

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Terry Waldron; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr Tom Stephens;  
Acting Speaker; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray; Dr  
Graham Jacobs; Mr Terry Redman; Mrs Judy Hughes

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**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) BILL (NO. 1) 2008**  
**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) BILL (NO. 2) 2008**

*Declaration as Urgent*

**MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Treasurer)** [4.00 pm]: In accordance with standing order 168(2), I move —  
That the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Bill (No. 1) 2008 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Bill (No. 2) 2008 be considered urgent bills.

The government proposes the same sort of arrangement with the second reading debate as applied in previous budget debates. That process involves the acceptance of this motion by the house.

**Mr M.W. Trenorden:** Do you expect to complete that process this week?

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** Yes. We expect to finish the second reading debate on the budget this week, and the estimates committee hearings will take place next week.

Question put and passed.

*Cognate Debate*

Leave granted for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Bill (No. 1) 2008 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Bill (No. 2) 2008 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Bill (No. 1) 2008 to be the principal bill.

*Second Reading — Cognate Debate*

Resumed from 8 May.

**MR T. BUSWELL (Vasse — Leader of the Opposition)** [4.01 pm]: Before I commence my remarks, I point out that, for the purpose of timing, I will not be the opposition lead speaker on the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 1) 2008 and Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 2) 2008. The opposition lead speaker, the member for Capel, the shadow Treasurer, will speak later on these bills.

Last Thursday, I, like almost every member in this house, came into this chamber to listen to the Treasurer deliver his eighth budget speech. As is the norm, after being given about an hour or even half an hour to peruse the document, I was asked to comment on it. The comment I provided on this budget was that I found it to be a dull and unimaginative budget that lacked any real vision for the long-term future of the state. I heard the Treasurer say the next day that he could not be expected to have a new vision every single year when he delivered the budget. The fact is that I have looked back over a number of the Treasurer's budget speeches, which did not add much to my weekend, and in none of them did I find that he had effectively articulated a suitable long-term vision for the future of Western Australia.

One of the consistent criticisms of this Treasurer and this government is their inability to leverage off the unique transformation of the Western Australian economy in the early years of the twenty-first century. Despite the fact that Western Australia has enjoyed, and is continuing to enjoy, a period of sustained economic growth, this state is confronted with some significant issues. It is confronted with some significant capacity issues, and, in particular, I refer to problems with labour supply and major issues confronting housing affordability. In addition, there are serious issues in the delivery of public sector services in Western Australia: I refer to a health system in which the people of this state have an ever-decreasing amount of confidence, an education system that is confusing and in which a record number of Western Australians are voting with their feet and moving to the private sector and a law and order system that sees the people of Western Australia in this most prosperous of times never having felt less safe in their homes and communities. This state has significant issues with moving forward. The facts of the matter are that in the 13 pages of the Treasurer's budget speech he provides little by way of inspiration to give anybody confidence that this government will tackle these significant issues.

As I said in my introductory comments, the Treasurer's budget speech reinforces a widely held view that he has little vision for the long-term future of this state. It also confirms that he has fundamentally mismanaged the transformation of the Western Australian economy. The legacy that this Treasurer and the government will leave the people of Western Australia after eight years of governance will be a record level of taxation, having increased from \$2.9 billion in the 2000-01 financial year to \$6.5 billion this financial year. The increase in royalties coming into this state's coffers have been massive, increasing from \$700 million to an anticipated \$2.66 billion this financial year. However, this state is again heading into levels of debt that, if not managed properly, will jeopardise and threaten this state's AAA credit rating. That is the legacy that after eight years this Treasurer will leave this state.

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It goes a little bit deeper than that. I always enjoy reading the economic and fiscal outlook section of the budget that refers to this government's reform agenda. In this year's budget there are two elements of the government's reform agenda that are sadly lacking. One element is the government's complete and absolute failure to reform public sector service delivery in Western Australia. A few years ago in one of his budget speeches the Treasurer indicated that the government would announce that it would conduct a number of functional reviews of government departments. The fact is that only a handful of those reviews were completed, and that gives a very clear indication that the Treasurer and the government do not focus on efficiency and that they have no appetite for a serious reform agenda for service delivery within the Western Australian public service. The government's focus is on inputs and, in particular, the fiscal magnitude of those inputs. That is reinforced when one reads the Treasurer's budget speech. There is nothing serious in his speech about reforming the processes of public sector delivery in Western Australia, but merely a focus on spending more and more money, which, I agree with my colleagues, is not a bad thing, but it does not mean that there will be better outcomes.

The time will come when the Treasurer and some of the cabinet ministers will have to sit back and realise that they need to start focusing on the outputs the government is delivering in health, education and law and order rather than simply the fiscal inputs that are being injected into the system. This is brought home in the public opinion surveys that the Treasurer conducts from time to time. I am sure that the Treasurer would look at them and think how it can be that this government is spending so much yet the public of this state rates the government so lowly and poorly on the quality of public service that it is delivering. The people of this state believe, and rightly so, that when this state has so much there should be leading edge public sector service delivery. Put simply, that is not happening.

If I turn to this government's reforms that apply to the public sector, I find that reference is made to procurement reform. I have acknowledged in this house previously that the government's procurement reform program under Mr Tondut is a great program.

The other component of the government's public sector reform agenda is the Office of Shared Services. It is a complete and absolute fiasco and, interestingly, it is reduced in the totality of this year's budget papers to a one-line entry under the Department of Treasury and Finance. A \$300 million budget black hole is represented by a one-line entry and that is almost scandalous. It goes further than that. The Treasurer needs to understand that in state-based and national-based jurisdictions around the world there is a dinkum effort by people to reform the process of public sector delivery. It happened in the United Kingdom under a Labour government. It has happened in other states around Australia under a mix of governments, but it certainly has not happened in Western Australia, because the Treasurer and other ministers do not have the appetite to roll up their sleeves and do the hard work that is required to drill down and understand what in a department needs to be reformed to improve the delivery of public sector services in this state.

The first significant issue that I have with the budget is that there is absolutely no attempt by the Treasurer or the government to focus on quality of outcome. It represents continued self-congratulation and backslapping because a little bit more money can be pumped into programs that have proved repeatedly to fail.

The second aspect of this budget that disappoints me about higher level reform relates to the use of public-private partnerships. Once again, around the world and in other states in Australia public-private partnerships are a tool that many jurisdictions are using to deliver a variety of benefits from public infrastructure. I am not surprised that the Treasurer slinks off when I talk about public-private partnerships.

**Mrs C.A. Martin:** He doesn't slink; he swaggers.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** He disappears off to the back of the chamber in a slinking manner. The government is blinded to the benefits by some philosophical revulsion to embracing the private sector through PPPs. The people who suffer from this government's inability to embrace the private sector are the taxpayers of this state. Yes, this government has a major infrastructure program in place and, yes, it is worth a lot of money, but we have not seen a lot from it yet. In fact, we have seen very little from it.

**Mrs C.A. Martin:** Come and visit Broome.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** I have visited Broome.

There are benefits from the use of PPPs, and I will touch on five of them; they are, creating new infrastructure which is of a standard beyond which could be delivered by the public sector; supporting infrastructure with guaranteed services to ensure continued usefulness; efficiency and longevity; taking advantage of innovative ideas and technology, which traditionally have been fostered in commercial environments to more effectively manage the risks that come with large complex projects; and generating a whole range of synergies. I know they are the benefits. One of the reasons I know is that they come from one of the Treasurer's documents dated 2002

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and titled “Partnerships for Growth: Policies and Guidelines for Public Private Partnerships in Western Australia”. The government needs to embrace the use of PPPs more effectively if it is to deliver infrastructure on time and on budget.

**Mrs C.A. Martin:** You support PPPs.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** I most certainly do. They should be delivered in an environment that is less risky to the taxpayers of Western Australia. On a broad level, when I peruse these budget documents, I see a fundamental inability to embrace two basic reforms: the reform of public sector service delivery and the use of the private sector in a meaningful, modern and contemporary way in the delivery of public infrastructure.

I also want to take some time to examine two or three of the key issues touched upon in the budget. They are the issues of taxation reform, infrastructure spending and, more importantly, debt. The Treasurer made much last Thursday, and again last Friday, of his wonderful stamp duty cuts that were contained in the budget. They are welcome. A 15 per cent cut in stamp duty for homes classified as residential will, on a median-priced house of \$457 000, see stamp duty drop from \$18 600 to \$15 700, saving the buyer about \$2 850. That is a good announcement. However, these things sometimes have to be put in context to understand their historic significance. What the Treasurer is doing, and what the taxpayers know that the Treasurer is doing, is returning only a fraction of the massive increases in stamp duty that he has enjoyed in recent years on a median-priced house. I will give the Treasurer some examples so he can understand what I am talking about. In 2001, when the median house price was \$173 000, people paid \$4 820 in stamp duty. By 2004 median house prices had increased by about \$90 000 to \$260 000 and people paid \$11 000 in stamp duty. Now, with median house prices around \$460 000, people pay \$18 700 in stamp duty. What has happened under the Treasurer’s aggressive, nasty stamp duty regime in recent years is that he has milked every last cent out of the people in this state who are attempting to buy a house by increasing stamp duty on properties at faster than the rate of growth in property prices. From 2001 until now property prices, as measured by median house prices, have gone up by 165 per cent. Stamp duty on the same property has gone up by 290 per cent. There has been a massive imbalance in the Treasurer’s rate of growth of stamp duty collection when compared with the rate of growth of property prices. It is to the Treasurer’s shame that he sat there while state government coffers grew fat on the hard work of the taxpayers of Western Australia. Effectively, what the Treasurer has done is to transfer a massive amount of public debt in this state to the private sector by the transference mechanism of stamp duty. In the historical context, he is giving back only a very small fraction of the massive amounts he has been taking in recent years.

We also need to understand that a stamp duty cut of just under \$3 000 represents just over half a percentage point in the price of a median-priced house. Therefore, the impacts on housing affordability of the Treasurer’s cuts will unfortunately be negligible.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** If you had been doing it, how much would you be cutting stamp duty by?

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** I would be looking at a whole range of things to affect housing affordability.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** How much would you have cut stamp duty by?

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** I would have looked at a whole range of things, not a bit of tinsel and ribbon, as the Treasurer has done. People will not be sucked in by it. Does the Treasurer know what? When he uses the most enduring measure of state-based taxation competitiveness—the one he used in 2001 and for many years after, which is taxation per capita—it shows that he is robbing us blind. The people in this state pay more in state taxes than any other Australian state. That is a f-a-c-t—a fact. People in Western Australia, as measured by taxation per capita, are being absolutely hammered by the Treasurer and his government.

I also want to touch quickly on the government’s infrastructure projects. I wonder as I read the budget: is the increase in infrastructure expenditure driven by increased costs due to delays of projects that have already been announced dozens of times over or is it because of costs in new projects in the budget to light the way forward for Western Australia? I will admit that the budget contains some new, good projects, such as the stadium and the developments on the foreshore, which we have supported because they are the sorts of things that the state should be doing. However, there is a heck of a lot of stuff in this budget that is regurgitated out of last year’s budget. In fact, I think the Treasurer needs to get somebody to improve cut and paste techniques for next year. I am hoping the Treasurer will not be there next year! Let me rephrase that. There is certainly a major issue in the way that the Treasurer has continually regurgitated, year after year after year, the same old projects. I will list a couple. One is the Fiona Stanley Hospital, which was originally flagged in the last election for completion in 2010. It has been announced every year for as long as I can remember. I went to Murdoch earlier this year to try to find it. I drove down the freeway, turned right onto South Street, ducked around the back of St John of God Health Care, Murdoch and wondered where was this great centrepiece of the government’s reform that was due

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to open in 2010. There is nothing there but a pile of bricks left over from some work done on St John of God Health Care. Nothing else has happened. This is one of the fundamental problems. The government talks and talks about these infrastructure projects and nothing has happened. I know the construction environment is difficult at the moment, but things should be happening and they are not.

I took the time to have a look at how many times the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure announced the Perth foreshore redevelopment. It has been announced three times in the past four years. It has been announced nearly as many times as the Northbridge link. It just does not happen; it is a hollow shell of repeated announcements of the same old projects. People are fed up with it. That is one of the reasons the budget speech is a very lightweight document. I had to hold onto it on Thursday for fear that it would float off. That is one of the reasons people are not in the street celebrating the Treasurer's budget announcements.

I want to move on because I wish to make a couple of other points.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** In the last three minutes you might give your speech some substance.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** I seek an extension.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** I want quickly to touch on state debt, because despite the fact that there has been a massive increase in state tax and a huge increase in royalties, the Treasurer is sending this state into dangerous levels of debt over the next four years.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Which projects would you cut?

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** The Treasurer is a fool. I have just spent time talking about the use of public-private partnerships —

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** You would hide the debt by entering into public-private partnerships.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** The Treasurer can use other sources of capital.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** You would shift the debt off and hide it —

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** The Treasurer does that every day he charges someone stamp duty. That is not hiding debt. How is that hiding debt? It is an alternative form of financing.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** It is because the state still has an obligation.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** Whoopy-doo!

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** It is pretty clear that you are in favour of cooking the books.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** I am in favour of better approaches to completing infrastructure projects. I just put it in context for the Treasurer in case he is not listening. In 2006 state debt was \$3.1 billion. Does the Treasurer know why the state might be in less debt if he were to use PPPs? Things might get built on time and on budget, so he would not have to borrow as much. Does he understand that concept—on time and on budget? I did not think so. State debt will be \$4.7 billion this year. State debt will be \$11.4 billion in four years' time despite the fact that the state has never enjoyed more income, in particular through state taxes and royalties.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Would you not build the stadium? Would you not build the museum?

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** Listen to this: if the Treasurer had controlled expenses properly, as he promised the people he would every single year —

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** What would you do? What is your plan?

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** That is what we would do: we would make government run properly. We would not deliver budgets full of rubbery figures, as the Treasurer has done for the past four years.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** That is very specific, isn't it? You will not say that there is any project that you would cancel?

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** No. The other interesting thing is that to help fund this infrastructure project, the Treasurer is selling down \$2 billion of land. I do not have a problem with the sale of land. However, it is interesting to note for the public record that over the next four years \$2.3 billion of state land will be sold to help fund the infrastructure project. Here is the point about the debt: by the Treasurer's own projections, the net debt-to-revenue ratio will reach 43.9 per cent by 2011-12—up from 17.9 per cent in 2006-07. The Treasurer's target is 47 per cent.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Our cap is 47 per cent.

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**Mr T. BUSWELL:** That is right. What is the difference between a cap and a target?

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** There is a significant difference! A target is something that you aim to achieve; a cap is a limit.

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** My friend the Treasurer has never met one of his targets, except to tax people to the point that their backs are breaking. If total non-financial public net debt increases by seven per cent, the net debt-to-revenue ratio will exceed the Treasurer's own cap. What would make debt blow out by another seven per cent? Maybe some of the projects the Treasurer has on the books will come in over budget. Given the Treasurer's history of major project deliveries, that is bound to happen. If some of the Treasurer's debt-funded projects go over budget, what will he do? Will he borrow more money if projects he has committed to come in over budget, thereby pushing up net debt and impacting on the net debt ratio? That is a very real possibility, Mr Treasurer.

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

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** Consider for example —

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

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** Listen to me! What I am saying to the Treasurer is this: the Treasurer has never had more royalties money come in than he does now. He is drowning in taxation revenue. He has never had more taxation revenue, yet he is sending us into a spiral of debt that is bordering on reckless. The margin for error is very small, and if that margin for error is exercised, the state's AAA credit rating could slip away.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Will you take an interjection?

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** No, I only have nine minutes. Let me finish and then I will take an interjection.

First, if a debt-funded project blows out; second, if GST payments fall by more than the Treasurer anticipates; and, third, if some of the institutions that the Treasurer is relying on for revenue do not return to the government the expected revenues, the Treasurer will have put the state in a somewhat precarious position in terms of debt. One of the reasons that Western Australia is heading into such high levels of debt is that the Treasurer has effectively been unable to control the growth of recurrent expenditure.

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

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** I have eight minutes left. I will take interjections if I finish.

This state is facing significant capacity issues with housing affordability and in particular with labour supply.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** So you would reduce the infrastructure expenditure to deal with the lack of capacity issues. Is that what you would do?

**Mr T. BUSWELL:** Did the Treasurer hear me say that or did he have his fingers in his ears? I have spoken about alternative approaches.

I have indicated that the Treasurer has lost control of recurrent expenditure and now, Mr Acting Speaker, I want to talk about the labour shortage and housing affordability because they are significant to the issue of capacity constraint. I only have eight minutes, but I want to touch on these issues because they are fundamentally important. If, moving forward, Western Australia cannot attract, maintain and house a suitable labour force, the state will not be able to leverage off of the current economic opportunities. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia has said that over the next 10 years the demand for labour will grow by 400 000 full-time equivalent workers and on current trends we will supply 250 000 FTE workers. That is a shortfall of 150 000 FTE workers. The labour shortage is a huge issue going forward for this state. Where in the Treasurer's budget document does he talk about initiatives and big ideas to tackle the shortage of labour? He does not discuss the issue at all. Labour shortages are biting in the city and they are biting in regional Western Australia. It is a massive issue, yet there is not one new idea in this hollow shell of a budget to tackle the single biggest issue confronting this state.

I might flick the Treasurer a document recently developed by the opposition called "Recruit WA". It outlines a very interesting initiative that involves the government working together with the private sector to make it easier for small and medium-sized Western Australian businesses to employ staff who have come here on 457 visas. This issue is fundamentally important to Western Australia moving forward, yet this government has no interest in it. In fact, when it comes to 457 visas, the Minister for Small Business has, on occasion, blocked applications because some of the unions that sit in the murky backrooms of the ALP have not liked them.

Another big idea that the Treasurer might like to consider—one the federal government has been talking about in the past week or so—is paid parental leave. Having a family friendly work environment would represent a very exciting opportunity for this state to promote itself as a place where families want to come and live to raise their

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children. As a state, we should look seriously at paid parental leave. We should understand what the federal government is doing—if it is doing anything—and work out how to leverage off of its work in order to provide working mums and working dads with the best possible environment in which to work and to raise their families. Where in the budget does it talk about such initiatives and new ideas for the long-term future of this state? As I have previously said, this budget is a document devoid of new ideas for the long-term future of this state.

I will quickly touch on the housing crisis. We all know that between the 2004 and 2006 December quarters the median house price went from \$260 000 to \$460 000—a massive increase. Yes, the median house price has stabilised since that time, but rents are now going through the roof. Where in this budget document is there a significant new idea to help tackle the rental crisis? I have not seen one. There is a bit of talk about land tax and things like that, but I have not seen one idea, yet Kevin Rudd's government has announced a really good scheme—the national rental affordability scheme—under which private sector developers can get a \$6 000 per annum tax credit for 10 years if they agree to provide rental properties at 20 per cent below the market rate. I have not seen anything from this government to actively and aggressively pursue private sector investment opportunities under that scheme. The minister came in today and talked about 85 units in Northbridge. This federal project has funding for between 50 000 and 100 000 dwellings. On population alone, the state should be aiming for between 5 000 and 10 000 dwellings in Western Australia under this scheme. The opposition has told the Treasurer that he should use Western Australian land. We have said that he should use the \$2.3 billion in land that he is flogging off—well, the bits of it that he can flog off. The Treasurer should use public land. He should go to the private sector and negotiate aggressively with the private sector. Think big, Treasurer! Do not think about 85 units at the auto-repair shop site in Northbridge. Think big, because that is what the state needs at the moment—big ideas to solve some of these big problems. However, nowhere in the budget does it talk about the housing crisis from that point of view. Nowhere in the budget does it talk about the major reforms required for the state's approvals process, which was taken off the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure because of her incompetence and transferred to the political hatchet man, David Hatt, in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Mr Hatt has probably been a bit busy because he has had a few political hatchets to stick into people over the last little while. I am not looking at the member for Ballajura, but Mr Hatt has been busy. He has been flat strap up there, going through pens like there is no tomorrow, but the fact is that he has not produced a plan.

Treasurer, the problem is that there are no big plans, and when I look at this budget, that is what saddens me more than anything else. This government has failed to grasp an opportunity to tackle the big issues that confront our state, the biggest state in Australia, with innovation and initiative. The budget is just a regurgitation of announcements that we have heard before, and it takes a cut-and-paste approach, which pretty much means that this year's budget is not much different from last year's budget and not terribly exciting at all.

I just want to conclude with the following observation. Our state has undergone a massive transformation. In the past seven years the iron ore industry has grown from a \$5 billion to a \$16 billion industry, the petroleum industry from \$10 billion to \$16 billion, and the nickel industry from \$2 billion to \$8 billion. The Western Australian economy is being pushed along by private sector investment in the resources sector, and if one looks at the current budget forecasts, future state growth will occur on the back of the export earnings that the increased investment in the resources sector will generate. There is a lot of economic opportunity in this state and a lot of good things happening, but we face some significant and fundamental issues. I have attempted to touch on some of those, including this government's failure to provide the people of this state with a dividend from the boom via improved delivery of public sector services and the significant capacity constraints the state faces, particularly in the areas of labour shortages and housing affordability. There is nothing in this budget that tackles the big issues facing this state. If ever the people of Western Australia needed big ideas that will take this state into the twenty-first century and allow us to leverage off the wonderful economic opportunities that have been presented to us, it is now. That has not happened, and the Treasurer has been, and will continue to be, condemned for failing to take that initiative.

**MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin — Deputy Leader of the National Party)** [4.30 pm]: My focus this afternoon in this budget reply speech will be on inland country Western Australia. I make no apology for that. Someone needs to speak out for that region of this state, and we in the National Party will do that. I have been a member of this Parliament for eight years. This is the worst budget for my region—I focus on that inland area—that I have seen since I have been a member of this Parliament.

The *2008-09 budget overview* is titled "Building WA". However, building Western Australia should include all of Western Australia, not just the so-called important parts of it. We in the National Party, and I personally, do not knock development in the metropolitan area and in our main coastal ports etc. We support that. However, we need to remember the other parts of this state. The new projects that are outlined in this budget actually reflect the new boundaries that were established under the one vote, one value legislation. Agriculture was not even

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 13 May 2008]

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mentioned in the budget speech. Page 12 of the budget overview lists 22 major infrastructure projects for Western Australia. Eighteen of those 22 projects are in Perth and in the coastal strip to just south of Bunbury. The other four are north of Perth. However, my region—that great inland region of the southern, the central great southern and the upper great southern, and the eastern and northern wheat belt—is not included in that. The projects in Perth include Fiona Stanley Hospital; the new Museum, at a huge cost; the new stadium, which could have been built in a different way to save money and still achieve a good result; Perth Arena; and the Perth waterfront. However, other projects in inland Western Australia that may be small but are very necessary for the people in that area did not even get a mention. Often when we talk about figures in this house, ministers respond by giving us the figures for country WA. However, we need to look at how those figures are broken up. Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton and Broome—the main coastal towns—and Kalgoorlie seem to cop most of the funding for country Western Australia. We want the people in those areas to have good ports and facilities, because they serve our hinterland area. However, we also want some basic facilities to be provided in our hinterland area. As the Leader of the Nationals said in his press release, this budget has been a missed opportunity to grow sustainable communities in country Western Australia. That is what the people in the regions are trying desperately hard to do. It is not good enough that the government has once again rejected important local projects. The people in the regions have just about had enough.

I will start off by talking about a simple program, the infill sewerage program. I have been talking in this place since 2001 about the importance of this program for Kukerin, Kondinin, Hyden and Boyup Brook. I have mentioned those four towns; however, a lot of other towns also need that program. That program has now been stopped by this government because it is too expensive. The last project in Tambellup cost about \$3 million. Last winter, the tourist town of Hyden had raw sewage on the streets. That town is visited by busloads of people from Japan and other overseas countries, and from interstate. We talk about the importance of tourism, yet that town cannot even get a sewerage project done. In a couple of weeks I will be going to a meeting with the minister and the Shire of Kondinin to put to the government a project that we hope the government will help bring to fruition. We should not need to do that.

I turn now to education. There are many fine agricultural colleges in country Western Australia. We talk about increasing the school leaving age and trying to accommodate people who might not have a lot of academic skills but have a lot of great skills in other areas. Agricultural colleges help those youngsters become good citizens and put them into the workforce. We desperately need skilled workers in our area. However, the accommodation wing at Narrogin Agricultural College, which is in a deplorable state, is once again not mentioned in this budget. I have managed to get the minister to agree to visit Narrogin Agricultural College on 31 July. That is only because he will be coming to Narrogin on that day to open the new design and technology centre. That is the only project in the Narrogin region that we have been able to get from this government since I have been in this Parliament. All the other great projects were put in place by the previous government. That is a fact.

While I am on that subject, I want to mention Narrogin Regional Hospital. It is struggling to get enough doctors. However, it is a great hospital. That hospital has been upgraded over the years. The former Minister for Health, the member for Yokine, came to Narrogin to open the second stage of that upgrade. The previous government was set to go ahead with the final stage of that upgrade in 2001. However, the final stage has still not been built. That is making it very difficult to facilitate the smooth working of the hospital and patient management, because the design of the upgrade, with the nursing post etc, was all based on the final stage being built.

I turn now to the problem of decaying and dangerous roads. People say I am always talking about road funding. The fact is that in order for people in country Western Australia to do anything—play sport, get their kids educated, or run a business—they need to travel on decaying and dangerous roads. The majority of the road funding in this budget is for the new Perth-Bunbury highway. That includes a large amount of federal funding. We welcome that funding and say well done. However, that does not mean that the government should forget about all the other areas of country Western Australia that also need road funding. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure knows about the dangerous section of the Wickepin-Kulin road. It will be only a matter of time before a bad accident takes place on that road. That road is used by school buses and hay trucks. The road has a bitumen median strip that can take only one car at a time, so cars need to get off the bitumen to allow buses and trucks to pass. The proposed Gibb siding section on Collie Road is earmarked to cost about \$3.5 million, so that work will now not be done. There is no funding in this budget for Chester Pass Road in Albany. There is also no funding for passing lanes on Albany Highway. There is also no funding for the Boddington-Dwellingup Road. The development of the Boddington goldmine will lead to a huge number of trucks on the dangerous section of road between Boddington and Dwellingup. I have been to a meeting in that area. I know that the minister is aware of the problem. The minister is talking about building some slip-off areas so that trucks can move to the side of the road in a couple of places. That is not good enough, because that road is really dangerous. I will finish

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with the Narrogin link road, because that is a real beauty. That is a three-stage project. The former government built the highest priority part of that project first. It is now very important that the next stage of that project be built. A new industrial area has been established in Narrogin, with a large hay plant, a cattle feedlot and a large piggery. That has created a very dangerous situation, because the trucks need to pull out of that industrial area and into the main street of Narrogin. However, we cannot get a couple of million dollars from the government to enable that project to go ahead. I wanted to highlight that, because it is very important.

I do not want to talk just about infrastructure. I also want to talk about people, because we tend to forget about people when we talk about the budget. There are some housing allocations in this budget. We are yet to see where that money has been allocated. However, it is very important that we offer incentives to attract and retain people in country Western Australia. I had the opportunity last week of speaking at the public sector rally that was held at the front of Parliament House. After that rally, the Minister for Health made a bit of a joke about how I as a National Party member was speaking to the workers. I was happy to speak at that rally. A huge number of country people were at that rally. It is about time the government recognised that the country regions of Western Australia are growing. The people of country Western Australia need public sector services. I will not go on at this stage about the need for housing for police, teachers etc. However, the two things that public servants in country areas have spoken to the National Party about are the need for adequate housing and an increase in district allowances. That is not to mention the government's pay offer, which is below the rate of growth in the consumer price index. If we are to attract and retain these people to allow our communities to grow, we need to pay them well. We also need to offer adequate housing and district allowances. It was pointed out to me yesterday that the price of diesel in Kojonup is now the same as the price of diesel in my home town of Karratha. District allowances are paid up north. However, the gap between the cost of living in the north and the cost of living in country areas has reduced greatly. We need to recognise that. One of the issues in the teachers' pay claim is the increased cost of food and fuel. That is now getting to a critical stage. I urge the government to reconsider the situation of these public servants because, if it does not, it will create a huge crisis down the track for whoever happens to be in government at the time.

Parts of that public service, of course, are community work orders. Talking about law and order, young people are sometimes sentenced to community work orders. I actually agree with that. I do not believe young kids should be sent to jail. If they make a mistake that is not super serious, they should always be given another chance. Community work orders are a good way to go on that and I support them. However, youngsters are saying that if they do not want to complete a community work order, they will just go to the country. That is because in the country we do not have supervisors for them. The non-supervised positions used to be called unallocated positions. Now they are saying that they do not call them unallocated positions because they are monitored. However, monitored really means that the youngsters are not allocated a supervisor but are instead monitored from Perth or from a major coastal centre. In many cases monitoring is not happening. In some cases it happens. That is a real issue that must be addressed, but I see no allocation of funding in the budget for it.

The lack of funding also affects child protection workers. We have all heard about what happened in the terrible death of a young boy in Coober Pedy. I am sure country politicians could tell members about local issues that people bring to them. There are some real disputes over child protection in country towns. In the town where I live, Narrogin, we are lucky to have some reasonable facilities; however, workers there are under huge pressure. I make the point that the budget needs to address the lack of investment in people who carry out these services. These people must be given priority, otherwise they will get worn out and stressed. Already some have found the stress so bad that they could not do the job any longer and have gone off to do something else. Good people have gone off and are driving trucks because they can make more money doing that, do not have to worry about things and do not have any stress.

I do not want to be silly, so I acknowledge that there are good things to be said about this budget. I acknowledge the increase in the budget for mental health services. That is great to see and I applaud it. However, once again, I am not quite sure where that increase will go and how it will be appropriated. For goodness sake, put some of that towards mental health workers in country WA! I say the same for child workers, because they are under immense pressure, and I worry about them.

I want to mention the allocation in the budget for stamp duty relief. Talking about good things, I welcome the stamp duty relief. We heard the statistics on stamp duty from the Leader of the Opposition and how much stamp duty had increased in the past few years and was then brought back a little. I used to have my own real estate business and I cannot believe that the Treasurer would announce the stamp duty relief and then say that it would not operate until 1 July. I tell those members who have not been involved in real estate and do not know what it means that a real estate salesman trying to sell houses, and trying to meet his mortgage repayments, keep his kids clothed and fed and their school fees paid etc, will have hardly any opportunity to make a brass razoo between



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now and 1 July. It is unbelievable that the Treasurer has done this. I heard him say, in answer to a question he was asked on radio the other day, that he could not get stamp duty relief in place before that time. However, he was able to do that when he changed stamp duty previously. I would guarantee that stamp duty relief was one of the first things that was organised in this budget and that it could have been operating—bang!—from last Monday. It is important to acknowledge that delaying stamp duty relief until 1 July will put real pressure on the real estate industry.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has been mentioned a lot today and I therefore will not refer to it much, other than to say that lack of funding for the flying doctor is a disgrace. I say to the government that it has made a blue here! It should go back into the budget, fix it and give the service an allocation. It needs three planes and crews. The government should get at least one or two planes out there immediately and perhaps put some funding away for a third next year. The Royal Flying Doctor Service needs those planes and crews right now. I emphasise, as has been said in the debate, that one of the biggest costs for country health services, about which I will come to in a moment, is the inter-hospital transfer of patients. Time after time patients are transferred between hospitals by the flying doctor, by ambulance and by the patient assisted travel scheme.

That brings me to health services, which have become so centralised that people must constantly travel to obtain them. People have to travel from a little health centre to a little local hospital; from the local hospital to a regional hospital, such as those in Narrogin, Merredin or Katanning; and from there they must be transferred to Albany, Bunbury or Perth. So much money is being spent on transport through St John Ambulance, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and PATS. It is about time we started putting a bit back into country hospitals so that they are able to provide more services locally. That would cut back a helluva lot on those problems and it would help us build more sustainable communities in country WA where there are movements of people to our areas.

I will quickly mention dental health. I have spoken previously to the Minister for Health about this matter. I do not see any allocation of funding in the budget to expand government dental health clinics into country WA. A pensioner or a health card holder in country WA pays much more than those in the city do, because they cannot attend clinics as we do not have them. They must therefore go to a private provider. Although there is an allowance paid, that still works out to be a lot more expensive. A simple thing we could do is place clinics in places such as Merredin, Narrogin and Moora. Another area that will not take a lot of money to improve is dental vans going to schools. Not enough resources are being given to dental services. Schools are not being serviced. Some of the dental vans have now stopped operating. That is not good enough for young kids. Even when I went to school in Jingalup in 1957—for goodness sake!—dental vans visited the school twice a year, but they cannot do so now. That is a disgrace and I urge the health minister to fix that.

On education, I encourage the government—although I know arbitration is ongoing at the moment—to fix the malaise with the negotiations on teachers' pay; otherwise we will start to see some real effects on kids in the community. I support the teachers in their better pay deal. I know that the government has said that it can go only so far in negotiations; however, it is a disgrace that the negotiations have gone on for this long. The government should have been able to work with the State School Teachers' Union of WA to have this matter finalised long before now.

One of the highlights of the year for a district or senior high school in country WA is Country Week. It comes around once a year, but because of what is happening this year some kids will probably miss out on Country Week. That will be it for them; they will never again be able to participate in Country Week. I call on the minister to get on with and finalise those negotiations.

I keep hammering on about housing. Housing for teachers in country WA is another issue. I will not go on and on about it. Another point is school maintenance, which keeps slipping and slipping. We see some good things that are being done in some schools with upgrading etc, and I appreciate that. I know some new schools are being built—not in my electorate, obviously—and that is a great thing for Western Australia. However, the lack of maintenance of schools is akin to a farmer who does nothing on his farm for 25 years. He may say that he cannot afford to do anything this year and he may keep putting off maintaining his farm, but in the end he will have a huge problem. The same thing happened with Western Power's lines. We need to make sure that we prioritise the maintenance of schools, particularly some of the administration areas in which teachers and staff have to work. There are three schools in my electorate that are in absolutely terrible shape. I am continually told that they are on the priority list. However, they have been on the priority list for three years. They must be getting close. It seems that the priority has slipped away.

Another issue is air conditioning. I congratulate the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure for at least agreeing a couple of weeks ago in this Parliament to review the air conditioning in school buses. There are three designated areas in WA, two of which are affected by the lack of air conditioning in school buses. There should

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be air conditioning on all WA school buses, and I congratulate the minister for saying she will review it. However, there should be a little more support for air conditioning in schools. Currently parents and citizens associations and parent donations are paying for air conditioning in schools in my electorate. Although P&C associations are happy to contribute, they cannot get a contribution from the budget to help them. That should also be a priority.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I welcome the changes the minister has made for the appointment of new principals. Although the changes are encouraging and are good and I welcome the addition of a local person to the selection panel—which I spoke about in this place about four years ago—the old points system for the transfer of teachers should also be considered. One of the problems of attracting teachers to country WA is the lack of opportunity for them to transfer back to Perth. I believe more teachers would come to country WA if they knew there was a reasonable chance they could transfer back to Perth at a later date. At the moment that option is not available to them.

I will move on to sport and recreation, which is quite dear to my heart. I want to emphasise from the start the importance of sport and recreation.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** More money for the Dockers!

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** More money for the Dockers and the Kojonup footy club!

Several members interjected.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** Members of this place talk about health, leadership, crime problems and about respect and all of those matters. I want to emphasise again that sport delivers most of those things, especially when people work together in groups; whether that be a church group, a service club group or a scout group. People are involved in sport throughout country Western Australia. We should encourage that. I do not think we invest enough in sport. I will put forward a couple of suggestions. The community sporting and recreation facilities fund grants are great. I acknowledge that that is one area in which country WA does well, and that is very important. I believe that the budget should be increased further, because the benefits of sport are huge. We must take into account that the cost of building a couple of new tennis courts or the cost of relaying a synthetic surface on a bowling green has increased so much that the total budget now does not reflect the value we were getting five years ago. That needs to be recognised.

**Mr A.J. Simpson:** Has it been increased in five years?

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** It has been increased, but not to the amount that it should have been.

The other point is that most of the shires contribute 33 per cent or a third, the sport and recreation fund contributes a third and the community contributes a third. It is getting beyond the capability of many of our shires and communities to contribute that full third each; that is, two-thirds. I believe that in next year's budget the government should look at making the sport and recreation fund contribution 50 per cent. Some remote areas get close to 50 per cent now. I believe it should be 50 per cent across the board, and the local governments and the communities would find the other 50 per cent. That would take a bit of pressure off.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Would the local governments in the metropolitan area be making a contribution to the new sports infrastructure being provided in Perth?

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I would not think so, but that happens in all our country towns. Our communities do not mind, but once again it is about equity and fairness. Therefore, I put that forward. I will ask a question in the estimates committee hearings because I want to make sure that the country sport enrichment scheme is included in the budget. I do not see it mentioned, but it is usually in the budget because it is such an important scheme.

I will talk briefly about police and road safety—I am running out of time. Members know that a number of police stations in my area were closed. I urge this government to reinstate some of those stations. Maybe the government cannot reinstate all of them. I think one may be reinstated, but I hope that is not just a token gesture. In my region, Dumbleyung and Cranbrook should have priority and their police stations should be reinstated. Since those stations closed, we have lost those police numbers. Those numbers went to the next town. Those police were transferred and moved on, and they have never been replaced. We are 17 police down in my region, and that is from the horse's mouth. Tambellup is two down, Wagin is two to three down and Pingelly is two to three down. In Pingelly, I know that the local police want to increase the number to four police, but they cannot get housing or the police. This really is an important issue.

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The Minister for Police needs to be aware of what is happening to those police. They are being put under huge pressure. I issued a press release and raised the issue in this Parliament about seven or eight weeks ago, I think it was. I talked about the pressure that the police at Wagin were under. A week later one of the constables at Wagin had a heart attack. He is a younger person than I am. I am not saying that it was all because of the stress of the police work, but I bet it contributed to it. I am concerned that we are going to have some real problems, because these police cannot be expected to continue doing what they are doing. If they were working in a trucking business, they would have to be stopped because of the fatigue management guidelines. These people are working outside those guidelines; I am sure of it. I know that the head of the police station at Pingelly has recently been sent on two weeks' holidays for that very reason. These are very important issues.

Road safety is a very important issue. I am a great supporter of road safety, and will continue to be. I do not support the reduction of the speed limit from 110 to 100 kilometres an hour on our open roads. Having been involved with the minister and the parliamentary group in the process of looking at this issue, my view has been further reinforced. I have looked at the areas that have been identified by the Road Safety Council and the minister's department. We have maps showing the dangerous sections of road and where many of the fatalities and injuries have taken place on our country roads, and we should be concentrating on those. We talk about speed barriers, lowering speed limits and verge safety. We should identify the areas, and where there is a bad corner or whatever, we should take the trees out on that corner and replant them somewhere else. We should take the trees out on that bad bend, put in a safety barrier and lower the speed limit for that corner; we should not make it a blanket approach across the state. I fear that if we lower the speed to 100 kilometres an hour, there will be an adverse reaction from the people out there. I am not being a smart Alec when I say that; I think that is going to happen. We should approach it sensibly. The Gibbs Siding section of road, where a person has been killed, is a real nightmare. We should say, "Right; let's fix that bit of road. Let's take those trees out, but we will replant them in a place where they are needed and put the barriers etc in." We should do something that will save lives and serious injury. In country WA, we have a problem with some of our people on the roads. However, we cannot beat and beat; we must take them with us. I congratulate all those members who have had those road safety forums, because I believe that has helped the process.

I will mention the advanced driver courses and support for our service clubs. Service clubs are putting up money for these courses. They offer the children in their towns who turn 17 and get their driver's licence that year an advanced driver course, which I think costs about \$160. The service clubs pay \$100. They work with the local police, and all those kids who get their licence that year have the opportunity to do the driver's course. It is a wonderful idea. However, I believe that those service clubs should be helped a bit more with an allocation from the Road Safety Council. I will take that up directly with Grant Dorrington, because I believe that needs to happen.

I will deal with road funding. Prioritising the dangerous roads is very important, as is safety on our roads. I understand that no government can fix every road overnight. However, there are priority areas. I mention again the Boddington-Dwellingup road, because I am sure that I will be in this place one day saying, "Look what's happened. We should have done it."

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I hope so, because I drive on it every week or two.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I am worried about the member. I know he goes down to his farm.

I welcome the black spot money, but once again it is a question of where it will be spent. I urge this government to start investing more in those inland areas, because a bush change is happening; we have growth. In most of my towns we are seeing new developments. For instance, this year I opened the new Munthoola development in Williams, which has 130-odd blocks of land. Williams is only an hour and a half or so from Perth. There is real growth in those areas. However, we need to make sure that we support that. We need to give these developers a hand with headworks, and assistance with power and water. We are making it very hard. We need to make it easier, and I think we could do it at not a huge cost.

There is one thing I want to talk about with Western Power. Under the current scheme, when people want to connect to the power supply, they must make an application. They get a desktop quote. They must then pay 10 per cent of the cost. If they do not go ahead with it, they forfeit that 10 per cent deposit. To me, that is wrong. That should not happen. Okay; there is a cost to Western Power, but the cost is not 10 per cent, particularly when the projects are big. An older couple in Narrogin are putting a new house in a little place called Piesseville. It is going to cost them 22 grand to get power; that is the estimate. They think they can afford about \$15 000. They might get it for below \$15 000, but they cannot take the risk of paying the \$2 200 deposit, because if the price comes back at \$26 000 or \$27 000, they will not get their deposit back. I do not think that is good enough.

