically some of those communities are not provided with local government services. Will the minister please advise what is being done by this Liberal–National government to rectify this situation and provide better services for Aboriginal communities?

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI replied:**

I thank the member for North West for his question and also for his ongoing strong interest in this very important matter.

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You're the Joh Bjelke-Petersen of this Parliament. Goodness gracious me; don't you worry about that!

**The SPEAKER:** I will not worry about calling you for the first time, member for Mandurah! People on both sides of this house have expectations that some questions might be answered and that, in some instances, as the member for Balcatta indicated earlier, a little less time might be spent trying to answer questions. Continual interjections from members on both sides do not help that process.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** I say for the benefit of the member opposite, who I thought had a very strong interest in Indigenous communities, that I would have thought this answer would be of enormous interest to him.

**Mr T.G. Stephens:** My interest is sincere.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** That is what I thought, member.

As we know, in the 1970s the commonwealth government phased in direct funding to Indigenous communities —

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen, I have been reasonably tolerant of you today. That is no longer. I formally call you for the first time.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** As I was saying, back in the 1970s the commonwealth phased in direct funding to Indigenous communities for the delivery of essential services, with variable success. It has been recognised for many years that these services need to be normalised. It has been recognised that Indigenous communities should have similar services to those of other communities of a similar size. The Local Government Advisory Board's 2008 report into local government service delivery to Indigenous communities recommended that business plans be developed for each local government area to include discrete Indigenous communities. These plans were to provide costings and develop standards for the delivery of services to those communities. That concerns 22 local governments. I am pleased to advise the member for North West that a business template plan has been developed that will help to facilitate the process. It not only provides for standard uniformity, but also helps local governments work out the process for determining the services that are required, the cost of those services and how and when they will be delivered. Most importantly, I have allocated \$1.44 million, which is available immediately, so that these local governments can access expertise in developing those plans. In that way, they will be able to provide information to their communities. This will assist local governments with the total cost. We can then approach the commonwealth for that funding. I thank the member, because this is another aspect of the reform process whereby we are trying to deliver better services to everybody in Western Australia.

#### STATE BUDGET 2010–11 — FORWARD ESTIMATES

##### 271. **Mr B.S. WYATT to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's comments in the house yesterday, when he said —

The forward estimates are for the future years. They are out there in never–never land; we never, ever get there.

- (1) Are the forecast increases in revenue to the government from dividends paid by public utilities such as Western Power predicated on a 22.3 per cent or average \$300 increase in residential electricity bills?
- (2) Are the forecast debt levels contained in the 2010–11 budget predicated on a 22.3 per cent increase in residential electricity bills?
- (3) Is the Premier's estimated surplus of \$652 million in 2011–12 based on a 22.3 per cent increase in residential electricity bills?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:**

(1)–(3) Let me again explain what forward estimates are.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** It may come as a radical concept to members opposite, who are totally process driven and bureaucratically bound —

*Point of Order*

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I did not ask the Premier to get up and talk about forward estimates again.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** It's his answer; not yours.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Shush now, Deputy Premier! My question was in three parts and was very specific. I ask that you, Mr Speaker, direct the Premier to stop avoiding the question and answer the three parts that were specifically put to him.

**The SPEAKER:** On your point of order, member for Victoria Park, that is a reasonable request. I am looking forward to the answer, as I am sure you are. I cannot guarantee what the Premier is going to say. I do not have that amount of control in this place.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I thought the member for Victoria Park had grasped the concept of forward estimates, but clearly he has not.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** I thought I had, too, but you have a very different definition.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The question related to electricity tariffs. Mr Speaker, if you will indulge me for a moment, I would like to read two very brief comments. The first is a review from the Office of Energy. In January 2009, the Office of Energy completed a review of electricity arrangements as part of the electricity retail market review. A previous draft review was released under Labor in April 2008. In April 2008, the Labor Party was in government; they were sad days. The April 2008 draft recommended a cumulative 72 per cent increase in electricity prices over three years.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** And thank God we didn't do it!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Members must remember that this was reform under the Labor government that was going to bring down electricity prices.

*Point of Order*

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The point of order I raise now is similar to the one I raised previously. Yesterday the Premier sought to avoid answering this question. Again, my question was in three parts and was very specific. It was about whether the forward estimates in his budget are predicated on that 22.3 per cent increase. It is very simple and I ask that you, Mr Speaker, again direct the Premier to answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I am convinced, member for Victoria Park, that the explanation that the Premier is giving at the moment will lead to the answer to the question.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** In terms of electricity prices, which is the subject of the question, under the Labor Party, which reformed the electricity market to bring down electricity prices, the legacy was that, according to a report released during its time in government, a 72 per cent increase was required. That is the most stunning failure of public policy in Western Australia's history, bar one exception—WA Inc, which was caused by another Labor government and left us with a debt of three quarters of a billion dollars.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan** interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The member for Armadale, the doorknocker, who is out there using Western Australian taxpayers' funds —

*Point of Order*

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Premier is not dealing with the question, and I remind you, Mr Speaker, of standing order 78. The member for Victoria Park did not ask the Premier anything to do with the member for Armadale. I ask him to go back to the question.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The Premier was responding to an interjection by the member for Armadale, and I think that has been fair game in this house for many years.

**The SPEAKER:** Premier, I urge you to return to the question that was asked.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** You will need to protect me, Mr Speaker, from the member for Armadale!

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Midland.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The starting point was that, according to a report released under the Labor government, a 72 per cent increase was required. The response of the Labor Party was to have a —

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** When are you going to answer the three questions that I put to you?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I am attempting to answer the member's question, and if he would give me a smidgin of courtesy, he would hear the answer.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** An increase of 72 per cent was the starting point. The previous Labor government adopted what it called the glide path—more like a crash path—whereby it was going to deliberately conceal the reality from the public of Western Australia by talking about a community service obligation. It was a subsidy to try to conceal the loss.

*Point of Order*

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Mr Speaker, I am not enjoying continually getting to my feet to make points of order. As members know I asked the Premier three specific questions. I did not ask him about the CSO payments that were in the 2008–09 budget of the former Labor government. I asked him three specific questions and, Mr Speaker, I ask you again, now that we are some eight minutes into his answer, that you ask him to return to answering those questions.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Further to the point of order, the standing orders in relation to a question clearly state what it should contain. It is an area that is breached by the opposition every single day. The single line that relates to an answer to a question states —

An answer must be relevant to the question.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** It must be the answer to the question.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** No; it states that it must be relevant —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** If members in this place do not want to listen to points of order from members on either side, it is a little disappointing. Minister for Health, I am having difficulty hearing your point of order. I think I understand it and I will ask the Premier to return to the questions asked. All I can instruct the member for Victoria Park is that when a question is asked, an answer is given and sometimes it is not the answer the member asking the question wants to hear. People in this place know that is how it works.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** What I was attempting to do was to give the background of electricity price increases; that is, what Labor failed to do. This government, having inherited the position, took it on. It confronted the issue.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Do not let me go back to the Labor government's history on finance. In this government's first year it increased electricity prices by 10 per cent, plus 15 per cent, which was a big increase. This year electricity prices have been increased by 7.5 per cent, plus 10 per cent. That does not get us to full cost recovery. However, it is taking the issue on and dealing with it up-front. It may be unpopular, but it is honest.

I do not underestimate the intelligence of the people of Western Australia. They were not fooled by the Labor government's approach. They knew it was concealing the problem. They know that this government has at least had the honesty and integrity to deal with the problem. That is the difference between this side of politics and the opposition side. On the opposition side, concealment and half truths; on this side, deal with the issue and deal with it openly.

The forward estimates are Treasury's projection. They are a projection based without any policy decisions. The budget is an annual event. Treasury has in its forward estimates put in a 22 per cent increase. I made it clear on presenting the budget that there will not be an increase anywhere near that scale next year or in subsequent years, because it is a policy decision of this government. It made a policy decision that two years of big increases is as much as the government thinks the Western Australian public can or should bear. It is sharing the burden.

I refer members to a note on page 233 of budget paper No 3, which they should have read. This is from Treasury not the government. It states —

Department of Treasury and Finance budget planning assumptions only for 2011–12 onwards. The State Government has not yet made any explicit electricity tariff decision beyond 1 July 2010.

In other words, they are simply projections forward of a financial nature. They reflect no decision of this government. I say once again: there will be no 22.3 per cent increase in electricity next year—nothing like it.

STATE BUDGET 2010–11 — FORWARD ESTIMATES

**272. Mr B.S. WYATT to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. I am delighted that the Premier wants to deal with it up-front. I ask him again and he can answer yes or no. Is his \$652 million surplus in 2011–12 based on a 22.3 per cent increase in residential electricity bills—yes or no?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:**

The member asks the question how he wants and I will answer it how I want.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Mr Speaker, I do not want to have to give up again.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Be honest, Premier, be up-front with the people of Western Australia.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I think I am, my friend.

**The SPEAKER:** This will be the last question. Members have had a fairly vigorous question time.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I would be very pleased if in the year 2011–12 Western Australia achieved a \$652 million surplus.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Is it based on the 22.3 per cent tariff rise?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** We will not know —

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** If you do not know, just sit down.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Okay.

Several members interjected.

**ABORIGINAL HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2009**

*As to Assent*

**The SPEAKER:** Members, I have message 99 from the Governor.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, I call you for the second time.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mandurah, I call you for the second time.

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Health, I will call you for the first time.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** I saw the nod and wink.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Collie–Preston, you are formally on a third call at this stage. I want to keep you in here, because there are things we need to talk about.

*Assent*

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the bill.

**STATE BUDGET 2010–11 — FEE AND CHARGE INCREASES**

*Matter of Public Interest*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr G.A. Woodhams):** I received a letter today from the Leader of the Opposition in the following terms —

I wish to raise the following as a matter of public interest today.

“That this House condemns the Barnett Government’s 2010–11 State Budget as an attack on family living standards through its massive increase in charges and fees especially for water.”

If sufficient members agree to this motion, I will allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

**MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition)** [2.57 pm]: I move —

That this House condemns the Barnett Government's 2010–11 State Budget as an attack on family living standards through its massive increase in charges and fees especially for water.

This state budget has been built on the backs of Western Australian families. The budget's surplus headline was achieved by attacking family budgets and the next state budget will be built on the same basis. At question time today we had the excruciating spectacle of the Treasurer trying to avoid responsibility for his own forward estimates, which show increases in electricity of 22 per cent next year, 5.6 per cent the following year and six per cent the year after that.

I know that the budget papers state that the government has not explicitly taken decisions on electricity tariff increases in 2010–11. The fact is the government has implicitly taken decisions on those tariff increases. That is what the cabinet did when it signed off on the budget and the forward estimates.

While the Treasurer tried at length to avoid answering the question there is no other conclusion than this —

**The SPEAKER:** Members, we do have an MPI before the house. I know that some members want to participate in it and others prefer to have other conversations. If members want to have other conversations, I ask them to take them outside.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** The conclusion is clear. The forecast surplus for 2011–12 is based on an assumption of a 22.3 per cent increase. The forecast debt level for 2011–12 is based on an assumption of a 22.3 per cent electricity increase. The retention of the AAA credit rating—all of the bottom line figures with which the government characterises this budget, are based on the assumptions in the Treasury papers, including the assumption of a 22.3 per cent increase in electricity next year. Next year's budget path is already set. The government has slugged Western Australian families once, twice and will do it a third time in the next budget. No matter how much the Premier tries to wriggle out of this issue, he will not get away from the figures that are in the budget papers. When we look at the surrounding commentary from the Department of Treasury and Finance, we can see that it will probably only get worse because renewable energy target changes have not been taken into account, network costs for 2012–13 have not been taken into account and forecasts of generation costs may not be right. When we read all those things the only conclusion we can draw is that the risk is that the cost will be even higher. Make no mistake, Western Australians, these increases are coming. They may be one per cent less or one per cent more than the forecasts in the budget papers, but these increases are coming.

Similar assumptions, unfortunately, are not available for water, but the Minister for Water let the cat out of the bag at question time when he said that we are 20 per cent off cost reflectivity for water prices. What does that say to me? There is another 20 per cent coming on water prices in the next budget, because the government has a policy of cost reflectivity. When the Minister for Water says that we are 20 per cent away from meeting that target, what is the conclusion? We are going to pay an additional 20 per cent next year. We will be doing that, while in 2011–12 the Water Corporation's total payments to the government of income taxes, rates, expenses and dividends will be \$651 million, the following year \$744 million and the year after that \$862 million. There will be a \$225 million increase in Water Corporation dividends over the forward estimates. I do not know which political genius decided on the shock and awe policy of increasing water prices on top of the electricity prices. It was not the Economic Regulation Authority or the Water Corporation; it was some political genius in the Minister for Water's office or in the Premier's office who decided on this shock and awe policy. This has been a terrible attack on the living standards of Western Australian families. Despite the Premier's denials, the Minister for Water has let the cat out of the bag and they will be at it again in the next state budget.

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park)** [3.02 pm]: I too rise to speak on this matter of public interest. In light of the Premier's performance during question time today and the fact that he stood and said that he would be honest and upfront with the people of Western Australia, time and again he refused to acknowledge the fact that his budget in 2011–12 is based around a 22.3 per cent increase in electricity charges. As the Leader of the Opposition said, the Minister for Water outlined it today. Water has another 20 per cent increase to come. The Premier can carry on all he likes. I know he does not like to talk about these things, because he knows that the 17.5 per cent increase in water prices that has come down in this budget has got people talking about the fact that this Premier barely makes it east of the central business district and does not know what people are feeling when it comes to what he has done already with electricity prices.

The Premier has form on this issue. He robbed Western Australians last year and he will rob them again this year. It is clear that another rise is to come next year. He could stand and make all the snide remarks he likes about how we cannot rely on the forward estimates, but that means that we cannot rely on his fiscal strategy or the fact that the AAA rating will be retained. What is he telling Standard and Poor's and the credit rating

agencies? If he cannot rely on the forward estimates, what is he telling them? I dare say that he is looking very hard at the forward estimates and saying that we are keeping under the 4.5 per cent of net-interest-to-revenue ratio of Standard and Poor's, so our AAA rating is okay. The only problem is that he does not come in the chamber and be honest with the people of Western Australia. If it is not 22.3 per cent, what is it? Let the people of Western Australia know now so that they can deal with the rises that they have already received and can start dealing with future rises.

The former Labor government was at least honest. It knew that the cost of the basket of goods across the forward estimates was not going to rise beyond the reference rate of inflation. People could factor that into their family budgets across the forward estimates. Members opposite may laugh at that, but the fact is that constituents in my electorate and in all of our electorates do not have the excess cash flow that perhaps some of my colleagues opposite have. They need to know what their bills will be next month and what they will be next year when their kids are at school and what they will be so they can start factoring in those rises. The snide remarks and evasive commentary from the Premier during question time today were unfair and deceitful to the people of Western Australia, who deserve better from a Premier who wanders around the state selling himself as some great, transparent and honest Premier, when on those key bread-and-butter issues he is refusing to tell the truth. What do we know about this mob? What do we know about the form of Premier Colin Barnett? Every Western Australian household is paying \$1 500 more to basically tread water. What do we know? There is another 22.3 per cent increase in electricity charges to come and another 20 per cent increase in water charges to come, apparently, but we cannot rely on the forward estimates. The Premier says that he will not tell the people of Western Australia exactly what it is going to be until he is good and ready.

As I canvassed in some detail yesterday, what is the Premier doing with all these price rises? Surely, these huge increases in electricity charges for the people of Western Australia will give them the increased reliability of supply that he talks about at every single media conference he does to discuss this huge impost. However, the fact is that he is treating Western Power as the proverbial cash cow. Between 2009–10 and 2012–13, Western Power will have \$110 million less in asset investment, another \$93 million in borrowings and \$160 million less in internal funds. The Premier then comes into the chamber and says that he is going to increase the dividend ratio payout on Western Power by 15 per cent. The budget papers show that despite the two increases in April and July of this year, we are still not charging cost-reflective tariffs. Western Power is not in a position to pay an extra 15 per cent on its dividend payout ratio, yet the Premier is pulling the cash out to stick it into the consolidated account. The Premier said that it is to control these organisations to make sure that they spend money on their own infrastructure. I can guarantee that those figures I have just outlined will increase over time. We will see Western Power reduced to nothing more than a debt-ridden shell of an organisation with nothing but old, decrepit infrastructure. Eventually the people of Western Australia will have to pay again for what is going on now caused by this Premier with his views on the energy sector dating back to the early 1990s. That is what the people of Western Australia will be left with as a result of his decisions.

I want to conclude with one more point. The people of Western Australia are hurting at the moment from decisions made by the member for Cottesloe, the Premier of Western Australia. They know that he cannot be believed when he stands and says that he promises that this is it and there is no more to come despite the fact that his budget has a 22.3 per cent increase in electricity charges. We know there is more to come, with net debt levels hitting 10 per cent of gross state product. The average annual interest bill from 2010–11 to 2012–13 is \$521 million. There is no plan to pay this debt down or to reduce those yearly interest payments. The guy sitting in the Premier's chair has form, so we know he is going to go back to the people of Western Australia and ask them again to open their wallets to pay for his financial incompetence.

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier)** [3.08]: This is the third time that the opposition has raised this debate in the past couple of weeks. I would have thought there could be a little bit of originality and real work rather than members opposite simply recycling the arguments and their budget reply speeches. Nevertheless, they seem to have no capacity to think broadly across a range of policy issues. It is the reality. There is nothing new and nothing original.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** It is great to see that ministers are supporting you.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** They do not need to. It is fine.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis):** Members on my left!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** The Minister for Water is in damage control.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Mandurah!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The way the member incessantly interjects means that the public see him for what he is. They see members opposite for exactly what they are—unable to focus, and incapable of doing the work and mounting a cogent argument.

I will go through, very briefly, water charges. The Minister for Water will provide more information. This seemed to be the main thrust of what the member for Victoria Park was saying in question time. I announced in the budget, along with the water minister, that the price of water would increase by 17.7 per cent. That was in line with the recommendation of the Economic Regulation Authority—a process properly assessed. A typical household—that is, a household on a normal suburban block—is assumed to consume 300 kilolitres of water a year. There are two complications to that. I will explain this, and members opposite should listen carefully. The first complication is that the water charge is a two-part tariff. There is a fixed charge to reflect access to the service, and I guess infrastructure. There is also a user charge to reflect the amount of water actually consumed. So there are two components to the charge.

In addition—this is the second complication—several charges are levied through the Water Corporation. There is a charge for water, there is a charge for sewerage and there is a charge for drainage. So there are two elements to this. The charge for water, taking into account both the fixed charge and the volumetric charge, has gone up by 17.7 per cent, as I said in the budget speech. The volumetric charge has gone up by 38 per cent. The fixed service charge has gone down by seven per cent. The combined effect is an increase of 17.7 per cent; so when I said to the people of Western Australia that their water charge has gone up by 17.7 per cent, that was honest and accurate.

People know when they receive their bill from the Water Corporation that it is for more than simply water. It includes sewerage and drainage charges. The charge for sewerage has increased by four per cent. The charge for drainage has increased by 34 per cent. When we combine water charges, both fixed and volumetric, and the charges for sewerage and drainage, the increase in the total bill—the bottom line—is 11.7 per cent. That is where the 11.7 per cent has come from. That is all members opposite had to do. All they had to do was look at the detail of the charge, pick up their account from the Water Corporation, and read it, and they might have understood. That is the explanation. Therefore, the price that the consumer pays for water—this stuff in my glass here—has gone up by 17.7 per cent. The total bill for water, sewerage and drainage has gone up by 11.7 per cent.

Had I come into this place on budget day and said to the people of this state that their Water Corporation bill will go up by 11.7 per cent, I would have been accurate. Would I have been full and honest? No, I would not have been full and honest. I actually presented the increase in the price of water. I could have concealed it. I could have said it is an 11.7 per cent increase—and then members opposite would have come in here and said that water has gone up by 17.7 per cent; and they would have been right. I did not do that. I gave it straight to the public as it was. I said that the price of water has gone up by 17.7 per cent. That is the truth. That is the explanation. That should not have been all that hard for members opposite to get their minds around. But they could not do that. They could not get their minds around that.

The member for Victoria Park in question time failed to do the work. I am very disappointed in the member for Victoria Park, because he is a very bright young man. He is a very intelligent young man. But he failed to do the work. He followed the bad example of other members opposite and he came out with rhetoric and one-liners and loud-speaking, but he failed to sit down and do the work. Member for Victoria Park, take some advice from a wise old owl, “Sit down and do the work before you speak. Do the work before you open your mouth.” That is all the member for Victoria Park needs to do, and he may well have a good career in this place.

I said in question time that, under Labor, electricity prices were signalled to go up by 72 per cent. They tried to conceal it. I have said that a thousand times in this place.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I think the member for Victoria Park has had a very, very bad day!

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** It is one of the best days I have had, actually!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I would hate to see a bad one, then, if this is a good one!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis):** Okay, members! That is enough.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Members opposite are just a joke! Get organised! They are an embarrassment.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Okay, members! That is enough.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** That is the explanation on water, totally upfront. On electricity, as I said, under Labor, a report came out that said there would be a 72 per cent increase. Labor tried to disguise that as a community service obligation. That is not what it was. It was subsidising a loss that had been made by the electricity utilities, largely—not totally—as a result of Labor’s failed policies. This government was honest with the people of Western Australia. It is interesting. I think members opposite underestimate the people of Western Australia. I will relay one phone call —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The people of Western Australia have a lot more wisdom and commonsense than members opposite give them credit for. They understand that they were not being told the full truth about electricity prices. They knew there was a problem. They also understood that the real cost of supplying water is more than they are being charged.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** This is a joke, Mr Acting Speaker.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, members on my left

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I do not care whether members are on my left or my right. I am going to call the next person who interjects.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** So we made the decision to be honest, and to share the pain and do it early. We have done that. I know that will put a lot of pressure on many households. That is why we have increased the hardship utility grant scheme.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Victoria Park, this is your second call.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Victoria Park, did you not hear me? I call you for the third time.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, I call you for the third time.

**Mr P.B. Watson** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Albany, I call you for the third time.

*Point of Order*

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Mr Acting Speaker, I distinctly heard interjections from the member for Riverton. I am just hoping that you will be consistent in your —

Several members interjected.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** So he has got a ventriloquist over there!

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

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I have said all I want to say on water. The Minister for Water will say more.

**Mr M.P. Whitely** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Bassendean, I call you for the first time.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** On electricity, this government made the decision, rightly or wrongly, to deal with the issue upfront. As I read out during question time, the 22.3 per cent that Treasury has put in there is not a policy decision of the government. I guarantee to the people of Western Australia that the increase, if there is one, will be nothing like that. Can I just say that in the 2009–10 budget—the first budget of this state government—Treasury had a similar assumption showing an increase of 25.9 per cent in 2010–11. Did that happen? No, it did not happen, because the government made a policy decision for basically a 10 per cent increase plus a 15 per cent increase—not a 25.9 per cent increase.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, member for West Swan! I call you for the first time.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Forward estimates are what they are. They are projections.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Number two, member for West Swan.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Forward estimates are Treasury's projections. There is only one budget. The budget is an annual event. If members opposite doubt that, they should look at the title of the appropriation bill that we are debating. It is the budget for the coming year; it is not the budget for the next four years. The budget is an annual cycle. If members opposite cannot grasp that, I cannot do much to help them. The forward estimates provide a

guide for decision making. We can now understand why this Labor group could not govern properly; it could not even grasp the concept of the budget.

**Ms J.M. Freeman** interjected.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Nollamara and member for West Swan—one each. That's three for you, member for West Swan.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I am not going to say any more.

**Mr T.G. Stephens:** When you do a tax return, do you pick figures out of the air and pop them down?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Pilbara, I am calling you for the first time.

**Mrs C.A. Martin:** Why did you pick on him? They were louder than him.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Kimberley; I am calling you as well.

**Mrs C.A. Martin:** Show a bit more respect.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Mr Acting Speaker, the Premier is encouraging debate from this side and we are answering. Every time someone answers, you are calling them to order and gagging debate.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I made it perfectly clear that I did not want to hear another interjection from either side of the house. Let me make this point, member for Albany. You could well have been sitting in this chair during this debate, and you turned down the opportunity this week.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Mr Acting Speaker, the Speaker's role is to be impartial in the chair and not adopt a partisan approach and start pointing at members and start threatening them. I would ask you to reflect on that.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Mr Acting Speaker, with respect, I just want to get your ruling and find out exactly what you are saying to the member for Albany when you said that he could have been sitting in the chair. Are you suggesting that the management of the house would have been different if the member for Albany was sitting in the chair? It is very unclear to me.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. Take a seat. The Premier has the call.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I will conclude my remarks on one little issue.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** The Premier is a liar.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Cannington, do I have to instruct you on what to do on this?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I am interested to know what your ruling is. On the point of order —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Cannington, take a seat. I do not need someone to take a point of order to instruct you to withdraw that remark. It was crystal clear.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** If it is the instruction —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Cannington, I am not going to debate it with you. I am instructing you to withdraw that comment.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I withdraw that comment.

*Point of Order*

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I have been very quiet, for obvious reasons. I must get some clarity along the same lines of what has been said because earlier in the day the words "lied" and "liar" were acceptable in this house. I am now totally confused.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I make this point, member for Collie–Preston: I will ask the Speaker to clarify the exact words that are acceptable and that are not acceptable. My understanding is that to refer to an individual as a liar is not acceptable.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Did you hear that, member for Scarborough?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, member for Cannington.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** During one of my radio interviews—I think it was on the ABC—a caller phoned to discuss electricity and water charges. He said to me that he was not happy about the increases as he is on a moderate income and he and his wife have six children. He said it will hurt them to pay these higher electricity and water charges. To his great credit, he said he understands that we must pay more for water and we should try to conserve water. That is what we underestimate. The people of Western Australia understand that electricity and energy is expensive to produce and should be conserved. They particularly understand that water is increasingly expensive and also should be conserved. Members of the opposition underestimate the people of Western Australia. They have shown no respect for them in the way they have behaved in this debate.

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn)** [3.24 pm]: I am not too sure why the Premier was making the comments that he did in that speech. He spent 11 minutes defending himself against accusations that we did not make, particularly when he referred to the 11.1 per cent increase. We never debated that issue whatsoever. Let us summarise what has happened so far. The Premier did that but I will briefly go back over it. Water charges have gone up by 17.7 per cent, sewerage charges have gone up by four per cent and drainage charges have gone up by 34.32 per cent. That is a total increase of \$122.49. If we go back to the 2009–10 budget, the water price increases for those same three components —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for South Perth and member for Wanneroo, I am not counting this as an interjection but I do not want you to have a private conversation in the chamber. I want to listen to the member for Cockburn in silence.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** The total increase for households amounts to \$122.49. If we go back to the 2009–10 budget, the increase for those three components was \$65.75. That is a \$56.74 increase over the increase that was applied to those three services in the 2009–10 budget. That in itself is an 86.2 per cent increase. The charges in this budget are 86 per cent up on the increases that the Minister for Water applied in the 2009–10 budget.

I turn to the comments that the Premier made just a minute ago, which he also made in his budget speech. He talked about honesty, openness and transparency. When the Premier talked about water supply and consumption charges, he said that the average household cost will increase by 17.7 per cent in 2010–11 following the recommendations of the Economic Regulation Authority. Today he said that that was in line with the ERA. Let us go to the ERA report that was tabled in this house in August 2009. What did it say? It said that water increases—that is, water supply increases, including the fixed charge—should reach the real cost of water of \$553 by 2012–13. We should get to that point by \$45 increases each year. That is a 10 per cent increase each year. What have we been faced with this year? We are faced with a 17.7 per cent increase. If we look at the waste water and sewerage charges, what did the ERA recommend? The ERA recommended that we reach \$579 by 2012–13, on a \$10 increase per annum over the years between 2009–10 and 2012–13, which is two per cent. What are we faced with today? As of 1 July, we are paying \$522.24. That is a four per cent increase above what it was last year. If we go to sewerage, the ERA recommended that a fixed charge of \$87.21 be introduced this year and remain fixed from now on. What has the government put the sewerage charges up to this year? They are \$90.40, a 34 per cent increase above what it was last year, and above the ERA recommendations.

I ask the minister and the Premier what will happen next year. Will the sewerage charges go up next year or will they be in line with the ERA recommendations, which the government has already breached? The Premier said that these charges are in line with the ERA recommendations. Clearly, I have shown to the house that they are not. The water charges, the drainage charges and the sewerage charges are not in line with the recommendations. What is going to happen next year? Is it going to be fixed from now on at \$90, when the Economic Regulation Authority recommended that it should be fixed from now on at \$87.21? I would like to hear a response on that from the Minister for Water. If we are to believe the Premier's budget speech and what he just told the house—that these charges are in line with the ERA recommendations—what should we be paying? We should be paying \$485.30 this year for water; that is \$34.15 less than the Minister for Water's increase in charges. We should be paying \$552.24 for sewerage, which is \$10.62 less than the increase in prices. For drainage, we should be paying just over \$87, which is \$3.11 less than the increase in prices. That would give us a total saving for households in Western Australia of \$47.88. That is how much less per year families in Western Australia would be paying as of 1 July: \$47.88, if the ERA recommendations were followed, in line with what the Premier has just told the house—that these increases were in line with the ERA recommendations. That is just not true; it is a blatant untruth. If the ERA recommendations were to be followed, householders in Western Australia would actually be saving \$47.88 a year.

What did we get from the minister during question time? He said that we have not yet reached the real cost of water and that it should increase by 20 per cent. However, the ERA recommended that the real cost of water would be \$553 by 2012–13. If we follow the Minister for Water's suggestion of a 20 per cent increase, we will be paying \$623.34 for water supply charges, including the fixed charge. That is \$70.34 above the ERA recommendations. I would suggest that that is called gouging; is that not true? The ERA has recommended what the real cost of water should be by 2012–13, but the Minister for Water is suggesting that prices have to increase

by 20 per cent. That would result in people paying \$70.34 more than the real cost of water. That is why I asked the minister the supplementary question: how much does it cost to supply one kilolitre of water? He could not answer. He said, "I don't know; somewhere around two dollars". I asked that question because I wanted to know how much families have to pay for each kilolitre of water, to find out whether that is the real cost of water. In line with the minister's response about 20 per cent increases, that clearly is not the real cost of water. The minister is either misleading the house or planning to gouge water users in Western Australia and force them to pay more than the real cost of water.

The Premier said on radio that the price hike is appropriate, but that it could have been managed better. I ask the Premier: by whom? Who could have managed it better? Clearly, it could have been managed better than it was managed by the Minister for Water, because he has misled the house and he does not know his own portfolio. He does not know the price of a kilolitre of water. He does not know what the real cost of water is, because he is suggesting that it will be \$70 more than what the ERA recommended. That is what he said to this house. I ask the Premier: who could have better managed these increases? Could the Premier have managed it better? Maybe he could have. Could the former Treasurer, the member for Vasse, have managed it better? Could the Minister for Water have managed it better? He clearly has not done a very good job at all.

What are we getting for these increases in water charges? Are we getting any better service? We are paying more, but are we getting a better service? Last year, because he is so weak, the Minister for Water oversaw a \$600 million capital works cut to his budget; he could not defend himself. What has happened this year? He has again rolled over and allowed a further \$85 million in capital works to be cut from his budget. He has put \$100 million back into infill sewerage, and that is fantastic. That is a great decision.

Several members interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Mr Acting Speaker, you made a ruling earlier about interjections. I have heard the Minister for Water, the Premier and the Leader of the National Party.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis):** I formally call the Minister for Water and the Leader of the National Party.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Why was that \$100 million put back into the budget? I remember; I led a campaign against the Minister for Water to actually do the right thing by the people of Western Australia on the issue of infill sewerage, and the Premier saved his neck. That is why the \$100 million is back in this year's budget. The Premier stepped in and saved the Minister for Water's neck. However, if we go back to the budget papers, where has that \$85 million in capital works been cut from? It has been cut from water services programs. It has been cut from the area of water services and distribution—the very areas that deliver efficient water services to Western Australians. These are the very areas that the Minister for Water crowed about when he was talking about billions of litres of water being lost through leaky water pipes. What is his response to that? It is to cut \$85 million out of the budget. That is his response. We are now paying far more for water than we should, and in future we will be paying more than the real cost of water, according to the Minister for Water. What are we getting for that? We are getting more leaky water pipes and less efficient services. That is fantastic. That is the minister's record as the Minister for Water and what he has delivered to the families of Western Australia. Working families will have to go, cap in hand, to the government for a subsidy to pay their water bills, and in return they will get leaky water pipes and less efficient services. The minister should just resign.

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Mindarie)** [3.37 pm]: I rise to address the Premier's claim before the election that, as Premier, he would never deliver a deficit budget.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** He said it after the election.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** He said it after the election; I am sorry. He said he would never deliver a deficit budget during his Premiership. Today, when talking about water bills, he talked about what Western Australians understand. He said Western Australians understand that, in the makeup of water bills, there are different composite parts, and he talked about the percentage increase in each of those composite parts of water bills.