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Before I finish, I will talk briefly about youths in our towns. We are experiencing some problems with youths in our towns, especially those who are probably not involved in sport or who might have some problems at home. They are left out. Therefore, the youth centres—they used to be called youth advisory councils or YACs—need to be reinvigorated. We are looking at doing something in Narrogin at the moment. I spoke to Minister Ellery, who asked me to go back and speak to her after the budget was delivered. I have not had a chance yet. However, we need special funding for two things: for some of those youth centres and for the people who work in them. They should also be centres where youths can be advised about essential services; they should be like advisory centres.

I also raise the issue of men's refuges. There are women's refuges in our centres. However, in many cases, when there is a domestic dispute in my area, I find that the men have nowhere to go. They have to get out of the house or whatever and have nowhere to go. We are looking at that situation in my area. There is one refuge in Northam. Of course, the difficulty is funding and being able to find a place. If we can put up a good proposition, I encourage members on the other side to ask Minister Ellery to try to find some money for us and to help us with that. We want to make sure we protect women in those situations. We have a great women's refuge in Narrogin. However, we also have some problems now with the men, and we need to make sure that we look after them also.

In conclusion, I want to say that budgets are about priorities. The state government has its priorities. It has made it clear to us where they are. Country people have important issues that need to be addressed, but we do not crack a mention. It is about time we did. We are not asking for the world. Country people just want a bit of equity. We do not want the same as what people in Perth or major coastal towns get, but the gap needs to get closer. Country people support developments in Perth. They come to Perth. Some of them have kids in Perth. Let us share it around a bit. Yes, the big projects in Perth are great but we are doing too much at once and country people are missing out. I am sure that will be reflected in the regions when we go to the polls. I urge Country Labor members to stand up and be counted.

**MRS C.A. MARTIN (Kimberley)** [5.00 pm]: A number of line items in this budget are really important to me. One of those is the \$10 million that has been allocated to mental health services in the Kimberley region. That funding is important because there is a suicide in the Kimberley region every three weeks. Our young people are dying before our very eyes. That part of this budget is about the spirit of our community. It is about the long-term vision for the future of our youth. Until recently, a lot of our youth felt that they were not part of the future and saw suicide as an option. Hopefully, we will be able to turn that around with these funds and facilities. I knew most of the children and young people and their families who suicided in the past eight years. I do not know of a family that has not been devastated by this trend. Some of the suicides were copycat incidents.

There are also a lot of accidents in the Kimberley. We lose our youth in those accidents. One car accident that occurred not that long ago involved three young people under the age of 21. Two died and one lost an arm. I am also really pleased that the road budget for the region is in excess of \$55 million. Some of it is very important for Victoria Highway and the bypass into Kununurra. That is more about keeping the flow up. It also generates employment and opportunities for our youth. I thought the budget was a bit light on the big infrastructure items, but \$55 million for roads is not too bad.

A new prison will also be built in the Kimberley. A high percentage of Aboriginal people and Kimberley people in the prison system are not actually in the Kimberley. Hopefully, the prison and work camps in my region will house the majority of local people. At least we can bring them home. It will be a model prison that will be looking at rehabilitation, so people will not revisit the system. Hopefully, that will break the cycle of reoffending.

Fitzroy Crossing District High School is in my region. It cost \$34 million to build. The project went over budget simply because the cost of steel and fuel has gone up. An aquatic centre will also be built in Fitzroy Crossing. Hopefully, that will help the attendance rates at the school as there will be a no school, no pool policy.

A huge amount of money—more than \$100 million—has gone into the health services in the Kimberley. Twenty years ago nobody would have imagined the health campus in Broome that we have now. It has a computerised axial tomography scanner, which cost \$2 million. A lot of people had to use the patient assisted travel scheme to go away to other towns to have a CAT scan. We are bringing the Kimberley into the twenty-first century. It is important that we maintain this level of budget input.

When we look at some of the other hospitals and facilities in the Kimberley, we can see the effect of 50 years of neglect. However, there is a new hospital in Halls Creek, a brand-new facility in Fitzroy Crossing, a complete upgrade and remodelling of Broome District Hospital and a new wing at Derby Regional Hospital, which we

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have been waiting for since 1993. The only town that we have not had an impact on is Wyndham. We have the funds in this budget to move on with it. There is nearly \$4 million for a multipurpose health centre at Wyndham, part of which will be used for renovations. An amount of \$700 000 will go towards renal units, but we need a lot more. I have made this known to the Treasurer and the Minister for Health.

In the budget I was really pleased to see that \$1.2 billion will go into the public sector for housing. Part of that—\$450 million—will go towards low-income housing, which is essential. We know that housing is in crisis. I am not saying that I want it all, but I will have half. Quite a few housing units are down our way.

We have received 95 per cent of the funding for water that we asked for, so I am pretty happy with that. The other issue is the rise in power. We have more funds to extend the services that we currently provide. We are also getting a new courthouse at Kununurra, which will cost \$1.1 million, something we need to accommodate the new magistrate.

The issue of child protection in my region was on the front pages of the newspapers for a long time. We now have funds for child protection. We are finally starting to look at the services that are required to normalise the lives of children. Officials can now investigate and ensure that children are seen as the primary target for service delivery. For so many years we have not had the resources to deal with this horrific trend, but this budget puts children right up there with some of the other important issues.

I do not begrudge Perth the Fiona Stanley Hospital. It is really important that the one million people who live here have a hospital that works instead of having to go to an antiquated hospital where one has to step up eight inches out of a lift to get to the right level. I have been in the lifts in Royal Perth Hospital, and that happened on a couple of occasions. It will be great to see Fiona Stanley Hospital completed.

The other day I was driving down Roe Highway with my daughter, who has only recently come down from the Kimberley, and she said, “Mum, thank Alannah MacTiernan.” The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is a legend in my daughter’s eyes. People can drive from Midland virtually all the way through to the other end of the city. There was nowhere that that girl could not go. Once people get onto one of those major roads, they get to where they want to go at a reasonable speed in a reasonable amount of time. My daughter-in-law Renee Ralph is from Broome but is currently in Perth. She is doing a four-week course at Fremantle Hospital so that she can work effectively in the emergency room of Broome District Hospital. She gets into her car in Midland in the morning and drives all the way to Fremantle to work. This is another person who said that it is a great road. We would not mind a couple more of those.

We would also like mobile coverage, but that is a federal issue. It is essential that there be mobile coverage for Highway 1. As far as the Kimberley is concerned, Highway 1 is doing really well. We used to have to wait for six hours to cross most of the low-level crossings when they were flooded. Now there are bridges over them. A lot of them are the result of federal funding; however, some of them were built from state funds. That money is now available. I am really pleased about that. The Dampier Peninsula road is still a bit of a problem. Hopefully, we can work that out outside the budget.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Is that the road to One Arm Point?

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** Yes. It creates a problem because a lot of damage is caused to vehicles that travel over that road.

The budget contains some good things for my electorate. Most importantly it addresses the issue of mental health. It will look at the issue of suicide among young people in my community of which, currently, there is one every three weeks. It is important that I continue to press the government on this issue because the community has been fighting youth suicide for so long. The budget might provide young people with the opportunity to be given assistance at home instead of being sent to Graylands to live among strangers.

I refer now to the east Kimberley. The Ord River scheme expansion project, which was previously known as Ord River stage 2, has been allocated \$15 million in this year’s budget. I am really pleased that an allocation has been made to progress this project. For the people in the east Kimberley and the farmers who have been waiting patiently for over 40 years it will mean that they can start their projects. At this stage the federal government has not made a commitment, but I will keep my fingers crossed that an allocation will be made to this project in the federal budget that will be brought down tonight. The Northern Territory government also has not made a commitment, but this state government has and for the people in the Ord region and Kununurra I am pleased that it has.

Another important event in my region was the recent opening of Kununurra Youth Services. It is a major project and is one of Michele Pucci’s babies. Michele, the shire president, has been fighting for this service for years and

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on the day of its opening she was in tears. Kununurra is another community that puts its kids first. It is important that these communities continue to do that.

The multifunctional police facilities in remote Aboriginal communities—those with up to 1 500 people living in them—have been a great success. The multifunctional police facility at Kalumburu is doing exceptionally well. John Birch, a local identity, was recently transferred to Kalumburu. John knows the community, its relationships and its membership. The multifunctional police facility at Dampier Peninsula is new and groundbreaking. It is doing some wonderful work with the community and the community is supporting the local police station. Only the other day I was asked by the chairperson of Ardyaloon community to lobby the government for more resources. The Warmun multifunctional police facility is doing extremely well. When I have visited the local school I have seen the police with the kids and it is brilliant. Law and order and community safety are so important to the region. Bidadanga is getting used to its multifunctional police facility. Even though Bidadanga is only a couple of hours' drive from Broome, the multifunctional police facility has posed a few problems. However, the community is beginning to get used to having a police presence. Balgo was one of the first communities to have a multifunctional police facility because it already had a police station, but it needed to be refurbished. People like Lindsay Greatorex have made a great commitment to the area, although Lindsay has now moved to Perth. He was able to get some wonderful programs operating for the young kids.

The best news in this budget is for the Looma community. It will have another multifunctional police facility. Looma is one of the larger communities in the region and it needs the same services as any of the smaller towns. Approximately 1 500 people are associated with that Looma community and its satellite communities. The multifunctional police facilities are working well.

The facilities in the region will continue to improve. For example, the aged care service in Broome will open shortly. It will replace facilities like Numbala Nunga Nursing Home, which is a very sad place. The new facility is bright and airy and has space outside for people to go. It looks wonderful. It is purpose-built and the aging population in the community needs this facility. A lot of people retire in Broome. They do not sit still for long, but they go to Broome to retire.

This budget has been good to my region. It provides services that will alleviate some of the issues of concern; most importantly, those that deal with the youth and children. The Department for Child Protection has been under the hammer for many years and the additional funding that it will have at its disposal will enable it to do a better job.

The new magistrate will be a replacement magistrate for Antoine Bloemen, who will be retiring very soon. That is sad because he is a great man. I hope that he does not leave the community because we love him. A second magistrate will be stationed at Kununurra and, of course, the necessary infrastructure will be required, including a house and the upgrading of the courthouse, which I have already mentioned. However, many things still need to be done. It is important to the region that the government ensures that the service is improved and that visiting courts continue.

Several services available to my electorate did not rate a mention in the budget and I will be taking them up with the relevant ministers. One is the Kimberley Drug and Alcohol Authority, which will need more funding because of the changes to communities due to the introduction of the accord and alcohol bans.

Generally, services in my electorate are looking up. I have not made reference to all the issues in my electorate. I did not want to talk about cane toads, but I have to. Although \$12 million has been well spent on eradicating the little critters, little progress has been made. There is nothing worse than waiting for one's backyard or community to be invaded by these critters. If \$12 million allows that community to try to stem the flow of these nasty little critters, it is money well spent, and more funding will probably be required. We know that the action that is being taken will not stop these critters. A biological solution is needed, which, I accept, is a federal government responsibility. The \$12 million that went to the Kimberley Toad Busters was well spent. Good on those people who pack up on a Friday afternoon to go and zap these critters in freezers and whatever to put them down humanely; it is a good thing. These people need fuel to operate their generators. The people in the Kimberley do not sit around and act helpless; they get out and do whatever they can to alleviate the problem. This government understood that and came up with the money. I am really happy about that.

An undertaking of \$3 million has been given to provide funding for legal aid. We know that there will be a huge number of cases resulting from the investigations into child protection by DCP. The perpetrators, or those alleged to have committed a crime, will need legal advice. Legal aid will be available to them.

The Kimberley is doing okay. The concerns about the Halls Creek Aquatic Centre have led to its being managed by the local shire. This debate provides me with the opportunity to not only make a contribution to the budget

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debate, but also provide feedback on what is happening in my electorate. My electorate did not get everything it wanted in this budget. I submitted 53 requests and about 30 were approved, so that is not a bad result.

The two most important issues confronting my electorate are the youth and kids. Kids need to be protected from the predators who prey on them and sexually abuse them. My electorate has a higher suicide rate than any other area, which is not something that I would want to promote. At least funding will now be provided to give the people in my electorate the capacity to deal with their own people and to keep their young people at home. Maybe we can have an impact on those 500 young people and others who suffer from chemically-induced schizophrenia, which is another of the great scourges of our community. I commend the bills to the house.

**MR A.J. SIMPSON (Serpentine-Jarrahdale)** [5.20 pm]: I am sure that many members opposite can guess what I am going to say. Much of it is the same as I have said for the past couple of years. This is not because I like to repeat myself or because I like the sound of my own voice. I say it because of the services and infrastructure that I need for my community.

The communities of the outer suburbs and the hills have been totally ignored in this budget. This budget contains nothing for the extension of Tonkin Highway, even though this road is badly needed to take large trucks off South Western Highway. This budget contains nothing for renovations at Chidlow Primary School, even though it has been near the top of the works list for the Swan district for the past 10 years, or for the planning of a new school in Byford, even though two primary schools in the area have almost reached full capacity. Instead of investing in permanent buildings to teach children, the state is allocating \$4 million for demountable classrooms and \$9 million to move them around the state. Demountables are only a short-term option, yet the government is spending \$13 million on them. I learnt in demountables when I was a child, and that was in the 1970s. This is now 2008, in the middle of an unprecedented economic boom, and children are still learning in demountables.

The opportunity that this budget provided to increase the level of policing in the new, growing communities of the outer suburban areas was also ignored. No specific initiatives to increase policing in Mundaring were listed in the budget. This was really disappointing for me. The Serpentine-Jarrahdale police station was also ignored. As I have said in this place many times, officers at Mundijong Police Station are forced to work in substandard conditions in a building that is nearly 50 years old. Officers are required to cover a large area, which is both suburban and rural in nature. They must deal with hoon taking advantage of the remoteness of parts of the area to speed and indulge in general hoon behaviour. Officers have to deal with break-ins and vandalism, and cows on a road, all from a small, cramped, 50-year-old building. They have once again been ignored by this government, which has offered no commitment to a new police station that would offer them the conditions that they need to perform their job properly. How are these officers meant to feel knowing that their government does not value their services enough to provide them with the working conditions they need and deserve? In addition, the government is looking to change the zoning of the police station to metropolitan, which at the outset does not sound like much, but for a small police station that does all the work of a country police station to be zoned metropolitan will make it harder to attract more police officers.

This budget has also failed to invest in power supply for the hills, even though many of the towns along the scarp suffer more frequent and longer power outages than almost any other community in Perth. Three of the five suburbs in the Perth metropolitan area that are the worst affected by power outages are in the hills. In 2007 Mundaring was the second-worst affected locality, with Stoneville second and Chidlow fourth. Roleystone, Byford, Serpentine, Mundijong and Jarrahdale also suffer more frequent and longer power outages than almost any other community in Perth. This is at the time when the state government is sitting on a surplus of \$2 billion. Do we need more evidence that the state government does not care about our community? The state government needs to finally get its act together, find the priorities that the people of this state actually care about, and start investing in roads, schools, police and power supplies. I know that the people of my electorate have become fed up with the neglect they have suffered at the hands of this government and would like to see some real investment.

I would also like to touch on some of the issues in my shadow portfolio. This week is National Volunteer Week. Volunteering Western Australia is a fantastic organisation that helps to put together people, for the right reasons and in the right areas, who wish to volunteer their services. However, Volunteering Western Australia has pretty much outgrown its offices in City West Lotteries House. I was hoping that the government would be looking to enabling it to expand its offices and maybe in the future moving to new offices. This budget could have been an opportunity for the government to do that, with a booming economy, but again it has failed. I take this opportunity to thank all the people who volunteer for the fantastic job that they do not only in my community, but also in the whole of the state of Western Australia. This being National Volunteer Week, I give them special thanks.

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Another matter I would like to touch on is seniors. As the shadow spokesperson for seniors, this morning I attended the National Seniors Australia conference in Melville where I heard the concerns of an ageing population. They were hoping for a reduction in stamp duty. Although there was a reduction in stamp duty, it was across the board. National Seniors Australia members put together a wish list of what they wanted to see in this budget. They really wanted to push the fact that in an ageing community, with people downsizing from a family home to a smaller dwelling or an aged-care or retirement village, they were hoping for a reduction in stamp duty. They put together an impressive document that pointed out that they would be looking for a stamp duty rate of no more than that for a median-priced house. I thought that was reasonable. However, the state government has made a reduction across the board, not focusing on seniors. I am a member of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee, which is conducting an inquiry into a retirement village. I know that if, for some reason, people want to downsize from a two-bedroom unit to a one-bedroom unit in the same complex, they are charged exit fees and entry fees, which can be quite expensive. There must be a way in which the state government could look at this process. I guess it all comes back to the Retirement Villages Act, which needs to be looked at.

I was interested to read an article in Monday's *The West Australian* on a trail-bike strategy that has just been released. That article identified pretty much what I had spoken about the week before in this house during the debate on the road safety bill. It is calling for all off-road vehicles to be licensed, especially motorbikes. It is good to see that that report was identifying the same thing. Again I state that motorbikes, especially off-road motorbikes, are a huge problem in our community. With the booming economy, they seem to be growing in numbers. While they do not have a number plate, they cannot be identified. They are a constant problem to the community. The article also referred to allocating land for people who want to ride off-road motorbikes. Mr Acting Speaker (Mr P.B. Watson), I am guessing that in your neck of the woods, in the Albany area, a lot of people have quite large acreages of farmland. In that area it is not so much of a problem, but closer to town, in the outer metropolitan areas, such as in my constituency, with rural five and ten-acre blocks, the real problem starts to arise. It is even worse on one-acre lots where children of five or six years of age start with a very small Pee Wee motorbike. As they grow in years, so does the size of their motorbike. Neighbours are then impacted on when those motorbikes are ridden on a street and more places are found to ride them. It is an issue. I have been with rangers who have knocked on the door of some of these people. They ask where they are supposed to ride their motorbike. I tell them that they should have thought about that before they bought the motorbike. That is the issue we are dealing with at the moment. It is good to see that report, which is pretty much spot on the money. It is an issue for all of us. I do not know how we can deal with it in totality, but we will be going through the right steps in trying to licence the bikes and register the process.

I mentioned Chidlow Primary School. If I may, I will read out a short statement from the president of the parents and citizens association, who wrote to me about the problems at that school. It reads —

The Chidlow townsite and primary school is situated in pleasant rural surroundings, which helps to produce a happy productive environment for our children in their early years of schooling, however this environment is despite the cramped and sub-standard condition of some of the school buildings. The original school block, Block A was opened 30 plus years ago in 1972, and since then the school and pupils' needs have changed substantially. Most of the rooms in this building have been adapted, through necessity, for multi purpose use, resulting in less than perfect conditions for both staff and students alike. As a result of this, the P & C, and the School Council have identified the following priorities for the building.

### **SCHOOL BLOCK B**

#### **The library**

The library is contained in Block B, which was opened in 1987 and is only the size of a normal classroom, which is now much too small to adequately house the books and resources needed for our children. There is no space to expand the current resources or to establish study centres, which are especially valuable for the older students — there is no space to even group together larger tables and chairs for grouping of children. In the 1980's it could not have been envisaged that school libraries would need to have the space to house a computer bank but this is now classed as a necessity in new schools currently being constructed.

As we move into a more technological age, it is vital children have access to the tools and have the skills to use them, and the need to feel comfortable and "at home" in such an environment can only lead



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to an interest in development of reading pursuits, to the future advantage of the children in their future education.

The submission went on to discuss the sick bay —

As a parent, I would have to say that I find the sick bay totally inadequate and inappropriate for the housing of sick children. The room used is a converted storage room, and as such has no ventilation and no toilet.

It is still used for storage so there are products on the shelving extending over two walls, which must be housing dust which would be extremely detrimental for any child suffering respiratory problems such as asthma. There is no viewing window on the door, which means the door must be left open to supervise sick children until their parents can collect them. The staffroom is directly opposite so any noise made by staff during their breaks is heard by the sick child. Any confidential discussion taking place in the staffroom may also be overheard. The lack of toilet facilities is also a major worry, as the nearest toilets are far enough away that a child suffering. . . may not be able to reach them in time. In the case of a child feeling dizzy etc. it also means a person being available to supervise their trips to the toilets, to the embarrassment of the child. It also presents the possibility of such illnesses being spread to the larger school population.

#### **Interview Room**

The school has an urgent need for an interview room; at present a member of staff (usually the Deputy Principal) must vacate his office (to the detriment of his work) so that the room may be used for either a parent/teacher or teacher/student interview. Any visiting professional i.e. school nurse, psychologist etc. also must use this room, which has the effect of diminishing the importance of the services provided by these very professional people. Many parents and children find such interviews intimidating, and so for these reasons and also for issues of confidentiality a room solely designed for such a purpose, one in which all concerned can feel comfortable is absolutely necessary.

#### **Reception Area**

The reception area is extremely cramped with an inefficient layout. There is limited space for storage, too little work space especially for two people, and not enough area for all the necessary office equipment. A foyer is needed for people who are waiting, rather than have them stand (usually in the way of others) until their needs can be seen to. Security is also an issue, with cash and cheques frequently being passed to office staff to bank. It is also too small to house the photocopier, which means it must be located in the staffroom, which reduces the efficiency of the school administration staff.

#### **Classrooms in Block A**

The year seven class (arguably the most important year in the primary school system) has no way to shut out the external noises; it needs some form of sound proof partitioning. Room 4 is particularly small and needs a wall removed to help open up the class size, however this leads to another problem as this is where the children store their school bags.

#### **Toilets**

There was until recently only one toilet available for female staff. That has been increased to two cubicles, but the work carried out in installing the second one needs to be reviewed and the door to the second toilet needs to be resited. The whole toilet area needs greater ventilation and complete refurbishment, and this extends also to the children's toilets located in the same block.

#### **Staff Room**

We firmly believe the staff deserve and need an area for relaxation and recuperation, however the current staffroom also houses the photocopy machine, it is a major storage area, and is used through necessity as an area for interviewing and also special tutoring. An area with adequate personal storage and a reasonable level of comfort is well and truly deserved by our teaching and administration staff.

#### **Storage Areas**

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Plentiful storage areas are always needed in any school, and Chidlow is no exception in this regard. The storage extends right across the school, affecting all areas e.g. sick bay, staff room, library and all classrooms.

#### **Additional Issues**

These are not as urgent as the issues raised above but still important to the school. A verandah on the West Side of the school to shield students and staff from inclement weather and the high temperatures due to summer sun would be extremely beneficial. New guttering to take rainwater away from school buildings would also be helpful. The concrete paving around the old block can become slippery in wet weather . . .

#### **Summary**

In conclusion, the evidence points to a clear and pressing need for upgraded facilities in our school. The P & C, and the School Council both firmly agree that better facilities can only create long term benefits for teaching staff and students, which in turn benefit not only the school but also, society in general.

We strongly believe that the provision of a good education, and positive socialization in a pleasant and constructive environment, is vital to ensure the development of well-rounded young adults, to the benefit of all concerned.

We also firmly believe that modern schools must provide children with skills to survive in a technological world, and the cramped and limited facilities available at Chidlow Primary School are inhibiting these skills.

As we can see, there is a huge problem in the hills area—an area of steady growth. As we know, the hills are part of the urban sprawl, and as the city sprawls further, more pressure will be put on the areas of Mt Helena, Chidlow and Sawyers Valley.

I thank the Acting Speaker for the opportunity to add my contribution to the budget debate.

**MR T.G. STEPHENS (Central Kimberley-Pilbara)** [5.35 pm]: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The opportunity to —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson)**: Mr Acting Speaker, not Deputy Speaker.

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS**: Mr Acting Speaker—is that what gets you trips to China?

The budget debate presents one with a great opportunity to review the past four years of the government's program in action in one's own electorate. Of course, when one has an electorate the size of Central Kimberley-Pilbara—with an area of some 600 000 square kilometres and towns as far apart as Port Hedland, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Marble Bar, Tom Price and Paraburdoo, and the 40-plus Aboriginal communities scattered around the electorate—one would understand that a fair bit of activity is going on in that region. This activity is not only in response to the resource boom, which I think really has moved well beyond a boom and into something that is of a different order altogether. It is a complete quantum shift in the way the resource industry operates in that area. As a result, there is huge pressure on the towns and the communities located at the epicentre of the boom. At the same time, there are ongoing opportunities to respond to the backlog of needs within the Aboriginal communities across the region.

In the pre-election environment, when I was running as a candidate for the Central Kimberley-Pilbara seat, I was able to put together a list of commitments of things that we wanted to do in the electorate. I know that many people were interested in whether we would be able to work our way through that list. In a sense, the budget we are debating this week completes that process—that cycle of responding to the challenges that we mapped out for the electorate which, in turn, secured the electorate's support for the return of a Labor member in that area. My son took the opportunity of listing the various commitments and promises we made. He whacked that list behind his bed, and from time to time he has taken the opportunity to check with me about how the government is going in meeting the various commitments. Therefore, this budget is an opportunity to review some of those commitments and to note that we have successfully completed the Karlarra House aged care facility in South Hedland, which is now open and fully operational after some teething problems that followed last year's cyclone. The \$11 million hospital at Fitzroy Crossing has been completed and is operational. We were able to celebrate the launch of that facility with the Minister for Health, and what seemed like the entire Fitzroy Crossing community coming out to celebrate that event. Not so many months before that, we had opened the new Halls Creek hospital—a very significant facility for that town. In Port Hedland we made commitments for an allocation of some \$500 000 to respond to the build-up of iron ore dust in the west end of Port Hedland.

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Those funds have been allocated, and various programs have been undertaken that have started to improve the whole amenity of that end of town or, if we like, the historic precinct of Port Hedland—the original settlement.

That area is now finding a new life, now that the problem of the dust build-up has been tackled. The Pilbara Development Commission, and also industry, have assisted in that exercise and have risen to the challenge of reducing dust emissions. That has involved significant expenditure to improve the amenity of the town by locating that plant and equipment away from the town. That plant and equipment will now be located inland at the ore body areas, and that will remove those dust-creating activities from the urban population centres of Hedland and Newman.

At the other end of my electorate, a \$12 million project to build a new high school at Fitzroy Crossing is now well and truly underway as part of a very successful roll-out of significant capital works for that community. That comes on top of the investment in the new hospital. It also comes simultaneously with the commitment that is identified in this budget for the construction of a new swimming pool in that community. That is a new commitment that many members of the house will welcome. That \$5.5 million construction program will be fully funded by the state government and forms part of an expanded contract by the Department of Housing and Works with the Royal Lifesaving Society to operate and manage that pool.

Another welcome project in my electorate is the completion of a \$6 million upgrade to Hedland Senior High School. That school is facing extraordinary challenges from not only the large number of students attending the school, but also the difficulty of attracting and retaining staff in a community like the Pilbara and a town like Hedland. The school is well led by the current principal, Carolyn Cook, who is wrestling this year not only with the completion of the upgrade of the high school, but also the awful aftermath of a major fire at the school at the beginning of the year that gutted the staffroom and the library and destroyed the computer room.

A couple of weeks ago, at the start of the school term, I visited the school expecting to see the staff and the students occupying the newly renovated and restored facilities following that disastrous fire. However, I was very disappointed to find that Hedland Senior High School is still waiting for that job to be completed. I was also very dismayed to see the devastation that such a fire can cause, and to smell the horrific aroma that is permeating the school from the wanton destruction of the much needed facilities at that school. The fire was incredibly disruptive, and it is placing enormous pressure on the teachers and the students. The school is still waiting for tenders to be let, contracts to be engaged in and work to be done to bring Hedland Senior High School back to its destiny as a glorious facility for that community that has been upgraded by the allocation of funds from previous budgets. That caused me to wonder whether a school in the metropolitan area that was closer to the focus and attention of the head offices of government would languish for so long and without a full response to the disaster of such a fire. However, I guess people in the Pilbara, living at the epicentre of the boom, know how difficult it is to get architects in, drawings done, contracts let and work done. People in the Pilbara are not strangers to the hardships that arise from living at the epicentre of the boom. They are experiencing in their own homes the difficulty of finding tradespeople who are prepared to do any job, let alone a major school renovation. The people of Hedland are showing remarkable patience. I hope that facility will be completed soon. I commend the staff at that school, and I express my amazement at the conditions under which they are working, with the horrific aroma from the fire and from the glue that has been used in the new computer room, which needed to be occupied immediately after it was completed.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** Is this in Hedland?

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Yes. It is a very nice new facility, but enormous challenges have arisen simultaneously with this awful fire that occurred at that school.

Another challenge in my community that has been met is a commitment of \$8.4 million to upgrade South Hedland Police Station. Some 52 police officers operate out of that police station. That police station is of enormous importance to a community that needs to deal with the challenge of ensuring community safety and dealing with the conflicts that emerge in a region like Hedland, in which the very affluent are living alongside the very impoverished sections of the community, which often leads to clashes about property, and occasionally also to incidents of assault and home invasion. More police facilities are desperately needed in that area. As I have said, the funds have been allocated. However, the task again is to get the contract let in a town which is at the epicentre of the boom, and in which it is very difficult to get people and companies that are prepared to embark upon this type of work. Fortunately, the commitment by the government to reopen Port Hedland Police Station has been met, and that facility is now operational and supporting the services of the police in the Hedland area.

The people of my electorate are now benefitting from the improved bus service that operates between Port Hedland and South Hedland. That was as a result of the intervention of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, who

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has been a great friend to the Hedland community and has responded in her portfolio to the great challenges that exist in my area.

My list takes me now to the other end of my electorate, where this government has made a commitment to build multifunction police facilities at Balgo and Warmun. Those facilities have now been completed. I note that as a result of the one vote, one value legislation, Jigalong will come out of the electorate of my colleague the member for Murchison-Eyre and will go into the seat of Pilbara. There is also a multipurpose police facility in Jigalong. The facility at Warmun is not far from the recently completed powerhouse that is operated by Horizon Power. That is a fully integrated facility that will enable the Warmun community to take its place, just like any other community of its size around the state, and enjoy all the advantages of being connected to a state-owned utility such as Horizon, with a power supply that does not depend on the vagaries of funding allocations from federal sources. That powerhouse is of tremendous importance.

I am also delighted to note that in recent weeks the Warmun community has enjoyed the official opening of the swimming pool. I was delighted to attend the opening of that pool, along with my colleague the federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, and accompanied by the state Minister for Housing and Works and the member for Kimberly. I was very pleased to have the opportunity of celebrating that event at the Warmun community, where these facilities are now in place.

I note that at Balgo I have not been successful in getting too much government funding for a youth program that I was determined to get for that community. I think we got about \$15 000 worth of funds from the state. However, I was very pleased to extract from both Caritas Australia and St John of God Health Care campus at Subiaco a cocktail of funding that has produced a full-blown youth worker program at the Balgo Wirrimanu community south of Halls Creek, which is having an enormously positive impact on and providing enormous benefit to the community in the Tjurabalan area. I made a commitment that I would work with the community to secure funds for the opportunity to create a youth worker program and I am delighted that it has been achieved. I am disappointed only that funding from the state was significant but relatively small. I appreciate those funds. I know that funds for a youth worker from state government programs are not easy to come by; however, I was able to find an alternative source for them.

Another part of the budget process was to secure an allocation of funds for stage 2 of the Tom Price to Karratha road, which is now well and truly underway and will no doubt come up for an official opening in the following two months. An amount of \$81 million was allocated to stage 2, which will result in the widening of the bitumen from Karratha heading not all the way to Tom Price but at least nearly as far as the Millstream turnoff. That will leave a big gap in the middle of that road which is yet to be completed. I take the opportunity of calling on the Treasurer to make sure that the government is well disposed towards this project. Enormous pressure will be placed on the two ends of the road as traffic from the resource sector, the many visitors to the region and the local community especially heads along the bitumen only to find a huge gap in the middle of the road yet to be completed. Interestingly for me it has been entirely state government funding that has gone into getting that road to this point, despite the fact that the major resource company in the area, Rio Tinto's Pilbara Iron Ore operations, now draws intensely off the magnificent piece of bitumen at the Tom Price end. There is an enormous amount of road traffic from Rio, with various vehicles tearing out of town heading north to the various satellite ore bodies, to Brockman and to other ore bodies at the coast, yet there is no contribution at all from the resource sector towards that road. The road will be of enormous strategic significance to that sector as the areas of mining activity move further to the west. I note with great interest that Rio in that area has plans to relocate its own hub of aviation away from the township of Paraburdoo to Tom Price.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** It is good to note that Rio will soon take advantage of the relocation of the airport from Paraburdoo out of Tom Price towards the coast a little, not far from the pathway of the highway that will eventually find its way to the township of Karratha. I hope that the state government will find ways of collaborating with Pilbara Iron Ore especially and other resource industry players in that area on the completion of that piece of bitumen all the way from Tom Price through to Karratha. It will provide a connection between those communities and the regional centre that Karratha represents, including shopping opportunities, the establishment of a hospital and the various aspects of life that a coastal community brings to the inland populations of Tom Price and Paraburdoo. It is well past the time for completion of this road with not only the funds that have so far been secured for it but also additional funds. I do not expect the funds to flow simply from the state. I think there is a place for the state to leverage funds out of the federal government for a project of this sort that will have enormous strategic importance and will inevitably be utilised by the resource sector to produce growing returns for the whole nation, as well as the resource companies themselves that operate in that

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area and their shareholders. Therefore, a tripartite arrangement is needed to complete that road. That is one project that I will be calling upon my colleagues in government to secure for the Pilbara community.

While talking about roads and election commitments, I am reminded that at the other end of the electorate we made a commitment to allocate funds to lift the amenity of the Tanami Road—the beautiful track that goes from Halls Creek across the border towards Alice Springs. I have been pleased during this term in Parliament to celebrate—again with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Minister MacTiernan—the opening of the Sturt Creek crossing. It is a very important crossing that secures the raising of the road for traffic to more reliably pass down the very busy Tanami track to Halls Creek, servicing not only the Tjurabalan communities of Bililuna, Mulan and Wirrimanu, but also providing a linkage through to Alice and connecting with South Australia. It becomes a major freight road there for supplies going into the Kimberley and it is an alternative route for eastern states' traffic that might otherwise be tempted to head to the Kimberley by going around the top and wasting a lot of mileage in that exercise. Even some traffic from Perth finds it more convenient to go via South Australia and then head on through Alice to the Tanami track into the south eastern end of the Kimberley. The funds that have been allocated as part of that pre-election commitment to the Tanami Road have been, therefore, fully expended and the road has reached new levels of amenity; however, as always, there is more work to be done.

Again, on this Cook's tour of the Central Kimberley-Pilbara electorate, I cannot help but take delight in the work that has gone on in Port Hedland to improve the amenity of the community through enhancement schemes. Collaboration between BHP Billiton, the town of Port Hedland and the state government has resulted in the construction of a pathway from one end of the coastal road around Sutherland Street all the way from the hospital towards Cooke Point. It is a tremendous pathway that was completed as part of the enhancement scheme and also integrated into plans to fully deliver the turtle interpretive centre that we committed ourselves to in the pre-election commitment. That commitment resulted in funds being allocated through the development commission for a collaboration around that project. The project is not yet completed but it is well and truly underway. Another major project in that area to the west of Port Hedland Regional Hospital, east of Acton Street effectively, is the work that has been done on the deep sewerage infill program. Some \$4.4 million has been allocated towards that project and more funds are allocated in the current budget to expand that opportunity for land to be fully utilised to respond to the residential challenges facing the Hedland community as a result of the growing pressures of the resource sector.

Some \$11.3 million has been allocated to accelerate the construction of government employee housing in the Pilbara region and ongoing works to upgrade current housing and establish new buildings. This is a major challenge and a priority for the future of the Pilbara. This provides the state government with an opportunity to lift the level of funding well beyond the amount of \$11.3 million, which will be spent over this period, to a very significant allocation. The establishment of the Pilbara Area Consultative Committee, under the chairmanship of the Treasurer, is an important structure that will put pressure on all three spheres of government as well as on industry to find appropriate responses to the housing challenge in the region. That pressure will particularly ensure that government employees—teachers, police officers and people who work in hospitals—are adequately housed so that when they are attracted into the region they can be successfully retained to deliver the much-needed services of the entire population of the region. The securing of those funds is an important work in progress and it is one that must be undertaken with great seriousness by the Treasurer at the earliest opportunity.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**Mr T.G. STEPHENS:** Before the dinner suspension, I was taking the opportunity to use the debate about the budget to describe the opportunities that have come into the area of central Kimberley-Pilbara as a fulfilment of the pre-election commitments that were made nearly four years ago in the lead-up to the last state election. Through the budget processes that have been unleashed since the last state election, we have seen a very significant injection of funds that have dramatically improved the amenity of the various communities, towns and population centres of the Pilbara and Kimberley regions. However, there is still more work to be done, and despite the fact that in the current budget additional funds are allocated to government employee accommodation within the regional areas, in particular the Pilbara region, there is an enormous challenge for funds to flow as they have never flowed before to meet the accommodation needs of government employees such as teachers, health workers, hospital employees, doctors, nurses, police officers and the other government employees across the north west, and specifically in the Pilbara and the Kimberley. That is an incomplete work in progress. The Treasurer needs to take the first opportunity to advance additional funds for government employee accommodation. I have every confidence that the government will find early opportunities to do that. In the months ahead, there will be many points at which unexpected windfall gains will come the way of the Western

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Australian community and go into the Western Australian coffers. I hope that one of the early calls on those additional funds will be specifically for government employee accommodation in the Pilbara.

I go back to the delivery of the election commitments of government. We have seen the completion of the swimming pool and aquatic centre at Halls Creek. State funds of \$2.9 million were put together for a complex involving almost \$9 million in capital expenditure from all the various funding sources. Despite its successful completion and a beautiful facility having been positioned in that community, it has had reduced opportunities to operate because of the difficulties of attracting suitably qualified swimming pool managers to stay in the Halls Creek community and assist it with its ambitions to reward the youngsters attending school under the no school, no pool program that I have previously described to the house as being of great significance in locations such as that. Fortunately, the Halls Creek community has finally been able to attract a fully qualified swimming pool manager from the Northern Territory, who now has the chance to deploy that magnificent facility in that town to improve the educational opportunities for the kids, to give them a real reward for keeping connected to their school education, and through that school education to hopefully move into training and on to employment along pathways that will lead them to take their place as proud Western Australians enjoying the economic benefits that should be theirs by birthright as Western Australians. That is what our generation has come to expect; a lot of prosperity comes our way. That is a remarkable contrast to the situation of our predecessors—our parents and grandparents—who had different sets of economic circumstances altogether. However, the current generation of Western Australians is very lucky indeed. It has prosperity that should be shared, including among the regional and remote residents of Western Australia in the Aboriginal communities that make up those regions who have the chance of enjoying, through employment, the economic benefits that flow from resource projects.

The final point of the pre-election commitments was the commitments associated with port developments. In Port Hedland, I am delighted to see that many upgrades have been completed. Work has now commenced to expand the Utah Point facility, which will be of great value to the resource industry as it continues to rapidly expand. It will be one of many expansions that will soon give the port at Port Hedland the status of being the largest tonnage volume port in the world. With the expansion programs coming on line for Port Hedland, in excess of 300 million tonnes of iron ore and other commodities will soon be going through that port, which will make it the largest tonnage port anywhere in the globe.

Much has been done, and I am proud of the work that my government colleagues have done in the past four years that I have been the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara. However, that is not to say that there is not more to be done. The glass is filling, but it is still a half-empty glass. Major projects must be done. We have some land release programs in places such as Pretty Pool and South Hedland that are much needed for residential accommodation in the Pilbara region. However, alongside that, there are still more work facilities to be done.

I can see that my son is starting to ring me on my mobile phone. I will not answer it, Madam Acting Speaker (Ms K. Hodson-Thomas). However, he will be one who will take great delight in the fact that I have discharged the pre-election commitments that I made to the people of my electorate in the campaigns that he worked on in the north west in the lead-up to the most recent state election.

**MR G.M. CASTRILLI (Bunbury)** [7.07 pm]: Not only as the member for Bunbury, but also as a long-time resident of Bunbury, I was not really impressed by this year's state budget. The budget failed to recognise not only the great and fundamental needs of the community, but also the significant contribution that the south west makes to the state economy. It has been stated that the south west produces about 14 per cent of the state's gross domestic product, yet in real terms the return in the budget to the south west is just seven per cent. The state Labor government promoted its \$515 million package for the south west, but when we take out the key water and power supply projects that are designed to benefit the state, only \$46 million remains, and that is 0.6 per cent of the state budget. The projects lumped into that \$515 million package include \$164 million for the Binningup desalination plant and \$57 million for the Muja power station upgrade. Although these projects will have spin-off effects for our community with population increases, and for local businesses, they will also boost our need for additional capital works expenditure to allow us to cope with the influx of people. Our schools, roads and hospitals are all being put under further pressure, yet this budget does not recognise the current pressure on, let alone the future severe crisis that looms for, the south west. Our health system, our disabilities sector, our ageing schools, our road networks and our public housing stocks are overburdened.

However, before I go on to detail my concerns about some critical deficiencies in this budget from a south west perspective, I want to give credit where credit is due. I wish to thank the state Labor government for finally recognising the need for a third full-time magistrate for what is Western Australia's most overburdened court. Together with members of the Law Society of WA in the south west, I have been calling for a third magistrate for Bunbury for several years. The lobbying came about because of the impact that the extensive waiting lists were having on victims, on justice and on the families who were experiencing emotional upheavals in the Family

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Court system. It is fair to say that our courts have reached crisis point. Therefore, along with the \$700 000 allocation, I urge the Attorney General to ensure that there are no delays in making the appointment. The criminal trial dates for this year in the Bunbury Magistrates Courts are booked out. Bookings are now being taken for 2009. The average wait time for a full-day criminal trial in Bunbury is 54 weeks and there is a 42-week wait for a half-day trial. In Perth, full-day criminal trials are delayed by only 20 weeks; the delays in Bunbury are nearly three times those of Perth. The urgent appointment of another magistrate will ease a large portion of the pressure on our courts and result in less pain and more justice for victims. In the budget papers, it is claimed that waiting times should be reduced to less than 15 weeks, and I will be keeping an eye on that to ensure that that outcome is achieved. There remains a need for a separate Family Court registrar, but this is an important and welcome first step.