Of course, to the average Western Australian and the average person in the electorate of Mindarie, whom I know reasonably well, these percentages do not mean much, because they do not understand and do not have ready recall of the base charges that each particular component relates to. What they and all Western Australians understand, however, is that the average cost increase across all households for fees and charges in the coming year will be \$367.86. That is the average across all households. I went back to the figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which revealed that there were 590 415 households in Western Australia at the time of the 2006 census. When we extrapolate that across the \$367.86 increase per household, we get a figure of \$217 million—that is, only \$70 million shy of the total budget surplus. What the Premier did not tell the people

of Western Australia after he was elected was that he would do whatever it takes to maintain the Premiership. He did not tell them that he would turn every household and worker into a beast of burden for the Liberal government. He did not tell them that he would turn them all into beasts of burden to maintain his Premiership. The Premier has done that because he has worked out that he can deliver a quarter of a billion dollar surplus. He probably asked the Under Treasurer the number of households in Western Australia. He would have been told that there are about 640 000 now, as the number has gone up from 590 000. He would have said, "Give me \$300 million, divide it by the number of households and I'll slap it on the lot of them." The Premier then had the gall to stand in this place at the table, look at the television cameras and thank the families of Western Australia. He thanked them for being supplicant to his demands upon them to come up with this figure.

I have many friends, not just in the electorate of Mindarie but also across the western suburbs —

**Mr C.C. Porter:** Name one!

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Attorney General, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Cockburn, I call you to order for the second time today.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I have many friends across the western suburbs and I have been to some of their parties, and I can tell members now that some of them would pay \$367 for a good bottle of champagne on a Saturday night. People like the Attorney General would spend that on a meal on a Saturday night!

**Mr C.C. Porter** interjected.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** But out in Merriwa, out in Ridgewood, out in Clarkson and out in Two Rocks, this \$367 is like the straw that broke the camel's back. What the Premier has done is outrageous. The people of Western Australia now know that he has hauled up his flag and that it reads: "Whatever it takes, there will be a surplus next year." We can guarantee there will be surplus next year because the Premier will go back to Treasury next year and say, "I want another quarter of a billion dollars to announce on budget day and I will look with my college-boy face at those suckers on the TV and say, 'Thanks a lot gang, you kept me in the job. You people out there are all going to be charged whatever it takes to deliver a surplus.'"

To put this in its context, the Premier got to the Premiership in the first place on the back of the royalties for regions program. That program in the budget across 2008, 2009 and 2010 indicates that there is \$430 million unallocated for royalties for regions. The Premier's attitude is: "It doesn't matter. Those out there in the outlying suburbs—where we do not actually get our votes from, and where it is really going to hurt—are all going to have to pay whatever it takes for me to be able to deliver a quarter of a billion dollar surplus and I'll have the royalties for the regions, the other \$430 million, tucked up in a slush fund for the rest of Western Australia."

It is an absolutely outrageous policy and an outrageous way to go about setting public policy to say, "I will do whatever it takes to any family in Western Australia so that I can come into the Legislative Assembly and tell the people, 'Here's my quarter of a billion dollar surplus.'" That is not fiscal management; it is fiscal management with a baseball bat beating down the people. I understand that the Premier would be regaled in his electorate of Cottesloe as a good economic manager for delivering this surplus because \$367.86 is nothing to any of his constituents. But out in Ridgewood, out in Merriwa, in Victoria Park and in the suburbs where working families live—not the capitalists, not the people who are making it by turning over land, mining shares or whatever—and where people have to catch a train to earn an hourly rate in their job, \$367.86 is a horrific impost.

It is therefore not good enough to talk about percentages only, as people forget the base rate to which the percentage relates. But what they know now of this Premier is that he will always deliver a surplus when the budget estimates come in. That is why he says, "Tomorrow will never come." What a puerile statement! If a five-year-old wanted an ice-cream, the Premier would say, "Tomorrow." Then when the five-year-old wanted the ice-cream the following day, he would say, "It's not tomorrow yet, sonny; that's the next day." The Premier is treating the people of Western Australia as imbeciles by saying that tomorrow will never come. What will come is the day of reckoning. The day of reckoning will come for all Western Australians on budget day next year when they will know that it is not tomorrow; it will be the day of reckoning as water and electricity charges rocket again, as they will, because the one sure promise the Premier made is that he will not ever deliver a deficit budget.

**DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre — Minister for Water)** [3.44 pm]: There is a little lack of honesty in this debate. The honesty is about providing a service at the true cost of that service. In this instance it is water. It is also electricity, but I will direct my comments to water. I believe this side of the chamber is honest. The member for Cockburn is quite ungrateful —

**Mr F.M. Logan:** Ungrateful!

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** The member for Cockburn is quite ungrateful for the efforts I have made in the area of infill sewerage.

**Mr T.G. Stephens:** I'll be grateful if you give some to Port Hedland.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** The member for Pilbara will have to wait.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I ask the minister to take his seat. Member for Pilbara, I call you to order for the second time today.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** It is well known that there is a line item in the budget for \$25 million a year for the infill sewerage program; that is, \$100 million over four years. As far as the priorities are concerned, for the member for Pilbara, the same process will be followed. That is why I find the member for Cockburn very ungrateful. The same considered process will be used that I considered for the plight of some of the member for Cockburn's constituents in Spearwood.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** It was about listening to the issues, considering the public health and environmental health issues and me going and looking at them. It was about using agencies, including the Department of Water, the Water Corporation, the Department of Health and the Department of Environment and Conservation. For the member for Pilbara's information, this will be part of the process in prioritising the spending of \$25 million in this year and in each of the out years on that program. At least we on this side have the accountability and honesty to say that this is the true cost of providing this service and that if we ignore it, eventually the chickens will come to roost.

The member for Mindarie suggested that the government is ripping off the people of Western Australia to bolster its coffers. I suggest to members that the Water Corporation's dividend is \$416 million. The other costs of income tax expense and local government rates mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition are included in his total.

The cost of the community service obligation to provide water is \$492 million. Community service obligations are paid for by this government for difficult to provide services due to their viability. In other circumstances, private proponents would regard the cost of providing those CSOs as not stacking up because of the need for the infrastructure required against the number of services provided. I see these sorts of decisions all the time. The cost of delivering water or sewerage services, for instance, divided by the number of consumers who actually access them does not stack up, but we have a responsibility as a government to provide those core services.

Members implied yesterday that the Water Corporation is in fact actually skimming these increased prices off consumers so that it can provide a dividend. Why would it do that? A dividend is provided by the Water Corporation, but \$492 million is provided in community service obligations for the core business of water, waste water treatment and sewerage services for the people of Western Australia.

I will just touch on the issue that the member for Cockburn talked about when he referred to the Economic Regulation Authority's recommendation. He said that the government had not complied with the ERA's recommendation to the absolute percentage. The ERA made a recommendation. As I have said today, I am being honest and up-front with the people of Western Australia, unlike members opposite who hid electricity prices and the true cost of water. It is about saying, "This is the true price of water." How that will be achieved is part of the budgetary process; it is part of the government's decision-making process. I am saying to the people of Western Australia that we have not arrived yet. People must understand that responsibility. Why have we not accepted the ERA's recommended fixed charge for sewerage, instead of a figure based on gross rental value? I get a lot of questions about that. People say to me, "Minister, the place over there is three times bigger than my small property, but I pay more than he does." There are anomalies in the GRV assessment, analysis and final figure. The ERA has recommended that we make a standard fixed charge. It would be less complicated. I have considered that if we do that, the prices would be higher for one-third of those people in the low socioeconomic group. We must consider that. This ERA recommendation would mean that the fees for a large percentage of those in the low socioeconomic group would increase. That is a consideration. People in the high socioeconomic group would probably pay less and those in the low socioeconomic group would probably pay more. That would make it uniform. That is an ERA recommendation. However, what actually happens and what is policy is a decision of government, and that is what we do on this side.

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton)** [3.53 pm]: We have just heard a rather vigorous exchange from members opposite who feigned anger. This is an important issue. People are doing it tough in these times, particularly self-funded retirees who have been affected by Rudd's tax and whatnot. The question is: what would members opposite do if they were in government and faced with the same issues? One does not have to go very far to find out; there is plenty of documentation. They were in government a couple of years ago. In fact, when they brought down the 2008-09 budget in 2008, they increased water charges by 10 per cent. On what basis did they do that? The then Premier referred to the Economic Regulation Authority's recommendation. In his explanation for that, Mr Carpenter said that he was confident that Western Australians would recognise water was a scarce commodity and understood the need to raise charges to combat climate change. I have heard those comments

from members on our side. The then Premier also said that people's understanding of the scarcity of water and the importance of treating water as a scarce commodity required his government to increase the price.

The member for Victoria Park asked the Premier what the increase is going to be next year. That same question was asked of the former Premier, but Mr Carpenter refused to be drawn on the likelihood of future price rises in household charges, and said that that would be assessed annually. I am getting a bit old and I am hard of hearing, but I think I heard that comment repeatedly today. A very interesting statement was made today.

**Ms J.M. Freeman** interjected.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Other people, in a different life, responded to this issue. The response of the guy who at that time ran the Conservation Council of Western Australia, Chris Tallentire—I recognise that name—was that water was still far too cheap.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** Did you listen to my speech?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes, I did. He is reported as saying —

You can get a tonne of water delivered to your home for about 80c at the moment, that's not helping anyone understand the preciousness of this resource at all, ...

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** He went on to say —

At the very least it needs to reflect the cost of delivery, the cost of production and environmental costs ... the 9.7 per cent increase is welcome because it gets us closer —

*Point of Order*

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I understand that the member is quoting the other member out of context.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** He is not a member in this case. Did the member not listen? This is before he came to Parliament.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis):** Before the member for Riverton continues, I remind members of the point I made earlier about wanting to hear people in silence. There are too many audible conversations going on among other members.

*Debate Resumed*

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I will repeat what he said. He said —

At the very least it needs to reflect the cost of delivery, the cost of production and environmental costs ... the 9.7 per cent increase is welcome because it gets us closer towards the real cost of water.

That is what we are doing. The Premier at the time said that the ERA's report warned that further price rises were needed and suggested that charges should increase by more than 50 per cent over the following period. As members know, Chris Tallentire is in this house. In his budget speech he railed against the increase. The real story is that he cannot have it both ways. He cannot have more positions on an issue than are in the *Kama Sutra*. The move on water was right, and the member approved of it.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I am not going to call the member for Gosnells. I remind the member for Riverton to refer to other members in this place by the name of their seat, not by their name. I remind the member that when he singles out members, he invites interjections.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Excuse me; I got confused with his past life. The issue is that we need to be consistent. We made the right move, just as members opposite did when they were in government.

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (26)

Ms L.L. Baker  
Ms A.S. Carles  
Mr R.H. Cook  
Ms J.M. Freeman  
Mr J.N. Hyde  
Mr W.J. Johnston  
Mr F.M. Logan

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan  
Mr M. McGowan  
Mrs C.A. Martin  
Mr M.P. Murray  
Mr A.P. O'Gorman  
Mr P. Papalia  
Mr J.R. Quigley

Ms M.M. Quirk  
Mr E.S. Ripper  
Mrs M.H. Roberts  
Ms R. Saffioti  
Mr T.G. Stephens  
Mr C.J. Tallentire  
Mr P.C. Tinley

Mr A.J. Waddell  
Mr P.B. Watson  
Mr M.P. Whitely  
Mr B.S. Wyatt  
Mr D.A. Templeman (*Teller*)

## Noes (30)

Mr P. Abetz  
Mr F.A. Alban  
Mr C.J. Barnett  
Mr I.C. Blayney  
Mr J.J.M. Bowler  
Mr T.R. Buswell  
Mr G.M. Castrilli  
Mr V.A. Catania

Dr E. Constable  
Mr M.J. Cowper  
Mr J.H.D. Day  
Mr J.M. Francis  
Mr B.J. Grylls  
Dr K.D. Hames  
Mrs L.M. Harvey  
Mr A.P. Jacob

Dr G.G. Jacobs  
Mr R.F. Johnson  
Mr A. Krsticevic  
Mr W.R. Marmion  
Mr P.T. Miles  
Ms A.R. Mitchell  
Dr M.D. Nahan  
Mr C.C. Porter

Mr D.T. Redman  
Mr A.J. Simpson  
Mr M.W. Sutherland  
Mr T.K. Waldron  
Dr J.M. Woollard  
Mr J.E. McGrath (*Teller*)

## Pairs

Mr J.C. Kobelke

Mr I.M. Britza

Question thus negatived.

**DECORUM OF THE HOUSE — DEBATE TERMINOLOGY***Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr G.A. Woodhams):** Before members might choose to move from where they are, I wish to bring some clarification to this place about the use of the words “lies” and “liar”. Members, there is a very strong convention in this house that many of you would realise has been in place over a considerable period of time; that is, that use of the word “lies” or accusing somebody of being “a liar” are not acceptable. I will not make a ruling, but I certainly indicate to all Acting Speakers who are hearing this, and to all other members, that if the word “lies” is used by any member in this place in reference to another member in this place, a request will be made that the accusation be immediately withdrawn. I hope that brings effective clarification to what has happened today, members.

**Mrs C.A. Martin:** What about Pinocchio?

**The SPEAKER:** If I can find Pinocchio, member for Kimberley, I will make sure that he is informed as well.

**SCHOOLS OF ISOLATED AND DISTANCE EDUCATION — STUDENT CHARGES***Motion*

**MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [4.03 pm]:** I move —

That the government immediately cancel all bills sent to secondary schools for year 11 and 12 students doing courses through Schools of Isolated and Distance Education.

The issue of schools having to meet some of the costs of students doing courses through the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education was first raised with principals in this state last year. Clearly, this is about part of the three per cuts, the cut to the education budget and the transfer of costs and saving money from the education budget to pay for things like the increased salary of the chief of staff to the Premier.

Despite this issue being raised with principals, I am told that principals were not advised about how much the costs that would be transferred to them would be, when that would occur and, indeed whether it was final that it would occur at all. It is interesting that the Minister for Education often makes claims in this place to the effect that this was something that was talked about a long time ago, that this is something that the former government was going to do or other claims of that nature. It is a little poor of her to make these claims and generalisations without providing any evidence of her claims. This is not something that the former Labor government would have done. It would never have passed these costs on to schools. It did not and it would not, but it is being done by the Liberal–National government. I would be very interested to see whether and how the National Party members vote on this motion or whether they will talk it out so that Parliament does not vote on it and they can pretend that they support education in country schools. I am told that advice was given to principals at government schools in April this year; certainly some schools received that advice in April.

This is really a budget cut from last year’s budget, one that the minister was not forthcoming about during part of the budget process last year. It was not announced. A couple of days after last year’s budget, the minister announced a range of cuts that would affect education services. However, this issue does affect services in education. In estimates last year the minister told me that there would be no cuts that would affect education at the coalface. She said that basically it would not affect student learning. It is clear that this cut will affect student learning. It will restrict subject choice for students at, the very least, dozens of senior and district high schools throughout the state.

Schools have now been advised that part of the total cost for a student doing SIDE will come out of their next school grant payment. The Department of Education said it costs about \$4 000 per student per subject to do SIDE, and that private schools are charged an amount of \$2 000.

The member for Churchlands used to talk a lot about openness and accountability when she was on this side of the house. Now that she is a minister, we see little evidence of it; those attributes seem to have been forgotten. She used to talk about parliamentary standards. Now we find that she has none. There has been no accountability or honesty about the cuts to education services. Members need only consider her answer to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition today about what the key cuts to services will be. Clearly, when one looks at this year's education budget, it is clear that there will be cuts to services. What are those services, minister? Either the minister does not know what those cuts to services are, in which case she is totally incompetent, or, alternatively, she is dishonest. She is not telling the house what those cuts to services will be when she knows what they are. One of her responses was to wait until estimates next week.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I believe you referred to somebody as being dishonest. You cannot refer to somebody as being dishonest.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** I did not actually call the minister dishonest. I said that if she were to be doing something, then she would be dishonest. That form of words has been generally accepted practice in this house.

Last week this minister denied that years 11 and 12 courses were being cut from district high schools. She used the euphemism of it just being an adjustment to the senior school allocation. Members know what that means. It means that funds are being cut so that years 11 and 12 students will be forced to go to senior high schools. They will be forced away from the district high schools that they were once at or are currently at.

This minister told the Leader of the Opposition to wait until estimates—wait until next week—to find out what those cuts to services are. Does she know what the cuts to services are? Could she not say? Is she incompetent? Is she dishonest? Does she know the answer? Could she have said today what they are? Could she have been open and accountable to the house? I think there is at least some possibility that she could have been open and accountable but chose not to. I pose those as questions. I have not accused the Minister for Education of any of those things. Sharyn O'Neill, the Director General of the Department of Education, said to a committee hearing of the upper house that those cuts to year 11 and 12 were part of the three per cent budget cuts. Quite clearly, they were known when last year's budget was brought down; they were known when this minister attended estimates last year. However, there was no mention of these cuts to what the minister calls adjustments to the senior schools allocation, which are affecting year 11 and 12 students at at least 21 district high schools, when she addressed the estimates committee last year, nor was there any admission of these cuts at any time since by the minister until she was questioned in this house last week. This is not openness and accountability from this minister. It is simply hiding the cuts in education and letting people find out by themselves.

Parents were first advised of that change to year 11 and 12 at district high schools towards the end of last year, yet it formed part of the budget back in April–May. Why were parents not advised earlier, because had they been they would have been in a better position to make choices about their future and their children's future? Some parents in country areas are saying to me that although the minister says that the choices are to travel by bus to go to a senior high school, to go to boarding school or to study with the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education, she neglects to point out the fourth option—this is what people are telling me—which is for them to move from a country town to a place where they do not have to send their child to a boarding school or put their child on a bus to travel for a very long time in each direction each day.

What has been exposed is another hidden but immensely significant cut that is being rolled out. This is forcing each high school in this state to contribute a payment for any students doing SIDE. I am told that the fee is \$1 000 per subject and that that fee is being charged to high schools for the first time in 2010. It was not charged before and it was not something that our government was planning to do. It is a new cut. I believe that if we were to ask the director general of education, she would say that it is part of the three per cent cuts that they have to make to the education budget. This \$1 000 per student is a further cut to school budgets. This government has already slashed school budgets. It removed the \$100 per student subsidy towards school fees. It removed the amount of money that each of those schools was getting for its year 11 students engaged in community service work. Now the government is charging those schools for students who want to do a subject that is not available at their school. The minister is looking at me in a very puzzled way because I am sure it does not affect Churchlands. I am sure that at Churchlands Senior High School in her electorate all kinds of subjects are on offer and there is a full range.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** It is a very large school.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Does the Premier think that Kalamunda Senior High School, for example, should have to pay \$1 000 for its students to do a subject such as French, physics or something else not on offer?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** I will speak later.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** I hope that the Premier does and I hope that he agrees with this motion, because I think this is one of the most scandalous changes that his government has made to education in this state. It is to restrict the choices of students in year 11 and 12 at probably dozens and dozens of metropolitan and country high

schools. The Premier may have furrowed his brow too, but that is exactly what he is doing. It is called policy by stealth. There was no announcement of this and no trumpeting by the minister that this is what the government was going to do and why the government was going to do it. There was no honesty and accountability. There was no statement after this year's budget or last year's budget that the government was going to impose more costs on schools and that it would reduce their school grant by \$1 000 per subject for each child who does a SIDE course.

Silently, letters have been sent to principals in country and metropolitan areas throughout our state. No doubt the minister will again accuse me of scaremongering and say that this is not happening, just as she told me last week that the cuts were not happening at district high schools. However, I can assure members that it is happening. I have spoken to people at the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations and people who represent the parent community in country and metropolitan areas. I have spoken to people in the metropolitan area. Many are a little frightened to speak out because they are afraid of being further victimised by this.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Further victimised? Who has been victimised?

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** We will get to that.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** That is a careless, irresponsible statement.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Premier!

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** A number of teachers and principals do not want to be singled out and identified as complaining about these cuts because they are afraid of what will happen to them. Whether the Premier likes it or not, that is what they have told me. They do not want their school identified. I will mention some schools on the record. In some instances I have not directly spoken to a couple of these schools, but I have heard the same figures from a number of sources. I think that what we should have here is some accountability from the minister. I think that if the minister is honest and accountable, at the very least she will table the amounts of money that every high school in this state has been billed for SIDE courses this year, because the bills have gone out only in the past couple of months and they are significant. Principals are telling me that they had not been expecting bills of this magnitude. They certainly had not planned on this expenditure as part of their school budget process. I am told that Merredin Senior High School received a bill for \$25 000. I believe that Northam Senior High School has received a bill for some \$37 000. That is a \$37 000 bill for Northam and other country high schools like it. There are many in the member for Collie–Preston's electorate and the Bunbury electorate, and in all the country electorates. For example, I have been contacted by Newton Moore Senior High School, where students who are doing French this year through SIDE have been told that it will not be on offer to them next year because the school will be charged \$1 000 per child who does it. I do not know whether the minister thinks that this is an acceptable outcome, but that example hit home with me. This is a time when people acknowledge the importance of learning other languages and the great benefit to young people in our state of being able to learn another language. They have received great encouragement from the Deputy Prime Minister of this country to study another language, to travel and to learn more about the world. The opportunities that it can provide them with in their lives and businesses in the future are phenomenal. It is a disgrace that in a state as wealthy as ours this minister and this government would deny those children that opportunity. The choice for parents who have children studying French at Newton Moore in year 11 this year and who would like those children to go on to year 12 is perhaps to send them to boarding school or to a school in the metropolitan area or to make them travel some further distance to another school in the south west where that subject is on offer. I do not see why they should have to do that. Students have for years and years and decades and decades effectively been doing these subjects through SIDE. I highlighted Merredin Senior High School's \$25 000 bill, or thereabouts, and Northam Senior High School's \$37 000 bill. Metropolitan schools have received significant bills. I ask the minister if she will provide a list of the bills that have gone out to schools.

Will the Minister for Education and member for Churchlands be honest and accountable to this house and provide a list of the bills that have gone out to schools?

**Dr E. Constable:** I will answer that when I speak.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Has the minister no standards of openness and accountability?

**Dr E. Constable:** I will answer that when I speak.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The minister is going to have to provide the information sooner or later, so why will she not undertake to provide it now?

**Dr E. Constable:** I did not say I would not do that. I said I will answer that when I speak. You are having your turn. I will have my turn.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The minister is truly hopeless. I urge the minister not to leave the chamber. I want to read out a letter from Kalamunda Senior High School. I want the minister to listen to this, because she always denies what I am saying. She always says it is scaremongering; it is not happening. I do not think this minister

would know if her head was on fire, because she does not seem to know anything about what is happening in schools. I want to read a letter from Kalamunda Senior High School that went out to the parents of a student in year 11. The Premier should also listen very closely to this, because I do not think he can be very proud of this. The letter reads —

Dear Mr and Mrs —

I have deleted the name —

I am writing to you regarding ... —

I have deleted the child's name —

course selection for Year 12 in 2011. ... is one of 7 Year 11 students doing one of their courses through SIDE.

In previous years schools were able to enrol a number of students through SIDE at no cost to the home school. In 2010 the Education Department is charging schools to enrol students in SIDE courses.

The minister is just chatting away to the Premier. She is not interested in what is happening to kids at Kalamunda high and throughout the state. The letter continues —

The cost for each student is \$1,000 and the \$10,130 for 2010 (7 Year 11 students and 3 Year 12 students) is being taken from our next school grant payment.

Although this poses a financial impact on us for 2010 we will pay the \$10,130 to ensure students can complete Year 11.

Unfortunately we will not be able to carry this cost in 2011. As a consequence your child will need to select their courses from those that we can offer in the school.

I am disappointed that this has occurred, as I believe SIDE offers a wonderful service in allowing students to do a wider variety of subjects than schools can offer.

If you would like to discuss your child's choice for 2011, please contact either our Senior School Deputy, Mr Carlos Notarpietro or myself at school.

Your sincerely

Mrs Kathy Ritchie

Principal

28 April 2010

This written advice confirms all the verbal advice that I have had from schools throughout our state, and also from parents. Parents have been told that in year 12, their child will not be able to continue in a subject that they are doing in year 11, because the school has been sent the bill for that course. I do not know about the member for Wagin or the other members of the National Party, but I can tell them this: the schools in their areas will be significantly affected by this decision. Merredin District high School—I am not sure if the member for Wagin has heard this—has been sent a bill for \$25 000. Northam District High School has been sent, I am told, a bill for \$37 000. I am told that some country high schools have been sent bills for in excess of \$50 000. This money is coming directly out of their school grant. The letter from Mrs Ritchie make that clear. I have spoken to other principals. I have not spoken to Mrs Ritchie. This letter was given to the member for Forrestfield by the parents of a child who goes to Kalamunda Senior High School. Those parents clearly are not happy. Why should parents have to send their child to a different school for year 12, and either put their child on a bus or make the choice to board their child somewhere, when their child should be able continue to go to the local school and do SIDE? I ask the minister what she is going to do about this and how this is going to be resolved. We will see what happens with Mrs Ritchie. As I said to the Premier, a lot of the principals I have spoken to do not want to be directly quoted. They do not want their school to be singled out. Mrs Ritchie is not alone. Her response is the response of every principal I have spoken to.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Did she give you permission to use her name in Parliament?

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** No, she did not. It is interesting. The Premier seems to be more interested in cover-up than anything else. He does not think I should have used Mrs Ritchie's name without her permission. The fact of the matter is that this is a letter that has gone to the parents of a student at a public school. The Premier and his government are running down public schools in our state. This government, if it stays in office for much longer, will be the ruination of public schools in our state. This minister and this Premier have slashed the budgets of public schools. They are cutting out courses that were previously available at district high schools. They are attempting to force parents to either send their kids to a boarding school, or send them on a long bus trip to a senior high school. The minister says that parents were consulted. They were not. Even the director general says that parents were not consulted. The minister denies that that is happening, yet we know that it is happening.

Last week in Parliament I raised a number of examples of what is occurring. An upper house committee is looking into this very matter. This is not even sensible cost cutting, because I think what will emerge is that the comparatively paltry amount of money that will be saved by cutting what the minister calls the senior school allocation will not end up being a saving at all, particularly if the students involved opt to catch a bus. In another furphy that the minister perpetrated last week, she said that there are existing bus services, and there will be no extra cost in sending these children to senior high schools. I have been told that some of these bus services do not run at the appropriate times, and that some of these services no longer exist. I am told that on some of these bus services, all the seats on the bus are already taken; so there are no extra seats. There does not appear to have been any homework done on that aspect.

Interestingly, the government has a royalties for regions program through which it claims it is spending more money in the regions. I am not sure that that is not money that has just been re-badged. I can tell members that this government is very, very bad for education in the regions. Under this government, more and more year 11 and 12 students will be forced to board in the metropolitan area or forced to board at major centres in the country. More and more students will be forced to travel long distances on buses to do years 11 and 12. Students who do not happen to go to a wonderful school like Churchlands Senior High School, or a school in the Premier's electorate, which have a vast array of year 11 and 12 options on offer, and who want to do languages and subjects like physics, will not be given that opportunity at schools at which they have previously had the opportunity to do those subjects through the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education.

I believe that options should be available to parents at those country and metropolitan schools. This school in Kalamunda is not alone. I have heard that other metropolitan schools have received similar bills and they have given similar advice to parents that they simply will not be able to wear the cost. They will not be taking \$10 000 or more out of their own school budget. The students will either be forced to not study a language or a subject such as physics or chemistry as it is not on offer at this school, or go elsewhere. I do not think that is acceptable. There is a very easy answer to this. The easy answer is to retain the status quo. We should allow those students at Merredin, Northam, Newton Moore, Kalamunda and assorted other schools in the metropolitan and country areas to continue to have students enrolled in SIDE. I ask the Premier to not charge the schools \$1 000 per subject per student enrolled in SIDE. I think it is a disgrace. It restricts education and opportunity for young people in this state. This is a wealthy state. It is a state that can and should do better, not worse. The Premier should be appalled at the decision that has been made by his minister and by her department.

**MR T.G. STEPHENS (Pilbara)** [4.31 pm]: I rise to support the motion moved by the shadow Minister for Education, because unfortunately great damage has been done to the educational fabric of Western Australia. This motion highlights the fact that bills have been sent out to parents of students who are enrolled in Schools of Isolated and Distance Education courses.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** To parents?

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Yes, effectively to parents through the schools.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** No, it's not.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** The Premier will have the opportunity to reply.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You're actually wrong on your first premise. Your opening sentence is incorrect.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Related to the damage that is being done to the educational portfolio by the Minister for Education is this reliance upon SIDE for the delivery of education for remote communities, not only those that have been referred to in this debate so far but also other locations. Today I had a call from a community desperate for the help of its local member of Parliament. The community pointed out that two of its students are required to enrol in SIDE courses. A truck arrived in the Patjarr community to pick up its whole classroom, its teacher's house and its toilet block. Ten students were photographed beside the truck today. I will pass the names across —

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** There hasn't been more than two for the whole year, and you know that.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I will pass this list to the member. He should not become a defender of an inept minister.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** I'm just saying that's a mistruth and a misrepresentation. There hasn't been more than two in any day this year, and you know it. They may have 10 for a photo but they've had only two students there all year.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** I would like this list to be passed to the member for Kalgoorlie.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** You know that's dishonest.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** The member for Kalgoorlie is doing that community a disservice. Today they sent me, through their advisor, the names of 10 students within that community, two of whom are expected to rely upon SIDE support. Two of them have enrolled in SIDE. The member can pass that list to the education minister. I am

not proposing to make those names public. They are the names of 10 students. Two of them are connected to the awful tragedy that we have all just seen displayed in reference to the treatment of people in that area with the loss of that life in that part of that world and the destabilisation of that community. Ten students sat out there in that remote community today while the truck rolled in and picked up their classroom, their teacher's accommodation and the toilet block. It amounted to \$325 000 of expense. Those facilities were taken away from those students and taken to other locations, leaving behind no capacity within that community, no telephone link, no computing facilities and no internet facilities. The educational support worker who delivers education to those 10 students leaves at the end of this week in the absence of ongoing support for the needs of that school. Today on Sorry Day that has compounded the reasons why that community will be sorry about being citizens of Western Australia while this government and this minister are damaging the fabric of the educational structure of Western Australia. All I can do is rely upon the advice that I get from that community. Today that is the advice that I have, with the list of those 10 names of students who have been in that community, some of them for a considerable period. Two of them arrived back in that community this week.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** That's in your electorate, but, as you know, the rest of the community is in my electorate. They've advised me quietly and behind the scenes that they support the moves, saying Patjarr is unsustainable.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** That might be the view of people outside the Patjarr community. It is clearly the view in the education portfolio but it is not the view of the community whose school is being taken away by this minister.

My argument in support of the motion that is before the house today is to take this most urgent opportunity to draw this matter to the attention of the minister. I hope that the member has passed the list of 10 names of students within that community to the education minister. Two of those students have been told to enrol and rely upon SIDE for their services. I do not know whether that service will be billed out to the students in that community through some extension of this user-pays process that seems to be rolling out while this minister is in charge of education. Certainly some of the students have been told that if they want education, they should go to Coolgardie. Other students have been told to enrol in the School of the Air, but apparently it was unable to provide them with any support or facilities to deliver education.

Today is Sorry Day. We have heard this government bleat from the other side of the house about its compassion and interest in Aboriginal affairs. All I would say to members is that it is not on display in the education portfolio under this minister in reference to the Patjarr community, whose classroom was removed, whose teacher's accommodation was removed and even whose toilet block was removed. I do not think that is good enough for 10 students.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** Member for Pilbara, do you concede that this is the only day in the year they've had more than two? Isn't it a coincidence that when they go to take the school away for the photo opportunity another eight turn up?

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** The member is not right. I am talking about my electorate, not the electorate of the member for Kalgoorlie. The advice that I have had is from those people in my electorate. It wedges right down to the bottom end of my electorate and it is not a place that I can visit regularly. However, all I can rely upon is the advice of the community. The consistent advice that I have received this year from that community is that there has been destabilisation in that community as a result of the death of the man in the back of that police van. Gradually, the opportunity has re-established itself. Now today 10 students are finally in place, only two of whom arrived at the beginning of the week. The other eight have been there for extended periods this year.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** That's not true.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** It is true.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** Are you saying that eight attended on one day?

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** There were 10 students in that school today. The school has been taken away from them. The school has not been allowed to accept enrolments this year. Children in that community who have tried to enrol have been told they cannot enrol because there is no school there. They cannot enrol in the Department of Education's facilities. They have been refused enrolment in the place where they live.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** I find that hard to believe.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** It is the truth, as it is put to me by that community. I have not found Aboriginals in these remote communities prone to telling lies to their local member of Parliament. All I can do is advocate on their behalf in the face of what is a growingly heartless government, as displayed by this education minister in the handling and the carriage of her portfolio. I believe that it is my job to position the argument of that community. I beg the member to butt out. It is my job and it is part of my electorate. If the member is supporting the closure of the school that is not in his electorate, he is doing my electorate and the people in my electorate a disservice. He should butt out. I will not argue for the shutting down of facilities in his electorate. He should not do it to mine. It is my job to represent that community, not the member's.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** The people at Warburton, which is the headquarters of that community, tell me they support the closure of the school. It is in my electorate.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** The headquarters might, but the community does not. All that means is that the community that puts the case to me is entitled to expect me to put its case to the Minister for Education in Parliament, and not for the member for Kalgoorlie to interrupt any further.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler:** I won't interrupt any further, but if you tell me to butt out, I will keep on interrupting. Take your choice. You can spend the rest of this time debating with me and not the minister. What do you want?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Kalgoorlie!

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** During question time I put to the Minister for Education the arguments that have been put to me, most recently by contact via emails from that community. They have said to me, yet again, that there are now 10 students within that community. Places such as Sandstone and Gascoyne Junction have schools that have been protected by this Parliament because they had 10 non-Aboriginal kids in attendance. If it is good enough for the white students at places like Gascoyne Junction and Sandstone to have a school that meets their needs, it should be good enough for the Patjarr community, rather than being subject to directions that they must enrol in SIDE for their education. That is the subject of this motion. If I am to believe the arguments I have heard on this side of the house, it is a process that places these communities at risk of receiving bills for their education, which is different from the process that was previously on offer to them.

I hope that I will get the chance to go back to that far southern part of my electorate and visit Patjarr fairly soon; I hope to be accompanied by anyone with an interest in meeting with the 10 students there and try to get to the bottom of it. Apparently the school facility that was put there, presumably with commonwealth government funds to assist the state in the delivery of education services to the Patjarr community, has simply been lifted up on a truck and shunted off elsewhere by a heartless minister who is doing damage to the delivery of education from one end of Western Australia to the other. I am annoyed with the Minister for Education over her handling of her portfolio; if ever there were a portfolio that is fundamental to the delivery of good to the people of Western Australia, it is the education portfolio, but it requires the deployment of focus, competence, compassion and intelligence to respond to the challenges of education, and that is not on offer from this minister. That has been evidenced by the arguments put by the lead speaker in this debate in reference to the SIDE issue, of which the Patjarr community is now a sideshow, because some of those students are being directed to participate in SIDE.

**MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield)** [4.42 pm]: I rise in support of this motion. This matter was brought to my attention recently when I was contacted by a constituent who, quite frankly, was at the end of his tether. His daughter was enrolled at a school in a neighbouring electorate, and the member for Midland has indicated that he received a letter from the principal that essentially meant that her dreams and hopes of a future in veterinary science would probably be dashed. This is a young lady who had worked very hard for the first 11 years of her schooling with this particular dream in mind. In order to achieve enrolment at her preferred university, she would have had to take a certain number of prerequisite subjects, but, unfortunately, the school in which she was enrolled was unable to offer all the prerequisite subjects in a manner in which she could take them. They were, in fact, all offered, but they were not offered on a timetable or grid that she could manage. As a consequence, she was enrolled in the SIDE program.

I was not exceptionally familiar with the SIDE program; many people in the metropolitan area may not be familiar with it. I imagine that most members who represent country constituencies are extremely familiar with it. The Schools of Isolated and Distance Education is the centre for distance learning in the Western Australian Department of Education, and it was created through the amalgamation of the Distance Education Centre and the five Schools of the Air. According to its website, its goals are to look after kindergarten to year 12 students; full-time students unable to attend a conventional school due to geographic location or isolation; Western Australian students travelling Australia or the world on a long-term basis with their parents; Western Australian students whose local high school does not offer the subjects they wish to study, or does not offer a timetable that allows them to join the class; students suffering from long-term illnesses; and part-time adult students undertaking courses to improve their education and employment options. This is an organisation that has clearly been set up to help people who, for one reason or another—geographical isolation, illness, travel and a range of other reasons—are unable to attend a conventional school. These are often children who are disadvantaged in some way, so it is an excellent program, designed to assist them.

As I said, I was approached by a constituent on this matter. I understand that there are in excess of 30 students in my electorate who are enrolled in the SIDE program, and that each of the high schools has been subjected to this charge. In fact, as the member for Midland stated, the high school in question is Kalamunda Senior High School, which is not, in fact, in my electorate, but a large number of students who reside in the High Wycombe and Maida Vale areas travel up the hill to that school.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Do you know what the particular subject was?

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** Yes, I do; it was biology, I believe. In fact, for the benefit of the house, I will read the letter that was sent to me by the constituent. It was in fact CC'd to me; it was sent to the member for Kalamunda, as will become apparent.

**Dr E. Constable:** What was the date of the letter?

**Mr A.J. WADDELL:** The date of the letter is 17 May.

It states —

Dear Mr Day

We are writing to you to express our concern regarding a recent decision of the Department of Education and Training (DET) to charge schools for students undertaking Schools of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) subjects.

This decision was conveyed to us in a letter from the Principal of Kalamunda Senior High School (KSHS) where our daughter is studying Year 11 biology as a SIDE subject (due to clashes with other subjects in the study grid line) to ensure she has prerequisites to enrol in tertiary veterinary studies. A subsequent meeting with the Principal has indicated that the school will fund the cost of the \$1000 per student in 2010 (as this has already been taken out of their school grant) but will not be funding such in 2011. This means that our daughter will not be able to complete her biology studies in Year 12 at KSHS. How can she be motivated to perform in Year 11 biology if she is aware that she will not be able to undertake the subject in Year 12?

Although we do not know the details of the decision of DET, it is clear that this is about the ongoing inability of the Department to effectively manage significant funding reductions being imposed by the Government. When both the Principals of SIDE and KSHS were questioned on the breakdown of this charge they were unable to clarify the basis of it. It is clear that it has not taken into account the input and support that the KSHS puts into the program and in fact is contrary to the subjected charges of the SIDE website which show an enrolment cost of \$50. It is clear that it would be better to enrol direct with SIDE rather than through KSHS. We believe this has been suggested but has been dismissed by DET.

As parents who support public schooling and want our children to succeed, we believe the decision is very short sighted both for our daughter and future students who need to undertake SIDE studies to fit into study grids. As discussed with the Principal we need to look at options so that our daughter can continue to study biology in Year 12. One option is to canvas sponsorship and associated advertising to fund this. Although you may think this is a drastic measure, we are sure that some sponsors would jump at the opportunity to fund this as part of their community involvement as well as for the coverage they would receive from the local and state media. We are sure this is not the image the government would like portrayed regarding public schooling in this state.

As the local member, a community representative on the KSHS School Council, and also a Minister in the current government, we believe you have the ability and means to ensure that appropriate funding is allocated for students to undertake SIDE study to complete their educational direction.

Your response to this issue would be greatly appreciated before we consider what options are available to us.

That letter was copied to me and to Ms Sharryn Jackson. I do not criticise the member for Kalamunda for not responding to the letter; he may have responded to it by now. He had not responded the last time I spoke to the parents. However, it was sent on 17 May. I understand, from the level of correspondence that comes through my office, that that is a short time. However, when I received the letter by email, I put down my evening meal at the time and picked up the phone and spoke to those parents. There are very few things that actually incense me as much as that letter incensed me. It incensed me because I am often reminded of the few opportunities for people in my area of the world. Education is one of the ways in which people can get themselves out of a constant cycle of poverty where there are low expectations in the community. We need to encourage students to seek their ultimate capacity; we need to encourage them to seek their goals; and we need to encourage them to pursue their dreams. We can do that through education. This cost is a slap in the face for those students. It angered me because it is \$1 000 per subject in the context of the budget that we are dealing with here; that is, \$30 000 within my electorate. I am sure it will impact greatly on the member for Collie–Preston's electorate. I am sure that it will greatly affect all the electorates of National Party members, yet \$430 million in unallocated funds is sitting in the royalties for regions program. If we consider this cost is \$1 000 per subject, we could fund 430 000 subjects with that unallocated \$430 million in royalties for regions.

National Party members stand in this place every day and crow about how they are for regions, about how they are for supporting people in the regions and about how they are for ensuring that people in the regions get their

fair share, yet there is evidence in this budget that the government is ripping out from families in the regions the very basics that they should expect. It is not a lot to ask that children get the education they deserve. They should not have to expect to pay fees like this to receive the kind of education for which they are asking.

When I was at university, I got involved in student politics because of the introduction of a \$250 administration fee. At that time higher education was free. As students, we were out there shouting and screaming about this little \$250 fee and how it was the end of the world. Everyone laughed at us and said, "It's only \$250; you should count your blessings." Indeed they were right; we should have counted our blessings. We were saying back then, when we were rallying against the \$250 administration fee, that this was the thin end of the wedge. Indeed it was the thin end of the wedge, because shortly after the \$250 fee came the higher education contribution scheme. HECS has continued to go up and up and now there are students who are leaving university with tens and tens of thousands of dollars of debt to their name.

This cost is the thin end of the wedge. This is saying to our communities that we expect you to start paying more for your public schooling. This is saying to kids, when they make their subject selections, "You had better think carefully about what you want to do, because it might affect your parents who you hear arguing about their inability to pay their increasing electricity bills and who you hear arguing about the fact that they don't have enough money to pay the water bill that is going up. Are you going to put extra pressure on them by selecting a topic that you know is going to create a conflict in the grid and therefore you might be enrolled in SIDE and therefore they're going to be hit with this \$1 000? No; you will do the right thing and you'll not choose those things. You'll lower your expectations." That is my fear—that this cost will force people who have already low expectations to continue lowering their expectations. This is the thin end of the wedge. This is a disgrace. We are a wealthy state. We can afford this. We do not need to attack the people who are least able to defend themselves. This really shows what this government is about.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston)** [4.54 pm]: I also rise to speak along similar lines to previous speakers.

What a disgrace is happening here! Western Australia has been a showcase to the world in the way free education has been provided to our children for many years, and here we go—we are collapsing the education system. We are bringing it back to centralisation so that if students do not travel, they will not get the education they wish for. Although we all know that students in some communities are not able to attend the top-of-the-range classes, they will not be able to attend the class they wish through the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education. That, in itself, is a compromise for our education system. However, the way we are headed here is certainly a lot further than that. It is incumbent on every member of this chamber to make every effort possible to give students and children the chance that others have had for an education.

I can tell members that the first SIDE arrangement that came into Collie was not well accepted. However, people there copped it because they could foresee that it would keep the school and the students in the community going. Now that has been taken away as well. I just cannot believe the cuts to education by this Minister for Education; I really cannot. There is still time for her to change her mind and retrieve the situation. When I was first alerted to this, I had to check whether it was true. Six or seven students in one class getting an education are not always part of just one class. There might be six or seven students in another class, but when they come back together, the class is probably 10, 15 or even 20 children, and they are learning and, really, assisting within the school grounds, thereby ensuring that teacher numbers are still at the right levels. Once the numbers in schools drop off, people move on. It is similar to what happens in years 11 and 12: once those classes collapse—people move on and move out of the towns as well.

I have said before in this place that once a school collapses, the community collapses. I foresee that happening very quickly if these cuts to education go ahead, because at the moment students can get the education they want. Most people accept that they have to move from a remote area for university studies. They might have to move to a community such as Bunbury, or even to Perth, to find a course that suits their needs. Most students come to Perth and start their studies at the University of Western Australia and other universities around the place. That is accepted. However, here we are asking people who cannot get the specialist studies in their communities, to relocate to communities that have changed in the past 20 years. Health and safety is another problem in these communities. When we send away young kids who have just turned 17 years of age, they go out in their cars and drive along country roads. What a disaster happened the other week for young people who were going home from TAFE in Bunbury! I do not want to bring that matter into this debate.

**Dr E. Constable:** Terrible.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I see the Minister for Education shaking her head. But we must remember that those people were going home from their studies in Bunbury. We do not want to see that sort of thing happen again. Why did they have to do their studies in Bunbury? It was because their courses were not available in their community. We do not want to see that happen again—ever. That is why courses of study should be available in towns of any size.

Another thing I note is that principals are very reluctant to speak out. They have a clause in their contracts that they must keep their issues internal. Why are they reluctant to speak out? It is because they will be punished in the future. They will be punished by not being sent to where they would like to go. There will be a black dot on their résumé to indicate that they should not be listened to because they brought out through the back door issues that were happening in schools. No-one has been up-front and honest in this debate. The information on what is happening in schools has leaked out. Now we have heard members quote in Parliament a few letters that people have sent out about what is going on. I have been told that the charge for these SIDE courses for students is \$1 100. Yes, it is expensive, but what value do we put on education? Most people in this place have been very lucky to have had an education, and it was probably propped up by their parents in one way or another. Many people do not have the financial status to be able to pay for their children's education. What happens then? It drives them to other schools. We are privatising our schools by stealth. We are sending these children away from public schools to private schools that will provide their education, or we are sending them to other schools in other towns. That is very wrong.

We have heard about year 11 and 12 students in country areas who now have to take longer bus trips to get to school. It is good to see that there are two National Party members in this place. It is a shame that those members have not stuck up for the availability of education in country towns. As the previous speaker said, \$400-odd million is unallocated, yet we cannot find \$1 000 for each student. We must not forget that not all students at these schools need that \$1 000; in some cases, only five students at each school need it. That amount is absolutely nothing in that context. If National Party members cannot give a hand in those areas, it just goes to show that royalties for regions has gone to the pack. Education is one of the base planks of country towns.. I do not care how hard we need to work to make sure that education is available.

Let us talk about Narrogin. What would happen if the education system in that town collapsed? We have seen a number of social problems arise over the past few years. Some of those problems are similar to the problems in Collie. In recent times, that town has had its bump, and it swaps around. Surely the member can see the value of keeping these kids at school. They need studies that suit their requirements. It is hopeless trying to get kids into a class that they do not want to participate in. They become disruptive and cause problems, or, in many cases, they simply do not turn up. How are we going to educate these kids? We need those classes. If it costs \$1 000 per student, so what? That is a very minor amount compared with the problems that could be caused later on with health issues, social issues, vandalism and so on. If these kids are not occupied, we will have those problems and the costs will be seen in other areas.

Some schools, one of which is in my electorate, have been sent bills of around \$30 000 for the education of children. That money has not been budgeted for, so where are those schools going to get the money? Will they have to hold sausage sizzles and chook raffles to keep their schools open? I do not think that should be the case. This money should be paid for by the government. It is what we pay our taxes for. The Department of Education should have the freedom to be able to do that with its budget, because it is not happening at the moment. I remember the holier than thou attitude that the minister had when she sat on this side of the house. She had plenty to say on issues like this. I know that very well and I admired her for having her say. She has swapped sides, she has changed her alliances and she is not doing her job for the children of this state. That really disappoints me. She certainly kept the house in a lot better order when she sat on this side because of the standards she set. But, by gee, her standards are dropping very quickly. It is disappointing that I have to have backdoor meetings with principals and schoolteachers about this issue, because they are too scared to stand at the front of their school and talk about it in case they get into trouble. I think it is a blight on the system. If we cannot talk about this issue and we cannot work it out, who is going to lose? Our communities will lose. We will lose our freedom of speech. Our children will lose their future. That is probably the strongest way I can put it. They will think, "My headmaster wasn't game to stand up for me, and the P&C is a bit worried because it might cause its funds to dry up, yet I want my education but I'm not game to yell out loudly because there may be another impact."

We have talked about years 11 and 12. Why has the National Party not yelled and screamed and said that more Schools of Isolated and Distance Education courses are needed so that we can keep those classes open. We need to keep our communities going so that we are not left with just signposts, as has happened in many country communities. I have heard the argument that country communities will lose their identities if the shire council amalgamations go ahead. Let us see how quickly a community loses its identity if it loses its school. It will happen a lot more quickly than it will with an amalgamation.

A number of people travel up and down the hill at Collie. Some of them are paying \$80 a week to travel to their special education classes.

**Dr E. Constable:** We're still working on that one.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The minister says that she is working on that. I am glad that she is not working on my car and charging me 60 bucks an hour, because that would be a very large bill! I rang those people last week and they have not heard where we are headed with that.

**Dr E. Constable:** Some of them have heard.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Some of them have? I rang them because I do my follow-ups on these issues, and some of them definitely had not heard last week. Does the minister see the point? It is the same thing. It costs \$80 a week to go to their special classes, yet the government is squibbing at paying \$1 000 a year per student. The impost has been put on others who wish to go outside that system for a particular type of education class. As another speaker said, they might want to be a vet or a doctor. Why should we penalise those people? There is no sense to that. I realise that we must have regulations so that parents do not take their children out of a school that is quite good because of personality problems with the teachers or just allow their children to swap schools willy-nilly. Again, the government is running away from the issue rather than fixing it up.

The government is not able to provide education in Collie, a town with a population of roughly 9 000 people. Where do we go next? Do we start to say that it is cheaper to close the schools in Bunbury and move the students to Perth? I refer to the Premier's future dream of superschools. It will mean that kids will have to travel and live away from home. If we think about the breakdowns that occur within our communities now, this will certainly increase the problems suffered by young children who move away from home early in their life.

The silence from the National Party is deafening. There is \$400-odd million in the budget, yet we cannot provide \$1 000 to these students. However, we can find money for plastic cows, talking toilets, a kiln for a ladies' group and a wood lathe for a wood-turners' group. I could go on and on. The basics of our children's education are being left behind. This is something that we should take stock of. It is something that the Premier should take control of because if he does not, it will bounce back. Country communities are starting to jump up and down about other issues on which they have been overlooked. There is more to this state than just the north west. We need to understand that a lot of the state's economy also comes from the South West and the Great Southern. It is extremely disappointing that the support is not going back to those regions. Certainly, that is the heartland of the National Party, whose members sit in this place and say nothing about this issue. It is going to go on; it is not going to go away.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It will bounce back in the future. The person who has his mouth open now is on a very fine margin when the preferences are taken away. If I were him, I would stand up today and really fight for these people's future. It is something that he has not done thus far, and I look forward to what he has to say in this house very shortly.

**DR E. CONSTABLE (Churchlands — Minister for Education)** [5.09 pm]: I am really pleased to —

**Mr M.P. Murray:** Is there nothing from the National Party members?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I go first. Is that all right?

**Mr M.P. Murray:** National Party members are weak. You let those kids down.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Collie-Preston.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I am very happy to respond to the opposition speakers on this motion about the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education courses that are available to senior high schools.

The member for Forrestfield gave an interesting background of SIDE and where it came from. I tried to get some history of this before the debate. In talking to the Premier as a former Minister for Education, we think that probably the antecedents go back to about the 1930s. As the member for Forrestfield said, it was in about 1955 that the five campuses of the School of the Air and other services were combined under the Schools of Isolated and Distant Education. At that time it was considered that there was a need for it.

What is interesting about this debate—it will unfold as I continue my comments—is that the character, the need for learning and the courses that SIDE now provides might make us think before long about changing the name from the Schools of Isolated and Distant Education to one that is more appropriate. The list that the member for Midland asked for, and which I will table shortly, suggests that almost every metropolitan and regional senior high school in this state is using the online services that are provided.

Some very interesting and rapid changes in technology dovetail into the changes that we have seen over the past few years with the new curriculum for years 11 and 12 course. All 52 courses could not be offered by any one school. The view is that if a large high school can offer somewhere around 15 to 20 courses, that school is providing a good choice and suite of courses. We are finding that SIDE has provided a great service to smaller schools and even larger schools when a student might want to do a language, as the member for Midland and other members pointed out, or a subject such as ancient history if it is not offered at the school. SIDE provides a great service in cases of a problem on a gridline and a student really wants or needs to do some subject for his or her future. The need for online learning through the use of technology is making a huge difference to what students can be offered and the way schools will be organised and run in the future. The developments are very exciting.

Later I will mention the Twomey report, which was commissioned when the Labor Party was in government. In that report, Lance Twomey refers to online learning, using technology to deliver learning and how something needs to be done about it. That is exactly what this government is doing.

SIDE is used by people living in remote areas and in small communities. For many years, primary schools have been the main user of SIDE because of languages other than English, and that has come about, as all members know, from the shortage of teachers of those subjects. Primary schools are not charged for that because of the need for that service.

More recently, with changes to the 52 courses now being implemented, more and more senior high schools and other schools have been taking up the services of SIDE. What we see and what I have been trying to describe is a change in context for SIDE. Education has changed dramatically in the past decade and SIDE has been able to adapt to provide more services across the state. We find an increasing range of demands impacting on the capacity to deliver high-level programs to all students in all schools across the state; I refer to changing demographics, to students having more diverse needs and to a range of needs covering students' interests in vocational education and training and tertiary-bound units. Students feel that the new courses available at the universities are courses they want to have a go at. Students with disabilities often make use of SIDE further in their schooling. The linking between school training and employment is one of those things that is a changing landscape. Part of that changing landscape is, of course, the 50-odd new courses in senior secondary schooling.

Another thing that makes a difference is, from time to time, teacher shortages. Currently we are in a good situation. We know from projection work that in the next three, four or five years across Australia there probably will be teacher shortages, particularly in mathematics and languages other than English. We have an ageing workforce. We know that some courses will be short of teachers and SIDE will continue to play a big part in providing online learning to many students.

All of these issues provide challenges for this government as it plans education for the future. This government's aim, which from what members opposite have said in this debate appears to be the opposition's aim, is to provide the best possible opportunities for all years 11 and 12 students as we move forward. The core in education is for the government to plan well.

I mentioned the Twomey report. Lance Twomey, in his report, looked at online learning and the need for the use of technology that must make a difference to the delivery of education. In 2007 he made comments to the effect that this state was not doing it well and much needed to be done.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** It has got a lot worse under you.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I have not finished. When I have finished the member for Midland can comment. I did not interrupt the member and she should not interrupt me.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Midland!

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I understand that interjecting is disorderly and I do not have to answer questions when the member is speaking. The member's questions will be answered in my contribution.

The Twomey report makes reference to the fact that in 2007 the organisation of SIDE services and associated services was incoherent. It states that the current system is uncoordinated, minor in its impact on Western Australian education and substantially underfunded.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** How can it be made more coherent?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I will come to that point in a moment and in my own time, member for Midland. The former government had this report from Lance Twomey, but did nothing about it. We are doing a lot about online learning and providing online services. We will continue to do so because we see it as a major factor in education in the future.

I did make a note of the member for Midland's earlier comments. I can assure her that when she said that all this is part of the cuts to budget, she was wrong. When she said that the government is transferring costs, again, she was wrong. The truth of the matter is that these students doing SIDE are double funded. They are funded when they are enrolled in SIDE, and they are fully funded for their school. They are double funded.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Now you will charge the school. It is called double charging.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Will the minister resume her seat. Member for Midland, will you please stop interjecting?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** We do not double fund patients in hospitals. We should not be double funding students in schools. SIDE is funded for its enrolments and the school gets fully funded for its enrolments. That means that

government is paying twice, when perhaps it should not have to. It has already been said that the cost to do a course through SIDE is just over \$4 000 per student per course. As part of this process, a letter was sent to schools last November informing them that there would be a \$1 000 charge to offset some of those costs because of the double funding of students. When the opposition was in government, it had a policy that was almost the same as this government's policy. However, it was happy to double fund students doing SIDE and students at school. The Labor government's policy was that they should pay almost exactly —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** They have got them at school anyway. They have got to meet those costs. It is double charging.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I do not think the member for Midland gets it.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You are restricting students' choices. Have a look at the real impact.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The member for Midland just does not get it, does she? If we are funding a student to do a subject in a school, we employ a teacher and that has a cost attached to it. Schools get funding through their school grant. School grants are very interesting. I am sure that the member will be very interested when she sees the list to see what is in the bank balances of these schools, particularly Kalamunda Senior High School, which has \$1.4 million with still the second amount of funding to come. It is being asked, because of double funding, to pay a small amount of \$10 000 towards those costs for those students. In fact, it is able to retain 75 per cent, recognising that supervision and other services are needed for those children, but they are not marking, they are not teaching and they are not providing the work to students. They are not doing any of those things because Schools of Isolated and Distance Education is doing it. SIDE is doing that and the school is fully funded for a full course of that student. That is what is happening here. They are being double funded. That is what we are addressing. We are not cutting costs and we are not transferring costs. They are being funded twice, so we could not possibly be doing that.

I have a couple of examples, which might be quite interesting, at least to members on this side of the house, which I would now like to run through. I have an example of Kalamunda Senior High School. If we look at comparative costs between the policy that Labor had in government and the policy that is now in place this year, under the previous policy Kalamunda Senior High School —

*Tabling of Document*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The minister is clearly reading from a lengthy typewritten document —

**Dr E. Constable:** My own notes.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** It is not handwritten and it is a lengthy typewritten document. I would ask her to table that, because I do not believe it is something she has prepared herself.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Just on that point, if it is an official document, it is quite reasonable that it should be tabled, but from where I am standing these are clearly the minister's own notes. In any case, a simple courtesy would be to allow the minister to continue to use them. If you, Mr Deputy Speaker, wish to examine it later, it is not an official document. However, the minister should be able to continue her speech, using her notes. With respect, if you should wish to look at them later to see whether it is an official document, I am sure the minister will be quite agreeable for you to do so.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, is the document you are referring to your notes or an official document?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, it is definitely my notes with my scribbles after I did some typing on a few pages.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no need to table those notes.

*Debate Resumed*

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I wanted to make some comparisons between the policy that was in place under the former government and the policy that is in place now in terms of the costs and how it would work. The previous government recognised the double funding. It had a policy that recognised the double funding. We will take Kalamunda Senior High School. It has 773 students. Under the previous government there was a rather complicated policy of providing a few free places and then charging the school for the rest. Kalamunda was judged to get five free enrolments in SIDE. There was then an additional cost for the school to pay after those five places were used up of .02 full-time equivalents per subject per student for the rest of the enrolments. Kalamunda has 10 enrolments in SIDE at the moment. The cost to Kalamunda in 2007 terms would have been \$7 236. The cost under the current government for each subject student would be .14 FTEs, or \$10 130. This is a school with a bank balance of over \$1.4 million and with several hundred thousand dollars of its second tranche

of school grant to be paid in July. The sum of \$10 000 is a very small amount to be paying when a student is double funded.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** What about the schools that are not so well off?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The member needs to see the list. Northam Senior High School had 35 subject enrolments in 2010. Under the policy of the previous government in 2007, because it was a country school it was allocated a quota of 12 free enrolments. The additional cost of .02 FTEs for the other 23 enrolments would be almost half a teacher's salary. The cost would be approximately \$33 385, which it should have paid to SIDE. The cost under the current government is \$35 456 —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** It is the first time they have got bills for SIDE. Are you denying that it is the first time they have got bills for SIDE?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I am not denying that at all.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** That is my point.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The previous government was quite happy to double fund students in schools, which is the most irresponsible budgeting that I can possibly think of. It was quite happily double funding these students in schools, which I think is an irresponsible waste of taxpayers' money.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** I think that double charging is obscene. That is what you are doing.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** We are not double charging. The member is just making that up. The bank balance at Northam Senior High School right now is \$670 000, with the second tranche of the school grant still to come in.

I want to take up the point that was made by the member for Forrestfield, because I am very concerned about the letter that he read. I think that it is absolutely abhorrent that a school would offer a biology subject through SIDE, allow a student to select it and then say that it is sorry that —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** It is because you have imposed a fee next year. Don't you get it?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I get it.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You have imposed a fee for this year and next year.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I did not interrupt the member. I think it would be really nice if she would just button up for a little while.

Here is a school that was quite prepared to have a student double funded this year. It was told at the end of last November that there would be a charge of \$1 000 so that it could plan for it.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You go picking on this school. It is happening at all the schools.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** The member picked on this school, too.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** I made that point. You know that. It is the same response for all the schools. Do not single it out.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I call you now for the second time.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** I am responding to an issue raised by the member for Forrestfield, which I think is an extremely serious one. It is quite abhorrent for a school to offer a student year 11 SIDE when the student is being double funded and then say that, because it has to pay 25 per cent of the cost, it will not do it next year and the student cannot do it in year 12. I will be taking that issue up immediately with the director general. It is bad education and it is not fair to that student. I will not accept for one moment that that student should not be offered SIDE next year in that school. I am really pleased that the member raised it. If there are any other examples, would members please let me know? If nothing else comes out of this debate, it is that that issue has been raised. It is bad education for principals to be making decisions about students in that way because they think they should be double funded if a student does something on SIDE. More and more students will want to do subjects on SIDE as we move forward in the coming years. I am fully supportive of that. SIDE is providing excellent education for many students and will continue to do so.

I started by making some comments about how the landscape in education is changing and how we need to make sure that our online offerings continue to be good. We know from some of the research that was done last year on students who did English on SIDE in their final year that the average result for those students was higher than the state average. SIDE is a great product.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** They need to rake in a bit more money to improve it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The minister.

**Dr E. CONSTABLE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

SIDE does a great job. We are looking at how we can improve that, because we know that the one direction for us in the future is to continue to make sure that online learning is done well and that we harness all the best technologies in this vast state of ours so that students from the farthest points from Perth, as well as in Perth, are given the very best opportunities.

**Mr T.G. Stephens:** The minister did not even reply to a school that is desperately waiting for her response to its needs!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Pilbara!

*Tabling of Document*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, the minister did say that she was going to table the list at the end of her speech. She has not done that. I was expecting a list of all the schools with SIDE and the amount in dollars that they are being charged this year.

**Dr E. Constable:** I will just check that it is in order, because it dropped onto the floor.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Is that going to be tabled?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order. If I may, just to get this out of the way, the document has now been tabled by the minister.

[See paper 2136.]

*Debate Resumed*

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier)** [5.30 pm]: I want to make some comments on this motion. Can I just say that Western Australia has a very fine Minister for Education. Members opposite might want to think about what they are saying about this minister. We have a minister who has an impeccable background in education, and who is setting a standard in our government schools that I for one feel proud to see being put in place. Not only is she doing a very fine job as education minister, but also she is being a role model in education. The member for Midland should have a bit more respect. I am very pleased that Western Australia has an education minister of the calibre and experience and qualities of the one that we have right now.

**Mr T.G. Stephens:** Tell that to the community of Patjarr!

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** When were you last there?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, Minister for Police.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I want to pick up on a couple of points the minister made. They were interesting observations, and they reflected a good contribution by the member for Forrestfield, who does raise some important points. There is no doubt that with the advancements in technology, what can be delivered through remote education—online education—is very different from what was possible just a few years ago. Who knows what will be possible in just a few more years—not only in the variety and quality of materials, and the audio and the visual, but also in what can be done to build the supports around that technology. That is important. We would be silly, in a state as big as Western Australia, not to take full advantage of advances in technology.

Secondly, as the minister pointed out, there are now 52 courses in the year 11 and 12 stream. Most of us—certainly those of us who are beyond the age of 50—can think back to the choice of subjects that we were offered. That choice was very limited, even in large high schools. A wide range of subjects is now available—52, as I have said. Therefore, even in a large high school, not all of those 52 courses will be available. In medium and smaller schools, if a student wants to do a particular course such as biology—as in the example mentioned by the member for Forrestfield—or a particular science course, a particular school may not be able to provide that course, for whatever reason. Not all schools, even the largest ones, provide every course. It may be a language course. Newton Moore Senior College was mentioned. I imagine that Newton Moore does offer a foreign language course. I do not know what it is. It may be Japanese. I do not know. Clearly it does not offer French. So if a student wants to do French, a student should have the option of doing French and using the existing course and the existing technology to do that. We should use technology that is available and allow students to have a choice beyond what is offered at the particular school that they attend. That provides more choice for students. It allows greater variety in their education.

Having said that—I would hope members would agree—we then need to look at the funding that goes into senior high schools. Schools are basically funded according to student enrolment. The money follows the student. The student enrolls in the school, and taxpayer funds, both state and commonwealth, follow the student to the school. If the student then exercises choice—for example, to do French through SIDE—it is only logical that that public funding will follow that student's choice. That empowers the student to exercise that choice. In other words, the money that has gone to that high school—in this case, not even the full cost, but \$1 000—will follow the choice of the student to access a SIDE course. It is quite appropriate and quite logical that that should happen.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Except that the school budget is a bit rigid.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** No. As the minister has demonstrated in the papers she has tabled, schools have the funds to do this. Schools may make a decision that the number of enrolments in a course in their school is so small, or is so intermittent from one year to another, that they will not have a teacher in that particular discipline. That may be a sensible management decision for that school. However, the individual school student—the young lady who wants to do biology—should not be precluded from doing biology by that decision of the school if that option is available through SIDE, which it is.

What I think is wrong in this exercise is that I am, like the Minister for Education, concerned if school principals are writing letters to parents—I do not have a copy of the particular letter that the member for Midland referred to—to say that their child cannot do a particular SIDE course because —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** That is exactly what the situation is!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I will tell the member for Midland why she would not be a role model as Minister for Education. It is because she has no courtesy, and that is a standard that we want in our schools.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** The pot calling the kettle black! You are the rudest person in here!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Midland, you keep interjecting. You have been called twice. I do not really want to call you for the third time. This debate has been quite an intelligent debate. So can you just let the Premier carry on.

**Mr J.R. Quigley:** It was an intelligent debate.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Mindarie, I call you for the first time,

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I doubt that it is the intention of the school principal in writing a letter such as that to convey what might be interpreted as a certain impression to parents. If that letter is pointing out or implying in any way to the parents that their son or daughter cannot take a SIDE option because it will cost the school \$1 000, that letter is either misinformed or poorly written. It is not costing anyone \$1 000. This is a transfer of funds within the government education system. That is all it is. It is basically a transfer from a school to another part of the education system. No parent is being charged. No child is being charged. It is free education. A school should not be implying that somehow a child who exercises choice is imposing a cost on education in this state. The child is not. The child is in all probability saving the school funds, because the school will allow that option rather than offer a course for one or two kids. I will be interested to look at some of those letters. The minister has already indicated that she will act to make sure that proper information is conveyed to parents. I would hope that schools, as they develop further, will have courses that they operate and deliver on the school site, and another selection of courses that they can make available through SIDE and perhaps even support through tutoring operations at the school site. That will give students as wide a choice as possible, and the best quality of education. School principals should not be conveying an impression to parents that if their child exercises choice, that child is limiting or costing the school in some way. That is not the case. It is all taxpayer money—public money—for the education of a child. If a child exercises choice, the dollars should follow that child and that child's choice.

**MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot)** [5.38 pm]: I really enjoy these private members' debates in this Parliament, because it encourages me to go out and learn things about subjects that I really do not know too much about. Obviously I did not go to school in this state, and I have not been blessed with children in the education system, so, other than visiting schools in my electorate and talking to parents, that pretty much exposes my limitations; and I am big enough to admit that.

This particular motion has encouraged me to learn a lot more about this issue. The first thing that I did was go to the state government website for the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education. For members who may not be familiar with SIDE—there are probably others apart from me—the SIDE website states —

The formation of SIDE —

Schools of Isolated and Distance Education —

resulted from the amalgamation of the Distance Education Centre and the five Schools of the Air. The Schools of Isolated and Distance Education are located on six campuses. &In addition to the SIDE Primary School [K–7] and SIDE Secondary School [8–12] on the Leederville site, there are five Schools of the Air located in Carnarvon, Kalgoorlie, Meekatharra, Port Hedland and Kimberley [Derby]. Each school has its own principal. The Director, Isolated and Distance Education performs a quality assurance role across all schools. In addition, the Director has a management role for the Indian Ocean Schools [Christmas Island DHS and Cocos Islands DHS] and the School of Instrumental Music.

Part of me wishes I had attended that school. I can promise members on my side that I will not be bringing my guitar into the chamber and singing.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** If you do that, I'll bring in my drums.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** My guitar is in my office.

It continues —

The Flexible Learning Project in Schools [FLIS] is a new initiative in 2006 which is under the SIDE directorate. The schools have a large and diverse student population ranging from Kindergarten to Year 12:

Importantly, it continues —

- full time students unable to attend a conventional school due to geographical isolation
- WA students travelling Australia or the world, on a long term basis, with their parents
- WA students whose local high school does not offer the subjects they wish to study, or where the timetable does not allow them to join the class
- students suffering from long term illnesses
- part time adults undertaking courses to improve their education and employment options.

It looks like an outstanding program and something that will obviously benefit students in this state. I am not quite sure what other states do but I pray that other states have a similar set-up.

Education is consistently being challenged by evolving and dynamic demands. This obviously has to be met with a similar response. This, in turn, places great demand on the provision of funding. It goes hand in hand with the pressures that are applied to it. Educational opportunities must be given to all students in this state, irrespective of locality or situation. I am a firm believer in that. I do not think students should be disadvantaged because they live in regional areas or they choose to study a subject that is not catered for in their school. When I went to school, I was privileged enough to go to a Jesuit boarding school. The language of Chinese was not offered. Latin was compulsory. It is absolutely amazing how we have moved on in education systems across Australia over the past 20 years. The ability of any student in Western Australia to study Chinese is phenomenal. All governments, regardless of political persuasions, should be commended for that. Students' schooling is a vital plank in positioning themselves for future possibilities and a platform for life. It is all about freedom of choice. That is one of the reasons I am a big fan of these programs. If students wish to study a particular subject, be it biology or a foreign language, because they want to be an interpreter or a doctor, they should be given every opportunity to do so. As I said, choice is a key principle that I believe in, and it is a key principle enshrined in the School Education Act 1999.

SIDE gives students the choice to access other subjects that supplement their studies, primarily to undertake subjects that are not provided at the school they are enrolled in. I noted in my research that the potential of SIDE courses has been recognised by parents, with an increase in students taking up SIDE studies since 2004. I will not go into too much detail, but enrolments in SIDE have nearly doubled since 2004, including for home-based adults. Moreover, the number of full-time students learning through SIDE in years 11 and 12 has doubled from 174 to 323.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** Will it go down when country high schools are shut?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I am confident it will go up because it is an outstanding program. I am a bit of a betting man. We are going to be here for a few more years and I reckon I could arrange a bit of a wager with the member on the numbers for next year and the year after.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I am covered by privilege.

I admit that online teaching is not a substitute for face-to-face contact with teachers. Rather, it gives students an advantage of studying courses they could not have studied otherwise. In the ideal world, we would love to have a teacher in front of every student for every single subject but it is just not feasible to have a Chinese expert or a biology expert in every single school across Western Australia.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** You can have them in the city but not the regional areas.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** Once again, it comes down to population density and the location of the school.

**Mr J.R. Quigley:** Why doesn't it come out of royalties for regions? They are giving us the money from China and then we send it back and buy Chinese teachers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mindarie!

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I think he has finished. I think he has got it off his chest.

I looked at a couple of reports while researching this matter, including a report by the former director general of the Western Australian education system that confirmed online or distance education services to be an important part of the solution. This message was repeated in the Twomey report of 2007. The new policy of this government builds on the existing policy of the former government. It is very important to note—this is government policy, and the education minister has repeated this assurance to me—that no school or student will be worse off and assistance will be given if anyone encounters any difficulty. No-one will be worse off. People's situations will remain the same or they will be better off. That is an important principle and an important undertaking.

That brings me to the Twomey report. It went into a bit of detail about SIDE. It is worth noting what Professor Twomey stated in this report. I will read briefly from page 77, which reads —

The education system in Western Australia would benefit considerably by bringing the three areas of SIDE, WestOne and OTLS —

The Online Teaching and Learning System —

together under the same management to enable optimal use of workforce and resources possible, and to facilitate the development of digital content and online delivery.

I have always said that I am a bit of an analogue man in a digital world. I acknowledge that the member for Forrestfield is a far greater expert on these issues than I am, but I did listen with some interest to his comments on this matter. Anything that we can do to help our students use more of the current technology that is evolving is obviously worthwhile. The report continues —

The focus must be on providing Western Australian students with the best possible education allowing:

- blended and flexible learning, where traditional classroom teaching is facilitated and augmented by first class online learning
- subject learning to continue in the absence or lack of a specialist teacher by accessing online delivery, usually under the guidance of another teacher or education assistant
- independent learning, wherein students are allowed to utilise learning resources in their own time and at their own rate, helping them to take greater responsibility for their own learning (this is mandated for senior school students in some American states and European countries)
- distance education where the traditional text-based arrangements are amplified by online delivery and the opportunity to use facilities such as internet chat rooms to enable discussion of issues with a specialist teacher (e.g. often the expert who developed the package) and with other students of the same subject or discipline.

It is worth noting that one of the recommendations in this report states —

The current system is uncoordinated, minor in its impact on Western Australian education and substantially underfunded.

That leads me to the next question. I follow these issues in chronological order. What did the Labor government do about the recommendations in this report on SIDE? Any guesses? It did not release the report for a very long time. One thing I do remember from reading the newspapers at the time was that there was untold pressure for the education minister to release this report, and he did not do it for a fair amount of time. The previous government did nothing about this recommendation; it did not provide the funding to make use of the online learning that Professor Twomey recommended. I would suggest that if the previous government had started this reform in 2007 or even 2008, we would be in a very different situation today, because things move very quickly in the world of technology and there is a whole generation of students who have been—I will not say undereducated—somewhat left behind because this program was not started earlier.

There are a couple of problems with what the opposition is claiming in this motion. Firstly, the government is implementing the previous government's policy, which was not implemented by the previous government. Secondly, as the Minister for Education rightly pointed out, the students in these programs were double funded; they were funded through the school and through SIDE, so someone along the line was doing a little better than he should have. Considering that one of the Liberal–National government's very successful and popular policies gives authority to schools to govern their own budgets, meaning that school principals and staff have greater freedom over how they spend their money, funding is no longer tied in the way it was previously. It should be noted that schools receive funding that can be used specifically for the purposes of SIDE. SIDE is funded to deliver programs also, and I believe in the principle that whoever provides the service should receive the funding, rather than two agencies providing the same service and receiving double funding. It should be broken up. If a school is getting it, fine; if SIDE is getting it, fine, but let us not double fund it, because that is a blatant waste of taxpayers' money. There is no need for it, and the money can be better spent in other areas of the

education system. If students are studying at school, they should be funded through the school. If they are studying through SIDE, they should be funded through SIDE. That is very simple. This change has absolutely nothing to do with cutting funding; it is about providing funding to the areas where a service is being delivered, funding the people who deliver the service, about proper government and good government and not wasting money by double funding the same student for the same program. That is plainly unsustainable.

**MR P.B. WATSON (Albany)** [5.52 pm]: I have been approached by Kojonup District High School and Gnowangerup District High School. They are very disappointed, as I am. There is a National Party member in the house tonight, the Minister Assisting the Minister for Education, who is not even bothering to talk about how people in country areas will be affected. He is not talking about how schools in Kojonup provide tremendous programs to retain their students, programs that will be lost under what is going to happen. We hear all the time about the National Party and royalties for regions. I am sure that if Kojonup and Gnowangerup were up north, there would be funding for them straightaway. The National Party has lost all idea of what it was here for in the first place. All it worries about now is winning seats up north; it no longer worries about people in the bush. The Minister for Agriculture and Food used to be in the paper all the time in my electorate, saying that the previous government did nothing for people in regional areas, and that if the National Party were elected, it would look after people in regional areas. Now he sits there and has obviously been gagged. What is he going to do, get up and support the Minister for Education, who is trying to take things away from people in regional areas? Members should go to Kojonup or Gnowangerup. They are not even in my electorate—they have to call me and email me, and they did so today; I will show members afterwards!

Several members interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The member can laugh, but he is falling asleep at the wheel!

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Albany has the floor, but unfortunately we cannot hear him at the moment. Give him a chance.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection!

We hear about the National Party in the bush. I get out into the regions—I am not up north all the time—and I can tell National Party members that they are on the nose; they are well and truly on the nose. They can laugh as much as they like, but I heard people say the same about the Labor Party before the last election. I see the member for Riverton laughing; he has not yet even had to defend his seat in an election! The National Party is losing its core values. When the member for Merredin brought about the royalties for regions program, I applauded him. However, he has only picked out some regions.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** It is meant to be royalties for all regions, not just the ones where the National Party wants to win seats at the next election. Age pensioners were promised four lots of living allowance, but they are only going to get three. National Party members can laugh as much as they like, but I get out in their electorates. The only time we see the Minister for Agriculture and Food is when his car is parked at the airport. That is the only time people see him; they do not see him in his electorate. I have been doing some work in his electorate, and in the electorate of the member for North West. They are both on the nose. I was in Carnarvon recently for a committee hearing, and the member is on the nose up there. He does not even go to his office. We spoke to people up there —

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members! The member for Albany has the floor. It is all very well to have some banter, but unfortunately he is being drowned out.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I know that people ring up other members when they cannot get what they want, but the amount of feedback I have had from National Party members is astonishing. Parliamentary members of the National Party should wait two and half years and see. They have taken their eyes off the ball; they are driving around in big cars, flying up north, and all the money is going up north. If members ask people in my electorate, the first thing they will say is that they do not get any money anymore; it is all going up north. Did the member for Vasse have a nice coffee yesterday?

All I can say is that I am getting feedback about National Party members in their own electorates. There are tremendous projects in place in Kojonup to keep kids in school, and all these things will be lost. These kids will be travelling to other schools. Gnowangerup is exactly the same. I know that the member for Wagin is a very good member, but he does not listen; it does not matter how safe his seat is. When I got into Parliament, I had to achieve a swing of 17 per cent, and I got in, so there is no such thing as a safe seat. I would like to see what the

National Party will do for regional areas. I applaud it for the royalties for regions program, but it is taking its eye off the ball.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Blackwood–Stirling — Minister for Agriculture and Food)** [5.58 pm]: I do not have a lot of time to talk.

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I have always been happy to front any debate in this place —

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Collie!

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I have always been prepared to front a debate in this house or anyone out the front of the house who wants to take up issues. I have always been prepared to front issues in my electorate and will defend —

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Albany, I gave you some protection!

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I will always vigorously defend the position the National Party has taken in supporting regional Western Australia. I will provide a little of my background, because I think members sometimes forget. For my own education, I went to seven different schools. Year 1 was at a primary school at Liveringa station in a little town called Camballin; it is now called Looma. That was in 1969. We were there for two years; my dad was the principal at that primary school. I went to a range of regional primary schools, then went to Swanleigh Hostel and Lockridge Senior High School as an 11-year-old. I did three years at boarding school and then finished up doing years 11 and 12 at Esperance Senior High School. In respect of credibility and understanding of the educational challenges in regional Western Australia, I stand on my history and the educational background of my family, and I stand on the support that the National Party has for education in regional Western Australia, and its commitment to the delivery of services, education, and quality medical support in regional areas.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2010–11 BILL 2010  
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2010–11 BILL 2010**

*Second Reading — Cognate Debate*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR P.B. WATSON (Albany)** [7.02 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to continue with my reply to the budget speech. I was talking about some of the local businesses that have done very well in my electorate. Jewel Hair Salon owner, Lynette Robinson, was named WA Hairdresser of the Year at the Australian Hair Fashion Awards after a lengthy judging process. Having been a finalist in the awards previously, Lynette was pleased that her hard work paid off to win this prestigious award.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** She doesn't do your hair!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** This one is a \$15 Melbourne job!

Albany Sharks won the first senior match in its short history on Saturday, 15 May. They came from 33 points down at half-time to win by seven points in the reserves match against Mt Barker. The final score was 10 goals 14 to nine goals 13. Albany Sharks is one of the new football teams in Albany. They were going to get a league team this year but they have only got a reserves team. I am sure that with the support they receive throughout Albany and the region they will have a senior team next year. It is great for football. I am chairman of the Football Development Trust for the Great Southern. Any child we can get to play is a bonus in our community. Goal kickers for the Sharks were Michael Bennell with four, Regan Brown and Luke Matowitz with two, and singles to Matthew Galantino and Cohen Scott. Best players were Stanley Shaw, Matthew Galantino, Jayden Scott and Matthew Ward.

The Albany PC air rifle team competed at the PCYC invitational shoot at Collie. They won the senior, junior and novice divisions. The highlight was Craig Halligan winning the champion of champions shoot-off with a score of 91 from a possible 100. He was also the highest scoring shooter in the senior division. Terry Eaton and the group at PCYC do a tremendous job. They are a great asset to our community. The Albany PCYC sends a team away every year and it does very well every time. It is a great place for our young people to meet at the PCYC in Albany.

Sporting shooter Steve Hurley became the first person outside New South Wales to win the two-gun grand aggregate at the New South Wales state lever action rifle championships. I have not written down how many points away his nearest rival was. He won the state classic calibre championship and then went on to win the state open lever-action championship, making it his third two-gun state title after previously winning in Queensland and WA. Steve will compete with fellow Albany lever-action rifle group members Clinton Parker, Mick McDonnell and Richard Colmer in the national titles in Tasmania later in the year.

At the Australian athletic championships, Brenda Painter won gold in the 65 to 69-year-old division triple jump, despite starting the sport only six months ago. Greg Vander Sanden won the men's 50 to 54-year-old 1 500 metre race. I just do not qualify for that! That went with his win in the Jim McCann memorial mile race at the WA State Masters Games.

While the former Minister for Sport and Recreation, Hon John Kobelke, is in the chamber, I must congratulate him. I attended the Australian athletics titles. I caught up with a lot of old friends there. We all became a lot faster and a lot fitter talking about it! It is a tremendous facility to have in Western Australia. I congratulate the former minister and the former government. I remember running around Perry Lakes Stadium on the old cinder track, and then they put the Rebound on; that track is world-class. I am sure a lot of athletes will come from all over Australia to compete there and get good times.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** It was a team effort. We had a very good team.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Hon John Kobelke was the minister at the time, so congratulations.

Steven Moss continued his good form by making a personal best jump of 56.2 metres to take the silver medal at the Australian waterski championships. Emma Benson, Stacey Wallace and Gemma Hitchcock were selected as part of the WA team to compete at this year's women's country national championships in Canberra. For the first time in the history of the competition, Hockey WA withdrew the state side from competition, claiming a lack of nominations for coaching staff. It is disappointing to see a blue happening between Hockey WA and the country associations. This desperately needs to be sorted out, as country players do not need to be left feeling they have been snubbed.

Eric Goodchild and Jamie Wolfe took home awards from the national fly-in of the Australian Sports Rotorcraft Association. Rotorcraft are commonly called gyrocopters. Eric's aircraft was judged to be the most innovative design. Jamie took the precision flour-bombing award and came third in the navigation section.

I must congratulate the current Minister for Sport and Recreation, Hon Terry Waldron, for coming to Albany to open our new soccer oval. Wearing one of my other hats, I am president of junior soccer in Albany. It was great to announce that the new soccer ground was named after Kese Glory, one of the stalwarts of soccer and sport in Albany. Sadly, Kese lost his life in a car accident a few months ago. He was a great contributor to sport in Albany and to all other activities that he took on. He was very keen—he always supported his sons at soccer. It was great to see that the new soccer ground was named after him. He will be sadly missed in Albany, not only in the sport but also at the City of Albany where he worked.

Longstanding chairman of the Lions Community Care Centre, Ron Brown, retired recently after serving on its board since it started in 1986. Ron made a great contribution to our community by helping in many projects that the Lions Club were involved in, including the building of the much-needed respite centre that opened this year.

The Albany Soroptimists International Club recently celebrated its twenty-eighth birthday with a function attended by the immediate past international president Margaret Lobo. Albany soroptimist international president, Geri Pegler, leads a vibrant club of committed women that fundraise for international projects and run several local projects such as the finance centre for women, the Torndirrup National Park volunteer project and a mentoring workshop program.

The Great Southern Art and Craft Trail won the Premier's Australia Day active citizenship award for a community group or event. It is the region's largest art event. It has been running for eight years and has proven to be a major drawcard to visitors to the region. They come to see fine art and crafts of different styles and techniques set amongst more than 60 different venues across the Great Southern.

Albany Senior High School student Taylor Pomery was one of nine students selected from across Australia to help write a song for the 2010 Music Count Us In group, which will be formed nationwide. The nine students who travelled to Sydney were split into three groups and each had to write a song. It came as a bit of a shock to them when Taylor's group was announced the winner. Singer and songwriter Taylor, who plays classical guitar and is a member of the school concert band, will again travel over east for the national launch of the song later this year.

Congratulations to Adele Jackson and Beth Wimbush, who are two of only three country players selected to represent Western Australia at the national soccer youth championships in New South Wales in July. It is a great

reward for them after spending many months travelling to Perth to train with the state under-15 squad. It also shows how strong the local junior soccer competition is in Albany.

I congratulate the Great Southern Institute of Technology top students of 2009: David Rastick, Vocational Student of the Year; Julie Essert, Endeavour Award; Lynette Reid, Women's Achievement Award; Robert Robinson, Apprentice of the Year; Karen Robinson, Excellence in Teaching; Donna Blight and Julie Robins, Excellence in Non-Teaching; Christine Smith, Accounting Achievement Award; Michelle Mead, Business Award; Graham Tracey, Benno Lange Award for Landcare; Derek Sloman, Mike Whitehead Land Management Award; Leanne Eades, Aboriginal Student of the Year; Leigh Swensen, Most Outstanding Automotive Student; Ethan Silvester, Excellence in Metal Fabrication; and Sam Western, Best Performing Stage One Apprentice.

It is disappointing when we see all the results of these top students to find that only \$3.6 million will be added next financial year to the education budget of \$3.6 billion. When the three per cent cut is taken into account, which was not delivered by the Department of Education this financial year, I just hope that these young people, who are receiving tremendous training at Great Southern Institute of Technology, will be able to carry on the good work they are doing, because there will have to be cuts. We find generally when there are cuts that they come from regional areas because there are fewer people in regional areas and they make less noise. I call on the Minister for Education to look at this issue, because very many things need to be done in education not only in the city, but also in regional areas. There has been only a \$3.6 million increase to the education budget—that is, only one-thousandth, or 0.001 per cent. There are three portfolios that should not be touched with budget cuts but should be looked after; they are education, public safety and health. It is very disappointing to see that there are no major projects in this education budget.

I am very disappointed that tourism offices in regional areas are to be closed and that tourism staff will work out of the city. I find it very hard to believe that people sitting in an office in Perth could tell people about the beauty of Albany and other regional areas. I must complement the City of Albany.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The City of Albany has had the Amazing Albany campaign. I have been a great critic of the City of Albany over various issues, and I am glad to see that the Minister for Local Government has stepped in to give the council some guidelines. I have heard criticism, not from the people of Albany, but from some councillors and the mayor. However, the minister has come in now and given the council set guidelines, and I hope that the council takes the bull by the horns now and does not sit around blaming everyone else for its problems.

We have heard about the proposed entertainment centre in Albany, which is part of tourism. Some people have said that there is no business plan for the entertainment centre. There is legal action on this matter; the former chief executive officer is suing the City of Albany over comments made by someone on the council. I sat in on a meeting with the former Treasurer, Hon Eric Ripper; Treasury officials; Bruce Manning from the Great Southern Development Commission; and Andrew Hammond, the CEO. We sat down with them and when we presented our first case, Treasury said, "No, that's not viable; come back with something better." We went back and Treasury ticked off on it. That is forgotten by a lot of people when they criticise the Albany entertainment centre; however, it was ticked off by Treasury. Most members of this chamber who have been here a while would know that if they do not have everything right when they go to Treasury with a government plan, Treasury will not tick off on it.

I do not know what has gone wrong with the City of Albany; there are lots of issues there. There was a ratepayers' meeting recently at which a vote of no confidence was moved and a request was made for an inquiry into local government. I believe an inquiry into the City of Albany would be only a good thing for Albany. Some people say that an inquiry would cost a lot of money; however, a lot of money is being wasted. The CEO, who was on a \$250 000-a-year contract, could not work with the council members. I am not saying who is right or who is wrong; that will come out in the wash. I do not think enough due diligence was done before the council went into the interview process. I call on the minister—whom I have spoken to and who is right behind me—to make sure that when the council gets a new CEO, the council members interview properly qualified people. I do not blame the council, as it is a situation that it was put into. They are people who are trying to do good in their community. They were in the situation of having to interview and employ someone. I just hope that the council members take on board that they made a mistake and that they go forward from there. But it is not right for them to blame everyone else and say that people are trying to bring the council down. All I want to do is make sure the City of Albany goes forward. Albany is going forward like a rocket; it is tearing up the road. But it has a big anchor on its back, and that is the City of Albany. There are some very good people on the council but, like any team, they have to work together as a team. They need a good CEO, and I am sure they will get a good CEO.

I will return to tourism. The entertainment centre will be very good for tourism in Albany. We need to get people to go to Albany. It will be a great centre and will be an icon for a long time. People will come to Albany and say,

“That’s the entertainment centre.” They might not necessarily like the design, but it will be an icon there for years to come.

I want to talk about Albany police and the police in the Great Southern. I have some statistics with me from the police that indicate that volume crime across the Albany subdistrict is generally down at this time, as opposed to the same time last year. Burglaries in Albany are down by 33 per cent and across the district by 11 per cent, because of the proactive policy strategy that the Great Southern district has adopted for tracking prolific and priority offenders—PPOs. I had an opportunity to be with our local police and to see how this works. Domestic and non-domestic assaults in Albany are down seven per cent and two per cent respectively.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I generally do not get interjections from my side, but perhaps the members beside me could just keep their conversations down a bit.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I am getting interjected on from my own side, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** It’s just that your pizza’s ready from Chelsea Pizza! Put it in the hot box for another half an hour!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I am talking about domestic assaults, and there is going to be one in the chamber in a minute!

Across the district there is a two per cent downward trend in reported offences, which is attributed to the no-tolerance approach to violence in the community, in particular to family violence and violence in and near the vicinity of licensed premises. Detected drug offences are down as a direct result of a number of operations in the past few years that have targeted growers and dealers. Through the use of the tasking and data information system—TADIS—emphasis is now on quality vehicle stops that target the registered owner of a vehicle who is the subject of intelligence on hand or who is recorded as having a misuse of drugs history. There was a 41 per cent decrease in the theft of motor vehicles in Albany—26 thefts as opposed to 44 in the same period last year—and 19 per cent across the district, which is a correlation of the diminution of general volume crime, in particular offences against property, such as burglary.

I have referred to PPO offenders. A constituent who once came to see me said, “My son is on parole. He is continually being targeted by the police.” On 9 February 2009, the statewide concept of an offender management system was trialled in Albany. It was subsequently introduced to all other stations within the Great Southern District. Currently, the Great Southern District has identified 36 people as PPOs. Since 9 February in the Great Southern District, 4 988 curfew checks have been undertaken from which 245 people were found to be in breach of their curfew, were detained in custody and brought before the appropriate court.

**The SPEAKER:** Just take your seat, member for Albany. I realise that the opposition Whip has to be in his seat, but I urge other members of this place to have the briefest of conversations with him, because I observe that the conversations that are occurring are causing difficulties for the member for Albany. I am sure that it would cause difficulties for any member of this place who was seated next to that particular position.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker.

I will continue. The overall downward trend in volume crime in the district can be attributed to the concept of nominating a recidivist offender as a PPO and providing resources to monitor that person whilst on bail. When the district’s top four or five prolific offenders are targeted and are found to be in breach of their bail and are put in custody, there is a noticeable decline in offences. The court system plays a significant part in this, as the local magistrate imposes the bail conditions, which are in turn monitored by police. The court is aware that the imposition of conditions is having a positive effect on the reduction of crime in the district. As such, both the police and the court work together towards restricting the movements of recidivist offenders whilst on bail. That is a tremendous project that is happening in the Great Southern. Dene Leekong and his staff are doing a tremendous job. We feel safe walking the streets of Albany. We can talk about different government policies, but when there are really good coppers working in a town, they get out on the streets and they understand what is going on in the community. I congratulate Dene and all his staff. Local members of Parliament always have people who come to see them to complain that the police have done this or that. Over the past eight years, I might have had one complaint about the coppers down our way, and it was not a good complaint anyway. They are tremendous people. It is one of the hardest jobs around. I would not be a copper for anything. People reckon that members of Parliament cop it, but some of these guys put up with a lot of rubbish. I congratulate them.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I concur with your comments about our police officers in Albany; they are tremendous people. I occasionally get letters from members of Parliament complaining on behalf of constituents about the actions of police officers, but I do not think I have ever had one from you.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** No; I have had a good relationship with all the superintendents who have been down there. If someone has an issue, that person should go and speak to them. They can sort it out. A lot of the time it is just a matter of misinformation. The police do a tremendous job.

I now congratulate the Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre program Mum's the Word, which took out a major community service award in Perth two weeks ago. Mum's the Word, which is run by the RCNC, was named best small organisation at the Community Services Excellence Awards. This program assists young mothers with parenting and community activities, and offers support, friendship and education opportunities. The program was awarded \$5 000. They do a tremendous job. This is one of the little groups in the community that no-one ever hears about, but they do a tremendous job for our community.

We had a bushfire in Little Grove just a little while ago. It was rather frightening for a city such as Albany. The fire started on a City of Albany reserve and then went into the national park and then onto private land. I think the City of Albany was the first call-out, followed by the Fire and Emergency Services Authority assisted by the Department of Environment and Conservation. My main concern is that there should be more funding for fire prevention. DEC and FESA do a tremendous job but I do not think there is enough money for fire prevention. About half past seven or eight o'clock that night we got a tremendous storm of rain. The wind changed and we saved Little Grove. Little Grove might not sound much, but it has at least 200 houses. They could have gone up. The prison is out there, as is our water supply, some stables and houses. Not enough is done on fire prevention. I will follow this up on behalf of DEC, the fire brigade and FESA, because we will not get that sort of luck again. We have to do more fire prevention. We can talk about all the other things, such as money for roads, but if there is a fire, people can lose everything, including cattle, horses and even their own lives. There is only one way out of Little Grove and Frenchman Bay, which is Frenchman Bay Road. There is a way out of the prison—I checked. I was very concerned, because I was looking across the harbour and I could see flames very close to the prison. They went within 50 metres of the prison. People were saying that the prisoners would be okay because there are big walls around the prison, but it is the smoke that kills people. There are nearly 160 prisoners out there, so it could have been a disaster. All I am saying is that I will follow up this matter. We have to prepare for this sort of thing in the future. We were very lucky this time. I do not think we will be that lucky next time.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah)** [7.25 pm]: I am very pleased to make a contribution to the debate this evening. As always, I enjoy making a contribution. I tell the Minister for Planning that a quality speech is coming. If he is leaving the chamber, he should leave now before he is named in my speech. If the Minister for Planning rouses me, he could be named!

*Quorum*

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Rockingham, it is a wonderful house; however, there are not enough people in it!

[Bells rung.]

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mandurah, things would seem to be in order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am pleased we have an audience.

A member interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I did not call a quorum on myself!

A member interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** We have a quorum. I do not need members who are out of their seats to be making interjections, however.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I do apologise for interrupting the mastication that has been going on in the dining room! I note that members will probably now go back to putting their snouts in the trough. They will push each other out of the way as they make their way to the buffet to feast on the wildebeest and other game that is plated there. I digress!

I am glad the Minister for Education is here. I am actually glad that there are a number of members on the other side of the house, because when I looked at the budget papers and typed in the word "Mandurah", very little came back. The member for Gosnells spoke earlier this afternoon about one of his constituents, who just happened to be of the name Mrs Hubbard. I feel very sorry for Mrs Hubbard. I felt a bit like Mrs Hubbard going to the budget cupboard and it was very bare. It was one of the barest cupboards I have seen for some time. It is going to be bare for many people in my community and the communities throughout Western Australia following the massive and savage cuts to people's budgets through the increases in charges. It is very sad. It is very important that members opposite understand. Members opposite remind me of a dysfunctional family.

They remind me of a dysfunctional family that thinks it is normal and doing things well and not attracting any attention to itself, but, in fact, it is scary, weird and out of touch! I am reminded of that wonderful family that was created back in the 1930s but came to fame on television in the 1960s—namely, the Addams family. *The Addams Family*, of course, is a very, very famous situation comedy that had as the lead Gomez, who was the father. I cannot reflect inappropriately on members opposite, but I turned my mind to the opposite side to imagine who might be appropriate to cast if one was a director casting from this wide net of talent. Of course, if we read the description of Gomez, we find that Gomez is an extremely wealthy character of inheritance, with extensive investments, and he seems to have very little regard for money and very little knowledge of the impact of what he does. Of course, the Premier came to mind—minus, of course, the cigar that Gomez smoked incessantly during the 100-odd episodes of *The Addams Family*. I would name the Premier as Gomez, if, of course, I was looking for someone to play the part.

Morticia, of course, is the female lead. Again, I cannot reflect on anybody in this place; however, when one casts one's eyes across to the other side —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Be careful when you cast Gomez!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** — one sees that there is a resemblance and there is the possibility that the member for Scarborough could play the part of Morticia. Morticia is actually a very sweet character in the show who, when visitors come to the house, says, “Do you mind if I smoke?” and then she actually wafts smoke from her—it is true; that is what she actually does! I have seen the member for Scarborough and in the chair and indeed on her feet in this place, and I sense that she would have that capacity as well!

Of course we move on to the minor characters, such as Pugsley—Pugsley comes to mind!

**Mr C.C. Porter** interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** No, no, no; the Attorney General is in the *Thunderbirds*—that is episode 2, which is my next speech! The Attorney General is one of the Thunderbirds and I will not tell him which one!

Then of course we go to Pugsley. Pugsley's sister, Wednesday, spends most of her time trying to hurt Pugsley and doing all sorts of things, but Pugsley sort of rebounds and rejuvenates himself and has no various afflictions even after he has sort of withstood explosions and the other things that impacted on him. Of course, if we were looking for someone to play the part of Pugsley, someone who of course would sort of barrel into the place and then bust about and do all sorts of things, if I was casting Pugsley I would probably settle for the Leader of the National Party—the Minister for Regional Development—because he would fit that role!

Now, of course, I struggled with Wednesday. Wednesday draws her name from that wonderful nursery rhyme, “Wednesday's Child”—blah, blah, blah. According to the nursery rhyme, “Wednesday's child is full of woe”. I found it very difficult to find someone. The member for Swan Hills should not worry; I am not going to pick on him tonight! I have heard that he is going to pick on me tomorrow. I am saving him; I am saving him!

I was looking around and I thought: “Who is Wednesday—full of woe and disgruntled? Who is, in this place, one of the most disgruntled members?” Unfortunately he is a member of the opposite sex to Wednesday, but I actually believe my good friend the member for South Perth—in drag, with a long black wig, in an appropriate tunic, with a few spiders hanging off his shoulders—would play a beautiful Wednesday, and I am sure he would do it with —

A member interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** — gay abandon! The member might say that; I could not possibly say that!

I struggled when I came to the part of the grandma. The grandma is a wild, frizzy-haired, almost cyclonic-type person who shouts like a banshee and who erupts into absolute pandemonium when she is on the screen. I racked my brains—I am glad she is not present in this place—and I thought, “There is only one person who screams like a banshee who could play the part of grandma”, and that person is, of course, the absent member for Alfred Cove. I can just see her playing that part and I think she would grow into it.

**Mr C.C. Porter:** Who is going to play Fester?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Fester—I am glad the Attorney General asked that!