I was pleased to see the confirmation in the budget of the additional money to complete the renovations of Newton Moore Senior High School to an acceptable level. The original budget was \$9.5 million in 2005 and that was nowhere enough to complete the works that were identified as needed and were promised. The rising building costs meant that the project had to be scaled back to fit the budget. The minister vehemently refused my request in this chamber for additional funds, but it was great to see that he finally caved in after protests from angry parents, students and teachers. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the school community for standing up and being counted.

While I am on the subject of education, I would like to move onto an area that has some displeasing aspects—the commitments to Bunbury. There is nothing new in this year's budget. It is a continuation of the finalisation of existing projects only. There was funding to complete the new Manea College, but ageing schools were ignored. The minister will of course cut some shiny red ribbons in time for the election, but in the meantime our ageing schools sink further into a state of disrepair. In particular, I am disappointed there was no money allocated in the budget for the Bunbury Primary School. Under the Lighthouse project, a four-phase upgrade was planned and the first stage was funded in 2005-06. However, as was the case with Newton Moore, the project had to be scaled back and only part of phase 1 was completed, at a cost of \$450 000. I was interested to see that in the promotional budget material the state Labor government labelled this project as completed. That is news to me and especially to the school's P&C. This is a school, like most schools in Bunbury, that is ageing, is unsafe and is dysfunctional in many aspects. The main part of the school was built in the 1960s and ongoing maintenance has been neglected.

The state of the Bunbury Primary School is not unlike that of the Withers Primary School. At Withers Primary School the small administration area is a disgrace and I feel for the staff who have to work in it each day. The administration area has one small room, which is used for time-out, by the school psychologist when she visits, parent interviews, storage and school nurse visits. There is no sick bay, so unwell or injured students sit on a chair in the entrance to the office. On top of that, there are no disabled toilets at the school. One student in a wheelchair has to be taken and carried to the toilet. If these problems are not enough to cope with, during the school holidays the school's demountable classroom, which was used as a music room, was taken to be used for the new behaviour unit in Perth. This happened despite the fact that Withers Primary School prides itself on its successful specialist music program. What amazes me is that the minister acknowledges that a shortage of teachers is looming, yet he expects them to continue to put up with these appalling conditions.

Out of the \$7.6 billion budget, only \$1.2 million has been set aside for Bunbury's ailing health system. We may have the bricks and mortar, but we have dangerous deficiencies in our health system and there are disturbing disparities between Bunbury and Perth. Bunbury Regional Hospital's emergency department is splitting at the seams and this is putting patients' lives at risk. Our child health services are so lacking that some children I have met are suffering permanent disabilities because of the extensive delays in seeing specialists and allied health professionals. An eight-month wait to see an ear, nose and throat specialist for a child with hearing difficulties is a disgrace. I do not believe it is fair to give under \$1.2 million to Bunbury's health system in a budget of \$7.6 billion.

Key election promises that have not been delivered by this budget include a cancer treatment centre and an intensive care unit. I am extremely disappointed that the completion date of the radiotherapy facility for Bunbury and the south west has once again been pushed out. This government's 2006-07 budget shows that the new radiotherapy facility for the South West Health Campus was an ongoing project from 2005, with a completion date of 2008-09, at a total cost of \$8.5 million. The 2007-08 budget pushed this completion date out to 2009-10 and now, once again, this current budget sees it further pushed out, to 2010-11. The only dollars that have been actually spent since the centre first appeared in the budget back in 2005-06 is a measly \$200 000 and that, I suspect, was for a business plan that was announced in February 2007. The most action I have seen on this project has been the buck-passing between the state and federal governments. Even after the Minister for South

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 13 May 2008]

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West announced on 3 October 2007 on ABC radio that work would begin immediately on the radiotherapy unit, there has been no action. The strain and the trauma associated with this treatment is bad enough for those involved without them having the added burden of having to leave their families, their homes and their support systems. For many cancer sufferers and their families who currently must travel to Perth for radiation treatment, this facility cannot come quickly enough.

In this budget, only \$800 000 has been set aside for the cancer centre and just \$300 000 has been promised for the intensive care unit. Both these facilities are needed now. It is ludicrous that the Bunbury Regional Hospital, the hospital for the south west region, does not have an ICU. I understand that there are numerous surgical procedures that could otherwise be performed by a specialist in Bunbury, but the people involved are currently being transferred onto the waiting lists in Perth purely because they require ICU attention for some after-care treatment. There are far too many transfers occurring from Bunbury Regional Hospital to metropolitan hospitals that could be avoided if Bunbury had an ICU.

We have heard much about the overburdened and under-funded Royal Flying Doctor Service in recent times; in fact we heard it spoken about here today. The inaction of this government in providing the promised ICU in Bunbury is really placing a further unnecessary burden on this vital service. Bunbury is the largest source of inter-hospital transfers by the RFDS in the state; it now surpasses all other regional centres for such transfers. The large proportion of transfers by the RFDS are critical-care patients requiring an RFDS medical retrieval team and their destination is often intensive care units in Perth teaching hospitals. The people of the south west do not want to travel to Perth to obtain services. They need and deserve facilities in the south west. It just goes to show how city-centric this government is.

Funding for critical child health services, such as an infant hearing test program in regional Western Australia, is also missing. I am aware that the business plan for the implementation of this program is being reviewed. However, by delaying the introduction of this early intervention, hundreds of babies will go unscreened and will be at risk of severe and lasting language impairment with lifelong consequences. In my view and in the view of many people it is unacceptable that only metropolitan hospitals currently offer this screening.

The major areas of health, education and policing are struggling but the disability sector is in a league of its own. In my mind it is one of the most underfunded sectors in our community. This sector is one of the most vulnerable and in most need of our support. People with disabilities are not receiving the services they need to survive. Carers are at breaking point. Some of them have been to hell and back. All people have to do is talk to a few of them to understand how they feel and where they have been. They are constantly calling out for help. Past governments have failed people with disabilities and their families. While I acknowledge the increase of \$20 million in funding in this budget, it is a drop in the ocean compared with what is needed. The combined application process is grossly underfunded and the demands are ever increasing. Figures show that 793 applications were received in the latest round of funding for 2007-08, of which only 49 were successful. What happens to the other 744 people and their families? We are told that those who are rejected are automatically considered a priority for the next round. When the numbers are stacked up so high against these people, getting acceptance through the CAP is an absolute lottery. It is easy to say the number 744—it is just a number—until we meet one of those 744 people and talk to them. These people are not heading for crisis; they are already in crisis. The carers are broken, living in dangerous situations, risking injury, risking further suffering from other members of the family and have no life of their own.

What about the people with disabilities? They certainly deserve more. Bunbury desperately needs an accommodation facility for young people requiring high care, for those with acquired brain injury or disabilities with high level health issues and for those with degenerative diseases. The south west has an above average number of sufferers of Huntington's disease due to the hereditary nature of this disease. The only facility available for Huntington's sufferers is in Perth, meaning that one would have to be successful in the CAP funding and then be lucky enough to find an empty bed. That is not likely. Even if this was to occur, sufferers are dislocated from their families for the remainder of their deteriorating lives. I ask members to imagine the heartache of not being able to regularly visit their wives, husbands or siblings knowing that the outcome is death and the only thing unknown is how long one has to live. I also ask members to imagine being a patient and not being able to have their family visit during their remaining time. This is similar to those with multiple sclerosis in the south west who reach a stage where they require full high level care. They have no option but to go into an aged care facility or to be dislocated from their loved ones and moved to the city. I understand that it is difficult to plan for people with an acquired brain injury but for those with degenerative diseases, the outcome and the need is known and we can plan for the future. This has not happened. We have a great need for facilities in the south west for young people requiring high care accommodation. It is not acceptable to have suitable facilities only in the city. I urge this government and all those that follow to give the disability sector the recognition it

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deserves in the immediate future, to provide funding to construct a facility in the south west and provide appropriate recurrent funding. For me, this is a desperate need.

I want to talk about Homeswest and housing and works. While the capital works program for housing and works is \$1.3 billion, \$217 million has been set aside for the community housing program and construction and purchase of homes programs for 2008-09.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** It appears that the announcement made by the Minister for South West when he was in Bunbury last Friday about 93 houses for the south west is a combination of additional and carryover from 2007-08. I am interested to know how many additional units will be purchased or constructed in 2008-09, how many are carried over from 2007-08 and where they will be located. This small increase will not even scratch the surface. It clearly shows that the government is not in touch with those who are doing it tough in our communities. This small increase is basically just a replacement for what this government has taken away. Instead of increasing public housing stocks during its time in power, the government has reduced them. In September 2002 there were 1 194 Homeswest houses in Bunbury, yet last year there were just 1 128, a reduction of 66. Another concern is that late last year 42 Homeswest homes in Bunbury were vacant. Many of them were vacant for more than 21 months. There is no excuse for that. Imagine being a single mother facing the prospect of homelessness only to discover that 66 Homeswest houses disappeared off the list and another 42 are laying idle. Or imagine the life of a pensioner who has worked and paid taxes all his or her life having no safety net when he or she needs some help. I have spoken to such pensioners who fear a life on the streets. Their concerns are warranted. In the south west alone, more than 1 070 people are on the waiting list, which is anything up to four years long. The priority waiting list is anywhere up to six months long. As one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, we need more homes. Families and pensioners are being forced out of their private rental homes as rents soar. This token increase will not even keep pace.

I was pleased to see there will be road safety improvements on South Western Highway from Donnybrook to Bridgetown, with work to be carried out in reconstructing shoulders and widening seals, and the completion of Muir Highway. I was bitterly disappointed that at least no commitment was made in the budget papers to stage 2 of the Bunbury port access road and stage 1 of the Bunbury outer ring road. The project has been talked about for nearly 20 years. I understand that there is a commitment of federal and state funding for this project to the tune of \$170 million but no commitment in the budget, not even in the preamble. We will just wait to see what happens with that. An amount of \$22 million has been committed to stage 1 of the port access road. I hope it will commence in the 2008-09 financial year, bearing in mind that parts of it are in conflict with the greater Bunbury region scheme. The amendments to that scheme have to be made quickly to avoid further delays. All stages of the port access road and the outer ring road are very important to Bunbury and its future development, and also to the south west. It is essential that the pressure from Bunbury's main feeder roads is relieved by diverting traffic around the city.

In 1994, the Court government committed \$800 million to a 10-year program to rid thousands of homes from aging septic tanks. Fourteen years later, thousands of homes still do not have deep sewerage. These delays are causing problems with developments and it is possible that leaks from the crumbling tanks are causing environmental damage in our waterways. The program has been further reduced in this year's budget with the government allocating \$20 million compared with the \$30 million that was allocated in last year's budget. That figure is in stark contrast with the \$96 million that was committed in 1999. What concerns me most is the Bunbury share of the \$20 million allocation, which is \$206 000. How many houses can be connected to deep sewerage for \$206 000? I suspect not many.

In assessing the sport and recreation capital works allocation to the south west, I ask the Labor government whether it is the case that only city people play or watch sport. If this budget is anything to go by, that appears to be the case. The government has allocated \$147 million to the construction of the Perth arena, \$77.8 million for the Perry Lakes redevelopment project and \$76.9 million for a stadium at Kitchener Park. However, there is no allocation for Bunbury. The City of Bunbury has identified the need for a \$2 million upgrade of Hands Oval. However, there is no funding in the budget for such an upgrade. Compared with what has been allocated for sporting projects in Perth, that \$2 million is a drop in the ocean. I do not know how many members have been to Hands Oval, which is a major sporting venue in the south west. I know that the member for Collie-Wellington has been there many times, as have I. The members who have been there will be aware of its poor state. There is a critical need for a new and functional grandstand and for an upgrade of the toilets and change rooms. The oval's surface must also be redeveloped. We should be fostering participation in sport in regional areas. The ongoing neglect of sport and recreation in regional Western Australia is sending the wrong message to young people.

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**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Come and live in the western suburbs. The government is building a huge sporting complex in the western suburbs that no-one wants!

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** Member for Cottesloe, convince the government to come to Bunbury; we will have them all!

In a state with a 15 per cent obesity rate, we must invest in regional facilities and projects to encourage, not dissuade, people from participating in sports.

**MR P.B. WATSON (Albany — Parliamentary Secretary)** [7.34 pm]: I congratulate the government on its budget. Once again, Albany has been looked after. Albany is a very progressive place. In the seven years that I have been the local member, giant strides have been made in not only Albany, but also the outer region. In this year's budget \$7.4 million has been allocated to the continuation of the waterfront development and \$13 million to water projects. A lot of people think that it continually rains in Albany; however, as has been discovered in Denmark, water availability is an issue. The budget includes \$750 000 for the Albany Port Authority. One of the unsung heroes of Albany is Brad Williamson, the chief executive officer of the Albany Port Authority. He and the board do a tremendous job. They started shipping grain and now they ship woodchips. Once the Grange Resources Ltd project is underway, the port will receive sludge from the mine at Wellstead.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** He is a very good young guy who has done an excellent job in the Pilbara.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** At the moment, he is having a break because his father recently passed away. He will be back soon.

The government has allocated \$4.3 million to the upgrade of Albany Residential College, which looks after people throughout the region, and \$500 000 to the Albany fire brigade. The old fire station definitely needs an upgrade. It is great that that is happening. The government has also allocated \$4.8 million to Albany Regional Hospital as part of its \$50 million redevelopment. The plans for an upgrade of the maternity and casualty sections are being drafted. The budget includes \$25.8 million as part of the construction of the \$50 million entertainment centre and \$180 million for Grange Resources, which has been struggling to get finance. The government will commit \$180 million over the next 10 years to help it —

**Mr M.P. Murray:** Did you get anything for shark eradication?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** That is an interesting comment, member for Collie-Wellington. Since making a comment about Albany's shark problem on tonight's news, I have received 10 emails calling for them not to be killed. The sharks have been attracted to the harbour because of the big schools of salmon and because a dead dolphin has been floating close to shore. We do not generally see white pointers in Albany, although there are a few in some lawyers' offices! White pointers have not been seen in the harbour for a long time. If the sharks continue to hang around after the salmon and dolphin have gone, we will have a problem.

I have received many letters from students in my area. A letter from Maddison Mann, who is a student at Yakamia Primary School, reads —

Dear Mr Watson . . . ,

Hello, my name is Maddison Mann and I'm a year 7 student at Yakamia Primary School. For the start of this term we have been learning about expositions, and one of the topics was whaling. We found out the horrible things that the Japanese have been doing to these calm and gentle mammals that roam our oceans. Through out the process of learning about whaling we have all found out some horrifying and disgusting news about the whaling.

So what I am asking you Mr Watson, is can you please help put a stop to what is happening all around us. We would very much appreciate it if you could talk to the Parliament about this.

That is what I am doing now. It continues —

If we don't end this now then the whales will no longer be en-dangered, they will be EXTINCT!

**Ms S.E. Walker:** What is Kevin Rudd doing about it?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I am only passing on a message from one of my constituents. The following students also wrote letters: Jayden Douglas, Ethan Lesueur, Dalton Murray, Curtis Stephens, Caillie Carpenter, Tamara Ditchburn, Estelle Walker, Lachlan Dowsett, Jason Attwell, Aaron Sharp, Michael Gibbs, Tegan Stallebrass, Shannon McKeaig, Matthew Palfrey, Bill Haynes, Sarah Burridge, Annalise North, Tahni Edwards and Henry Hexter. These young people will probably be leaders in our community in the near future. They are making a stand. I am proud to relay their message to Parliament.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Terry Waldron; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr Tom Stephens;  
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At a recent cabinet visit to Albany, 117 people attended the one-on-one meetings with ministers. The meetings allowed them to express their issues to the ministers. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure opened the pedestrian bridge that links the central business district with the rest of Albany. On the day that she opened it, the QE2 was visiting Albany. People on the ship were able to embark and use the link to reach the city.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Did you have a stall set up?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** No, but I am pretty sure that the member for Hillarys will have his barrow if he does not get pre-selected!

The bridge marks the completion of stage 1 of the project. Stage 2 is underway with the realignment and reconstruction of Princess Royal Drive. Tenders have been advertised to build the civil works on the eastern side of the jetty. The site of the Waterfront Hotel will deliver a quality hotel and a restaurant, so short-stay accommodation and bar and conference facilities will be on the market by the middle of next year. The Carpenter government has invested \$76 million in the project, which is expected to attract \$60 million in private investment and generate up to \$400 million in economic activity by 2020. This will make Albany a better place in which to live and raise a family, because it will provide jobs and an exciting entertainment and recreational hub. The Premier and the Minister for Water Resources recently opened a 25-megalitre water storage tank on Mt Clarence, which was the final project in the \$50 million upgrade of Albany's water supply infrastructure.

The Premier and the Minister for Education and Training turned the sod on the \$17.68 million upgrade to the Albany Residential College to cater for an extra 90 students and to improve the college's recreational and dining areas. The young people who attend this college come from regional areas that do not have schools or facilities close to where they live, so they come to the college to stay. It will be a tremendous asset once it is upgraded. I was on the college board for a while and I know that the overcrowding was getting out of hand. Now the college will have great facilities for these young people who have to leave home at a rather young age. It is great that we can have such a good facility for them. The upgrade will enable the college to provide facilities for students with disabilities and will incorporate new information technology, including fibre optic and data points in students' rooms.

The Treasurer opened the Great Southern Regional Buying Centre, which will help local businesses secure government contracts and help keep government spending in our region. The centre will also encourage local suppliers to bid for government contracts and help them in that process.

The Minister for Energy announced the doubling of the number of solar schools in regional areas, with Spencer Park Primary School being one of the successful applicants in the latest round of funding.

The Minister for Child Protection handed over a \$100 000 cheque to the Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre for the establishment of the Albany teenage parenting centre to provide parents up to 25 years old with essential parenting skills to help those parents nurture their child's social and emotional development. I attended the opening of the centre and I saw some mothers who need this sort of assistance. It is great that the government can provide that assistance.

All this demonstrates the state government's ongoing commitment to regional communities and shows that it is putting money into the regions and sharing the benefits of a strong economy.

I also mention local singer and guitarist Sarah Gamble, who has proved to country music lovers throughout Western Australia that she has what it takes to be a star. The Albany Senior High School student recently won the 2008 WA country music junior vocalist award at the Boyup Brook Country Music Festival held earlier this month. Sarah is only 16 years of age. She sent in a CD recorded by former fellow ASHS student Daniel Martin. Daniel Martin is a young man who will go a long way. It would not surprise me to see him in this place when he gets older. I am sure that he will sit on the government side because he is a good supporter of the local member!

During Country Week, five players in the under-16 and under-18 boys and girls basketball sides were awarded a place in the all-stars team. Jake Grimshaw has had a fantastic season and this form saw him make the under-18 all-stars side. Michael Colbung and Jake Loutheran topped off a weekend of very good basketball to be selected as under-16 all-stars. Tessa Maroni won selection in the under-16 all-stars and Erin Hetherington won selection in the under-18 all-stars.

I congratulate the City of Albany turf curators, Brett Wolfe and Steve Ditchburn, along with the Collingwood Park ground manager, Bluey Lockhart, and many others who contributed to the ground and the whole venue being in pristine condition for the Collingwood versus Eagles game. Brett Turpin, the WA country Auskick ambassador and member of the NAB Challenge organising committee, had his business, Turps Steel

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 13 May 2008]

p2862c-2909a

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Terry Waldron; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr Tom Stephens; Acting Speaker; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Peter Watson; Deputy Speaker; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Mick Murray; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr Terry Redman; Mrs Judy Hughes

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Fabrications, construct the 12-metre high AFL standard goal posts for the match. Unfortunately, his efforts did not enable Collingwood to win!

In the outstanding results for 2007 for Albany Senior High School, Kaggen Ausma was awarded a certificate of excellence; Aaron Byrne was awarded a certificate of excellence; Allison Higgs was awarded a certificate of excellence; Rechelle Sheridan was awarded a certificate of excellence and achieved a tertiary entrance rank of 99.05; Neil McNulty Cooper was awarded a subject exhibition for chemistry and a certificate of distinction in chemistry; Daniel Martin was awarded a subject exhibition for music in society and a wholly school assessed certificate in music in society; Matthew Gunn was awarded a wholly school assessed certificate in food production; Jarred Pedro was awarded a wholly school assessed certificate in senior science; Nicole Speight was awarded WSA/VET dux; and Tom Walmsley was awarded tertiary entrance examination dux and achieved a TER of 99.25. In the outstanding results for 2007 for North Albany Senior High School, Matthew Vermeulen was awarded a certificate of excellence, achieved a TER of 99.5 and was awarded TEE dux. Congratulations to all these students on achieving these outstanding results. Thanks must also go to their parents, teachers and principals for their support and encouragement throughout the final school year.

The Albany swimming team had a successful 2008 WA country swimming championships and Sunsmart state championships. Reece Child won a silver medal in the 200-metre backstroke at the state championships and followed that up with six gold medals and one bronze medal at the country championships. Jake Smith-Wright also competed at the state championships and won silver medals in the 50-metre and 100-metre freestyle for 14-year-olds. Jake then had a brilliant country championship, winning eight gold medals. Other swimmers to win medals at the country championships were Brett Deadman, Addison Dew, Kiara Atkins, Michael Offerman, Jae Torley, Jemma Pouwelsen, Jazmine McKechnie, Jay Robb and Oakley Dew.

Congratulations go to Katherine Hancock, who made history by being the first local woman to win the Cullity's The Laminex Group Albany Classic, Albany's premier triathlon event, in a time of 2 hours, 20 minutes and 31 seconds. Katherine is new to the sport and looks as though she has a bright future, as she will only improve over time. The first local to finish in the men's event was Adrian Nicholl. Albany triathlon president, Gerard Cameron, and his committee did a fantastic job of putting the event together and making sure that it ran smoothly on the day. This year it attracted 120 triathletes from around the region and Perth to compete. The event has really grown over the past few years and is now attracting more and more athletes from around the state.

In our sports star of the year awards, junior winner, Tessa Maroni, had a fantastic year in athletics that saw her win a gold medal at the West Australian Little Athletics championships and qualify for the international team. A talented high jumper, Tessa also won in that event at the state all-schools athletic championships to be ranked number one in the state in her age group. The highlight was jumping a personal best to win gold at the international track and field championships in Kuala Lumpur. Tessa is passionate about athletics and is always willing to help those younger than herself at Little Athletics and in training sessions after school. The senior sports star of the year was Sonja Johnson, who was named in the shadow Olympic eventing team and is hopeful of achieving her dream by getting a place in the team to compete in Beijing. During a successful year, Sonja won the trans-Tasman three-day event in New Zealand on her horse, Ringwood Jaguar, which was also awarded the WA event horse of the year. Sonja was also voted the Equestrian Federation of Australia (Western Australia Branch) rider of the year, WA event rider of the year and WA open championship winner. The veteran sports star of the year was Greg Hooper, whose wife, Julie, works as my electorate officer. He was captain-coach of the Albany Vikings in the masters football over-35's competition. The Albany Vikings went through the season undefeated in the state competition and was selected in the state side to play at the national carnival. WA won the carnival for the third year in a row, and Greg was named in the all-Australian team for the fifth year in a row.

In the Albany Cup it was great to see local trainer Steve Wolfe's horse, Impact Rating, win. We are very lucky in the Albany region. There are a lot of good trainers, with Paul Hunter and Steve Wolfe. People do not realise the flow-on effects from the racing industry and the number of people employed in the industry in the region. I think a couple of Eagles footballers are part owners of Impact Rating, so at least they will get one win this year!

Great Southern TAFE lecturer Andrew Nicholson was named the inaugural trade teacher of the year by the Institute for Trades Skills Excellence. The aim of the institute is to advance learning, teaching and training in trade education. Andrew was given \$10 000 as part of the award and has put half of it towards developing a training program for the Forest Products Commission to enable employees to be trained and tested for applied knowledge in the field. Andrew has lectured in agriculture, horticulture and conservation and land management during his 12 years at Great Southern TAFE, and he was a great master of ceremonies at the recent TAFE awards night.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Terry Waldron; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr Tom Stephens;  
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The Albany Basketball Association awarded trophies to Bert Meuzelaar for senior sportsperson of the year and Danielle Rule for junior sportsperson of the year. Both of them have made outstanding contributions to basketball in Albany and are worthy winners of the prestigious Reside Family Trophy.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Bert is also vice-president of the ABA and is dedicated to the sport through his work in fundraising and his commitment to Country Week and coaching.

**Mr J.J.M. Bowler** interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I am talking about people who are doing stuff for the community, please!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms K. Hodson-Thomas):** Do I need to remind the member for Murchison-Eyre that he is not in his seat?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** And he is in the wrong area.

Bert is passionate about basketball and is always willing to help players by passing on his vast knowledge of the sport and the skills that are essential for it. Danielle set an example to other young players by coming back after spending two years on the sidelines due to injury and not only played again, but also refereed at senior level and coached the under-15 girls to the grand final in her first season as coach.

Margaret Witham won the Mike Stidwall medal. The medal honours the memory of former Department of Sport and Recreation manager Mike Stidwall and is awarded for outstanding contribution to sporting administration. Margaret has been a tireless contributor to the administration of lawn bowls at the local and state level for 18 years, and has also been involved in coaching children. She is currently a national umpire and vice president of the Middleton Beach Bowling Club, and she really enjoys getting back to the sport she loves to play.

In basketball, the ABA Raiders are men's division one country champions again, after defeating Geraldton 33-32. Coached by Greg Cowie, the team was Chris Delacy, Clint McGregor, Darren Godbolt, Jack Grimshaw, Justin Benson, Malcolm Pages, Michael Brenton and Ryan Benson. The tenth state Masters Games was held in Albany late last month. It is a biannual event consisting of 13 sports from athletics to chess, with most of the sports requiring competitors to be in the veteran class. The Masters Games committee worked hard in planning the event and congratulations go to chairperson Barb Wilson, vice chair Janet Ullinger, treasurer Lorna England, Mike Pooley, Esther Maklew, Steve Marshall, Tammy Stone and Greg Cook.

I turn to the winners of the 2008 Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry business awards. The special awards for developing unique business cultures went to Ryan Waugh Hairdressing—Ryan and Becky Waugh did a great job there—and Charles and Lee Reynolds of Fluorescence Cut Flowers. The award for businesses with one to four employees once again went to David and Gaynor Clark of Cape Howe Cottages. The award for businesses with five to 10 employees went to Amber Cekerevac of BodyCare Health Club; Lindsay and Dale Freegard of SMS Southern Mulching Services were highly commended in that category. The Port Authority award for businesses with more than 10 employees was won by John Oldfield of Rural Project Services. The tourism award was won by Alan Kelly of the Tanglehead Brewery Company. The GSACC industry development award was won by Ken Keays of ReIMS; he also won the Great Southern Development Commission export award. The Timbercorp agribusiness award was won by Stephen and Suzanne Koster of Reshet Forestry Contractors. The community business award was once again won by the Jeanette Kostos and David Thompson-Harry of the Albany Youth Support Association. The small business home-based business award went to Suzanne Bellanger from Diabetes Education Services. She set up a little business on her own and it was great to see that she won the award. The Small Business Centre business achiever award was won by Jerome and Julie Ryan of Camping World Albany; they only recently started their business. The Telstra Country Wide business person of the year award went to Rob and Barb Jackman of the Rare Coin Company. The business of the year award went to BodyCare Health Club.

The Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry has 560 members; that is an increase of 20 per cent. It hopes to have a membership of 700 by the end of 2008 and 1 000 by 2011. Gary Cutler and all the members of the ACCI are doing a tremendous job. When they have a business after-hours, one is battling to get a drink because there are so many people there; not that one goes to a business after-hours for a drink!

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** That is a lot of awards. Who won the best cake award?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** So many competitions and you haven't won anything yet!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The member for Cottesloe says I never won anything! I recently attended the Australian Olympic trials. They invited me as an ex-Olympian and asked me to present the 1 500 metre award. I thought,

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“That’s great!” After the event they all got up on the dais and I looked at the time that the winner had run, and I did not have the heart to tell him, as I shook his hand and presented the medal, that I had run faster 40 years ago! It does worry me a bit —

**Dr G.G. Jacobs:** So he did win a few things!

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** No, it is not that I am good, it is that the standard has not improved over 40 years, and that is a real worry. We have the Australian Institute of Sport, psychologists, masseurs —

**Ms S.E. Walker:** What about steroids in your day?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** When they did the steroid test, they took one look at me and actually offered me steroids they had taken from someone else!

Speaking of the Olympics, it is something very dear to my heart. The International Olympic Committee says that we should not protest against China and the torch relay, and that we should not bring politics into sport. These people fly around the world travelling first class, staying at top hotels and receiving gifts from various countries. The International Olympic Committee must be one of the most corrupt organisations in the world. China says we should not attack the Olympic torch relay because it would be political to do so. However, why are the Olympic Games being held in a city that is surrounded by pollution? There are human rights issues, and we do not know what sorts of drugs their competitors use. Many of these athletes have, all of a sudden, become top athletes. I am not knocking athletes who come from all over the world to compete, but when these people from the IOC come out and say, “Don’t mix politics with the Olympics,” it is a load of rubbish. The committee should pick a venue on the basis of having the best climate to allow the athletes to compete at their best. I competed in Mexico in 1968. The games were held at an altitude of 7 500 feet and there was pollution. The African competitors loved it because they were born at similar altitudes. When they got to the Olympics it was a bonus for them. However, for athletes accustomed to low altitudes it was a disadvantage. It is supposed to be a level playing field. I think the International Olympic Committee is an absolute disgrace. Kevan Gosper and John Coates have their little trips around the world for four years, they get gifts from people and then they make their decision, but do they make the decision for the athletes? No. The International Olympic Committee has a big building in Geneva to make it look great. Members should mark my words: if the marathon is run in Beijing, someone will die. For athletes competing in the Olympics, it is the realisation of a lifelong dream. It does not matter whether they are born in a little country in the Andes, in Albany or anywhere else in the world; they have a dream to compete in the Olympics, and they do not want to let their country down no matter what, so they will run until they drop. Even for 5 000 or 10 000-metre events, conditions of pollution and heat are dangerous. Once pollutants get into one’s body, one’s body will start to eat itself away. It is all right for athletes who have sports medical support, but many athletes are from smaller countries and do not have such support. They will run until they drop. They will not know that they have to ingest extra glucose; they will just take some water and keep running. I can remember a marathon competitor at the Mexico games. Everyone else finished at seven o’clock at night; he came in at two o’clock in the morning, running all over the road; his legs were bandaged. He was running for his country. They tried to stop him and he just pushed people away. We saw the lady at the Los Angeles games who collapsed while coming up the straight. Her body was actually eating itself. I think she finished just before the finishing line. Those conditions were a helluva lot better than the conditions in Beijing. Until members of the Olympic movement start putting the athletes before their greedy selves, they have lost my respect. That feels better!

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Didn’t you get an invite to Beijing?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** No, I did not. I certainly will not get one now!

I would like to congratulate Sam Newman. A lot of people attack Sam Newman, but the fact is that he came out with his prostate cancer, told the world what he had and showed the operation. I do not know whether that was for television ratings, but the fact is that he had the courage to come out. I have been through prostate cancer. People do not want to get tested for it. I speak to different groups about prostate cancer. It is amazing how many men will come to the meetings. Getting them to visit the doctor is the difficult thing: “I’m not going to let a doctor undertake a digit-type of examination on me”, they say. It is okay to say that, but that examination is better than the other option. This is one of the things we must face. Many people die from cancer. My dad died a horrible death through prostate cancer. I swore that I would never put my family through something like that, so I started being tested in my late 40s and early 50s. I was lucky; it was caught early. Friends of mine in Albany said they were not going to have an examination. I had no symptoms at all. It is not as though I was aware that I had a problem; I just kept having the tests. When I first visited the doctor for a test, the doctor said, “Go home; men die with it, not from it.” However, my wife sent me back to the doctor. If she had not sent me back, I would not have been around to see my granddaughter. When I attend meetings I tell people about their options.

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We talk in this place a lot about road safety. When I was talking to Ross Tomasini, our district superintendent, he came up with a good point. People say that we should decrease the speed on the road, but when we pass cars on passing lanes, we have to go a lot faster. He suggested that the speed limit on country roads should be 100 kilometres an hour, but 120 kilometres an hour on passing lanes. That is a very sensible suggestion. Apparently, when that has been done overseas, road tolls have dropped. The speed limit should perhaps be 100 kilometres an hour generally, but the number of passing lanes should be increased because there are not enough, and the speed limit on passing lanes should be increased to 120 kilometres an hour.

**Mr M.P. Murray** interjected.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Yes. We have discussed that before; they start off with very few.

I would like to congratulate the Albany Farmers Market, which was awarded the best market in Australia in the *Vogue Entertaining + Travel* produce awards. Congratulations to Ian Haines and his group. The other day I drove past the new athletic and basketball stadiums. They will be tremendous for Western Australia. My old record will stay at Perry Lakes forever; no-one will be able to break it at that track.

This is a great budget. I told my daughter that I would mention that we went to her wedding at Hamilton Island. It was one of the best days of my life.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** That was not in the budget?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** No; but it will be in my budget because it cost me a fortune. I was very proud of my daughter and her husband, Matt. It was a great event.

**MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys)** [8.02 pm]: I will make a brief contribution to the budget debate tonight. I would love to say how delighted I am about all the facilities the government has budgeted for and the funds it has allocated to my electorate! However, unfortunately, I would be telling fibs if I did. I cannot see any evidence of anything that has been done in my electorate, but it is a Liberal electorate so there is very little going on whatsoever.

It was a very interesting question time today. I asked the minister a question about the present crime rate. I said that it was rife—and it is rife. I referred to the rising rate of antisocial behaviour and all the other crimes that are taking place. The minister berated me and said that Liberal members did not support our police officers. I want to put the record straight, because I did not get the opportunity to do that during question time; we had to listen to the minister. The Liberal Party and I support our fantastic police officers 100 per cent; they do a great job. However, we do not support this government, which shows no commitment to or vision for the future and will not accept its responsibilities in relation to our spiralling crime rate. We have the unenviable title of the burglary capital of Australia. I will tell the house about a case that happened in the suburb of Craigie where some very nice people moved into a rental property. You will know that suburb, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.P. O’Gorman); it used to be in my electorate but now it is in the Joondalup electorate. On Saturday, while the tenants were out shopping, their home was broken into.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** It’s the other member’s fault!

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** It is the government’s fault of course, because there are not enough police patrolling the areas. When those good people of Craigie came home from shopping they found that their house had been burgled and all their valuable items had been taken. Unfortunately, because they had only just moved into it as a rental property, they were not covered by insurance and they lost a helluva lot of valuables. Do members know how long it took the police officers—there are not enough of them—to get to that house in Craigie? Can anyone hazard a guess? It was not noted as a priority 1 or priority 2 call, and it took four hours for the police to get to that job. We would expect the police to attend a home burglary in less than four hours. Those residents were told not to touch anything because the forensics people would come out and check the property for evidence. I remind the minister of the “Burglar Beware” advertising campaign on television, which has falsely tried to make the government look good. The police officers told the tenants not to touch anything until forensics had attended the scene and that they would be there forthwith. The burglary took place on Saturday. What is today? I think it is Tuesday, and the tenants are still waiting for forensics to come. Does the minister think it is acceptable for the people of Western Australia to have to wait from Saturday to Tuesday for forensics to come out? Is the “Burglar Beware” advertising campaign working—the one that is supposed to make the government look good? I suggest not.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services and his government are letting down the people of Western Australia. Every member on this side of the house and I know, and the minister knows in his heart of hearts, that we do not have enough police officers to adequately combat the crime wave we are experiencing at the moment,

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and have been for some time. The minister had the audacity to berate me when I happened to mention that the crime rate was spiralling. I live in Western Australia. I do not know the minister's address. If there is not a great deal of crime in his area, he is very lucky. Our local newspapers give the weekly figures for the number of houses broken into in the cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup. Does the minister know the clearance rate for home burglaries?

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** It has gone up since you were in government.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** What is it?

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** I don't have the latest figures, but it was up 14 or 15 per cent, I think, for burglaries.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** From what figure?

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** I think it was down about 10 or 11 per cent.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The clearance rate—people being charged with breaking into houses for burglaries—is around 10 per cent. The other 90 per cent are getting away with it. That is why we are the burglary capital of Australia under the minister and his government. That is why so many people are being bashed senseless in the ever-increasing number of violent crimes that are occurring in Western Australia.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** How do you factor in that the rate of burglary is down 40 per cent?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** A lot of people are not bothering to notify the police of burglaries.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** That is simply not true.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That is all the minister ever says—"It is simply not true." He does not know what he is talking about.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** A lot more incidents are being reported since you were in government. When you were in government and people phoned the police, they did not even answer the phone they were so understaffed.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The minister should not talk rubbish.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** There are plenty of examples. I will show the member the figures during the estimates hearings.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** We do not believe the minister. More importantly, the people in Western Australia do not believe him. They have no faith in the government. The minister knows from the focus polling his government has been doing that community safety—law and order—is the number one issue; it is at the top of the pile.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** No it's not.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes it is; the member knows it is as well as I do. The member knows that it is a very serious situation for the government because it will be criticised as being soft on crime, soft on drugs and soft on criminals. It is interesting that in the *Budget Statements* under "Corrective Services" the government says that it wants to try to reduce the number of people in prison. I can tell the government that very soon it will have a queue of people outside the prisons waiting to get in, but it is harder to get in under the Carpenter government than it is to get out. That is what it is! It is harder to get into prison than it is to get out. What a disgraceful situation we have in Western Australia, where crime is rampant and where people fear for their safety. I can tell members that people will not go out at night very often; they do not want to travel on the trains. It is not only the passengers who are getting beaten up; it is the security guards as well, because we do not have enough of them. The government has about 100 private security guards working for Transperth because it does not have enough security officers directly employed by Transperth. Therefore, Transperth is subcontracting out security to private security officers, who do not have the powers of the security officers employed directly by Transperth. The government is failing. I am afraid the government is failing dismally. Shame on the government!

We want to give the people of Western Australia a better alternative to the Carpenter government. We have seen the failings of this government over the past eight years, yet members opposite reckon that this is a budget worthy of applause? I must tell members that it is one of the most boring budgets I have ever come across, yet the government thinks it is acting like Father Christmas by giving a little pittance back to some of the people who want to buy a home. This is the only time the government has given anything back in the eight years it has been in government. For the other seven years, the government has grabbed money from taxpayers. I have never seen so much money being grabbed from taxpayers in Western Australia as the amount I have seen over the past seven and a half years. However, we are in an election year. The government says, "There is an election around the corner, so let us act like Father Christmas. Let us have Christmas come early this year. Let us try to give a little back and try to fool the people that we are doing some good things. We will give them some things back;



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we will give them a social dividend.” However, if this is the government’s form of a social dividend, then God help us, I say, because it is abysmal. The government has reaped so much money over the past eight years that to give back the pittance that it has given this time will not fool the people. I have not heard one person tell me, “Actually, I think the budget is a very, very good one.” People have not even said, “I think it was a fair budget.” Do members know what people have said? People have told me they are very, very disappointed. The government has made it almost impossible for people to buy homes these days because they have to borrow the cost of the stamp duty. The stamp duty costs so much and what does the government give people for that stamp duty? What do people get for the stamp duty at the level set by the government? The government has reaped all that money from stamp duty over the past seven and a half years, and what do people actually get for it? Absolutely nothing! The government has disappointed the business world and it has disappointed the homebuyers. The only good deal for a homebuyer at the moment is if someone happens to be a first homebuyer. I am afraid there are not that many first homebuyers at the moment because they cannot afford the mortgages because interest rates have gone up. Who do we blame for interest rates going up? I blame the government! I blame the government because when we were in government, if the interest rates went up a quarter of a per cent, members opposite would blame us; therefore, I will blame the government. Interest rates have not gone up by only a quarter of a per cent; they have gone up a helluva lot more than that! I blame the government, my whole family blames the government and all my friends and my constituents blame the government because the government has to take that responsibility.

Talking about a miserly government, we have an overworked and overstretched police service. We really do. The police do a great job given the constraints put on them by this government. The police service has been in need of a replacement helicopter for years. The police have only one helicopter at the moment—I think we are the only state in Australia that has only one police helicopter. One police helicopter for one-third of Australia! Will the government buy the police a new helicopter? Will the government fund a new helicopter? No it will not. The government will make the police sell a lot of old police stations, any spare land they have, the family silver, the old truncheons and their old Pat’s cat uniforms. The police service will have to sell all of that to buy one new police helicopter—that is what the government will force them to do! One new helicopter! Minister, the police service needs two helicopters, not just one. However, the government is forcing the police to sell all those little assets dotted all over the place, and once they have gone they have gone. The minister and I know that we need to expand our police facilities to accommodate the expanding police service. The Joondalup academy, which is a beautiful place, is stretched to the limit now just trying to train our police cadets, who will graduate after a six-month training period, and our direct-entry officers who come from overseas to train as police officers in Western Australia. What is the government doing? It is not allowing any extra facilities outside of the academy. Police officers have told me that there is not enough room in the academy now. Therefore, the government will sell off all the police service assets, all its buildings and the old police stations. Some of those old police stations could be used, because as our population grows and as our police service must grow, where will we put all those police officers? The government does not have a budget allocation for one new additional police station to be built in 2008-09; not one new police station.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** That is wrong.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The government has some police stations under construction and some that are being moved, such as the Perth station; I know about that. However, some police stations are being relocated. Where is the government building a brand new police station where there has not been one before for miles around?