**Mr C.C. Porter:** Could we borrow someone?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** No! The Attorney General may think that one member from my side could play Fester, but let me describe who Fester is in the caricature: Fester is a bald, barrel-shaped man with dark, sunken eyes and a devilish grin. He is also very good at raising money, apparently. Then I cast my mind back to an *Inside Cover* story about the member for Carine and an interesting quiz night that he held a number of months ago. As I looked and gazed at his eyes and looked at his stately shape, I thought: “There is only one person who can play the part of Uncle Fester, who has the capacity to light up things by putting light bulbs into his mouth.”

He actually sits, at the end of the evening, in an electric chair to recharge himself. If I was casting this from, of course, the huge talent pool, the member for Carine would get that part.

There are also a couple of bit parts. I am very sad that the member for Mount Lawley is not present in this place tonight. I was trying to think how I could cast the member for Mount Lawley, and then I thought of the one part that would suit him down to the ground—the part of Thing. The hand that sort of reaches out to grab everything possible that is going! I thought of the City of Perth and the need for a severance gift and the need to ensure that the severance gift was appropriate. Thing spends most of his time making tea with his French tea set, which he might have received from the City of Perth! And, of course, he also attends to various jobs around the Addams family's manor. I have not looked at the member's hands closely, but I am sure he would do that.

Some members of this place, of course, were challenging the member for Mount Lawley for the part of Thing, because in question time earlier this week, we saw the new Minister for Commerce gesticulating wildly and doing that sort of thing. Again, perhaps he was actually rehearsing, or indeed auditioning, for a part in the *Thunderbirds*—but I will not go into that because the *Thunderbirds* comes a little later. It is not in this speech, but another one; I will save that. The Minister for Commerce, of course, was beginning to gesticulate, and earlier this week we also saw the Minister for Regional Development with his gesticulation, and then, of course, we have seen a number of other ministers gesticulating, so they could have all got the job of Thing.

But then I came to Cousin Itt, who is a very interesting one. Cousin Itt is, in fact, the cousin in the show who often visits the family. He is short in stature, has long hair that covers his entire body from scalp to floor, he drives a three-wheel car called a Messerschmitt, and when he speaks he is known to speak in a high-pitched nonsensical gibberish that only the family seems to understand! I instantly thought of a number of members opposite; however, I rested on choosing the member for Geraldton for that part! That is not unfair, but I think the member could play that part beautifully and I think his family would really appreciate it!

Of course, we also have Lurch, who is an interesting character. Whoever plays him needs to be fairly tall in stature, so instantly I thought of the member for Murray–Wellington, although the Attorney General did come into my consideration. But let me just tell members what Lurch is. He is a ghoulish manservant; he serves as a shambling, gravelly voiced butler, and he vaguely resembles—this is very unfair and I am not reflecting on any member of this place—Frankenstein's monster! He occasionally botches tasks due to his great size and strength, but he is otherwise considered quite a catch by the Addams for his skill at more personal tasks such as waxing Uncle Fester's head! I instantly thought there were a number of members who could have played that role, but the member for Southern River became very, very, very much the one who would suit that role well. He is not present in this place either—possibly he is polishing Uncle Fester's head!

There is a serious matter to this caricature of the Addams family. Some members may find that that has been hidden in the presentation of this contribution, which is a fine contribution.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** I am sure your constituents will think so.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** They will get double copies of this speech.

It is important to remember that families—the government is a family—can be dysfunctional. The National Party is a wing of the government's family that is not really part of the family. Its members are the country cousins who have arrived, along with a few chattels, in the back of a truck driven by the Minister for Regional Development. That family is a dysfunctional family. The message is —

**Mr M. McGowan:** The *Beverly Hillbillies*.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We could go into that, but I want to save some of my ammunition for later.

The important thing to know is that this family caricature is very apt for the current government because it believes that it is normal. It believes that it is doing things that people do not consider to be wrong, disappointing or different. In fact, it is. It is taxing people in record amounts. We have seen in this budget—the family budget that has been brought down—that the basic necessities of life are being taxed and increased. A 17.7 per cent increase might not mean a lot to the government family but it means a lot to the families in Mandurah, Geraldton, Jandakot, Joondalup, the Kimberley, the South West, the Great Southern, the Mid West and the Wheatbelt. They feel those increases and many of them will be on the brink because of the increases. I cannot believe how many people in the past six months have contacted my office, and I am sure other members' offices, about the impact that the already increased electricity, gas and water charges have had on them. There is more to come. The Minister for Water Resources let the cat out of the bag this afternoon during question time, just as the Leader of the Opposition highlighted in debate on the matter of public interest that there is more to come. Families have reached the end of their tether. The Addams family—the government; the family—does not have a real understanding of the impact that these increases will have on those families. I will highlight an example. A constituent of mine from Mandurah, Mr Ian Kevin Jenkins, highlighted a massive discrepancy in one of his water bills. The last couple of bills he received were for \$10 and \$15 when suddenly it jumped to \$200. He

quizzed and questioned why that was the case because his water consumption history shows that he is not a water guzzler, yet when he tried to get a favourable hearing from the Water Corporation, he was told that the meter must be right and that he was wrong. He was told to pay it. This bloke, like many people, is on a fixed, or limited, income. These people will suffer if they see a 17 per cent increase in charges for utility bills and their water or gas meter is not right. We have to make sure that the family—the government—understands that the decisions that it supports through this Premier and Treasurer are having, and will have, ongoing and lasting impacts on families throughout Western Australia.

I have been the opposition Whip for a couple of years now. I seek an extension.

**The SPEAKER:** You rang.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The Speaker is obviously feeling left out because I did not consider characterising him as Lurch! That was very inappropriate of me.

I cannot believe how many members on this side were so keen to put themselves forward for the estimates hearings, which will be held next week. I cannot believe how many members on this side expressed feverish excitement about being on the committees; I had to beat them back with a stick. I had to bring a stick from the back of my house to beat them back. I asked which members wanted to attend the hearing into commerce and they salivated, their eyes narrowed, their gaze became glazed and their teeth gnarled as they looked across at the new Minister for Commerce. About 12 of them wanted to be on it and I had to beat them back with my stick. The Minister for Commerce is in for a pounding next week. I hope that he will be ready for it because it will be an absolute pounding. Opposition members also wanted to be on the committees for the Minister for Water Resources and Mental Health. I was again beating them back with my large stick. I said, "Get back! You cannot be on everything," and they said, "Extend the time we have to interrogate these ministers. None of this three hours business; let's make it a whole day that we can spend picking at the carcass of the Minister for Commerce, picking at the carcass of the Minister for Water Resources and Mental Health, picking at the carcass of the Minister for Local Government and picking at the carcass of the Minister for Regional Development. Give us more time." I told them that I had no control over that. "I am merely a mortal in this place," I said, in the compassionate way in which I speak. I told them that, although I have no control over that, I would try my best, and I have tried my best. Some would say that I am very trying! Members on this side are absolutely enthusiastic about the estimates hearings. That is in stark contrast to the former opposition. I remember attending estimates committees when I was a minister and before that when I was a backbencher. First of all, we had to wait for the then opposition members to turn up. Half of them would not turn up, half were not in control, half did not know what questions to ask and half of them were hoping that we would ask the right questions. In fact, we were tougher on our ministers during estimates than were members of the opposition.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Don't mislead the house.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We were. It is interesting that the Minister for Police has piped up because he was one of the members who always wanted to finish the estimates early. He would say, "Come on, we can go home now. We have asked four questions each." That is a good work ethic and good productivity! He said, "It's a gentleman's agreement. You have done three, I have done two, let's go home and call it quits. It's half past seven in the evening. Let's go home early. The finish time is supposed to be 10 o'clock but we will go home at 7.15 pm. All we have to do is have a gentleman's agreement." We would not stand for that. The Minister for Commerce is in for a pounding next week. The Minister for Police is in for a pounding as well.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Bring it on.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We have the best line-up that I could muster. I had my stick out because I had to muster them. We have the best line-up against the minister, and I can see him quaking from here. He will be when we expose him —

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** I will remind you of these comments.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am sure the minister will. Last year, the Minister for Local Government had just one hour on local government. He was pounded last year. I remember him leaving the room bloodied. There was blood on the floor. We had to mop it up. No wonder they had to get new chairs in the other place! That is where we were. We left stains on the floor because the Minister for Local Government had been absolutely pummelled into submission. This year we will have three hours with him. He is in for a pounding, let me tell members. I am looking forward to the estimates committees because the opposition is eager to raise a huge number of issues. Members opposite need to take great notice of the estimates. They should not just wheel out the government line during estimates; they should be good members of Parliament and actually question their own ministers, as we did when we were in government to ensure —

**Mr J.H.D. Day:** You sat there with coloured files with the answers to questions on them!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** No, no! Those coloured files were very important weapons.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I would not be cruel in this place. I would never reflect inappropriately. The part of Fester Addams has to go to someone with more —

**Mr P. Papalia:** Weight?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** No, not weight—personality! No, that is cruel. They should have a little bit more energy. Let me say that the Minister for Planning does not fill me with the feeling that he has a lot of energy.

I want to finish on a couple of very serious matters in my electorate. I am sorry that the Minister for Health is not here—he did come in for the quorum but he has disappeared again. He has his family here and I appreciate that. If the minister were here, I would need to highlight to him a very serious matter in Peel that I believe is seriously undermining the confidence in the Peel Health Campus; that is, the ongoing dispute with the lowest paid workers in that hospital—in fact, they are the lowest paid workers of any hospital in the state. That dispute has been going on for 18 months. It is appalling that it has been going on for so long. The recently resigned manager—the board says he was sacked; he says he resigned—agreed with the workers that they deserved an appropriate pay rise. That was not, and has not been, at this stage, forthcoming. Those people who work as enrolled nurses, orderlies and cleaners are doing very important work in the kitchens, behind the scenes, and with the doctors and other nurses in the hospitals. They are a tremendous group of people. It is interesting that when the Minister for Health was questioned in this house by the opposition spokesperson for health, the minister said he had been talking to staff. He has not been talking to those staff! Why has he not spoken to them? They are the people who are aggrieved and who, for 18 months, have been trying to have their cause heard. This whole issue not only seriously undermines the confidence in the Peel Health Campus—I think the Minister for Health understands this—but also clearly exposes why the people of Western Australia question very seriously the privatisation of essential services such as hospitals. If members want to look at examples of where it might have worked, they can find them. But if they want to find an example of where there are serious questions about privatising a hospital, they can find them at the Peel Health Campus. Members should not forget that it is my hospital! My son was born there and my mum was there for an operation only recently. My community relies on that hospital. We want an efficient, effective hospital where the staff are treated fairly. That is all they are asking for. They want to be treated fairly and appropriately, and to get paid appropriately. Even the last offer, which I think the management was dragged to the table with after 18 months, will still put those workers as the lowest paid hospital workers in Western Australia. That is the case even with the current offer that was made to them late last week.

I am glad the Minister for Health is here now.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I think they are pretty happy.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The Minister for Health has not talked to them. I was down there on Monday. The minister said in this place that he been talking to the doctors and to some of the staff —

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I talked to them today.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Good! I hope the minister will report on that tomorrow because we need to hear it. The people in Mandurah need to hear what the outcomes were. The minister needs to take responsibility because he privatised that hospital.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** We did not privatise; we contracted it out to the private sector.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** When that hospital model was presented to the people in 1996, it was presented as a landmark way for hospitals to operate. It has had five or six CEOs since that time. The minister knows that.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Four since I have been around.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** There has been more than that, minister. Management has had ongoing disputes with staff for an ongoing period. It does not happen like that in other hospitals. Most of the time, there are industrial actions for short periods. The management and the owners of the hospital should be sitting with the staff and saying, “Let’s get an outcome here.” It should not have dragged on for 18 months.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** That is what I did today

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I hope the minister reports to this place tomorrow on this issue, because the people down there need to know.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** The staff will know

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The minister was not here when I mentioned this, but I will tell him that the confidence in the hospital has been affected, and will continue to be affected if this goes on any longer. I will not

attack the hospital and the staff, because, as I said, one of my children was born there and my mum has had an operation there. There is no attack on the staff. However, the staff are concerned about the overall operation from the higher management level. I think the minister has a responsibility in this, and what he needs to do is make sure that he is at the table. Earlier when the minister was questioned and pushed, he did a Pontius Pilate and wiped his hands of it and said, "The contract is watertight. I can't do anything about it."

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I did not say that at all.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am sorry, minister, but you put us in this situation. The former Liberal government put us in this situation and the people of Mandurah and Peel deserve the very best health service that other people throughout Western Australia get.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Are you saying they do not get it?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That includes making sure that the workers, the people who are doing the excellent work there, are paid appropriately and get a fair go. Currently, they are not! And the minister has not supported them. The minister has not said that publicly. All the minister does is make an excuse and he says, "But they are all happy!" Rubbish! The minister should go and talk to the 40 or 50 people whom I saw on Monday. Will the minister go to see them on Monday if they walk out of the hospital and come to see him? Will the minister go and talk to them? I bet he will not! He will go and talk to the management, but he will not go and talk to the workers!

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I have been on the phone to the workers.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Who—the 50 people I saw? When I asked them —

**Dr K.D. Hames:** You go and ask them.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I do not want to be there; I do not need to be there. The minister needs to be there. I asked them on Monday whether they had spoken to the minister. The minister tried to arrange a meeting late on Friday afternoon because he had a cancellation. The minister offered them a meeting with about an hour's notice because he had a cancellation. That is appalling. The minister cannot do that to these people. They are low-paid workers doing important work in that hospital. The minister needs to fix this because it is on his head. Members opposite privatised this hospital, and the minister should fix it, otherwise the people of Mandurah and Peel will come after the minister. They know where the minister lives! The minister lives in Perth, by the way. But, apart from that, they know where the minister lives.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** What about my house at 38 Waterside?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The minister claims to live in Perth. The minister claims \$30 000 a year to live in Perth; the minister does not live in Mandurah. Is the minister telling me he lives in Mandurah now?

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I claim according to the number of nights that I have to be in Perth for work.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, but the minister lives in Perth. How many days a week is the minister in Mandurah this week? None! How many days have I been in Mandurah this week? All of them! How many days was I in Mandurah when I was minister? Most of them, if not all of them.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Did you have a house in Perth?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, I did, but I did not stay in it. I rented it out because I used to go home to my home town all the time.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** You had a house in Perth, the same as I do.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** But I did not claim for it, you silly goose! That is what I am telling you, you silly goose! I did not claim for it. The minister did because he is greedy! He wants \$30 000 a year. Unbelievable!

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.57 pm]:** Some members will be aware that I was ill yesterday afternoon and because of that I got to leave early. Of course, there is no such thing as a free pair in life, and for my punishment I get to speak now at eight o'clock this evening. As a further punishment I get to follow the act of the member for Mandurah, and I am sorry if I am not going to be able to meet his passion.

**Mr M. McGowan:** It is no act; he meant every word he said.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I have to follow the impassioned speech of the member for Mandurah and that is a very difficult speech to follow.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** He gets himself all worked up.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** The Minister for Health was not in the chamber for most of the member's speech because he was still having dinner. The rest of us got on with the job, so from that perspective it is probably appropriate that the minister does not reflect upon the content of the member's speech.

Earlier this week the Leader of the Opposition was talking about dishonesty in the government's budget documents. There can be no greater area of dishonesty or budget dishonesty than in the area of health. The Minister for Health has spent much time trying to head off any negative reaction that might have occurred in health, and, indeed, has trumpeted some of the earlier increases in expenditure across the portfolio as though it were a virtue in the budget. As the Australian Medical Association observed, the health budget is an exercise in treading water—or it is an exercise in standing still. As a proportion of the overall budget, it remains pretty much the same. As an increase in expenditure, it represents a 6.7 per cent increase on previous years. The Leader of the Opposition drew attention to the fact that we are looking at a 6.7 per cent increase in expenditure in the 2010–11 period and to the fact that, over the previous nine or so years, there has been only one occasion—I think in 2003–04—when expenditure growth has been under that. Even in 2009–10 when the much-heralded three per cent efficiency dividend was in full flight, the government managed to hold down expenditure growth in health to only 7.2 per cent. I think it is fair to say that, from the outset, the health budget is itself an exercise in dishonesty in the Barnett government's budget documents.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** How can you say that?

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I can say it this way; it is quite simple: if we average the increase in expenditure growth in the health budget over the past nine years it comes up to about 9.13 per cent. The concept of the health minister holding expenditure growth to 6.7 per cent is an exercise in fantasy, and he knows it. Even last year when he was being beaten about the head by the member for Vasse, the previous Treasurer, when he was hounding the director general out of the Department of Health for ruining his reputation as a frontbencher and a manager of budgets, he did not manage to deliver 6.7 per cent expenditure growth.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Seven percent.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** It was 7.2 per cent. I think it is fair to say that, if we take the average over the past years —

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I am not sure what the minister had for dinner tonight; it might have been the curry or something of that nature, but he is clearly a little bit hot in the bot. He should relax and take a sip of his water and we can work through these numbers to show the level of dishonesty portrayed in these documents. If we are to take that nine-year average, which is perhaps the best the minister can possibly hope for, we are looking at a budget blow-out of \$128.56 million before the financial year has even begun. The government has failed to account for \$128.56 million and, quite simply, it is incapable of reversing the historical expansion in health expenditure. Over the past financial year the minister has demonstrated that he is incapable of holding down expenditure to budget levels. It is fair to say that we are looking at a blow-out of around \$128 million.

In addition to that, we have seen the exercise that is unfolding in Busselton. The then shadow Minister for Health, now Minister for Health, claimed throughout the election campaign that his government would rebuild the Busselton District Hospital for the same amount the government of the day had committed to rebuild it for on its current site—around \$77 million. At the time, the critics and the community said it could not be done. Lo and behold, what is happening? The minister is demonstrating that he cannot do it—not that he is prepared to admit that in his budget documents, although both he and the former Treasurer know that there is not a hope in hell of that hospital being delivered for \$77 million. What did the previous Treasurer, the member for Vasse, say about the Busselton Hospital the morning after the budget was delivered? He said that he believed the Busselton Hospital would cost at least \$100 million, if not \$110 million. He said that a renovated, not a rebuilt, hospital on the current site would cost between \$100 million and \$110 million. Why is that not represented in the budget documents? Why did not the former Treasurer, the member for Vasse, demand the budget documents represent what is in fact the true estimate of this particular capital works project—the redevelopment of the Busselton Hospital? Sure, the government is not delivering on its election commitment to rebuild the hospital; sure it will be delayed and, indeed, the minister himself yesterday admitted it would be delayed. But at least he could be honest with the people of Vasse and admit that the renovated hospital will not be delivered for the amount the government is claiming. That should be of concern because the government has form when it comes to the development and underfunding of capital works for hospital projects.

We are seeing what is unfolding at the Albany Regional Hospital site. The government has gone cap in hand to the private sector looking to privatise various hospital services at that campus as a way of closing the gap between the actual cost of the program and what it is prepared to pay for.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I do not need to remind you about Fiona and Joondalup do I?

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I am coming to Joondalup, so the minister should sit there with the curry his body is trying to digest at the moment, and we might get to the real answers associated with the health budget.

The other area that I think is worthy of consideration is the curious developments around the national health agreement. We understand the Premier is in negotiations with the federal government, and we commend him for

undertaking that process to deliver the best possible outcome for the people of Western Australia—the patients of the Western Australian hospital system. But the other night the Premier committed himself to providing the exact same level of funding to the WA health system whether he signs the health agreement or not; that is, whether the federal government will be in a position to release the funds under the national health agreement. The other night the Premier said that he was happy to commit that level of funding. Indeed, he said, “We will make up the gap somehow.” We can chalk up an extra \$350 million before we even start the clock racing, at least in the first year, which this government has now committed itself to. I would have thought that that provided an opportunity for the government to be honest in its budget document. This is a government that says it is delivering a \$290 million surplus, yet we have seen with the health budget alone, through these three measures, that it is developing a huge hole in its budget and a very real liability for the state.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** How do you figure that? It is \$500 million over four years—\$120 million a year.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** It is about \$350 million for the first year, which I am sure the minister is very excited about, and I am sure the people of Western Australia are relieved because they now know that, regardless of the outcome of those discussions, the state government will fund health to the full tune of what is on offer by the Rudd Labor government. It will make sure that money is inside the health budget, ready for the health minister to roll out these benefits for the people of Western Australia. If that is not the case, the Premier needs to explain to this chamber and to the people of Western Australia why he is now prepared to renege on that commitment.

Royal Perth Hospital sits like an albatross around the neck of the Minister for Health. It is his private crusade, which is starting to go bad on him and continues to rot inside the budget of the health department. The minister was very keen to point out by interjection last night that he does not need to redevelop Royal Perth Hospital; he does not need to “transform RPH into a 400-bed trauma facility with a new emergency department and a new west wing.” He is now saying to the people of Western Australia, “Look, I made that promise but I do not need to do it any more. Despite what we have said to the people of Western Australia, we no longer need to keep that commitment.” Essentially, the wheels have fallen off the minister’s private crusade for Royal Perth Hospital. Why is that? There is not a person in the health sector or a person in the Treasury building who is prepared to back the minister’s bizarre arguments around Royal Perth Hospital. How bizarre are they becoming? First of all, we have the proposal from his committee that the hospital be redeveloped into partial residential units—an extraordinary flight of fancy worthy of some of even the best thought bubbles from the Premier, as the minister struggles to do something creative with RPH. But the minister continues to hold out that having tertiary beds spread across three tertiary hospitals is somehow the same as having the same number of tertiary beds in two hospitals. Not a commentator in Western Australia is prepared to back that analysis. People know that if there are three tertiary hospitals, there is administration, there is equipment and there is personnel—specialists in particular—that have to be provided across each of those campuses. There is a critical mass that has to be provided across those three campuses, which will essentially put extraordinary pressure on the health budget. This is the reason why the Department of Treasury and Finance has said on a number of occasions that it is unsustainable. This is why the Royal Perth Hospital proposal came in for such criticism from the Education and Health Standing Committee in its recent report. This is the reason why people right across the health system are saying that the Royal Perth Hospital flight of fancy, while being a very popular election stunt, is bad public policy, and it will continue to be bad public policy regardless of the bizarre arguments that the minister may come up with from time to time to protect what is essentially a discredited health policy and what is essentially now regarded as a bit of a joke.

The minister has on a number of occasions tried to divert the public’s attention from Royal Perth Hospital, saying that it is somehow related to a discussion about secondary beds. It is not. It is a pity that the member for Rockingham is not in the chamber at the moment—it is good that the member is in the chamber, even though he is not in his place. The minister was saying the other day that, as a result of the work that he is doing in relation to Royal Perth Hospital, he will be able to put extra beds into the Rockingham–Kwinana hospital to bring that hospital up to —

**Dr K.D. Hames:** One hundred and fifty in Fremantle.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** No, the minister was talking about Rockingham hospital.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Yes, 50 in Rockingham and 150 in Fremantle.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** He was going to bring Rockingham hospital up to 350 secondary beds. This was indeed what he thought was a great exercise. But, of course, it has always been the plan that Rockingham hospital, in stage 2, would come up to between 340 and 350 beds. It is not new policy; it is old policy. It was going to happen anyway. For the minister to use that as some sort of distraction from the RPH campaign, quite frankly, will not work. It was never the argument about RPH. Rockingham hospital was always going to have between 340 and 350 beds. If the minister doubts this, he has only to refer to tabled document 3793, which was tabled on 10 April 2008 by the then Minister for Health, Hon Jim McGinty, and which provides exactly these numbers. The minister also said with great fanfare the other day that, through his great work, he was going to bring Joondalup

hospital up to 471 beds—exactly the same figure that the previous Minister for Health was aiming at. So this is not new policy; this is carrying out the same policies that were in place before. The damage being done by the retention of RPH is essentially to put pressure on the costs associated with tertiary beds, and that is why people oppose the RPH exercise.

We all know that RPH will draw resources away from Fiona Stanley Hospital. We know that it will draw resources away from Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. In fact, that is what the RPH policy explicitly does. If that is the case, that is the case to which the minister must respond. In the public's mind, why should the privatisation of Fiona Stanley Hospital not be a direct result of the minister's policies to retain RPH? How would the privatisation of Fiona Stanley Hospital occur if it were not for the minister's decision to retain RPH?

Of course, the minister protested that Fiona Stanley is not being privatised, because the minister, with his medical background, does not regard hospital services that he so euphemistically and disrespectfully describes as backroom or back of house as being part of the privatisation. It is for that reason that we regard the privatisation of Fiona Stanley Hospital as very real, even though he regards orderlies and people of that sort as not being part of the privatisation.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I want to turn briefly to the fact that the minister is also one of the luckiest health ministers alive. Last year, struggling as he was, he was saved at the bell by the federal Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, as she nobly offered to pay for the redevelopment of the rehabilitation unit from Shenton Park at the death knell. I can still remember the relief on the face of the state Minister for Health when the federal government announced that it would put \$180 million into the Midland hospital, which, forlornly, the minister has also signalled for privatising. This time it is the royalties for regions program that is coming to his assistance.

Although we were all led to believe that royalties for regions was an exercise in top-up—that is, not core services—we know what royalties for regions is. It is essentially part of the National Party's political electioneering fund that it will use to pursue —

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Wonderful person, Nicola Roxon.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** She is. We know, for instance, that even though the health department had committed to funding the redevelopment of Carnarvon Regional Hospital, which this health minister cancelled or delayed, the royalties for region program will now come to the minister's aid.

The Exmouth ambulatory facility, which can only be described as core funding, will now be paid for by royalties for regions. The Nickol Bay Hospital rebuild, at \$150 million —

**Dr K.D. Hames:** We didn't see it in your budget.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** No, indeed not, minister. I never saw it in the minister's budget either. All I saw it in was the Minister for Regional Development's budget. But we know why the Minister for Regional Development is so keen on the health facilities in that area. It is because he is trying to prop up the member for North West as part of the National Party's overall electioneering strategy. Why could the Minister for Regional Development not assist the Minister for Health when it came to Busselton Hospital? There is a shortfall there. Surely that is worthy of consideration.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Maybe it is.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Maybe it is, minister.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** Wrong country.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** But it is the wrong country. It is the wrong sort of electorate. However, there is a very interesting entry in the health budget, and that is the redevelopment of Esperance District Hospital. Does the minister remember the Esperance hospital—the one that he delayed and near on cancelled in the last budget? Now, happily, it pops up in the health budget, funded by royalties for regions, in the member for Eyre's electorate. I wonder what the member for Eyre's political future holds for him if the Minister for Regional Development has decided that the member for Eyre too has a special electorate that is worthy of royalties for regions funding in the area of health. I would not want to be in the member for Eyre's shoes come the next election, because I think we know what is coming his way. If the member for Eyre is finding royalties for regions funding is allocated in his electorate, whereas it is not in the member for Vasse's electorate, I think some very interesting developments will take place in the member for Eyre's electorate come the next election. Even though the member for Eyre failed to be able to defend his electorate in the last budget, I would not be so excited about it being in there this time. It is marked for targeting by the National Party, and if I were the member for Eyre, I would spend a lot more time in Esperance between now and the next election.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** And I would hang on to my ministerial position if I were you. That might be your only defence.

**Dr G.G. Jacobs:** Thank you for that advice.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** The area of mental health is moving into new territory in this budget. We now have a \$507 million budget that will be under the control of the Mental Health Commission, and I think it is fair to say that there are people in the community who are genuinely interested to see where this new experiment is taking them.

**Dr G.G. Jacobs:** Do you think it's a good idea?

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I think I reflect the sentiments of many in the community, Minister for Mental Health, when I say that I am heartened by the opportunity to see what the expenditure in mental health is. I notice in the budget documents—the minister will have an opportunity to explain this more fully, and I mean that sincerely in relation to the estimates—that there is no capital expenditure in the mental health budget. I understand that some of that still appears in the health budget. The Drug and Alcohol Office still appears in this health budget although I think it is under the Minister for Health's control.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** It is. It has not been separated.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I understand the egg is still to be unscrambled in relation to that. The mental health community will not sit by forever and watch an acting commissioner indefinitely; an acting commissioner who took well over 365 days—although it was supposed to take only 100—to set up offices. I am sure it is fair to say that there is a great deal of disappointment in the sector that the first visible act of the Mental Health Commission is to set itself up in a St Georges Terrace office.

I will read correspondence from one member of the community, in which he says —

We still do not know whether this allocation —

The allocation in the mental health budget —

bears any relationship to a clear understanding of the actually assessed level of community need for accessible and appropriate services in all parts of WA. Does it include capital and recurrent expenditure and what are the government's own priority targets for the coming 12 months for bringing on new, effective services?

The correspondence goes on to say —

It seems that Public Service modes of operation inevitably create new agencies as bastions of stultifying strata, inimical to the kind of leadership and decision making necessary to give shape to mental health reform. This scene of consolidation at the centre at 81 St George's Terrace is in stark contrast with that of continuing service curtailment in the real world of direct service delivery. For example, the North Metropolitan Area Mental Health Service is busy closing the Mental Health Clinic in the important Morley Regional Centre on highly questionable grounds and retreating to the City Centre and Midland and there are ongoing concerns of plans to close the Mirrabooka Regional Mental Health Clinic as well in this curtailment of accessible services.

It is fair to say that there is a level of concern and a level of cynicism about the establishment of the Mental Health Commission and its move into the St Georges Terrace offices. The Minister for Mental Health has a big task to turn that cynicism in the community around. One of the reasons that members of the mental health community are so cynical is that the suicide preventive strategy—when it eventually found its way into daylight—came to little or no action. We have still not received any outcome from the PricewaterhouseCoopers strategy into the development of the new mental health review, which the government received some time ago—I think it was late last year. The mental health community is still crying out for a new Mental Health Act, which was all ready to go under the previous Labor government. It now seems to be on the backburner. There is a lot of expectation in the community—it wants to see some action. What we have seen from this minister is a lot of talk and a lot of care, but not a lot of action. I want to see, minister, a great deal more effort put into community-supported residential units. I think it is an important part of the mental health strategy. It is one that is accepted nationwide as being the way to go. I know the minister opposed it before the election, but I notice he has been proudly opening units that began construction under the previous Labor government. It is fair to say that we expect to see a lot more action in that area.

Finally, I will turn to the area of Indigenous affairs. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs had the temerity, the cheek and the gall to get up today in question time to talk about Indigenous Affairs initiatives. I must say there was just one area that we could call exclusive services or exclusive programs that are targeted to the Aboriginal community; that is, the work being done on the Closing the Gap program. We must make the observation yet again that it is not the Department of Health or the Minister for Health who is championing this; it is actually the Minister for Regional Development. It is yet another royalties for regions —

**Dr K.D. Hames:** No, it is not.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** It is yet another royalties for regions program that is going forward. The minister did not mention at all what he is doing to his own department. We watched over the years of the Court government while that government demoralised, decimated, sidelined and marginalised the Department of Indigenous Affairs to the runt that it was when Labor came into office. I am disappointed that Labor could not actually see out the full reform of that department.

Let us see what has happened to the Department of Indigenous Affairs. There is a \$2.6 million budget cut. Almost eight per cent of that department's budget has been cut. The government is discontinuing \$16 000 in heritage grants, it is ceasing land management grants of \$5 000, and reducing the amount spent on reconciliation grants from \$145 000 to \$100 000. It was interesting today, when a question was asked specifically of the minister about reconciliation—a point that he definitely avoided on Sorry Day; a shameful exercise by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs—to also see a cut in Indigenous community grants from \$655 000 to \$260 000, and a reduction in funding for Aboriginal community patrols from \$4.15 million to \$3.9 million. We would have thought the Deputy Premier and Minister for Indigenous Affairs would at least be able to defend his own department. We would have thought that under this government we would see some direction in the progress of Indigenous issues, but all we see is a department that continues to be undermined, continues to be hacked away, budget after budget, and continues to be marginalised. There can be no indictment more stark on this government than the number of Aboriginal people who are employed in the public sector. This has been revealed in the Equal Opportunity Commission's annual report.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** You don't mean in our committee report that criticised your government for the low employment of Aboriginal people—a joint parliamentary report?

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Industry is working tirelessly to improve Aboriginal employment right across the regions. This government has cut the number of Indigenous employees in the public service from 2 507 to 1 776. It cannot even get this right, let alone provide any leadership to industry in this state to improve the number of Indigenous people in employment.

The Bligh Labor government had the bravery and the courage to stand up and sign the Australian Employment Covenant, which had its critics. At least it stood up for Aboriginal employment. We perhaps have the only Indigenous affairs minister in Australia who not only cannot provide any leadership in this area, but also, by his own efforts, is undermining the public sector and the role that it has to play in employing Aboriginal people.

**MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta)** [8.27 pm]: The state of Western Australia is a great place. We see lots of good things happening. I think we also count our blessings. Many of my constituents tell me there is nowhere else in the world we would have it so good, which is not to say that there has not been suffering and pain in the slowdown of the economy. We certainly know people who have had their hours cut back and people who have lost jobs. On the whole, we have got through the global financial crisis with a minimum of pain. We have many great things happening in Western Australia. We are putting behind us some of the downturn that we have seen. We will see a whole lot of good things done, and this budget will fund a lot of good things, but that is happening even with a poor government. This budget is very clear evidence that we do have a poor quality government with wrong priorities. It simply cannot get the best out of this wonderful state of Western Australia and the money that comes to the government through a range of means.

This government's priorities are very different from Labor's priorities, both when we were in government and what we would project now. It certainly does not consider families to be important. This is not a government that wants to support working men and women. It is not a government that actually wants to back pensioners and self-funded retirees. This government has a quite different set of priorities. In fact, I think there is some confusion about what its priorities are, but we can see from this budget that its priorities clearly are not families, working men and women, or pensioners. The Treasurer has put his hand very deep into the wallets and purses of the men and women of Western Australia. He has done that through a range of things that I will touch on in my contribution to this debate.

I refer to page 5 of budget paper No 3, which shows that expense growth for the year to 30 June this year is estimated to be 12.3 per cent. This is on top of expenditure growth in the last financial year of 13.5 per cent. What that means is that in the two years that this government has had control of the budget in this state, there has been expenditure growth of 27.5 per cent. I repeat: the Barnett Liberal-National government has increased recurrent expenditure in this state by 27.5 per cent in two years. In the same period, revenue has grown by 12.5 per cent. The government cannot argue that there was no growth in revenue. It had revenue. The problem was that it could not control expenditure, it could not set objectives, and it had no strategy for managing government to make sure that it controlled spending.

The Premier gave an undertaking that he would balance the budget. We have a situation in which expenditure is out of control, so what does the government do? It gets stuck into ordinary people and ordinary families; it puts its hand deeper and deeper into their pockets to balance the budget. That is not a strategy that we on this side of the house can support. Uncontrolled expenditure growth has created problems for the government. Its solution is

to hit ordinary families and pensioners with taxes and charges. The government keeps saying that it is getting the budget and expenditure under control, but that is not the truth. In its first year, when it had to do a deal with the National Party, there were policy initiatives from the election for which it could say that expenditure might have got a bit out of control for that one year. There was 13.5 per cent growth in expenditure in 2008–09. That was repeated in the second year, with 12.3 per cent growth in expenditure. The budget for 2009–10 had estimated expense growth of 6.6 per cent. The government has more than doubled that figure. It has had no control over expenditure. In fact, general government expenses were up \$628 million since the mid-year review, which is clear evidence that the government does not have control of expenditure. It has turned to family budgets to find the money to cover that blow-out in expenditure. What has that meant? The impact on the standard or representative household is that electricity charges are going up by more than 16 per cent next year, water by more than 17.7 per cent and drainage by 34 per cent. The standard household basket of goods that has been used since the time of the Court government as an indicator, albeit an imperfect one, of the impact of government taxes and charges on ordinary families shows an increase of more than nine per cent on ordinary people by this government as it seeks to balance the books.

There are also other imposts. To balance the books, the government has dragged money into specific agencies not out of the consolidated fund but by hitting families. We have seen this in electricity, water and sewerage charges, but also with the landfill levy. It is a total contrivance, which I believe is actually contrary to the constitution. But the government will get away with it; no-one will challenge it. The government has imposed that as a tax but has called it a levy relating to landfill waste. It is not. It is a straight tax that will help fund the Department of Environment and Conservation, which previously was funded out of the consolidated fund. The government has provided less money from the consolidated fund to help cover the gap in the budget, and has placed an extra impost on ordinary families of \$24 per household. It does not stop there. There has been an 18.4 per cent increase in the emergency services levy, according to page 244 of budget paper No 3. That is an extra \$28 for the representative household. Householders will be hit with that charge when they get their local government rates. That has happened because the government has taken money out of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and is using that extra impost on families to fill the gap. It is using contrivances to hit the pockets of ordinary families so that it can balance the budget. It has also attempted to do it, but without the same success, with central city parking. It was an additional levy on people who come to work in the city and who have to find parking, because the government wants the money for its budget. It is not an overall strategy to deal with parking. The government does not even know what it will spend the money on, but it thought it was a way of milking extra money from mums, dads, families and pensioners.

The government has no control of expenditure but the Premier gave a commitment to balance the budget. The figures I have used will be in place this year. We had big increases last year. There has been debate already on the fact that there will be another 22.3 per cent increase in electricity charges next year. The Premier said that the government does not have to do that. It does not, but it has built that increase into the forward estimates. The Premier cannot come in here and crow about having nice, healthy surpluses in the out years if he is not going to increase electricity charges by that amount. We are used to a government that is quite dishonest in the way in which it presents the books, but it cannot have it both ways; it either has to admit that electricity charges will go up 22.3 per cent again next year, or it should not write that increase into the budget papers to show that it will have a healthy surplus next year if that money is not going to be coming in.

Ordinary families are being hit time after time by this government. Last year, the government abolished the subsidies for families with children in education. For instance, for families with one child in secondary school and one child perhaps doing an apprenticeship at a technical and further education college, \$600 was taken out of their pockets by this government. We see time after time that it is the ordinary mums, dads and pensioners who are paying so that this government can have a balanced budget without having to control its expenditure.

The budget was brought down last Thursday. I had normal appointments in my electorate office on Friday morning, including with two gentlemen who came to see me. The first thing they both said to me was, "How am I going to pay my electricity bill and my water bill with the way this Barnett government is slugging me?" I have known one of these gentlemen for a few years. He is a 76-year-old widower who had nursed his wife through a very difficult illness. She died a year or so ago. He does not own his own home. The lease for the private rental property he had lived in was not renewed, so he had to move out. He is still living in the electorate. He is paying \$280 a week as a single pensioner. He gets the Australian age pension, most of the pension supplement, rent assistance and a small British pension. His total income per week is \$570. He is paying \$280 in rent. Nearly 50 per cent of his weekly income goes in rent. He said to me, "How am I going to continue to pay my electricity, my water and my other charges?" Another gentleman came to see me. He is a 74-year-old man who is still trying to work, but at that age he is finding it difficult to get work. He has worked in a number of jobs. He has been a marine engineer. He goes to sea for awhile, that project finishes, he comes back, he has to get certification, which costs him a whole lot of money, and he does not get work for six months. He is not eligible for the pension. He asked me, "How am I going to pay for my electricity and water?" The difficulty is that the two

gentlemen who came to my office last Friday are not the exception—there are thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of people who are struggling to make ends meet. What happens? This government comes in and whacks them again and again with increases in water and electricity charges, and through the levies. I have been in this place for 22 budgets and I followed politics before that. I cannot remember a single government that was as vicious in hitting ordinary people with taxes and charges as this government has been. This government is way beyond anything I have seen in my time in this Parliament and my involvement with politics, which is something like 30 years. The situation is that the government, to balance its book and to compensate for the fact that it cannot control its expenditure, is really getting stuck into ordinary people. But this is not just incompetence or lack of strategy; it fits with the Liberal Party ideology of taxing the battlers and hitting the people who are down because they are less likely to fight back. If members want evidence of that, let us look at the figures I have put together that cover the Court–Barnett Liberal–National government, through the Gallop–Carpenter Labor government, and through now to the Barnett–Grylls Liberal–National government. Mr Acting Speaker, under standing order 86(1), I wish to incorporate a table into *Hansard*. I ask whether you could look at it—I think it meets the requirements to be incorporated into *Hansard*. In doing so, when I speak to some of the figures, they will make sense.

These figures show that through the eight years of that Court–Barnett Liberal–National government, the average annual increase in the same representative household was 3.6 per cent. Back then, there was outcry that an annual increase, on average, of 3.6 per cent was hurting families and that it was an unfair imposition on ordinary people. That is why the Court government set up this representative household basket of costs. The average increase through the eight years of the Gallop and Carpenter governments was 0.3 per cent. These figures in the tables are actual dollars; they are not adjusted for inflation. That was the average annual increase in representative household charges by the governments.

Now we come to the past two years of the Barnett Liberal–National government. We find that in these past two years the average increase has been 9.1 per cent—way beyond anything I have ever seen in my time in this place. Water costs went up last year; they went up again this year. There has been something like a 30 per cent increase in water charges over the 18 months that this government has been hiking up costs on ordinary families. I seek to have that table incorporated into *Hansard*.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis):** I have had a look at standing order 86(1) and I have considered the table that you have presented. I am now happy to allow that to be incorporated.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

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#### IMPACT ON STANDARD 'REPRESENTATIVE HOUSEHOLD'

Based on actual dollar amounts to pay for a basket of State government goods and services

	Budget Years	Average annual increase
Court/ BARNETT Liberal Government	1993 to 2000	3.6%
Gallop / Carpenter Labor Government	2001 to 2008	0.3%
Barnett Liberal / National Government	2009 to 2010	9.1%

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**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Because the government has inflicted this pain on ordinary families, it has been able to balance the recurrent budget—but only just. We know it is not bringing a lot of other costs to book, and that is where the accounts are simply not honest. However, the government is finding that there is still a huge cost, because of capital works and other costs it is not meeting. Page 43 of budget paper No 3 shows that the budget for 2010–11 has a cash deficit of very close to \$2 billion, so we are building another \$2 billion debt with the budget that is currently passing through this house.

Do we see a strategy for controlling or repaying this debt? There is no discussion of one at all. The attitude is just: flash the credit card and run up the accounts. It is quite unbelievable that this government has so lost control of expenditure that it has no way of dealing with debt; it is not even suggesting how it will do that. When we look at the debt figures, members will see that they are quite horrendous.

I have another table that I seek Mr Acting Speaker's permission to incorporate into *Hansard* under standing order 86(1), as I wish to speak to the figures in it. It shows that in the last year that a full budget was delivered by the Labor government, which was to 30 June 2008, total public sector net debt stood at \$3 634 000 000—that is,

\$3.6 billion, rounded off. What happened in the first year of the Court Liberal–National government? That debt blew out to \$6.688 billion. State debt went up 84 per cent in that government's first year.

What will this budget do? This budget will take debt to \$11.3 billion, and we can see that a huge growth in debt will continue. Members can also look in the table at the percentage changes from year to year. However, I would like to put to the house the following: let us take that date of 30 June 2008 and look at the multipliers of debt that this government is incurring for the state of Western Australia. Members can look at the percentage increases, but I am looking at how many times over that debt is multiplying. I am not talking about debt increasing by 50 per cent, 100 per cent or 200 per cent; the debt, after one year, was 1.8 times what it was on 30 June 2008. By 30 June 2010, it will be 3.1 times the debt this government inherited, and by the end of the financial year of the budget we are now dealing with, the state's debt will be 4.2 times the debt of 30 June 2008. When debt is increasing so much, percentages do not mean anything. The government is just doubling and tripling the debt. By the end of the out years, the debt this Barnett Liberal–National government has created for the state will be 5.5 times the debt it inherited as the state's net debt when it came to government. That is what this government is doing to the people of this state in running up debt.

[Member's time extended.]

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 86(1), I am happy to have your second table incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

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**Total Public Sector Net Debt**

30th June	millions	Status as at 2010 budget	Change over previous year	Change over previous year as %	Debt Multiplier
2008	\$3,634	Actual			
2009	\$6,688	Actual	\$3,054	84%	1.8
2010	\$11,365	Estimated actual	\$4,677	70%	3.1
2011	\$15,442	2010 budget	\$4,077	36%	4.2
2012	\$17,511	Forward Estimate	\$2,069	13%	4.8
2013	\$18,902	Forward Estimate	\$1,391	8%	5.2
2014	\$20,063	Forward Estimate	\$1,161	6%	5.5

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**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

That rise in debt is without all the extra costs of projects the government is talking about and saying it is committed to, and it either does not have the figures in the budget or has rubbery figures that are not real. If they were included, it would be hard to imagine just how much this state's debt is growing under this government.

How will the government get out of it? I think that is why it is talking about privatisation. It is not an issue of, "We'll get a better deal for Western Australia." It will be the same as we saw under the Richard Court government. When a government has got itself so deep in debt that it is spiralling further and further into debt, it decides to sell off assets to get some money even though it might be a bad deal for the state. We saw it happen with the railways. The government sold railways off, and the companies involved made big profits. The incoming Labor government was left with a huge debt that had to be serviced out of the very good surpluses it was running, and over one or two years that government paid over \$500 million of debt that was left to the state. What is happening now? The railways through the Wheatbelt are being closed down because there is no revenue to service them. These railways are run by a private operator who is interested only in profit, and the state suffers.

The government can argue about privatisation in theory, but this government, having lost control of expenditure and seeing debt balloon at a colossal rate with no strategy to deal with that debt, will force the state, it thinks, towards privatisation. Even these budget papers state that the interest costs of up to \$196 million in the 2010–11 budget "are a major driver of expense growth". We have had this total lack of control of expenses that has created the problem, and now, with this ballooning debt, we find another additional driver of expense growth is

the interest rate to pay the debt. Nevertheless, there is no strategy to get out of it. My theory is that this then drives the government to put in place a privatisation agenda—not for the benefit of the state and not to get efficiencies, but because it is stuck in a debt spiral. Privatisation would do two things for this government. Firstly, it would give it one way of trying to cover some of that debt. We know that in many cases—although not always with privatisation—the extra costs are passed to ordinary mums, dads and pensioners. That is what happens. If privatisation happens, as happened with the privatisation of AlintaGas, the government does not have to take the responsibility for increasing gas prices because it is done by a private company. The government has no control over that price. The company is out there as a monopoly, but it is providing gas, and it is the mums, dads and pensioners who pay the increased fees, and the government can get the debt off the books as a cost. Developing debt without a plan to be able to handle it drives the state to privatisation. Perhaps a case can be made for some examples of privatisation, but I wish to look at the ones that have been a total disaster for this state. When the government sold off the rail freight network, it was a total disaster. It resulted in extra costs to the government and reduced services to people who need that rail freight to transport their wheat and other products. A private operator will run and maintain that railway only when there is a load that will return a profit. As a result, freight is transported by road. Who pays for the roads? The taxpayers, through the state, pay the additional bill for the roads. Taxpayers again pay more because the Liberal–National Court–Barnett government sold off the rail network because it was a smart deal to get some money at the time—and who paid for it? The taxpayers, the mums and dads, paid a huge bill for that mammoth mistake by the previous Liberal–National government.

The Premier was very proud about selling off the Bunbury gas pipeline. He got a huge price for it. What was the impact? He had a company that had paid too much, and because it could not be expanded, there was a stranglehold on the industry in the south west. It could not get energy. Again, it took a Labor government to fix the problem. We got attacked for it, but we fixed the problem by helping to transfer the company so that the new owner could expand it. The state lost because the privatisation was simply about fixing the debt that the Liberal–National government got us into; it was not about looking after the state's interest.

I am concerned that this government is showing itself to be a poor government. It has priorities that we do not support. Its priority is simply to balance the budget at the cost of ordinary families. The Labor Party tradition, through the Gallop and Carpenter governments, was to manage our expenditure and balance the books in a way that did not impact on ordinary people and households. This government has no interest in doing that. Its priorities are quite different and we reject the priorities of the government in sticking its hand in the pockets of ordinary people to balance the books when it has other options, one of which is to have a reasonable control on government expenditure. It is sheer cant for the Treasurer and other leaders on the government side to talk about controlling expenditure. They have brought down two budgets in which they have totally and utterly failed to control expenditure. We know that that trend will continue, because the books are not honest. The budget does not reflect the cost impacts that are coming or the decisions that the government has made. The government has committed to doing things, but the books do not show the full costs of the projects that it has committed to. If the government does not have an honest set of books, it will not come in on budget and there will be blow-outs.

The member for Kwinana talked about problems in health. Last year the situation was ludicrous. The government allocated a 3.8 per cent increase for the health budget, despite it not being below eight per cent or 10 per cent for many years. Of course, expenditure on health was around eight per cent or nine per cent. The government has done the same thing for the education budget this year. It has not significantly increased the education budget, so we know that it will not come in on budget either. The education budget will blow out again. Expenditure will be beyond that predicted. That will happen in many other areas because the government has not been honest and truthful about the way it has put the budget together. The government is simply about creating spin, which will undermine the government's very standing as a result of the fact that it cannot control expenditure. The government will then have all sorts of problems.

This is a great state and many good things are happening here. Although people have been suffering, we have got off relatively lightly compared with most other parts of the world and other parts of Australia. It is a great shame that we have such a poor government and that its priorities are wrong. It is seeking to bring down a budget that impacts very harshly and most unfairly on ordinary families and pensioners in this state.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston)** [8.53 pm]: Before I get into my contribution to the budget speech, I remind the Attorney General—it is a shame that he is not in the chamber—of some comments of a derogatory nature that he made some 12 months ago about the proceeds-of-crime funding. I have a long memory. The Attorney General ridiculed the decision to use some of the proceeds-of-crime funding for an arboretum in Collie. I will read part of a letter that was sent to the Shire of Collie on 20 January 2010. I have not referred to this previously because I did not think that the timing was right. The letter reads —

Dear Sir/Madam,

In 2008 the Collie Scout Group supported an application for the installation of lights in the Arboretum. We are very pleased they have been installed!!

Since their installation, we have noticed the area is much more visually appealing, from both sides of the river. The lights also make a pretty backlight for Soldiers Park.

As the Arboretum is a lot brighter, there are less places for people to hide and gives a secure feeling that the vandalism rate at our Hall will decrease.

The Scouts have benefited as well. As the Arboretum is a lot brighter, the Scouts can use it for outdoor activities for longer in the evenings as they can now see all the tree roots and branches on the floor, resulting in less falls!!

The only downside we found is it's harder to hide in the hiding and stealth games!!

Yours in Scouting

Tania Marsden.

The Attorney General criticised the recipients of the proceeds-of-crime funding, but I have not heard him criticise the recipients of the royalties for regions funding in the same way. To get royalties for regions funding, someone drives through town, throws up a few hundred dollar notes in the air and keeps driving, and whoever is lucky enough to grab it keeps it. We have seen that the National Party likes to sit on its money. There is a surplus of \$430 million in unallocated funding for the National Party for pre-election promises and pork-barrelling. That is why a lot of people in Western Australia are paying very dearly through increases in charges for goods and services and for electricity and water to the tune of around \$1 500 a year. Some people in my electorate can least afford it and a lot of them will find it very tough. When there is a reason and function for money to be handed out, that is well respected—unlike when it is just thrown in the air.

Another major disappointment to me in this budget is that there is no new money for the electorate of Collie–Preston. The Minister for Sport and Recreation just walked into the chamber. He is one of the main perpetrators. An election promise was made to give \$1.6 million for the Collie motorsport complex. There is not a line item for it in the budget. The minister will say that there is \$20 million in the sport and recreation fund. That is right, but the forward estimates generally have a line item. That is not the case for the motorsport complex. The Premier gave an absolute guarantee that \$1.6 million would be expended in Collie for the Collie motorsport complex so that it could have a dedicated drag track.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** That is not quite right. That is there, but they are not ready to go. It can't be done until they are ready to go.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I am asking the minister to put it in the budget. We have heard this all along. They have been telling me that the minister is not ready and will not sign the cheque. They are not in any rush because the minister is not ready to go. Let us put the money in a line item in the budget; otherwise, it will not be in it either this year or next year and it will be another broken promise.

Another major promise the then opposition made during the election campaign was to provide \$25 million for the Coalfields highway. Whoopee! The government has come back with \$4 million for this year. I guess the government will put the white lines on the existing highway because that is about what it will cost to do that—while people are getting hurt. Members should travel on Coalfields highway at around 7 am. It is bumper to bumper with traffic, but it moves at 110 kilometres an hour. That is where the problem lies. When someone travelling on the freeway in the metropolitan area has a minor mishap at 30 kilometres an hour, it does not cause the same amount of damage as having an accident on the Coalfields highway when travelling at 110 kilometres an hour. To rub salt in the wound, the money is not new money for the south west because it was taken off the Eelup roundabout. That is the roundabout that people from Collie travel past when they go to Bunbury. There has been no gain and there is a lot of pain. If I remember rightly, the Eelup roundabout, which is on the border of my electorate, was to be a flyover. That is what the member for Bunbury promised. I do not see that happening because they are still talking about the plans, which will not be ready for another 12 months. That is another broken promise. There is no chance in the world of that being started in the next few years.

While I am talking about the Coalfields highway, I must give a sincere thanks to Worsley Alumina, which has put overhead lights on intersections and provided car parks that take people off the road. In the morning, up to 30 buses take about 1 800 construction workers up there. It is a big job. It is tucked away and not a lot of people see it. Worsley has done its darnedest, without any help, or with minimal help, from Main Roads or the state government. By the time they get their act together, that construction phase will be finished.

Hopefully, Perdaman Industries will come on stream. That will be a \$2.3 billion project if the government gives it a small handout. It is moving well. I talked to the proponent the other day and all things looked to be going well. If it goes ahead, it should tail in with the wind-down of Worsley. The Perdaman factory will produce about 300 000 tonnes of fertiliser, or urea, a year.

If I add up the other major ticket items, in total \$35 million has been stripped from the electorate of Collie–Preston. That is a huge amount of money. When one equates that with jobs, that is a lot of jobs. We have youth

unemployment problems in my electorate, as most places do. At this moment, we are fortunate that Griffin Coal is still afloat, and we have construction workers in other areas. The next lot of money that I will refer to that has been stripped from my electorate relates to the Greenbushes–Donnybrook–Bunbury rail line. Although some people said that it should not go ahead, others were adamant it should have been upgraded so that the logs from the plantation timber industry could go on rail and into the port. Many people would have been satisfied if that \$20 million had instead been put into roads and overtaking lanes on highways to make it a lot safer to travel in that area. That has not happened. The money has gone! Can members guess where? It has gone into National Party electorates. That rail line will go from York nearly to Albany. Maybe that is a good job, but, by gee, it smells of pork-barrelling to me when I see \$35 million worth of electoral promises taken from my area. I hear that the Minister for Regional Development is coming down to my electorate on Thursday week, along with the Minister for Water, to announce—it is old money again—\$15 million for the desalination plant. That is the third time they have been down to announce it! The cheque will be worn out and they will have to write a new one, it will be that worn by the time it is cashed! There is absolutely no money at all going to my electorate from this government, but the government has certainly put the bills up!

One thing that has not been recognised is the cost to put on utilities such as power and water in a country town. On average, if someone lives on a five-acre block just on the edge of a subdivision in the Collie–Dardanup area, the cost to put power on will be around \$30 000—not \$300! There is no subsidy for this whatsoever. With the government talking about cost recovery, that cost will only go up. I do not take away from this; the requirement is that we must have underground power, which I support. We have seen the fires in other areas that have been caused by clashing wires, and those sorts of things, and we do not want that to happen in our area. But, by gee, anyone who is thinking of buying a block out of town should check that the power is on already, otherwise they will suffer dearly on top of what they have already paid for it.

I refer now to infill sewerage issues at Capel. The people of Capel are furious. The Shire of Capel is one of the fastest growing areas in the state, if not the fastest, yet it has no infill sewerage program. All of a sudden, there is a jam because not enough blocks have been released, so prices are going up and people are looking to settle in areas. It is a beautiful area of our state; it is absolutely one of the best. At other times people might have asked why we would live in Capel; now it is one of the most wonderful places because of the services there, the roads and also the hospital facilities just down the road in Bunbury. Donnybrook has exactly the same problems and is suffering from growing pains, yet the people are expected to put the infill sewerage and pumping systems in themselves. Donnybrook has been on the infill sewerage list for a long, long time. The chief executive officer of the Shire of Donnybrook is very disappointed in this budget and begs the state government to have a real close look at this.

We can look at it from the viewpoint of the people of Busselton; they do not seem to do too badly! Maybe local members down there should play up a bit more, in the sense of donging someone, or something like that, to see whether we can get a start! They might give us a few bob to get a few jobs done around the electorate. If it does not get there shortly, I might have to. I am getting a bit old, but I will still have a go.

Without doubt this is the worst budget that has ever been handed down for the seat of Collie–Preston and previously Collie–Wellington—by a long way! There is no new money.

We read a headline that the Dalyellup school misses out despite a big surplus. That was promised. Again it is in the Capel shire, which has a huge growth rate, and these people are very disappointed about that. I regard myself as a country person, but the people allocating royalties for regions do not seem to think so. They seem to think that the money has to go into the Wheatbelt or the northern part of our state to be called royalty money. We are seeing slowly but surely their badge is being worn away to the point that the royalties for regions is becoming just the fund for projects such as hospitals and roads—the same old stuff that could have been funded under what was called the WA local government fund in previous times. That is where it is headed. It is no longer funding that is over and above what is normally spent; it is a part of it. I applauded royalties for regions, as did some other country members here. It was well overdue. We could identify what was going to the country. It had been a problem identifying that money. Now it is identified, but the government cannot say that the funding is over and above what would normally be spent, because that is no longer the case. It is part of the main budget system. With that in mind, I think the people of Dalyellup have the right to be disappointed because even though it is a major growth area, their college did not receive any funding. This is a huge story in the country. This article refers to the growth rates and over 200 new students a year in the Dalyellup college. That area does need funding. They are expanding from years 9 through to years 11 and 12. That area does need money. The example in this article refers to \$6 million allocated to Busselton Senior High School—along with the hospital—down in Troy Buswell's area. That is the quote from that article.

The Mayor of Bunbury was quoted as saying that the budget money benefits Perth. That is how the budget has been received in the south west—the forgotten part of our state. A lot of produce comes out of there. About \$3 billion of the domestic product comes out of that area from mining, fruit, timber and the whole box and dice,

but no infrastructure money is going there. Another rub is the \$4 million that has been allocated to the port. It asked for \$750 million and it got \$4 million. What will it do? It will probably put an air conditioner in the front office.

I have to move on very quickly, but I will raise an issue that has come up in the past couple of days. I have been amazed at the number of phone calls I have received. One caller today said to me, "Don't talk about royalties for regions; what about loyalties for the regions?" He was talking about those contractors who for over 20 years have been undertaking contractual work for Homeswest offices and houses—the painters, chippies and electricians. Those people have been absolutely snubbed, as I believe that Transfield will pick up the major contract for the state. Transfield will then subcontract the work to local contractors and will push their prices down and the margin will go to Transfield, another huge company. That will impact on the jobs around Collie, because I have no doubt that Transfield will have fly in, fly out gangs that will be located either in Bunbury or maybe Perth. When there is a major job, Transfield will bring them in, put them in a hotel for a week and then take them back. There will no local jobs. It will be an absolute disaster for the local small business man. I am sure that everyone who lives in a country town will recognise the van with the racks on top, the ladders, the paint buckets on top—every now and then the road gets a splash of paint—and the dog on the back. All the things that go hand in hand with the local contractors around town will be gone. Let us face it, it will be cheaper for Transfield to have people on standby, move them in, move them out, and move them back in again. It is similar to fly in, fly out but it will be drive in, drive out. I asked members of the National Party to stand up and be counted on a couple of issues. None of them did! This is another issue I ask them to stand up for, because they have rolled over just to get the dollars in the bank. There is no loyalty to those people who have been subcontractors to Homeswest and other agencies for years and years.

The other issue that has come to mind is the mining tax. Having watched the debate and heard the Premier, I have to have a say on this. I have worked in the mining industry for most of my life in the north west and then down into the south west. What I do see with the mining tax and the mining companies is their lack of willingness to employ our youth. Many people in this room the other week went to BHP Billiton for a presentation on its nickel project and where it stood within the mining industry. The people from BHP were giving themselves a bit of a pat on the back. When asked how many people worked for them, they said 3 000 people. The next question was: how many apprentices. The answer was 50 apprentices. Is it any wonder they should be taxed? If that is their attitude to our young people it is an absolute disgrace that, out of 3 000 people, this company could put on only 50 apprentices. Some of them would have been mature-aged apprentices. These days mature-aged people can make a choice and go on to do an apprenticeship later in life. Members can average out the value of 50 apprentices across the state. Let us look at the easy way to employ workers. Suppose we want to build a new mine but we are short of labour; we do not have any tradies because we did not train any. We will bring in 457 visa workers and when they have finished their time, we can send them back. Companies are not training their own workers. It sticks in my craw that these large companies have not pulled their weight. They rely on the people who work for the Department of Housing and train one or two apprentices. As soon as the apprentices finish their time, companies up north steal them. The local mechanic shop might employ two apprentices, but as soon as they finish their time, off they go because they can earn more money in the north west. That is how companies let themselves down.

**Mr T.K. Waldron** interjected.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I am not sure what the minister is saying. I am running out of time.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Those companies' commitments to apprentices and trainees are just not there. We are hearing talk now of workers coming to work in Western Australia direct from Queensland on a fly in, fly out basis. Workers will drop in on the job and go back. The government should look at some of the areas where there is youth unemployment of up to 20 to 25 per cent. Why is this government not taking a huge leaf out of the books of other governments and saying, "We will make you work, if you don't." Do not worry about which government it is; I have had the argument with other governments in my time. The mining companies are letting down the system. Why the federal government should not tax them, I do not know. When they want construction work done, they send it offshore; if they want pipe work done, they send it to Singapore and float it back on a barge. Those are the areas in which the mining companies have let themselves down badly and now they are being rounded up. I do not feel sorry for them one bit, to be quite honest.

What a disappointment to see \$7 million is earmarked in the Department of Agriculture and Food's budget for redundancies—200 jobs out of a traditional area. Again, that is letting down the people in the country. Most of those redundancies will come from country areas. We will lose 200 jobs from one department paid for by \$7 million over one year. That will hurt country towns again because, as those jobs close, the employees will come to the city and the school numbers will collapse. We will not have to worry about years 11 and 12 that

National Party members do not support. They will not have to worry about them because the families will move out and take their children with them. I am sure more will be said about that.

I refer now to the amount of money allocated to the expansion of genetically modified food labels. There has been no denial of it. I assume potatoes, wheat, corn, tomatoes and barley will be the GM foods. There has been no denial of that. Surely the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mr Terry Redman, has misunderstood his constituents. From one end of his electorate to the other they are furious. He will pay for that in another way. He thinks I am joking. I heard the laughter from his side when the member for Albany had his say. I am telling him now that the ball is rolling. The doctors, the chefs and the organic growers are all saying no, yet he has put a huge amount of money into the budget to work on GM foods. While I am on that issue, I saw a movie the other night called *Food Inc*. I encourage everyone in this house to see that movie. It shows the way the minister is heading. *Food Inc* shows how we are relying on battery hens, battery pork, battery cows—name any one—and are feeding cows the wrong kind of food. Cattle were never meant to eat corn but now they are eating corn. It creates different bacteria in their stomach and changes their internal system. As a result, people's resistance to certain types of bacteria is decreased and that bacteria is resistant to antibiotics. I challenge the minister, even though he is not here tonight, to allocate some funding so that every school and every farming group in the state can see *Food Inc*, and then see what their attitude is. The film shows how, in America, cattle are being lot fed on up to 7 000 acres a hit. It is disgraceful to see what is happening and we are going down that same path. They can call it mass production but that is not the way of Australia or the world generally. I have no argument that farmers need to be profitable but we are heading in the wrong direction. I am short of time so I will go into that on another day.

The other problem that is stifling the south west around the Collie area is the Brunswick to Bunbury and into the port rail line. There is no money budgeted for that. Perdaman Industries expects to come on line in two years' time. If some money is not made available shortly for some planning and work there, we will not be able to get our produce into Bunbury. With that line and port upgrade I would like to see a coal berth. Members will not believe that at the moment we cart our coal from Collie by road to Kwinana, yet there is a port 60 kays down the road that we are not allowed to use because someone has the rights to it as a multi-use berth and will not let the coal ships berth there. It would save about \$10 a tonne on coal and make it very competitive for the export market. What is the use of having a port we cannot use?

While the Minister for Racing and Game is in the chamber, I will point out that it was very disappointing to get correspondence from people at the Geraldton Harness Racing Club concerned about that club closing down. I have written to the minister on this, but I would like to get my concerns on the record. The minister responded, and I thank him. The people at the Geraldton Harness Racing Club have worked extremely hard to get a fledgling pacing industry up and running in another growth area. With the port going ahead there and the junior iron ore companies that are going ahead, the population will expand, which will help this club move forward. It is unfortunate that the club has been advised of the closure. I know the minister met with people from the club yesterday, but I have not caught up with them. This is one area he has to work very hard on to help and hope they can survive. Perhaps the club could forgo the \$30 000 a year it pays to the turf club for the use of its facilities. That is a huge amount of money.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** I think the turf club and trots should amalgamate. That is a suggestion of mine, but it is not my business to interfere.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** One is bleeding the other.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** It has happened at Narrogin.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** If they work together, I think there is a future for that group. I think the other one in Mt Barker is in the minister's electorate.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** It is just out.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It is just on the border of his electorate. That is another area in which they are very concerned. What a band of hard workers they are. I think from memory that women from the local community comprise the whole committee and they give all the orders to the men, of course!

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** It is a very good and well-supported club.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** They are willing to work. The excuse Racing and Wagering Western Australia gave for threatening to close the club was that fibre-optic cable was not available. Straight away the committee said that it would put in the cable at the club's cost. I am asking the minister to have a very close look at it, not be scared and use his influence. He can have a say sometimes. He cannot sit back and let them run over the top of him.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** I can talk to them but I cannot direct them because of the legislation that was brought in by your government.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** If we move a motion here, we can direct them. It is up to the minister.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** I cannot; I would be breaking the law.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Let us look now at the royalties for regions local government fund. It failed; it was put back a year but no extra funds were allocated. It is a furphy because the money that was allocated previously, then held back, has not been carried forward and increased.

**Mr T.K. Waldron** interjected.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It was put there and deferred. When funds are deferred they are usually allocated in the same basket the next year. That has not happened. Country shires are quite angry about that because they feel they have been sold a pup.