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** At Blackstone, at Looma —

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** No, they are already under construction; those stations are in the process of being built. The government has not said in the budget that a new police station—other than those ones already under construction, being revamped or being moved—will be built. Members have to look only at the *Budget Statements* to see that quite clearly.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** There are three of them plus the Perth central police station.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes, but that station is basically being moved. The government is moving people out of there —

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Yes, but it will be much bigger and it will have more accommodation.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes, but it is still in the same location. The government is closing down police stations; it is not opening them up or building additional ones. The government is closing down stations in the country areas where the people need them. The government has overseen the—what is it called, the rural squad?

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** The stock squad.

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**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The stock squad.

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** Sergeant Byrne.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The government has seen Detective Sergeant Byrne, I am told, and the stock squad being closed down. I must tell the minister that some farmers in the south west contacted me recently. The prices for cattle and sheep are quite high at the moment, and they have been for a little while now, so rustling is going on. Rustling! However, because the police do not have enough officers to deal with it and the government has closed down a lot of the rural police stations, the farmers are being told, “You take photos, you gather all the evidence and then we’ll try to come and get it from you sometime.” This is do-it-yourself law and order under the minister’s government!

I think I have probably said enough about police issues for the time being; I will discuss them some more next week, obviously.

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** What about the new sexual assault mandatory reporting? The Attorney General sat in this place and said he would get additional funding and there is nothing in the budget. Is that not right?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Very true. My colleague the member for Murray makes a very good point and he knows a lot about the police, obviously. He has a lifetime’s experience of what should be there and what went on and what needs to go on—a lot of experience. However, let me just move on to corrective services and our prisons.

As I said earlier, people are queued outside our prisons waiting to get in. What has this government done in the almost eight years it has been in government? Has it built one new additional prison cell? The government says, “Yes, we have, yes, we have; you’re wrong, you’re wrong”, and it gives Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women as an example. Boronia is a tiny little replacement prison for Nyandi women’s prison, which the previous Liberal government also had plans to replace. Boronia is a halfway house for women who are due to be released from prison. I do not have a problem with it; it is a great little facility, and the member for Victoria Park would agree. However, that is not an additional prison; it is a replacement. The government knows it and I know it. I read in the budget papers that the government is going to put a few extra beds in some of our existing prisons; not extra cells, but a few extra beds so that prisoners will be double-bunking. I do not have a problem with prisoners double-bunking. I visited some prisons in the United Kingdom last year and there was quite a lot of double-bunking going on. It works in some areas and with some prisoners, but it does not with others. It can cause horrendous problems with some, but there are other prisoners who do not mind the company, but the cell must be big enough. This government has not added one extra prison cell in the eight years it has been in power. The community knows that this government is weak on crime, weak on law and order, weak on criminals and weak on drugs. I remind members about the big, beautiful Drug Summit that the government held in the first year it was in power that was the panacea for the problems of today—absolutely! Even ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair knew that, because he was soft on drugs, and of course the previous Premier, Dr Geoff Gallop, who was his best mate, became soft on drugs as well, as did the rest of members opposite. How can government members stand in this place and represent their communities, look the community in the eye and say, “We’re doing a good job because we have decriminalised being in possession of marijuana”? It is quite a large amount, I am told. If people want to, they can grow two plants per person per household. What a message to send out! How can members opposite keep straight faces and look people in the eye in their electorates whilst telling them, “It’s for the benefit of you people. It’s for the benefit of the people of Western Australia that we brought that law in, to decriminalise a very harmful drug”? It is not some weak type of drug like in the 1960s and whatever; not at all. It is far more sophisticated, dangerous and toxic today, but the government does not mind and it is quite happy to allow people to smoke it and carry it—as long as they do not sell it. They can grow and smoke as much as they want, but they must not sell it. What sort of message is that to send out to the people of Western Australia? These are the mixed messages.

May I have an extension? I am sure that the Acting Speaker will reluctantly agree.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I said I would be brief, but I always say that. My train of thought has gone now; that is terrible —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O’Gorman):** The member does not need the extension then, obviously.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The brain is a wonderful thing; it can disseminate information in a millionth of a second, but it gets to one when one stands up and suddenly it goes blank —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Alzheimer’s.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That is what happens sometimes.

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**Dr K.D. Hames:** The Acting Speaker is not allowed to interject from the chair.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I am helping the member.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** He is helping me. He is okay.

I was talking about marijuana, and I appreciate the assistance I got to remind me. Marijuana leads on to other harder drugs —

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** It is a gateway drug.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** It is a gateway drug, my friend and colleague. The Liberal Party is totally opposed to the decriminalisation of marijuana.

What other good things has this government done for the people of WA? What can people look forward to? I know what I will be telling the people in my electorate: “Thank you to this government for ensuring that we see more brothels in our neighbourhoods, that we see more prostitution activities operating from your next-door neighbour.” That is what we can look forward to. There will be cars coming to neighbourhood brothels day and night because of the government’s low moral base. It seems to think prostitution and brothels are okay; another great message to send out!

Those are the messages that I will deliver in my electorate, and I suspect all Liberal Party candidates will be sending the same message out in their electorates. If it is a Labor-held seat at the moment they will be saying, “This is what you can thank your local Labor member for: more brothels in our area, more mini-brothels in your street, more drugs on the streets, more burglaries” —

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** More violence!

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Exactly! More violence, because violence is definitely an increasing crime. Over the last two years there has been a 20 per cent increase in violent crime in WA. There have been some horrific cases and people are dead because of violent attacks by morons, both male and female. Those people need to be dealt with, but are they dealt with under this government? No, no, no! I will be telling the people in my electorate to thank this Attorney General and the Labor Government for insisting on the so-called truth in sentencing legislation, which means that judges automatically have to deduct a third of the sentence—no matter which offence they are sentencing for—and then criminals can get parole after that. We can thank this government for allowing criminals who have committed some of the most horrific crimes that we see today getting just two or three years in jail. What is the value of a life under this government? Not a lot! That is what I will be telling the people in my electorate; that is what every Labor member will be telling the people in his or her electorate. We will be telling them, “This is what you need to thank the Labor Party for. This is what you need to thank the Carpenter government for. You can also thank them for the increase in hoon activity and the fact that they are weak in the area of road traffic offences.” This government is not prepared to ensure that there is automatic confiscation of vehicles of people on a third offence who commit further offences. Weak again, soft again—it errs on the side of the perpetrator, not the victims. That is what this government does and that is what we will be telling the people in Labor electorates and in Liberal electorates. We will be giving them many more messages, so if the government thinks it is going to have an easy ride come election time, then it is very, very wrong.

Look at the mixed messages it has sent out over the pub lockout. In one breath it says that it wants to encourage people to drink more and go to more small bars and restaurants where they do not have to eat; they can just have an area where they can drink. In the next breath it says, “But after 12 o’clock you can’t go in there.” Even if someone has been working all evening and they get off at 11 o’clock or 12 o’clock, if they wanted to go and have a drink they will not be able to after 12 o’clock unless they go to a nightclub. Nightclub business owners will love the government; the pub owners will not, and yet the government is trying to increase the number of small bars. The government is sending out another mixed message again: “It’s okay to drink more, we want people to drink more. It’s to increase the tourism potential.” Does the minister know that every hotel room is full in Perth at the moment? Where are more tourists going to stay? We need more hotels built, obviously. If tourists come to Perth they had better be warned that they cannot go into a pub after midnight, because otherwise violent crimes will be taking place. The interesting thing is that most of the violence does not actually take place in the pubs; it takes place outside the pubs, in the streets around Perth and Northbridge. I have seen violent crime, robberies, muggings, car-jackings and house burglaries increase in my electorate of Hillarys ever since the Labor Party has been in government. Hillarys is a lovely area with a beautiful marina, but the problem is that there are not enough police officers. People are being mugged and beaten, and violent crimes are increasing. Recently, a couple of young blokes who went out for a meal were on their way to their car when a carload of thugs came along, got out of the car and started beating them. They wanted their money and mobile phones. This is what people have to put up with today, and what does the government do about it? Absolutely nothing. The

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government knows what the problem is but hopes it will just go away. Where has the government spent all the money from the mineral boom over the past few years? We are going from a debt of \$4 billion to a debt of nearly \$12 billion in the next few years, but the government says things are going great. There will be a new stadium, which is okay, and a new museum. We will have these things, but not yet. The government has this big vision. Then there is the foreshore plan that not everybody likes, and we will have a big Ferris wheel. I want to see members opposite get into that Ferris wheel, and I hope it gets stuck when they are at the top. That is what they deserve—to look down on Perth and see what they are doing to this great state and this great city.

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** They are not even buying a new one; it is second-hand.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** What would we expect? We will see this massive debt blow-out. The previous government had to pay out the Labor Party's debt from the WA Inc years when it came into government. It took eight years to pay off about \$3 billion of debt racked up by the previous Labor government. Will we have the same job next time we are elected? We will have to sort out the present government's mess when we get into government. Does anyone realise how much interest will be payable on a debt of \$12 billion?

**Mr T.G. Stephens:** Do you realise how long it will be before you actually get into government?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will not accept any negative talk from the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara. We are very positive on this side of the house. When a government backbencher starts getting arrogant, that is the time when the government will fall. Members opposite are predicting that they will reign forever. They will not, because people are not happy with them. I know that they are a bit unhappy with us at the moment, but they are certainly not happy with the government. Members opposite will be very surprised on election day, because some of them will be shedding a few tears. It will not be those in safe Labor seats, but those in marginal Labor seats—there are quite a few of those—who will be shedding tears. On the day after the election they will be wondering what they did wrong, and saying that they thought that they had listened to the people. However, they did not listen to the people. For eight years they have not listened to the people. They have done what they thought was right and become very arrogant as a government and as a party. They think they have some sort of divine right to rule Western Australia, but they do not, and we will make sure that they do not. The government should make the most of the next few months, and ministers should carry on enjoying their perks and chauffeur-driven cars for the next few months, because those perks will be very short lived. The day of reckoning will come. We do not care when the election is called; we will be ready to defeat the government. To many members opposite, it is hello and goodbye.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Wellington — Parliamentary Secretary)** [8.34 pm]: I will try to keep to a lot more factual issues than the previous speaker, who tended to rant and rave a fair bit and missed the point. I am pleased that the government has taken a leaf out of the book of many other governments of both persuasions in creating infrastructure that has been demanded for many years. That includes water infrastructure, especially in the south west. Many places in that area have had problems with water for some years, including Manjimup, Nannup and Balingup. It is good to see that the funding has come forward so that people can have the quality of life that is sometimes taken for granted in the major cities. Funding has brought forward the expansion of those places by four or five years. I am sure that the member for Cottesloe wants me to mention something about coal, but I will resist that for another couple of minutes at least.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Can I go and have a cup of tea?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** He knew it was coming. That half a power station that the previous government built is still there, but we still do not have the other half. Some upgrades have been done around the area, including on the issue of the safety of the Wellington Dam, on which \$20 million is being expended to make sure it is safe. I had a telephone call from a reporter this week asking whether the base of the wall had moved. I hope it has not, because I have not seen water leaking from underneath but, if it has, there will be some problems that will cost a lot more than \$20 million to fix. I do not think that was the case; I asked the reporter whether it was an April Fools' Day joke. The \$20 million spent there will inject money into the whole area of the south west from Bunbury to Capel and Donnybrook. In some cases, people working in that area on construction work do not want to do fly in, fly out jobs. That is just starting to get going. Previously, one would have said that that was a major project for the area, but nowadays a \$20 million project does not seem to rate as highly as before, when we are talking about a billion-dollar expansion at Worsley, and the Bluewaters power station, costing about \$400 000 a unit.

Things are starting to look quite good. The town has lifted another gear after the depressed days of the closures of underground mines, of which I was a part, and not getting a cent from the government of the day to help out after the closures. Some 370 people were put out of work on a Monday, and we had to sort it out for ourselves. We certainly did not get any bailout money from the incumbent government of the time. That depressed Collie,

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and then we went to 12-hour shifts. It was a different culture, in which a worker would have four days on and four days off, and it took a while to adjust to that. However, that is behind us, and now the town is bubbling away. Confidence has returned to the town with small subdivisions, but also infill areas in which older houses were knocked down years ago. The blocks were left empty for a long time, and then auctioned off at huge prices ranging from \$1 000 up to \$30 000 for the most expensive one. People asked who would pay \$30 000 for a block of land in Collie but now anyone who can get a block for \$130 000 in a good position is very lucky. It just shows the confidence that has been brought back to Collie. I suppose it comes down to having a good member down there, and hopefully we will keep him.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Well done, Steve Thomas; he is a genius!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** He is not in Collie.

The town has come out of the doldrums. Just recently young people in the local community won the Triple J competition against towns all over Australia. A free concert is put on by the ABC's Triple J radio each year in a town with a population of less than 20 000. It was the third year that Collie had applied, and each year the applications got better. Last year another group came together called Stone's Throw, and assisted Sarah Stanley in her efforts to get the Triple J concert there. The concert went beyond all expectations. About 14 000 people attended, and the town acquitted itself very well, and so did all the young people who attended. When there is a crowd of 14 000 people, and there are only 14 arrests—two for disorderly conduct and the rest for minor drug charges—the young people of Western Australia and of the south west must be commended. There was no aggro, and the gods smiled upon us as well. At about 12.30 at night, it poured down with rain so much that people went home. It was really pleasing to see the whole show. I take my hat off to the Triple J team. They were down there for a whole week with a full complement of people and they set up a huge stage on the oval. The local shire worked closely with them. We still have not played football there because dugouts were taken away. We are waiting for them to be put back so we can play football. Other than a few minor mishaps, Collie was really proud of its efforts to showcase itself to all of WA, and in fact Australia, judging by Triple J's website. It shows that we are out of the doldrums and moving forward at a fairly quick pace.

There is \$30-odd million in the budget for salt mitigation. Fifteen million dollars of that is for the diversionary dams and drains that are in place. In the past two years up to 30 000 tonnes of salt has been diverted into mine voids, and that has to be dealt with as well. It proved that it can work. It has been good to have had really good early first rains because when that falls very quickly, it brings the heavy salts with it, which can be diverted so that it does not go into Wellington Dam. That has had an immediate impact that will last for many years.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** What are they going to do with the diversion from Collie east this year, now that the mine void is full?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** That is the next stage. It has shown, on a trial period, that that can work. The next stage will either be a desalination plant or we can run it out of the existing saltwater pipeline from the power station out to sea. There is room to move, but that is the next phase that is coming in now. That is all going very well, to be quite honest. There is only praise about what is happening. The quality of water in the Wellington Dam is improving at a greater rate than most would have anticipated. We were talking about it being 15 years until it could be used for other purposes; it now looks like it will be only five or six years. We are quite happy with that. The money is in the budget and it is my belief that the federal government will also assist in some of those issues.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Another part of that scenario is the potential to find additional mine voids now that the Chicken Creek void is full.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The ongoing work is really pleasing. On a trial basis, it has worked. The local tradespeople and trades assistants will be happy to read in this week's paper that \$60 million has been allocated for maintenance and refurbishment of Verve Energy. A lot of people in our area do shutdown work and they move from one site to another. They move from Collie A power station to the mines and back to Muja power station.

The gaps will close. I believe that Verve should have more full-time workers. The contractors that come on-site got stuck into me and said, "That is not the case; we enjoy our few weeks off between jobs." I think many games of cards and darts are played before they go to the next job! They work their seven days straight and deserve the break that comes with that. The \$60 million that is around will certainly give them some heart about the longer periods of work and they will not have to chase other work. That is another real boost for the people of Collie. Out of the 140-odd tradesmen that were on the last shutdown, it is my belief that about 80 per cent of them were from Collie.

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I know the member for Capel's office has had complaints that people from Bunbury were not given jobs. I firmly believe that if we are going to put up with the industry that is around our area, we should have first crack at the jobs. It was a bit disappointing to see a different position taken from the member for Capel's office.

**Dr S.C. Thomas:** Did the member for Collie-Wellington say my office said we were upset that Bunbury people were not getting jobs in Collie?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** That is right. The member for Capel rang and complained to United Constructions Pty Ltd. They told me that the member was complaining that people from Bunbury could not get jobs there. I believe if we are going to put up with the pain, the gains should go firstly to the local people and then to the people that travel up and down the hill. Anyone who travelled in and out of Collie at around 7 o'clock in the morning would think that they were travelling on the Kwinana Freeway because of the number of people that travel in and out from all places, including Harvey and Brunswick. I would not deny those people a job, but if we are going to put up with the industrial sites, we should certainly have a fair crack at the jobs.

Another issue that came up was a construction crew from Queensland that brought all their workers with them. That certainly did not help our situation in Collie as far as jobs were concerned. We have talked to those people and things have changed a little bit. The Queensland component will furnish people from WA if they can; if they cannot, they will bring them over from Queensland. There are still a lot of Queensland cars around our community and I have had plenty of people coming through my front door saying, "I have put in for a job, but they have brought their tried and trusties from Queensland." I can understand that as well. I am not saying that they should pick and choose drastically and give everyone in Collie a job; that is not the case. I put it back on a few of the guys and said, "What happened at your last job? Did you work every day when you were there?" They get a bit sheepish about that. I ask them whether they can pass a drug test, and they get a bit sheepish about that, as does anyone in any workforce. Those sorts of issues have to be hammered out to make sure that just rewards are given for the work that is in the area.

I chair the Collie Industry and Coal Industry Futures Group, and am very proud of it. The group has moved forward in many technical ways. Geosequestration involves stripping the CO<sub>2</sub> out of the burn. When it is put under pressure, it becomes semi-liquid and is injected underground. We have not got that far yet but an area called the Harvey ridge has been identified near Harvey where there is a bubble in the earth's surface. At three kilometres down it is very well sealed and it contains salt water. When the CO<sub>2</sub> is pumped down there it turns into something similar to limestone and does not seep back up again.

Although the technology is still probably a couple of years away, there have been some results from the east coast. Hopefully we can visit Victoria shortly with a couple of delegates from councils such as Harvey and Collie and educate them about the process. The infrastructure on the surface is only a shed on a block, but the work is done three kilometres beneath the ground. We are working very hard because coal will continue to be a major fuel into the future, worldwide. I do not see that changing soon.

At a conference held recently in Queensland, the presenters forecast that another gas-fired power station will not be built in Australia until 2014 because of the logistics of carbon trading that must be sorted out. However, coal power stations will continue to operate. That surprised me. A lot of the scientists and economists there were saying that coal would continue to be used.

I will not spend a lot of time on this issue, but we have seen Collie hammered by various governments over many years as they have switched from coal to gas, and from coal to oil and back again, at a huge cost of about \$80 million way back in the 1960s. The town itself has been very strong and has not weakened in its resolve. It has kept going forward against the odds. There is a lot of mud-slinging about Collie and the people of Collie. I have certainly heard it in this house at times. Although it disappoints me, we are strong enough to take that and we will give it back.

I remember an interview I did on television when I said, "When you run out of power, don't come and see the coal industry as the last resort." This time they came to see us only just before the last resort. I take my hat off to Rick Stowe from Griffin Energy and I applaud his efforts. When there was a bump in the highway, he did not worry; he changed gears and went on. That was when Wesfarmers won the 20-year contract to supply coal to Verve. That meant Griffin Energy's future looked very doubtful. Without batting an eyelid, Rick Stowe put his money where his mouth was and construction of stage 1 is well underway—it is probably about three-quarters of the way through the construction process—and earthworks has commenced for stage 2. The planning for stages 3 and 4 of Bluewaters is also proceeding, which is great news for Collie and for the coal community. Along with that, there is the \$1.2 billion expansion of Worsley Alumina. At its peak it will employ 3 000 workers, which will cause problems for the south west because it already lacks basic infrastructure. That major problem has been recognised by the government. The expansion will involve the use of coal in the power station because it cannot

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be guaranteed a gas supply. The Collie Industry and Coal Industry Futures Group was involved in the export of nine shipments of coal, eight of which went to India. The group went to India on a signing visit. Griffin decided to take the plunge when Wesfarmers was not as brave. While we were there, another 12 shipments were signed for. The first shipment went to China either this or last week. That is tremendous news for the coal industry. Some people have criticised the Collie Industry and Coal Industry Futures Group. However, I can say without fear or favour that company representatives were not allowed to join the group for the sheer fact that each of them said that they wanted \$5 million, and that they would then go away. We have used that money wisely and in a scientific way. We have sent coal to Germany so that it can be examined under a gasification process that is the future of the coal industry. Collie coal stood up very well during those trials. The coal was gasified at a lower temperature, which means that it is cheaper. Already there is worldwide interest in which industries can be involved, including the fertiliser industry. We are very hopeful.