I refer now to an issue quite dear to my heart and, as I think quite a few people have seen, it is quite emotional for me. When the government has a surplus of more than \$200 million and it cuts the Redress WA money, that is a very sad and unforgiving step, and it shows that we have a government that does not understand the issues that these people have been through. That money was cut back. I know that some of the people involved have now been paid, and they are reasonably happy about that. However, it is not about money. The main thing that it is about is recognition of what happened to them in their younger lives. But, gee, does it not show a miserable lot, when it has more than a \$200 million surplus and it could not leave the Redress money at the \$75 000 cap? Not many people would have got that. It just shows what an uncaring government we have, with a Premier who certainly does not understand what happens out in the real world. He has probably lived in Claremont for most of his life, and also on his farm up on the hill, where he looks down over other people. It certainly is a sad day when that sort of thing happens.

The closure of tourism offices is another blow to country areas, and again there is no noise about this from the National Party—none whatsoever. The closure of tourism offices hurts those areas that have fledgling tourism industries. Those areas need support, because they do not have huge populations to stimulate all the work around town. Generally, we find in country towns that about 20 people are on every committee and do all the work. Sometimes that support from the tourism industry is needed. However, to bring it back to basics, we will watch that taxi go around, if we are lucky enough to know where it is. I think the greatest comment I have heard about the runaway taxi is, “Where the bloody hell are ya?” I believe that was a follow-on from the previous tourism slogan for Western Australia, and I think people of the world are still saying, “Where the bloody hell are ya?”

As I finish, I have a note in front of me. It is my belief that as of yesterday—so that could have changed—the department of liquor licensing had yet to approve the licensed venues that will be permitted to extend their trading hours for the World Cup period. We know that on the other side of the world, the sport of soccer is played at a different time. The Director of Liquor Licensing says that these licences can be approved at 24 hours’ notice. I think that is totally unfair on the people who wish to keep their venues open and trade. How can they organise staff with 24 hours’ notice? They want their clubs to stay open so that people can watch the soccer on the big screen. Generally what happens is that different clubs support different teams, which I think is a great idea. If these venues stay open until three o’clock in the morning, it does not concern me at all. But how can these people organise their venues if the extended trading times have not been given to them? I am really putting the wood on the minister. The tourism industry cannot operate on 24 hours’ notice. Time is ticking away. Every day on the news programs, we see the Australian team line up. It had its last friendly game last night or the night before, and now the real game is on. If the government does not act on this issue quickly, the state will miss out on those extra dollars that will be generated by these companies, and people will miss out on watching the games.

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** I understand that is happening.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I think the minister has to get off his butt and make sure this issue is dealt with, because these people are at a loss to know what to do. Do they order extra drinks? Do they order extra food? Do they put out their advertisements when they may not be allowed to stay open? This shows that there is something wrong with that liquor licensing area, and it needs to be sorted out.

In conclusion, I believe that many people will be struggling at the end of this year. Imagine the position of a cleaner at a school or a hospital on the bone bottom base rate, and that person has to find another \$1 500 a year. It is going to be extremely difficult for those people, and I think everyone in this house should have a good look at what is going to happen under this budget.

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton)** [9.24 pm]: This is an excellent budget. It is a budget for the times. It provides stability during uncertain times, and these are very uncertain times. The global financial crisis has certainly not passed us by. It is a time when governments do not take radical action; they provide stability in periods of uncertainty. The budget builds for the future. It delivers services in a targeted way and begins the process of reforming the service delivery in government. The budget delivers a small budget surplus of \$290 million, but a budget surplus nevertheless. It delivers that with very slight revenue growth. Revenue growth over the next year is scheduled to be 3.85 per cent, which is slightly above the inflation rate. It delivers a budget surplus with no

new taxes or tax increases. In fact, it provides a \$100 million rebate of payroll tax in the next few months. It delivers a record capital spend of \$7.6 billion over the next year, which represents a 40 per cent increase in capital budgets compared with the last Labor budget—that is, the 2008–09 budget of the previous Labor government. Over the next four years, the capital spend for water is scheduled to be \$3.4 billion; for hospitals \$3.5 billion; for schools \$1.9 billion; and for public safety \$640 million. That is a massive level of investment, and a record level in Western Australian history.

My electorate of Riverton is characterised by a few factors. One is that the heart of the electorate is indeed its public schools—specifically its senior public schools. That is why people move there, and that is why people are continuing to move there. It has two of the largest and finest high schools in the state—Rossmoyne Senior High School and Willetton Senior High School, and Lynwood High School is catching up quickly. One of the things that these schools had been demanding, requesting and pleading for was a greater degree of independence from the education department. They wanted to tailor-make their services to the demands of the kids they serve and the family and community within which they operate. They had been getting nowhere until the Liberal–National government came into power and provided one of the most popular programs in my electorate—that is, the independent public schools. The independent public school process started last year when 34 schools were selected, including Rossmoyne Senior High School. That school is absolutely thrilled with this reform process. The tenders are out for the next wave, and both Willetton Senior High School and Lynwood Senior High School are applicants for that. This budget allocates \$19.3 million over the next five years to assist schools to flesh out and invest in becoming independent public schools.

My electorate is also characterised by a high degree of migrants, particularly from various countries in Asia, including South Asia. They are drawn to the electorate for a number of reasons—affordable housing, excellent schools and, of course, its multicultural nature. But with a multicultural population comes special demands, including special needs in English. Many of the migrants—at least their children—struggle with English; English is their second language. This budget allocates—I am particularly pleased with this because it is something that I advocated for repeatedly—additional money to help students with English difficulties from 457 visa families. In the past this should, of course, have been a commonwealth responsibility; 457 visas come under a commonwealth program. But when 457 visa kids with English difficulties go to schools, there is no additional money for them. The schools provide the education and provide the services, but they have no money for the kids and for their special English needs. This budget allocates \$13.9 million over two years for this. The schools in Riverton will be thrilled.

A program which was initiated last year but which is continuing this year is the Integrated Services Centre at Parkwood Primary School. That is a program particularly for refugee students living in and around the electorate who have been traumatised but who have special English and other needs. The Integrated Services Centre commenced a few years ago but was only funded on a year-to-year basis. The Liberal–National government came in and provided stable funding to run the program.

The budget provides additional funding for education. A major issue in education has been the move to a half-cohort for year 8 as students move from primary school to high school. That has led to disruption in high schools and also fewer students flowing through from year 8 to year 12. It was a major source of disruption. This budget provides \$22 million over the next four years to help adjust to the half-cohort.

Importantly, this budget recognises the difficulties of curriculum change. All of us will remember the outcomes-based education disaster of the previous government. It imposed on schools a harebrained new curriculum, which was like sending a virus into the software of schools. We have to adapt to the implementation of a national curriculum. It is not an OBE, it is much more rational, but it will impose implementation issues, and costs, on schools. This budget allocates \$5 million for the implementation of the national curriculum. This budget also continues with the \$14 million upgrade of Rossmoyne Senior High School in starting out its second phase expansion.

One of the most important facilities in the Riverton area is the St John Ambulance facility and depot. This budget allocates \$150 million over the next four years for new and expanded ambulance services, including at Riverton. It also allocates \$50 million over four years for community child health services. One of the issues in the electorate of Riverton is the rapid growth in the number of young families brought in by the schools, but, in so doing, the demand for community health services has increased.

One of the most important infrastructure issues facing Riverton is the continuation of Roe Highway. It was the most controversial issue at the last election. The continuation of Roe Highway and our promise to commit to it is the single most important reason for me being in this house. In the last budget, the government committed to extend Roe Highway—called the Roe Highway extension—and allocated \$20 million over three years for its planning, design and community consultation process. This budget continues to fund its planning. It will be a challenge. The Labor opposition is committed to preventing the road's completion. It has lobbied the commonwealth government to the point that the Rudd government has now, I understand, withdrawn funding for

it. The Labor opposition's action has withdrawn from this state over \$200 million in funding that would otherwise have come to us for essential road construction. The Liberal-National government has committed to this; and, if necessary, will find the money from other sources, particularly in the road budget. We will build the Roe extension. I must emphasise that the Leader of the Opposition and the members for Cannington and Gosnells have all sworn to resist the road. The Labor Party will be held accountable for its actions at the next election in Riverton.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** Where are all the opposition members?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I might add that I have sat here and listened to a number of speeches all day by the opposition, and only one opposition member is in the chamber.

**Mr F.A. Alban:** The comedian has gone and all the audience went with him!

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Utility increases—one of the most difficult issues in this budget was the increases in electricity and water charges. Electricity charges went up by 7.5 per cent in April and they are scheduled to go up by another 10 per cent in July this year. This is by necessity because of what we inherited from the previous Labor government, which kept electricity prices constant for eight years. That was during a period of time when the cost of fuel—whether it be gas, coal or oil—went up manyfold. As a result the various energy producers and suppliers were haemorrhaging. At one time they were subsidising Verve Energy to the tune of \$1 million a week. The previous government received a report in mid-2008 from the independent assessor, the Economic Regulation Authority, recommending a 72 per cent increase in the price of electricity. The report also stated that the electricity industry was facing huge losses. We, the Liberal-National government, committed to move towards more cost-reflective pricing. In a resource-constrained world, in a world moving to adjust to climate change, one cannot continue to hugely subsidise energy consumption. The question is: how rapidly does one move? We moved last year, and we moved this year—17 per cent this year. There will be some further movement, but the Premier has indicated quite clearly that most of it has been done.

As to water, as I indicated before we have a record capital spend on water—\$3.4 billion over four years. Included in that figure is the second desalination plant, which will cost around \$1 billion. The previous government, I think rightly, put in place and committed to a wide-ranging capital spend on water, sewerage and other facilities. We continue that, with not only completion of the second desalination plant but also \$100 million for the infill sewerage program. If the government spends the money, it increases the costs. Desalination plants and the provision of water is hugely expensive. It is manyfold more costly than capturing water from dams. The previous government committed to it, and we support it. It will lead to very high increases in costs, which will equate to cost-reflective tariffs. This budget put in place increases in water charges to the average household in the vicinity of 17 per cent. It has also increased hardship assistance for those people who are struggling to pay. We recognise that this will particularly affect families with large backyards or large lawns, gardeners, low-income earners and self-funded retirees in particular. Again, it is necessary to have cost-reflective prices as we move to a resource-scarce world.

The budget also allocates \$26.8 million to the popular WA Seniors Card for the cost-of-living rebate. This is a Liberal government initiative to help seniors meet the increased costs and also recognition of the contribution that seniors have made to society. These funds, which are indexed to the consumer price index, will be \$104.80 for singles and \$157 for couples. It will be paid directly to senior cardholders' bank accounts from July.

The people of Riverton will be pleased—they have a stable government; record capital investment; large investment in their most precious public asset, schools; large investments in the adjacent Fiona Stanley Hospital and the ambulance services; and slow and steady recognition of the need to start living in a resource-constrained world. I recommend the budget to everybody and support it fully.

**MR P.T. MILES (Wanneroo)** [9.39 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker, I may need to seek your protection from the opposition over there!

I am pleased to speak on the state budget for the 2010–11 financial year. I congratulate the Treasurer, Hon Colin Barnett, on bringing down a budget that, after eight years of irresponsible financial management by the previous Labor government, keeps the Western Australian ledger in the black and safeguards the state's AAA credit rating. The budget's focus is primarily on health, education and infrastructure. It builds on last year's budget, which laid the necessary foundation to secure our state's financial future and to improve the state's services for our families and communities.

The health system will receive the biggest ever injection of additional funding, with \$1.3 billion over the next five years. There will be increased funding to meet higher demand and costs, as well as new and expanded ambulance services across the state. Some \$890 million will be spent in 2010–11 on the building and expansion of our hospitals.

Funding for education is another major plank of this year's budget, with \$98 million to be spent over the next four years to provide 428 additional teachers, education assistants and school support staff. The independent

public schools initiative, which is a big bonus for, and has been very popular in, my electorate of Wanneroo, has received \$19 million to enable the expansion of that program over the next four years.

The government continues to respond to community concerns about law and order, with \$13 million pledged over the next four years to tackle the problem of illicit drugs, as well as funding for the additional 100 police and auxiliary police officers in 2010–11.

Creating the right environment for continued economic growth in Western Australia is vital for our future sustainability. The ongoing commitment by the government to provide infrastructure necessary for that growth is evidenced by the funding of a number of important projects, including \$339 million to fund common-user infrastructure at Oakajee port, \$111 million over five years for the Browse LNG precinct, and \$392 million over four years for the Perth City Link project. Some of those mining projects are very important for the electorate of Wanneroo, as quite a lot of the small businesses in the Wangara district and the Neerabup industrial area are picking up a number of those contracts. The take-up of jobs within that area is exceeding supply at the moment.

Other important projects to receive funding include the ongoing infill sewerage program, which will receive \$100 million over four years; the development of Perth's major rectangular stadium, which will receive \$83 million; the new state netball centre, which will receive \$26 million; and the Perth waterfront redevelopment, which will receive \$21 million for planning and design work.

I turn now to specific outcomes for the electorate of Wanneroo. Construction of the \$33.5 million stage 2 of Ashdale Secondary College will commence in the next month or two and will cater for years 11 and 12. The college will serve the secondary education needs of students who reside in the localities of Madeley, Darch and Landsdale. The second stage is anticipated to be completed by 2012.

Tapping Primary School is the largest primary school in my electorate and will have more than 1 000 students at the beginning of next year. A second site for kindergarten to year 2 is currently being constructed. That project is costing some \$10 million and will be up and running at the start of the new school year. It is a very large project. Whilst not everybody in the Tapping area likes the fact that the school will be run over two campuses, I am sure that the Department of Education will be able to run it quite well. Neerabup Primary School will receive \$5 million for improvements and additions, mainly being the construction of a library. The previous government built the school without a library, just to say that it was building a school. It was an election promise made during the 2005 campaign, for which I was also a candidate.

A planned upgrade of busy Joondalup Drive between Houghton Drive in Carramar and Tumbleweed Drive in Banksia Grove is also being assisted by the state. This road will become a four-lane dual carriageway with central median and bus embayments, instead of the current two-lane single carriageway. This project will receive \$729 000 in state funding this year, and a further \$1.5 million in the 2011–12 budget through the local roads funding program. The upgrade of Joondalup Drive will greatly improve traffic and pedestrian safety in three of the fastest growing suburbs in my electorate, being Carramar, Tapping and Banksia Grove. Joondalup Drive is also a major exit for people who want to travel north, because they get off the freeway at Joondalup and travel down Joondalup Drive, which swings right around and goes through to Neaves Road and into Bullsbrook, which is part of the member for Swan Hills' electorate.

The health needs of many people in the Wanneroo electorate are served by the Joondalup Health Campus. I am delighted to see that further funding of \$227 million has been budgeted this year to continue the expansion of that health facility. Once completed, the hospital will be almost twice the size of the existing facility. By 2013 it will have 471 beds, compared with the present 280 beds. The new emergency department, which is already the busiest in the state, will be more than twice its current size and will be fitted out with state-of-the-art operating theatres. Once this expansion is complete, the people in my electorate of Wanneroo and surrounding suburbs will be able to receive treatment locally instead of having to travel to city hospitals such as Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital.

Rural residents in Wanneroo, particularly those near the huge Gnangara pine plantation, will be pleased at the \$2.8 million in funding to FESA to enable it to continue to use a type 1 helicopter to help fight bushfires in the Perth metropolitan area. The risk of fires in rural Wanneroo, particularly during the long, dry summer months, is always very high, so it is reassuring to have on hand sophisticated firefighting equipment such as this helicopter.

The ongoing development of Gnangara Park is a longstanding item—five years—and this year starts off with funding of \$250 000. This project was actually started under the previous Court government, when Gnangara Park was identified as the Kings Park of the north. The project is continuing under this government. The funds will be used mainly for nature conservation work involving revegetation trials in an area of state forest that is being cleared of pine in the Gnangara, Pinjar and Yanchep plantations in the municipalities of Wanneroo and Swan. The proposed works are in two areas of Gnangara Park. There will be an upgrade of the Pinjar and Gnangara off-road vehicle access areas to improve car parking, safety of motorbike trails, rubbish clean-up and safety and user signage. These areas provide safe riding areas for an estimated 10 000 day rides each year. The native vegetation rehabilitation trial areas and demonstration sites on cleared pine areas will also continue.

Local charity Wheelchair for Kids will receive \$42 000 to pay rental costs for the coming year on its factory premises in Wangara, where the small army of some 400-plus volunteers from throughout the northern suburbs produce low-cost wheelchairs and accessories for disabled children in Third World countries. Wheelchairs for Kids is now manufacturing what is believed to be a world-first wheelchair that is particularly suited to children and also conforms to two standards set down by the World Health Organization. This is a very good achievement on its part, for which I congratulate it. I thank the Premier for making that annual donation possible.

The Wanneroo Showground clubrooms, which were burnt down in 2008, are now a step closer to being rebuilt, with works to begin in the next month. With the preferred tenderer now set, we are hoping that this project will be finished by the end of this year or the beginning of next year. The project has received \$670 000 in state government funding, while the local authority received \$724 000 in insurance money. That will mean that the Wanneroo Amateur Football Club, the Wanneroo Districts Cricket Club and some other smaller clubs will have a very good state-of-the-art facility. However, I am disappointed because, being in such a central location to the town centre, it really should be the jewel in the crown of the City of Wanneroo, but nothing was allocated in the budget for it apart from SEAD funding of \$10 000, which it was forced to put in. That is all I have to say.

**MR P. ABETZ (Southern River)** [9.49 pm]: I am delighted to rise to speak in support of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 Bill 2010 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 Bill 2010. Many items have been mentioned by the members for Riverton and Wanneroo, so I will not go over those again, but I would like to draw attention to several items that I was delighted to see in the budget.

The first is the funding for Piara Waters Primary School. Even though it is just outside my electorate, it will take the pressure off Bletchley Park Primary School, which is bulging at the seams. A lot of new development is happening in Southern River that will put even more pressure on Bletchley Park Primary School. This is a very timely funding allocation for a new school in Piara Waters.

I am delighted to see that \$13.7 million has been allocated for special English classes for children of parents who are in this country on 457 visas. This item was allocated for in the budget through my becoming aware of the situation at a primary school in my electorate, Caledonia Primary School in Canning Vale. This school had 13 non-English speaking children in one class whose parents are in Australia on 457 visas. Needless to say, that created a major problem for the school, and there were other classes in the school that had non-English speaking children. Inquiries revealed that if there was spare capacity in the intensive language centre, these children could access intensive English lessons. However, the point was that those centres are always full and none of these 457 visa kids could get access. I brought that to the attention of the Education and Health Standing Committee, which then agreed to hold an inquiry. The inquiry resulted in various recommendations being made, and I am delighted that the Minister for Education took that report very seriously and championed the cause of the 457 visa children, and that cabinet agreed to provide that healthy \$13.7 million allocation.

The other funding I was particularly thrilled to see was the \$49.7 million allocated as additional funding in response to the “Healthy Child — Healthy State: Improving Western Australia’s Child Health Screening Programs” report that the Education and Health Standing Committee tabled in May 2009. That funding of almost \$50 million will go a long way to eliminating the unacceptably long waiting lists for young children to access speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. If young children who have speech or other developmental difficulties have them addressed at a very young age, generally, by the time they get to school, they can be in mainstream schooling and it is not a problem. This government inherited from the previous government waiting lists of 18 months, which is just simply unacceptable. I am delighted that the budget contained that provision. These health budget items are a brilliant investment that will bring a very, very high return in the long term for the young people of our state. Not only will it save us many, many dollars in future years through having dealt with issues in the early stages of a child’s life but it will also help to enhance the quality of life of those children.

Much has been made in members’ contributions to the budget debate about the increased costs of water and electricity. As the member for Riverton indicated, it is high time that these charges were cost reflective. I could never understand why the other side of the house wanted to massively subsidise electricity and water costs for wealthy people living in a double-storey house with a swimming pool—it just did not make sense to me at all. While I appreciate that the increases will put some pressure on low-income earners, I am sure they will make every effort to reduce their consumption. If that is not enough to make their bills affordable, I am glad that the Barnett government has allocated funding in the budget for a scheme to allow such people who genuinely need it to be financially assisted to pay their bills.

I was also pleased to see funding in the budget for an additional lane on the Kwinana Freeway between Leach Highway and Roe Highway; there is always a bottleneck there, even when traffic is not all that heavy. In fact, when the railway line was being built and the freeway was being realigned, most of us in my electorate could not quite understand why a third lane was not constructed at that time. Had it been done then, it would have saved an

enormous amount of money and would have caused a lot less disruption. Nevertheless, we are delighted that it is happening at long last.

Having been involved in the sponsoring of refugees for many years, I have always taken a very keen interest in multicultural affairs. In my previous work back in the early 1980s I was involved in sponsoring Vietnamese refugees, Sri Lankan people who fled Sri Lanka after the Colombo riots in the mid-1980s, Hungarian refugees, and I have helped Korean people resettle in Perth and establish their communities. I have been involved in resettling Bosnian and Sudanese refugees, and, in more recent years particularly, South African and Zimbabwean migrants. My electorate is made up of many different nationalities and I have been told that 60 per cent of Nigerians living in Western Australia live in the suburb of Canning Vale in my electorate. Many South Africans, Zimbabweans, Indians—including a dynamic Sikh community that has its temple in my electorate—live in my electorate, as well as Chinese and Singaporeans. The list goes on. As a result, I took a keen interest in the funding for multicultural affairs in the budget, and I was delighted to see that the community grants program continues to be funded, and there has been an increase in funding for Harmony Day celebrations. The schools in my electorate have embraced Harmony Day celebrations with vigour and enthusiasm, and because of the cultural diversity in my electorate, some schools have put the flag of every nation represented in their community in their assembly hall, which teaches the children to interact positively.

When applications were requested for people to serve on the board of the Multicultural Advisory Group last year, I sent an email to two South African community leaders who I thought would be able to make a very good contribution, particularly in being able to convey to the minister the issues that pertain to the many thousands of South African and Zimbabwean migrants who live in Western Australia. Of the two people I sent the email to, Reverend Joe Vermeulen chose to apply and was appointed. The member for Perth seems to be so anti-religious that he seemed to have choked on his cornflakes that morning when he read that Reverend Vermeulen had been appointed. But choking on his Weeties was not sufficient to get the bile and venom out of his system because on 11 March he put out a very malicious and despicable press release that attacked the suitability of Reverend Vermeulen for the role. It also attacked his integrity and even mocked his religious commitment, which is hardly befitting for a person who wants to serve as a shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests. I put on record the malicious and disgraceful mocking language that the shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests used in his press release. He concluded it with these words —

A Government committed to a true multicultural WA needs to be listening to real multicultural advocates, not relying on divine intervention from the religious right-wing backbench of the Liberal Party.

To assert the Reverend Vermeulen is part of the right-wing backbench of the Liberal Party is disingenuous and, in fact, stupid, particularly because Reverend Vermeulen does not have a single political bone in his body. It is no wonder that not one media outlet bothered to run with that appalling press release, although I noticed that the ALP website stooped to posting it. Being a forgiving person, I did not raise the matter earlier. I thought that the member for Perth might have got out of the wrong side of the bed on the day he wrote that press release. Perhaps he was feeling guilty for neglecting the shadow multicultural portfolio. Of the 38 press releases that he has issued so far in 2010, only four have anything vaguely to do with multiculturalism.

**Mr M. McGowan:** You have been doing some research.

**Mr P. ABETZ:** We have. On Wednesday, 19 May, in a supposed question of the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, the member for Perth sank to even greater depths of depravity. Not satisfied with his earlier attack on Reverend Vermeulen, who is not in a position to defend himself in this chamber, the member for Perth, under the pretence of asking the minister a question, quoted in a fake mocking South African accent a couple of sentences out of context from a message that Reverend Vermeulen gave on Sunday, 4 October 2009. I wonder whether if the member for Perth was asking a question —

**Mr M. McGowan** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is the member making aspersions about my accent? This is not the first time that people have made comments about my accent in this chamber and I have ignored it in the past.

**Mr P. ABETZ:** I wonder whether if the member for Perth had been asking a question about a black Nigerian, he would have, in a mocking way, tried to imitate that particular accent. I would have thought that the Leader of the Opposition would have sacked the shadow minister for multicultural interests for that loathsome, shameful and disgraceful behaviour that we witnessed last Wednesday. Then again, I am starting to learn that the standards are somewhat lower on that side of the house. To take the quote out of context and to ask the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests whether this was Western Australia's multicultural policy was despicable and dishonest. It was a deliberate attack on a member of the community who is not here to defend himself.

The message that the member for Perth quoted from was one that Reverend Vermeulen presented at a special gathering of newly arrived South African and Zimbabwean migrants. The message was so appreciated by the

migrants that they had it translated into English and posted it on one of their denominational websites so that others could benefit from that inspiring message. I have a copy of the message here and I am more than happy to make it available to anyone who is interested in reading it. Any member who has even one ounce of honesty in their body would, on reading it, immediately realise that the action of the member for Perth in quoting something that Reverend Vermeulen spoke of about what many South Africans had experienced in South Africa as a negative thing—the member for Perth was talking about it negatively—and to claim that Reverend Vermeulen was now promoting this as Western Australia’s multicultural policy is absolutely despicable and disgraceful. I have run out of adjectives to describe that type of scurrilous behaviour. It does not befit any member of Parliament to act in that way.

With the Deputy Speaker’s indulgence, I will read two paragraphs from the end of Reverend Vermeulen’s message. Reverend Vermeulen writes —

Integration is important ... be part of where you are. I remember, and am proud of my heritage, and that I come from South Africa. I can speak two languages. I will always love melktert (milk tart) and biltong, and I shed a tear whether I hear “Laurika” sing on ‘You Tube’. But, my priority is here. I am here by choice and I hope I don’t step on anyone’s toes, but I am first an **Australian**, then a South African, because this is now my country and this is where I now live. This is the flag under which I am protected. So my priorities are now here.

I would like to invite all of you to be the best Afrikaans speaking Australians you can be. Let us be where we are, and we pray, “Father, use us in this new country. Help us to take root, because if we are settled here, then we can have influence where we live.” We can make a difference to other immigrants, but also in this country, Australia, where God has brought us to.

Reverend Vermeulen’s message was for immigrants to integrate and be part of the community but also to maintain their own background. From the member for Perth’s futile effort of misusing that quote, it is clear that he either lacks intelligence or has a malicious character. I am not sure which of the two it is. I will leave my listeners, who know him better, to decide that.

The reason that I suggested Reverend Vermeulen should consider applying to serve on the Multicultural Advisory Group is that he has served the South African migrant community in Queensland tirelessly for seven years where he contributed much to the wellbeing of new migrants and assisted them in settling in to their new life here. He came from South Africa some eight years ago. Since coming to Perth in 2009, he and his wife Cecile have continued to work tirelessly for the thousands of South Africans migrants who have made the monumental decision to make Western Australia their new home.

It gives me much pleasure to be part of a government that has produced a balanced budget. It strikes the difficult balance between seeing so many of the good things that we could spend money on and the need to be financially responsible.

**MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills)** [10.07 pm]: I rise in response to the Premier’s budget speech to speak about projects and issues that either involve or impact on the residents of my electorate. My story is mostly a good news story. There are a few regrets, but too few to mention. The 2010–11 state budget includes the expenditure of \$502 million on assets in the north eastern metropolitan region. I will repeat that because it is quite impressive: \$502 million will be expended on assets in the north eastern metropolitan region, reversing the neglect of this area under the two terms of the previous Labor government. It is interesting that this area was represented by Labor members—surprise, surprise.

The budget provides \$1.1 million to complete a new career fire and rescue services station at Ellenbrook at a total cost of \$3 million, which is a great comfort for the residents of the hills area, where fires are prevalent. Construction will commence on Aveley primary school, which is expected to be completed in 2012 at a cost of \$14 million. The school will provide relief to Ellenbrook Primary School. Stage 2 of the Ellenbrook Secondary College construction is significantly advanced, at a cost of \$25 million. Previously, senior high school students living in the catchment area had to travel to Hampton, Lockridge and Governor Stirling Senior High Schools to complete their year 11 and 12 studies. The new buildings have been designed to include innovative and state-of-the-art facilities that will be integrated into the Ellenbrook townscape as an educational institution of excellence.

Planning will continue on the new \$360 million Midland health campus, the construction of which will start in 2012. This will benefit not only my electorate, but also the electorate of Midland. The planning and assessment for Bullsbrook District High School has commenced on the \$20 million additions and improvements to the secondary component of Bullsbrook District High School. This project is expected to be completed by 2012. It is a most rewarding project in my electorate. I am helping to turn a Cinderella school into a princess. One of the projects that part of my electorate is very excited about is the \$112.6 million for a flyover at the intersection of Roe and Great Eastern Highways. This will be of great benefit to the eastern portion of my electorate—to the people in Mundaring, Stoneville, Parkerville and Wooroloo, who have had to put up with serious road safety issues and long queue times.

A new school has been announced in this year's budget and \$14 million allocated for the construction of a primary school at Malvern Springs that is expected to be completed for the year 2012, which will be a very exciting year for my electorate. This extra school in Ellenbrook is further complemented by two new private schools—the Holy Cross Catholic School and the Anglican Swan Valley School.

I take this opportunity to address a major concern in my electorate. In the Swan Hills electorate, particularly in Ellenbrook, a great proportion of residents' sole income is mining related through fly in, fly out work. Many of these sole-income providers for their families have mortgages, and any changes to their employment will have a huge flow-on effect for the community in which they live. Any negative impact on the state's mining industry will mean a loss of jobs, not only in the mining sector services but also in the sectors of the economy that supply and service it. To me, there is an element of the green-eyed monster in this tax. The federal government is attempting to play Robin Hood in taking from well-off and successful rich Western Australia and giving it to the poor eastern states. The moral of the story is that at least Robin Hood had the sense to take from the rich after they had accumulated wealth, not like the super tax, which has been flagged even before the projects are in existence and operating. Who would be that stupid? The proposed tax seeks to remove one of the fundamental underpinnings of our Federation; namely, that the states have sovereignty over their own mineral wealth. Mining is so critical to this state's welfare that any change will greatly affect the health of Western Australia's economy. This will affect all other associated industries. There is a well-known saying: don't bite the hand that feeds you. A resources boom creates jobs in mining, construction and ancillary industries, and higher levels of investment in wages further stimulates consumption and jobs. Generally, all parts of the economy benefit.

We have been selling our country bucket by bucket for some time, and now it looks like we are selling the bucket as well. I believe some mining projects have been already been cut as a result of the proposed introduction of the super tax. It has the potential to affect the growth of Western Australia's economy and jobs. This new tax defies logic. Australia will be one of the highest taxed mining countries in the world. I ask: if something goes wrong with mining, how do we pay our way as a country? Do we go back and resuscitate the manufacturing sector that we killed off or do we go back to agriculture, which has gone from producing 18 per cent of gross domestic product to two per cent? What other options do we have? China and India, our two greatest markets, have the ability to find other customers and cheaper options, such as Africa and South America, for their iron ore. Western Australia has only 18 per cent of the world supply of iron ore. All Western Australians should be incensed at this tax that one way or another will impact on each one of us. Members opposite—there are not many members opposite here now; I think they only stay for the jokes of the member for Mandurah—have shown little backbone as Western Australians standing up for their country. This tax, together with 68 cents in the dollar —

**Mr P. Papalia:** Are we in a different country now?

**Mr F.A. ALBAN:** The member for Warnbro may as well speak up; he is the only one there! He is not so chirpy without his army behind him.

This tax, together with the reduced share of 68 cents in the dollar of GST, shows the lack of respect the federal government holds for Western Australia.

What of the future? I have a favourite wish. My number one project on my wish list is the Swan Valley bypass of the Perth–Darwin Highway. Our access to the projects of wealth in the north is limited to only a single lane each way highway.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, you have spoken about the railway a few times. I think the member for Swan Hills has listened to you or heard you.

**Mr F.A. ALBAN:** The member for Warnbro's offside, the member for West Swan, is not here tonight, but he may want to tell her that there are at least a dozen projects in my electorate. I would like to hear of at least one that she has been able to make happen. It will probably take her mind off the train.

**Mr P. Papalia:** I was just interested that it is your number one priority.

**Mr F.A. ALBAN:** It is a bit of a stuck record. I do not suggest that the member should try being clever; it does not suit him.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Swan Hills, would you please carry on and not engage the member for Warnbro.

**Mr F.A. ALBAN:** The capacity of the Great Northern Highway is already overextended with some 2 600 truck movements daily, many of which are road trains intermingled with both tourist and local traffic, creating a safety nightmare. This dangerous recipe will be alleviated with the construction of the first stage of the Swan Valley bypass from Reid Highway direct to the Brand Highway. This will open up huge tracts of land to the north of my electorate with the potential of a tremendous number of jobs from commercial and residential developments.

**MS A.R. MITCHELL (Kingsley)** [10.16 pm]: I rise to support the 2010–11 budget as presented. I would particularly like to comment on a number of items within the budget, some as they relate to my electorate and others in the broader initiatives. First, if I could focus on education, I believe it is very important for the future of our society. Within my electorate I am very pleased that infrastructure construction has been highlighted at a number of my schools. Most of these projects are ongoing. If I may mention Greenwood Primary School initially, construction will continue through the first half of the next financial year, the second half of the calendar year, and it is hoped that the school will be completed at the end of this year with a view that the transfer will occur hopefully before the end of the school year, but definitely by the start of next year. I was touring the school with the project managers just a couple of weeks ago, and it is an incredible set-up. It is wonderful for the future of the children of Greenwood and it will certainly make a difference. They have put up with quite a bit of disruption over the past couple of years as one school has closed down and they have been transferred to another. When this is finalised, and it will be completed by the end of this year, it will make a huge difference and set the standard for education in the Greenwood area.

Woodvale Senior High school has a couple of projects. One of them is an election commitment that is coming through. The one that I am most interested in and which I believe is very important is the construction of the new trade centre. Tenders will be going out within the next couple of weeks. This is exciting because it is a great partnership with the West Coast Institute of Training. Having that relationship with such a fantastic training provider in a very positive, progressive school is a fantastic initiative. One of the other projects, which is probably a little embarrassing, is at the school of 1 600 students on a confined block. One of the important projects, for which tenders will also go out very soon, is that of a toilet block, because the female number of toilets at the high school is definitely below the number that is required. We certainly look forward to getting those underway before the end of the year as well.

Another aspect of this budget that I believe is very important and that does not always get recognition is the benefits to children. They do not always get a voice, and I would like to speak on behalf of the children at this stage. I have a number of young children in my electorate, particularly in the suburb of Greenwood. There is no doubt that there is a great need for more services for community child health. I am very pleased that we got \$49.7 million over four years to improve the access to community health services—in particular I am talking about speech therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Unfortunately, children cannot speak up for these types of services. I therefore think it is important that we recognise them as important areas in the budget and that this will be great for the future of these children, who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

I also wish to make special acknowledgement of the Constable Care Foundation. As many members know, I am on the board of Constable Care. In this budget there has been a significant increase in the annual contribution from the state government. This is the only organisation of its type in Western Australia that prepares children to counter unacceptable community behaviours. I do not know how else to put it. The programs this organisation offers are outstanding; they are effective and they cover Western Australia. For this organisation to now not have to rely as much on seeking sponsorship to raise money means that it can focus more on its core business.

I would also like to say in this speech tonight how exciting it is that yesterday in the Northern Territory the Northern Territory Police Commissioner has adopted programs from the Western Australian Constable Care Foundation for the Northern Territory. As a former Western Australian he knows the value of such programs and could see that they would benefit the Northern Territory. This is tremendous recognition of the work of this organisation, which is a Western Australian foundation and program.

I have to also mention graffiti. I think I mention it a couple of times every year. I will not say too much tonight because I will bring it up at a later date. It is unfortunate that the government still has to invest money into fighting graffiti. But while it is necessary, we must do that. As I said, I will talk more about that at a later date.

There has been a lot of talk about the Joondalup Health Campus. I must admit that I hope I do not have to use it; I do not want to need to go to a hospital. But I am very pleased that the construction work has commenced and that it will be completed by 2013–14. The care and service that this health campus provides and these additional beds in the mental health and acute hospital beds as well as the emergency service are fantastic. This is a growth area and a very broad area. The services from this hospital in that northern area are very extensive. It is great that this additional work is being done within it. That private–public partnership provides a service for many people within that northern area.

I am also very pleased that many of the constituents in my area are looking forward to the detail about the electricity feed-in tariffs. Many of my constituents are very conscious of their energy usage and have taken the opportunity to install the photovoltaic cells on the roofs of their homes. I must mention one group in particular: more than 100 of the 140 residents of one of the retirement villages in my area have agreed to install these cells on their rooftops. This is exciting because these people can see that they can make a difference to the community. I understand they spend their time watching the metre slow down and they get excited about that. They are looking forward to finding out the detail of the feed-in tariff, so that they can make a more positive

contribution to our energy supplies. I must say I believe this budget is very practical. With a view to looking forward I support its broad initiatives. I have mentioned a couple of things within it. I believe it is setting up Western Australia well for the future and I support this bill.

**MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton)** [10.23 pm]: I wish to speak briefly on the 2010–11 budget. In summary, it is a budget I am proud of. A budget, of course, seeks a balance between the needs of people versus the long-term needs of the state. One of the highlights of this budget are that, as promised, it will produce a surplus, which will help maintain our AAA credit rating. Thankfully, state growth will grow to 3.75 per cent, up from 0.7 per cent this year. Western Australia went through the global financial crisis reasonably comfortably. I hope the current problems in the Euro zone do not produce long-term problems.

A feature of this budget is a group of commitments that have been made to the regions. In the Kimberley, the commitments are Ord stage 2, the Kununurra justice complex, and the Broome boating facility. In the Pilbara, the commitment is the \$310 million to be spent on the Pilbara Cities project. In the Gascoyne, the commitments are the Gascoyne revitalisation, the Carnarvon police and justice complex, Carnarvon hospital, and the Exmouth clinic. There is also an amount of \$44 million over four years for justice services and infrastructure in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne. These are similar to the programs that are already being run in Geraldton and seem to be working quite well.

The regional hospitals that will be funded in this budget are the Nickol Bay, Karratha, Kalgoorlie, Albany, Carnarvon and Esperance hospitals. Those hospitals will receive substantial amounts of money. There is funding of \$26 million over four years for the St John Ambulance Service. There is funding of \$120 million over three years for rural communications, including \$80 million for police and regional communications. There is funding of \$100 million for regional school updates, \$52 million for residential colleges, and \$11 million for the air conditioning of all orange school buses. There is an expansion of the country age pension fuel card, with four new categories for people on disability support, wife pension, widow B payment, and carer payment. There is an additional \$111 million to increase district allowances to retain public servants in the Pilbara and the Kimberley. There is funding of \$5 million for expansion of the Clontarf academies.

In the field of training, there will be 7 600 new training places, and funding for employers to take up apprentices who are out of contract. Finally, for Western Australia there will be a feed-in tariff for domestic power. As a member of the Education and Health Committee, I am delighted that our recommendation for an expansion of funding for speech pathology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy has been adopted by the government. The government has also adopted the committee's recommendation that children of 457 visa holders should not have to pay extra money to attend schools, as they have to in places such as New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Finally, the government has adopted the recommendation that there be an exemption from land tax for caravan parks.

In my seat of Geraldton, I am delighted that the 330-kilovolt powerline has been listed in the budget. I would like to briefly quote a media release from Gindalbie Metals Ltd. It states —

Gindalbie Metals Limited ... has welcomed the Western Australian Government's commitment to fund a major upgrade to high-voltage power transmission infrastructure in the Mid West region. The upgrade will enhance the distribution network in the entire Mid West region as well as playing a key part in the future power requirements of any potential expansions of the Karara Iron Ore Project.

It goes on to quote Mr Garret Dixon, the managing director of Gindalbie —

"This commitment in the recent State Budget demonstrates the Government's positive attitude towards the development of the region and ensures that the power transmission infrastructure in the region will match the capacity of our own transmission infrastructure," ...

"This removes any question marks over our ability to access adequate power supplies for the Project well into the future."

The media release goes on to say —

Mr Dixon also welcomed the funding allocated in the state budget for the development of Oakajee Port, which he said reflected its strong overwhelming commitment to investing in infrastructure development to support the resource industry.

"At a time of economic uncertainty, we believe that this is a responsible and sensible use of Government funds, representing a proactive investment in infrastructure that will support projects with the potential to make a long-term contribution to Western Australia," he said.

For those members who do not know very much about Karara, I will give a brief summary of the project. Karara is a multibillion dollar capital investment. It will deliver 1 500 construction jobs and 600 jobs when it is in production. Initially it will produce 11 million tonnes of iron ore products commencing in 2011, comprising eight million tonnes of high-grade magnetite and up to three million tonnes of direct shipping ore. Karara has the

potential to produce more than 30 million tonnes per annum over a mine life estimated at more than 30 years. Karara will initially generate around \$1 billion in annual export revenue, rising to \$3 billion annually as the project grows, equating to \$40 million in government revenue, rising to \$120 million annually. Iron products will be initially exported through Geraldton port, with Karara also able to commit foundation tonnages to underpin the development of the new multibillion dollar Oakajee port. The business case for the 330-kilovolt powerline is being finalised and has yet to go to the Economic Regulation Authority. Unfortunately, the federal government has declined to support stage 2, but I have a commitment from the government that stage 2 will be built when needed.

Now I will move to the question of the Oakajee port. I would like to quote the executive chairman of Murchison Metals Ltd, Paul Kopejtka, who made the following statement in welcoming the announcement of funding for Oakajee —

“The unswerving government support for Oakajee underlines the importance attached to this project by his Government —

That means the Premier Mr Barnett’s government —

and the enormous benefits that will flow to all stakeholders from unlocking the region’s vast mineral riches,” ...

“We look forward to continuing to work closely with the WA Government to deliver this important project.”

I am quite convinced that it is the government’s commitment to build the port infrastructure for Oakajee that has kept the mining and port projects on track through the global financial crisis. I am also convinced that Oakajee will prove to be a profitable investment for the government. The super tax proposed by the Rudd government is the big cloud on this horizon. I am quite confident that the three foundation customers for Oakajee, being Gindalbie, Sinosteel Midwest Corporation Ltd and Crosslands Resources Ltd, are committed to start and will fill the foundation tonnage of 45 million tonnes per annum. However, of the 14 potential customers identified for Oakajee, some will not see the light of day due to Rudd’s tax.

There are other exciting developments for Geraldton. Finally, the Meekatharra School of the Air is to get purpose-built facilities at Bluff Point, next to the camp school. I personally thank the education minister for her commitment to fix this problem. Finally, we are going to get action on the suburb of Beachlands to develop this neglected area, which has been waiting since 1993. We are also finalising the upgrading of Geraldton’s water supply.

The two issues that seem to have generated the most heat in this budget, of course, are power and water. We have to accept that we have a drying climate. We have to encourage conservation, and the cost of water has to reflect the cost of supply. I am encouraged by the fact that the government is going to bring in a system under which a person’s first allocation of water is charged at a lower rate than the rest of it. I am also very happy to see the infill sewerage program being started again.

On the question of power, I do not consider that it was sustainable for the state to be moving towards a situation in which we were going to be subsidising energy to the tune of \$1 000 million a year. That is money that is needed for other government services.

The only other issue I will mention is that I was interested in and encouraged by the proposal that was brought forward by the Premier the other day suggesting that we should consider developing a government precinct around Parliament House. I think that is a visionary idea, and I am quite encouraged by it. I think it would be a good thing for Perth.

Finally, this is a government of which I am proud. It is a government for all Western Australians. I note that a lot of the funds are committed to electorates that the government does not hold, as they should be. There were no whiteboards used here. It is a good budget for Western Australia, it is good for the Mid West, and it has a serious commitment to the development of Western Australia’s next mining province, with up to \$10 billion of investment ready to go—Rudd and his super tax willing. Geraldton is at the centre of this, with an attitude of “grab the opportunities”. Sensible innovations such as the regional planning committee introduced by our government will help make this happen. This is a budget that makes me look forward to the future with optimism and confidence.

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough)** [10.33 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to rise tonight in support of the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 Bill 2010 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 Bill 2010. This is the second budget since I have been a member of Parliament. There are a number of really positive things in this budget for my constituents in the electorate of Scarborough. Probably the most exciting funding announcement to come out of this budget for my electorate was \$5.5 million worth of state funding put towards the Stirling city centre project. This project has been on the books for a long

time. The planning for the project really started to gather some impetus in about October 2008. The project has a number of partners, including the state government, the City of Stirling and some of the private landowners in the Innaloo precinct. They have come up with a public-private-community partnership, PPCP, as they are calling it, and have done some amazing design work. It is pretty extraordinary when we can find a project that will deliver considerably increased density, a whole heap of new residents, up to 25 000 new jobs to add to the existing 12 000 jobs that we have in the Osborne Park industrial area already and to have the community engaged in this process and excited about the project. That excitement comes from the inspirational ideas that the Stirling Alliance has and the way that it has harvested those ideas by involving the community.

The Stirling City Centre project has some fantastic environmental elements to it. I attended a community workshop for the project at which a visitor from Germany, a man named Herbert Dreiseitl, spoke. He is involved in urban renewal projects right around the world in places such as China and Chicago. His specialty is water harvesting, water storage, water recycling and ground water replenishment systems, all things that lots of governments have talked about ad nauseam. Well, we got the expert over here to provide advice on the Stirling City Centre project. Now we are starting to review that project from an environmental point of view, starting with remediation of the Hertha Road tip, looking at ways to harvest water and looking at ways to design a green corridor to create urban streams and to create significant amenities that will have people wanting to live in this transit-oriented development. It is a very, very exciting project. There are economic considerations; lots of ongoing employment that will come in both the construction stage and in the continuation of the project as the retail and commercial precincts expand. We are looking at some low-cost housing initiatives, some green housing initiatives and lots of zero carbon buildings.

The bonus for the locals and people already living in the area is that part of this plan will involve fixing a significant local traffic bottleneck in Scarborough Beach Road, Odin Road, Cedric Street and the Mitchell Freeway. Anyone who travels along the Mitchell Freeway from the northern end into the city and back every day knows what it is like to get caught in that traffic snarl. Indeed, anybody in the whole of Perth who flocks down to Ikea, that lovely great big blue boxed shopping centre in my electorate, will know exactly what it is like to be caught in a traffic jam in Perth on a Saturday. It is a unique experience, and one that we do not particularly look forward to. I am not particularly proud of having that experience smack bang in the middle of my electorate driving my constituents crazy. One of the advantages of this Stirling City Centre project is that it will provide a solution to those traffic issues.

This project also talks about the dream: the light rail system. There is talk of light rail, perhaps in partnership with the federal government, which is quite excited about the prospect of having the first light rail project in Perth, starting in my electorate. I can see the potential for having light rail connecting the Stirling train station to Scarborough Beach, perhaps connecting Trigg Beach and Karrinyup and Innaloo shopping centres. That is the dream. That is what my constituents are fired up about.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** And up to Whitfords.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Indeed, there is probably an argument for light rail right along that coastal stretch as a tourism opportunity linking our beaches and our café strips. As I said, that does seem like a faraway dream but when we see the energy and the excitement in the room when the Stirling Alliance meets with members of the community who are part of this project, we start to believe that it might be possible. I think that is why people are so excited about it. They are talking about how they can make this happen, not that it will never happen.

The Public Transport Authority, Main Roads Western Australia and the Office of Energy are looking at alternative energy sources for this centre. They are looking at geothermal power and a range of unique ideas that have not been trialled all that successfully in Western Australia. I dare say that there has not been such a strong commitment by a group of people as members will see driving the Stirling City Centre project. I cannot speak highly enough of it. I thank the Minister for Planning for including \$5.5 million to complete the planning and staging of this project over time. It is certainly a big bonus for the people of my electorate and, indeed, the surrounding electorates of Balcatta and Carine.

At the edge of my electorate, the expansion of the Osborne Park health campus is taking place, with increased capacity for elective surgery as well as a mental health component. I cannot express how urgent it is to get mental health beds up and running. If this mining tax goes ahead and we start to see the impact of that mining tax on the community, we may start to see a need for the expansion of those very services. It has certainly got a lot of people in my electorate very worried. In fact I had a conversation the other week with one of my constituents, who owns a mining surveying firm. He employs 59 staff. Twenty-three are from the eastern states; he says they will be the first to go. He has just put a significant capital investment into surveying equipment. I do not know whether anyone in this house is familiar with that, but my dad is a surveyor and I can tell members that it is very, very expensive equipment. It is a significant capital outlay and a very high risk. It did not seem like a high risk about three or four months ago when the equipment was ordered and a deposit was paid, but it does appear to be a very high-risk investment for this mining surveyor at the moment. He has just had two years' work cancelled.

He was to undertake mining surveying work on some new projects. That work has gone. He has been told it is unlikely to be reinstated at this stage unless there is a significant change of heart from Canberra. He will be speaking to his 23 employees from the eastern states. He said they are not necessarily the least talented of his employees, but he wants to send a message to Canberra by sending 23 people back to unemployment lines in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. I have known this constituent for quite some years now and I have never heard him speak so negatively in all that time. I have grave concerns about the tax on our mining industry.

I have recently travelled around the state, through various committees and other opportunities that have been presented to me since I became a member of Parliament, and I have seen parks in lots of country towns that are there only because of the mining industry, which has paid for the beautification of town centres, parks and sporting facilities. I find it quite offensive that people from Canberra say that the mining industry gives nothing back to Western Australia. They are wrong, wrong, wrong.

On a more positive note, I was really excited to see the state government put a significant investment into the Matthews Netball Centre. My daughter plays netball there every Saturday morning. They have kindly given us an 8.15 am time slot! I can guarantee that it will rain consistently on Saturday mornings at 8.15. I have found at netball it is either freezing cold, pouring with rain, windy—or all three. I am pretty excited about the fact that this state netball centre will have some indoor netball courts. I am glad that will be built before my daughter tires of netball. I do not know whether members are aware, but about three years ago petitions started circling in relation to the Matthews Netball Centre. Thousands of names were collected on those petitions. The plan at that stage, much to the anxiety and distress of the many thousands of young girls and women who go to those netball courts, was to take some of those courts away and build a multistorey car park to provide for parking for the football stadium in Subiaco. I am here to tell members that went down like a lead balloon. Something that can be guaranteed at netball is that for every team of girls playing, there is a collection of parents who hang around the edges and have a really good yarn. It is quite a social activity every weekend; it builds community and it is more than just a sporting activity. It is actually about young girls developing their self-esteem and learning how to be part of a team. I cannot commend this government enough for putting a \$26 million investment into women's sport. Congratulations; it took a Liberal–National government to do it, and I am so proud to be part of the government that did this. Every time I drive past that netball centre, when it is constructed, I can say, “We did that”. I can say that to my daughter and her friends on the team, and the word will spread.

This is a government that listens to people and takes notice of the suggestions from parliamentary committees about how we can improve things. The \$49.7 million investment over four years to reduce the wait times for child development services is very welcome. As a mother of young children, I needed several years ago to access support services for my son; he needed occupational therapy because he was having difficulty learning how to write. He went onto the wait list for state-funded occupational therapy and we waited eight months to get the first call up. Thankfully, we are in a socioeconomic group that means we can afford to access private services, so during that eight months we actually sorted out most of the my son's issues. We went to a private service in Joondalup and the premises were fantastic. It was quite simple, but it was full of primary colours and had lots of fun games and toys that build strength and motor skills. It was a really fun place and my son loved going there. It was a place where children got to learn and enjoy their therapy. When I got the call after eight months to go to the state centre, I expected a similar standard, and I was absolutely horrified when I got to the premises in Rheola Street. The building and the facilities were an absolute insult to the wonderful staff who work there. I took my five-year-old son into a beige building with a broken second-hand desk and two sets of puzzles that were incomplete. Those were the facilities; this was meant to be a stimulating environment for my son to access occupational therapy.

The tragedy is that the very people who need to access state services are the people who cannot afford to access private facilities. I went once and I was not going to go again, but I was lucky that I could afford to do that because I had private health cover that covered a lot of our expenses. I looked at those facilities and thought, “How would I be if I could not afford to access private services?” My son had learning difficulties at school, and to add to all of those issues, I went to this third-rate, disgusting, horrible old afterthought in Rheola Street. That was the previous government's attitude towards children who had special needs. These kids, in the first three years of primary school, need to get those skills and build up muscle strength. They have to have physical ability, mental ability and speech therapy to succeed at school. They cannot learn how to read and write if they cannot hold a pen; that is very basic. I am thrilled that the government has responded to the Education and Health Standing Committee report, “Invest Now or Pay Later: Securing the Future of Western Australia's Children”. It is commendable that the government has taken that step and responded to the report.

I am nearly finished. I can see that members are anxious!

Similarly, as a member of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee, I am very pleased to see the government pick up on one of our recommendations to allow a land tax rebate for caravan parks. That will go a long way towards ensuring low-cost, affordable holiday options for Western Australians for years to come—and in the very best parts of the state.

I guess from a personal perspective I need to once again spruik how pleased I am to see my local primary school, Deanmore Primary School, listed in the budget papers fully funded. It was rumoured that it was funded by the previous government, but it did not appear anywhere in a budget paper.

**Mr P. Papalia:** That's not true.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** It was a promise that we were happy to deliver on. The people of my electorate who campaigned for —

**Mr P. Papalia:** It was a lump sum that was allocated during the year.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I am interested to hear the member for Warnbro say that, because it was not in the budget that his government drew up.

**Mr P. Papalia:** It was. The minister has an allocation, just like your minister has an allocation.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** No. It was not there under new schools. It was not in the statement on the decisions affecting the budget out of the election.

**Mr P. Papalia:** It happens every year. Ask the Premier.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** It was not there.

**Mr P. Papalia:** The Minister for Education has an allocation.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The previous government promised it and told those people that it was funded when it was not.

**Mr P. Papalia:** The same thing will occur under your minister.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** We are delivering it, member for Warnbro, so it is a moot point.

**Mr P. Papalia:** They have a lump sum of money that they allocate during the year without it being assigned to a line item.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** It is a moot point, member for Warnbro. We are delivering it. My community fought for the school for seven long years—seven long years of asbestos, mould spores, demountables, respiratory problems, arguments with the minister and the minister walking away from community meetings. That is what my community, successive parents and citizens association presidents and successive principals put up with. I do not know how we managed to maintain a stable workforce there. They put up with that for seven years. They fought for it. They shamed the member for Warnbro's government at the election into promising a new school. We promised it, too; we are delivering it.

On that note, it is a great budget. My electorate loves it. I cannot wait to see the fruits of the labour of our Treasurer and Premier, and I give appreciation to the work of the preceding Treasurer in office as well, Mr Buswell.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson (Leader of the House)**.

*House adjourned at 10.52 pm*

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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

**GOTHAM STUDIOS — ARTIST SPACES**

2565. Mr J.N. Hyde to the Minister for Planning

In relation to Gotham Studios' artist spaces in William Street, under the control of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, I ask:

- (a) what area of studio space, and under what financial terms, has Gotham Studios been operating during the following financial years:
  - (i) 2006–2007;
  - (ii) 2007–2008;
  - (iii) 2008–2009; and
  - (iv) 2009–2010;
- (b) what is the current area of space and financial arrangements being offered to Gotham Studios for future years; and
- (c) as Gotham Studios forms a major part of the Cultural Centre, which is a place of culture rather than a commercial centre, why is the Minister permitting the growth of commercial space at the expense of cultural space in the buildings previously occupied by Gotham Studios?

Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:

- (a) (i-iii) 552m2 at \$20 280 per annum (excluding GST).  
(iv) July to October 2009, 552m2 at the equivalent of \$20 280 per annum (excluding GST)  
October 2009 to June 2010, 307m2 Gotham is occupying the studios at the East Perth Power Station at a peppercorn rental of \$1 per annum plus utilities.
- (c) Under the terms of a proposed new lease for part Lot 20 William Street, Gotham will occupy 358m2 (subject to survey) being majority of the first level and all of the second level. The lease term will be for five years at \$26,850 for Year 1, \$28 640 for Year 2 and \$35 800 for Year 3 with CPI increases thereafter.
- (c) The vision for William Street is to build on and enhance the area's unique identity, heritage and reputation for emerging fashion, entertainment, food and culture. The ground floor of the tenancy is a key site to activating the Perth Cultural Centre, connecting William Street with the space and strategically leasing it to a tenant that meets this objective will realise this vision.  
To maintain affordability for creative tenancies in William Street, a level of commercial investment is required.

**WORKERS IN REGIONAL AREAS — HOUSING COSTS**

2714. Mr M. McGowan to the Minister for Regional Development

I refer to the National Party promise to phase out housing costs for essential workers in regional Western Australia after three or more years continual service in a regional area, and ask:

- (a) when will the Government be implementing this commitment;
- (b) if the Government will not be implementing this, why not;
- (c) will the Government commit to the phase-out of rents for essential workers to be over three years or will it take longer;
- (d) which regions will the phase-out apply to;
- (e) what compensation will the Government provide to essential workers who own their own homes in regional communities?

Mr B.J. GRYLLES replied:

- (a)-(e) The Liberal National Government's decision to increase the District Allowance payable to employees in the north of the State will provide immediate benefit to all Government workers, particularly those who have chosen to purchase their own home and therefore would not have been eligible for any rental assistance.

Implementation of the National Party's "Housing our Workforce" plan will be considered following an assessment of the impact and benefits of the Government's decision to increase the District Allowance.

LANDCORP — REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AFFORDABLE LIVING (REAL) CHALLENGE

2734. Mr E.S. Ripper to the Minister for Lands

I refer to the winners of the LandCorp REAL Challenge announced in October last year, and I ask:

- (a) have the winning designs been built on the blocks allocated in Baynton West (Karratha), Collie and Lakeside Park (Kununurra);
  - (i) if yes, when was construction completed on each home; and
  - (ii) if no, when is construction expected to be completed on each home;
- (b) did each home have to meet a specific cost limit in order to be eligible to be entered into the REAL Challenge; and
  - (i) if yes, what was that limit; and
- (c) what is the total construction cost of each of the homes individually?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS replied:

- (a) No, builders are in the process of seeking building licence approvals from relevant councils or preparing for construction.
  - (i) Not applicable.
  - (ii)
 

Kununurra	completion August 2010.
Karratha	completion August 2010.
Collie	completion October 2010.
- (b) Each home is required to be able to be sold as close to a specified sale price excluding land market value within the affordability range for each town.
  - (i)
 

Kununurra:	\$250,000.
Karratha:	\$300,000.
Collie:	\$190,000.
- (c) Unknown as that is commercial in confidence information to the builder. LandCorp has simply stipulated the house sale price needs to be within the specified range previously reported.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES —  
PAPER FILE RETRIEVAL FROM PRIVATE SECTOR

2739. Mr J.N. Hyde to the Minister for Regional Development; Lands; Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development; Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport

In regards to the retrieval of paper files annually from private sector records management service providers, how much money was expended by each agency in:

- (a) 2008–2009; and
- (b) 2009–2010?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS replied:

Gascoyne Development Commission

(a)-(b) Nil

Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission

(a)-(b) Nil

Great Southern Development Commission

(a)-(b) Nil

Kimberley Development Commission

(a)-(b) Nil

Landcorp

- (a) \$9204.36
- (b) \$9009.51 (9 months to end of March 2010)

Landgate

(a)-(b) Nil

Mid West Development Commission

(a)-(b) Nil

Peel Development Commission

(a)-(b) Nil

Pilbara Development Commission

(a)-(b) Nil

Wheatbelt Development Commission

(a)-(b) Nil

South West Development Commission

(a) \$422.

(b) \$4 392.

Department for Regional Development and Lands

(a) Nil

(b) \$4,294.51 (to 31 March 2010)

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES —  
PAPER FILE RETRIEVAL FROM PRIVATE SECTOR

2746. Mr J.N. Hyde to the Minister representing the Minister for Energy; Training and Workforce Development

In regards to the retrieval of paper files annually from private sector records management service providers, how much money was expended by each agency in:

(a) 2008–2009; and

(b) 2009–2010?

Mr W.R. MARMION replied:

Office of Energy

(a) \$1716.62

(b) \$479.55 (as at April 2010)

Department of Training and Workforce Development

(a) The Department of Training and Workforce Development was created on 30 October 2009. No costs were associated with the retrieval of paper files from private sector records management service providers during 2008-09.

All costs were incurred by the former Department of Education and Training.

(b) No money has been expended by the Department of Training and Workforce Development since its establishment on 30 October 2009 relating to the retrieval of paper files from private sector records management service providers. Prior to this, all costs were incurred by the former Department of Education and Training.

Department of Education Services

(a) Costs of retrieval of paper files are combined with record storage costs and recorded for the Department in the Oracle accounting system under one accounting code -"Storage Charges". The combined file retrieval services and storage costs in 2008/09 is \$5523.41

(b) See part (a). The 2009/10 (to April 2010) cost is \$4069.07.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES —  
PAPER FILE RETRIEVAL FROM PRIVATE SECTOR

2749. Mr J.N. Hyde to the Minister for Water; Mental Health

In regards to the retrieval of paper files annually from private sector records management service providers, how much money was expended by each agency in:

- (a) 2008–2009; and
- (b) 2009–2010?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

Department of Water advises:

- (a) \$3 015.85 (1 July 2008 to 30 Jun 2009)
- (b) \$4 424 (1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010)

Water Corporation advises:

- (a) \$5 871 (1 July 2008 to 30 Jun 2009)
- (b) \$2 561 (1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010)

Aqwest advises:

- (a) Nil (1 July 2008 to 30 Jun 2009)
- (b) Nil (1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010)

Busselton Water Board advises:

- (a) Nil (1 July 2008 to 30 Jun 2009)
- (b) Nil (1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010)

The Drug and Alcohol Office advises:

- (a) \$2 717 (1 July 2008 to 30 Jun 2009)
- (b) \$2 768 (1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010)

Mental Health Commission advises:

- (a) Nil (1 July 2008 to 30 Jun 2009)
- (b) Nil (1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010)

Note: The Mental Health Commission was established on 8 March 2010. For the periods 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 and 1 July 2009 to 7 March 2010 the Mental Health Division (now known as the Mental Health Commission) formed part of the Department of Health which was in the Minister for Health's portfolio. For the periods 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 and 1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010 the mental health services in the Area Health Services formed part of the Department of Health and of hospitals boards which are in the Minister for Health's portfolio. As a consequence, information concerning the Mental Health Division, the Mental Health Commission and mental health services (provided by Area Health Services) is included in the answer provided in respect of the Department of Health as a whole by the Minister for Health.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES —  
PRIVATISED RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES

2764. Mr J.N. Hyde to the Minister representing the Minister for Energy; Training and Workforce Development

What is the annual cost to the Western Australian Government of privatised records management services encompassing:

- (a) file retrieval services for Western Australian Government agencies where records are held by private sector services providers; and
- (b) storage costs to Western Australian Government agencies of records held by private sector services providers?

Mr W.R. MARMION replied:

Office of Energy

- (a) 2008-2009 \$1,716.62  
2009-2010 \$479.55 (to April 2010)
- (b) 2008-2009 \$5,740.05  
2009-2010 \$4,643.42 (to April 2010)

Department of Training and Workforce Development

- (a) The Department of Training and Workforce Development was created on 30 October 2009. No costs were associated with the retrieval of files from private sector services providers during 2008-2009. All costs were incurred by the former Department of Education and Training.

- (b) No money has been expended by the Department of Training and Workforce Development since its establishment on 30 October 2009 relating to storage costs for records held by private sector services providers.

Department of Education Services

- (a)-(b) File retrieval services and storage costs are recorded for the Department in the Oracle accounting system under one accounting code -"Storage Charges". The combined file retrieval services and storage costs are as follows:

2008/09 — \$ 5523.41

2009/10 (to April 2010) — \$ 4069.07

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES —  
PRIVATISED RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES

2767. Mr J.N. Hyde to the Minister for Water; Mental Health

What is the annual cost to the Western Australian Government of privatised records management services encompassing:

- (a) file retrieval services for Western Australian Government agencies where records are held by private sector services providers; and
- (b) storage costs to Western Australian Government agencies of records held by private sector services providers?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

For the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009:

Department of Water advises:

(a) \$3 015.85

(b) \$10 072.38

Water Corporation advises:

(a) \$5 871

(b) \$75 683

Aqwest advises:

(a)-(b) Nil

Busselton Water Board advises:

(a)-(b) Nil

The Drug and Alcohol Office advises:

(a) \$2 717

(b) \$2 717

Note: Analysis and estimations have been made to determine the split between these two categories

Mental Health Commission advises:

(a)-(b) Nil

Note: The Mental Health Commission was established on 8 March 2010. For the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 the Mental Health Division (now known as the Mental Health Commission) formed part of the Department of Health which was in the Minister for Health's portfolio. For the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 the mental health services in the Area Health Services formed part of the Department of Health and of hospitals boards which are in the Minister for Health's portfolio. As a consequence, information concerning the Mental Health Division, the Mental Health Commission and mental health services (provided by Area Health Services) is included in the answer provided in respect of the Department of Health as a whole by the Minister for Health.

PORT HEDLAND AND SOUTH HEDLAND — POPULATION FORECAST

2771. Mr E.S. Ripper to the Minister for Regional Development

What are the Government's population forecasts for Port Hedland and South Hedland:

- (a) for each of the next four financial years;
- (b) 2015; and
- (c) 2020?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS replied:

There are no forecasts available for the urban locality of South Hedland. The urban localities of Port Hedland and South Hedland are encompassed in the figures released for the Town of Port Hedland local government area (LGA).

The Government uses estimated resident population projections forecast by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC), released approximately every five years. The last figures released by the WAPC were in 2005 with the next set due for release at the end of 2010.

However, in regard to the Pilbara region it was agreed in 2008 that the population and employment figures prepared by the Pilbara Industry's Community Council (PICC) would be used by the WAPC and others for forward planning in the region.

The table below summarises population estimates for the Town of Port Hedland LGA using the current PICC data. These figures incorporate population estimates for residents, fly-in fly-out and construction workers.

Question	Year	Population estimate for Town of Port Hedland LGA
a)	2011	22 122
	2012	24 276
	2013	25 041
	2014	22 842
b)	2015	21 062
c)	2020	20 980

Source: Pilbara Industry's Community Council (PICC)

The Liberal National Government's launch of the Pilbara Cities vision in November 2009, will see public and private sector investment in Pilbara towns, in turn creating vibrant and sustainable communities into which people will want to live and invest. This policy direction will have a strong impact on population growth and as infrastructure and development projects come online it will influence the number of people who choose to live in the Pilbara.

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