Another issue is industrial land, which has been a bugbear for quite some time. Companies have had to demonstrate that they need the land. We are crying out for land. We are a bit behind the eight ball. I am hopeful that Shotts industrial park will open in the very near future. Griffin Coal is building its own industrial park, which will be known as Bluewaters industrial park. It is encouraging people to use that site. When the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is in my area next week, she will talk to the shire about light industrial blocks. The shire has changed its opinion on several occasions, and rightly so, which has delayed the process somewhat. Things are moving very quickly in Collie. The housing boom has levelled off. Houses were being sold within days of coming onto the market. We had not seen that for many years. All in all, Collie is doing very well. It is pleasing that the construction of Harvey police station is nearing completion. It needed a top-up of a couple of hundred thousands dollars, which was budgeted. That will be great for the upper south west region between Waroona, Harvey and Bunbury because it will be utilised to its full extent. It is pleasing that there has not been a series of add-ons, which is what has happened previously.

A Shire of Donnybrook representative phoned me about infill sewerage in Donnybrook. The government has allocated a bit over \$1 million for that, along with \$1 million towards the waste water plant upgrade. The budget for the south west is \$560 million. If one says that quickly, it does not sound like much. However, when one considers the whole of the state's budget in regional and rural areas, it works out to be \$3 000 a head or thereabouts—I will not argue about a few dollars or cents either way—which is a huge amount of money. I am more than pleased with the budget because my electorate has got its fair share.

**DR G.G. JACOBS (Roe)** [8.55 pm]: The member for Collie-Wellington has given an edifying speech about how well his electorate has fared in the budget. The budget has seriously let down my electorate and environmental policy and management. I will not give a blow-by-blow account of the areas in which my electorate has missed out. It is okay for the member for Collie-Wellington to say that his electorate has been looked after. I feel genuinely sad and sorry for the people of the south east of Western Australia.

I will talk about my shadow environment portfolio and about environmental management in the state of Western Australia. As members know, I have not long been the shadow Minister for the Environment. There are a couple of basics in any portfolio—and some science. Science is involved in environmental management. No matter what form of environmental management we talk about, it should be responsible. Members have heard me say that before, but it is very important that I repeat it. Environmental managers have a responsibility to the environment and to the people who neighbour a certain environment, à la the people of Esperance and the export of lead through the Esperance port, and they also have a responsibility to proponents.

I will share with members two experiences that occurred in my town. The first relates to a proposal for a tuna farm in Esperance. Tuna farming is conducted by the MG Kailis Group at Port Lincoln. Being a Western Australian company, Kailis wanted to bring its tuna farming business to Western Australia. It submitted a proposal to bring its tuna cages to Esperance. Tuna farming involves the fattening of small wild stock; it is essentially a marine feedlot. The process that Kailis went through to bring its 15 cages from Port Lincoln to Esperance was tortuous and extended for some seven years. The proposal involved wild fish being caught in cages that were 25 metres in diameter and then being fed with pilchard stock until they were a marketable size and age. It was then intended to sell them on the Japanese market. In the end the proposal was thwarted with appeal after appeal. Yes, we need to be responsible for our environment. Environmental issues were addressed during the process. For instance, one of the stipulations was that cages could not be placed over seagrass. Rather, they had to be placed on the bare sand bottom in 40 metres of water 20 kilometres from the shore and in the shadow of the Remark Island group. To this day, there is no marine management plan for the Archipelago of the Recherche and the bay. The proponent was frustrated because an appeal was made on the issue of seagrass. Kailis commissioned scientists to do the work on that issue and come back with a solution. Another appeal was worked on by the proponent and that issue was brought back and dealt with, and then another appeal was made.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 13 May 2008]

p2862c-2909a

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This process went on for seven years. There were two more appeals. The first appeal was about the fact that the bird population on the Remark Island group would be changed. The allegation was that the food that was brought from the shore to feed the fish would attract a lot of seagulls and mutton-birds and that that would destabilise the domestic or natural population on Remark Island. The second appeal—these did not occur at the same time—was about the fact that the fish pens would attract sharks and that when the sharks saw the fish in almost a fishbowl, they would become very frustrated, go into a feeding frenzy and swim off to Twilight Beach, 20 kilometres away, and bite the leg off some poor unsuspecting surfer.

There are two issues. First, the process is continually frustrated by an ongoing, rolling appeals process until the proponent is so frustrated and has spent so many millions of dollars that he puts up his hands and walks away. The scientific evidence that we needed to gather for the two issues was going to cost many more millions of dollars. I give that as an example of how that process can frustrate a proponent, when all the proponent is asking for is that all the appeals be put on the table and dealt with in a timely manner so that the process is not frustrated.

The other point I take issue with is that the Recherche Advisory Group, or RAG, has been working on a proposal called the marine management plan for the archipelago. The group had been going for probably seven to 10 years before I came to this place, and still there is no marine management plan for that bay and archipelago. Again, this has frustrated the process, whether it be for an offshore tuna farm, an onshore abalone farm, or, heaven forbid, a floating hotel. When there is no marine management plan, each proponent has to reinvent the wheel. There is no basic marine management plan or foundation on which to assess whether these proposals are valid or environmentally safe. I believe that this frustrates the process. They might not be environmentally irresponsible proposals, but such a process would be responsible and fair. It would be fair to the environment, to the people and to the proponents. I suggest that the environmental impacts of a tuna farm pale into insignificance in comparison with the lead pollution fiasco in Esperance. I believe that the lead export proposal was reasonably fair to the proponents. The member for Dawesville very ably chaired the five-month committee inquiry into the lead fiasco. You, too, Madam Deputy Speaker, were part of that process, and I thank all committee members, who left their political hats at the door, for the efforts they made for the people of Esperance. There was a litany of issues. It was said that this could not happen in the twenty-first century, but it did happen in the twenty-first century. Birds started dying and Michelle Crisp rang her doctor and her doctor rang me and asked, “Do you think the birds are dying because there’s something happening at the port?” That was a hard question to answer straightaway. However, history shows that it was because of something that was happening at the port. It is quite clear that there was no responsible environmental process or responsible environmental management. It was blatantly irresponsible. As members of that committee know, there was a litany of issues, which is often the case when a disaster occurs. It is never just one thing. It is very clear that the ministerial conditions for the proposal were not clear, had double meanings, were difficult to ascertain and were clearly not adhered to. There were concerns with the monitoring of the export process by environmentally responsible managers. The town and its population were severely let down. It was said that such a disaster could not happen in the twenty-first century. We were not environmentally responsible. In the case of the tuna farm, we were not responsible and we were not fair to the proponents. In the case of Esperance, we were clearly irresponsible and not good environmental managers and, subsequently, a group of children in the town were moderately “leaded”. They were significantly, but not irrevocably, leaded, even though such a thing should not happen in the twenty-first century.

Many members will have seen the reports of significant odours emanating from the Canning Vale Regional Resource Recovery Centre waste-composting plant. There is an absolute litany of reports of odour from many residents in Leeming, Canning Vale and Willetton. I had the pleasure, along with my dear wife, who is sitting in the public gallery, to attend a public meeting at the Leeming Bowling Club. It can be said that people who attended that meeting were very enthusiastic, maybe overly enthusiastic, and, in some cases, may have overemphasised the health effects from these odours. Clearly, there is a significant odour problem at the compost treatment plant. If we are to be not only responsible to the proponents, but also responsible environmental managers, we must make sure that the ministerial conditions for the plant are adhered to, that all the monitoring is done well and that there are upper limits. We must apply as much science as possible to the process of monitoring the plant to keep the community safe. This process, and the emanation of significant odour from the composting facility, is an issue. Whether it is a significant health issue is another question. However, there is an emanation of significant odour from that treatment plant. The process and the complaints have been going on for more than five years. It is a pity the minister is not here; he was here a little earlier. I want to know whether we will be responsible environmental managers and not just give lip-service to the environment. I am not talking about a greenie radical fringe; I am talking about responsible environmental managers who can bring as much science as possible to the process and who can be fair and consistent. The features of good environmental management are responsibility to the environment, responsibility to the health of people living in the areas



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surrounding whatever proposed activity we are talking about and responsibility to the proponents, because we all need economic development. We live off economic development and we have a thing called progress. The monitoring and assessment of these processes need as much science as can be brought to bear, and we need to make sure the processes are adhered to. We should not give just lip-service to it. When we really delve into it and ask an environmental officer at the port what it means to have 43 milligrams of lead per square metre per month in the deposition gauge, and what the upper limits are for the maintenance of people's safety, we do not want to discover that the answer is, "We haven't got any; we don't know any." It is that sort of science we need to address to be responsible. We need upper limits; studies have been done and there are precedents. We should not just go through the motions. The committee held many hearings, examined more than 200 witnesses and went through many submissions. It came to pass that people had been going through the motions; the monitoring process was an absolute sham.

[Member's time extended.]

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** If we are to take seriously the issue of odours in Canning Vale—I know that the member for Riverton has been involved in this process, and it is not an easy process—the question is: how do we monitor odours? I was speaking to people from Alcoa in Wagerup recently, and a scientist, Michael O'Donoghue, told me that there is a method for monitoring and reading odours from particular odour meters; it is quite an expensive process, but it can be done. We need to bring some science to this process and we need to be serious about it. If we are to be responsible environmental managers, we have to have some sort of action plan. I press the Minister for the Environment to establish an action plan for this process. The member for Riverton might be able to bring his experience to bear. It is not an easy issue; the member for Riverton might have seen all the emails we have received in recent times about the odour reports. Valid or invalid, processes are taking place that result in those reports coming to us, and there are many reports of significant odour.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** Member, it is a vexed question; you're right when you talk about it in that way. It's true to say that the Resource Recovery Recycling Centre in Canning Vale is producing odours that are obnoxious. Whether they are noxious is another question. I am satisfied that to date, the public health division has done some limited testing of the likely primary causes of public health concerns and has not found any levels that would trigger an alarm. However, it does not dismiss the noxious nature of the odours, or the fact that some people might be sensitised to a chemical cocktail that is very hard to pinpoint. On one side you've got that problem; on the other side of this issue —

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** The member for Riverton is pinching time from my speech, Madam Deputy Speaker! I invited the member in one way, but I did not expect him to go on for so long!

**Mr A.D. McRae:** My view is that it's in the wrong place.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** Yes.

The composting process may be something that should be done at another site where the compost can safely sit and fume and almost combust. It is very similar to the issue of nickel dust in my region. During its inquiry the committee found that the nickel levels in rainwater tanks were above the standard for Australian drinking water, and were higher than the lead levels. That told us that we had been "nickelised" for some time. There are very few medical experts from whom one can get an answer to questions about the effect that nickel at that rate and at that exposure in rainwater tanks and in the atmosphere has on the human body and about the health effects generally. There is a paucity of study in this area. The nickel loading system was exactly the same system as was used for loading lead. That is what allowed lead to escape into the atmosphere. That process has been going on with nickel for some time. The consequences of nickel in the body are nowhere near as serious as those for lead.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** What about iron? Is there iron?

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** No, there is little iron.

There are no documented studies that can clearly tell us the effects of this sort of exposure on the population. In reference to nickel levels, a visitor to my area asked me, "Graham, should it be there? Should it be in tanks?" We might prove that it is not unhealthy at this moment, but in 10 or 20 years it may well prove to be harmful. That is another question that responsible environmental managers ask: should it be there? The odour from the Canning Vale waste composting treatment plant might not be noxious but it is obnoxious; should it be there? That, I suppose, is a value judgement we will have to make. I believe it is part of environmental management and of being responsible. I feel let down, and I am quite sad for my constituents. I say that seriously because I do the best I can to represent my constituents. I am an ex-officio board member of the residential college at the Esperance Senior High School, which is a hostel for the high school students. As members know, a big mine called Ravensthorpe Nickel Operations is operating on our doorstep. It comprises more than 300 residential

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miners and mining managers, and they have children. If they do not live in Esperance but live in Hopetoun, when their children are of high school age they have the option of sending them to Esperance to stay at the hostel. The Esperance residential college is bulging at the seams; kids are living in dongas. The ablution ratio is about five to one, well in excess of what is acceptable. The hostel has been struggling for a number of years. It is growing. It was built for about 85 students and today it houses 102 students. That is not counting the demand that will come on stream over the next 12 months to two years, or even longer. Not one razoo has been allocated to build onto the college. I cannot see a line containing the item in the budget papers, and I have looked and looked. I even studied the DVD of the budget speech in case I had missed it. No moneys are included in the budget for the upgrade of the residential college in this booming area. I can hear the member for Collie-Wellington saying that everything is fine. It is almost as though people in my electorate are the forgotten people. We are so far away that the government thinks, "Oh well, they're a long way away." Let us be quite frank: that is one of the reasons the lead pollution occurred.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** To be fair, we have given a lot of attention to Esperance issues in the life of this government.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** The government did not allocate any money for this hostel. That proposal has been around for at least two, if not three, years. Jim Hopkins has done an enormous amount of work with the board. The walkways that were in the original plan were taken out, in a cloth-cutting exercise, to make it an acceptable budget request of \$12 million or \$13 million in a booming, growing region in Western Australia. The lack of funding hurts me. Is the issue not politically sensitive enough? I am not sure. Dealing with the politics of issues is what I find very difficult in this place. I did as much as I could for that place, and the community has worked very hard. It is a community that does not expect the government to do everything for it. About fifteen years ago the town needed a nursing home in light of it being a watershed area in which the goldfields workers can retire. The community raised \$650 000 and embarrassed the commonwealth government to match it on a dollar-for-dollar basis; that is, with another \$650 000 to build a nursing home. I suggest that it is one of the best nursing homes in the Southern Hemisphere. In the latter phase of my mum's life, it looked after her brilliantly. That is an example of that community's proactive approach. That is what is very pleasurable about representing my constituents; they do not expect governments to do everything for them. They do not carry on with "Wouldn't you think the government would do this or that?" It is probably a second or third generation pioneering community. In 1955 my father was a pioneering land farmer when Esperance was opening up agriculturally. The community does not expect everything to be done for it, but this lack of funding hurts and is very disappointing because the community puts in a lot of effort and it put a lot of work into this submission. However, I say to the Treasurer that I will be here to represent my constituents and will continue to try to achieve for their community what they duly deserve.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Stirling)** [9.25 pm]: I would also like to make a contribution to the appropriation debate. Before I get into the debate proper, I would like to put on the record a couple of thanks and make a couple of short comments about the recent parliamentary delegation to China. In the first instance, I thank the Speaker for giving me the opportunity to go. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and support the Premier's comments that every member of Parliament should visit China. It was an eye-opener. China's economy is going gang busters and will no doubt play a big role in what happens in the economy of Western Australia and, indeed, of Australia generally. I was extremely impressed with a couple of representatives who are involved in relations with China. One person I know only as BJ, but I am sure a number of members are familiar with him, is a most impressive gentleman.

**Mr A.D. McRae** interjected.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The member for Riverton knows him. I know him only as BJ. I was most impressed with him. He is involved with the Department of Industry and Resources. His understanding of not only the Chinese side of things but also how business works in Western Australia is impressive. The other person is Bruce Richardson, who also works for DOIR and who interpreted for much of the trip. Those two gentlemen make an impressive duo for our links with China. There is no doubt that they have been very successful in assisting as conduits in building relationships between China and Western Australia.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** What about the members of the delegation; they were outstanding?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** They were outstanding; they comprised a good cross-section of members of this place. Again, I highlight that every member of Parliament should visit China if he or she gets the opportunity.

I would now like to make a couple of global comments on the appropriation debate that I know have been echoed by a number of members in this place. The first is my concern over the growing state debt, which in the out years of 2011-12 is likely to be \$11.4 billion. The net debt to revenue ratio will move from 17.9 per cent in

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2006-07 to 43.9 per cent in 2011-12. My concern is not so much that the ratio has increased, although that is a consideration, but about the government's capacity to acknowledge where we are at and the need to be disciplined in maintaining our expenses and so on so that we do not end up in an unsustainable position.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** It is worth noting that across the forward estimates there is no net debt in the general government sector. It is all in the trading enterprises, and they use commercial returns to service the debt.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I understand that. I will not claim to be a full bottle on it, but from the perspective of what will happen in the future, we need to ensure that these debts do not become a noose around our neck.

The other point I want to make from a global view is about the relationship with our federal government. A big proportion of our income is from federal sources. The budget papers suggest that our share of the goods and services tax pool will take a hit. Our sources of income are derived from the GST pool and Commonwealth Grants Commission payments. There is a concern that there probably is not the recognition that there should be of Western Australia's position and the pressure on Western Australia right now from the booming economy that we have. I think the eyes will be right on this government and its relationship with its federal colleagues to ensure that Western Australia finishes up in a good position from that relationship. I know that just before the change in government there were a lot of dorothy dix questions that related to the position that the former coalition government had in respect to Western Australia. Now that we have a Labor federal government, I think we need to remind ourselves of some of those questions and, indeed, the position that this state government will take in that regard.

Another point I want to make concerns regional Western Australia. When we set a budget it is all about balancing needs. I think everyone recognises that we need to balance the needs of not only all the various sectors in Western Australia, but also the regions versus the more populated metropolitan areas. I have identified three areas that I think we are trying to balance. We are trying to balance the social infrastructure, such as stadiums, museums and some showcase investments, if we like, against income-earning infrastructure—our wealth-creating assets—roads, ports, natural gas pipelines and so on against our community service and support areas; that is, our teachers, our nurses, our police, housing, regional incentives and so on. Therefore, we are trying to balance the needs between social infrastructure, income-earning infrastructure and our community service support areas.

One thing that I have focused on in the past has been capital works programs. I want to draw some attention to service provision because I think, particularly in regional areas, the service provision component of how we balance where we put our money is lacking in regional areas. I note that in response to a question last week the Treasurer said—I am quoting from memory—that the people of Western Australia have been receiving a dividend for government's investment in services. I do not know that people living in regional Western Australia, and certainly in a lot of the areas I represent, would necessarily think that is true. On top of the regional infrastructure arguments, I would argue that there is not enough focus on regional service provision. I understand that we need to differentially resource country areas because of the lack of population, the isolation, the distances and so on. When we have constraints such as those that we now have on the labour market in both skilled and unskilled areas, regional Western Australia is one of the first areas in which these pressure points manifest. That is now showing through in the areas of police, teachers and nurses, which because of the strains of the labour market are the areas in which it shows up first. Regional Western Australia is the area where people first choose not to go; therefore, it is the first area to experience those pressures. Therefore, I would argue that there is a strong need to differentially resource the regions either through incentives or through policy positions that encourage people to work and live and, indeed, want to take the extra step to invest in regional Western Australia. For example, in my electorate a dental van services six great southern schools. Presently, because of the issue of staffing, that dental van has had to close. Six schools—Frankland, Cranbrook, Kendenup, Mt Barker, Denmark and Walpole—are serviced by that dental van. When I took up the issue, the Minister for Health responded in a letter he wrote to me in April. He stated, in part —

Staff shortages across Dental Health Services in 2008 will preclude the use of staff to cover short term vacancies and consequently it will not be possible to staff the mobile dental therapy centre in the short to medium term.

I understand that the minister is not saying that he will not support this in the future; he just does not have a staff member for it, which means we must look at what we need to do to encourage people to go to work in those areas. Why do we not have dental therapists who are able to work in some of the most beautiful areas of the state? Indeed, six communities are missing out and are only able to access an emergency service in Spencer Park, Albany. I guess that is one area in which we have pressure on labour that manifests itself in the regions and in a key service area.

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In this place we have heard on a number of occasions of the issues with closing six police stations in regional Western Australia. Cranbrook Police Station is the station that closed in my electorate. I highlighted recently through the media that presently across the great southern police district, police are about 14 to 15 staff down on complement. Again, we have a circumstance in regional Western Australia whereby we have concerns with basic services and the staffing of those services. We ask: what incentives or policy positions are not in place that lead us to finish up in this situation? I know that the Treasurer highlighted that there are some 90 new police officers in the 2008-09 budget. Obviously, we would like to see a number of those police officers in regional Western Australia, but we could ask: why would they want to move to regional Western Australia to work besides being told to do so? I will highlight some of the things that I think we need to do to address that.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Denmark and Mt Barker are lovely parts of the world.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Yes.

While I am on the topic of police officers, it is interesting to note that when Cranbrook Police Station closed, two officers were posted there; one went to Mt Barker and one went to Tambellup. Late last week I asked: what are the numbers of police officers in those particular stations? At that point in time, Tambellup had one police officer out of a full complement of three officers; Wagin had four officers out of a full complement of seven officers, and one of those was relieving from Albany; and Pingelly, which was also in that district, had one officer out of a complement of three officers. I know that Wagin has advertised about 20-odd times to get officers to go to those areas. I know from talking to Ross Tomasini, the regional superintendent, that some changes are in the pipeline, hopefully, to fill some of those gaps. However, it highlights that staff shortages are a serious concern in the provision of what are basic services to these communities.

I move on to regional teacher shortages, particularly in the Kimberley and Pilbara. Again, we must ask ourselves: what are the incentives for people to move to those areas? I will look at the teacher issue in a debate I will raise in private members' time tomorrow. The teacher shortage is not simply an issue of funding and issues such as housing and so on; there are some policy settings that could be changed to assist. One policy setting addresses the mobility of teachers. One concern of teachers who move to those regional areas is not how much money they get to do so but, indeed, that they finish up isolated somewhere and are not able to get back to a preferred location in their latter years when they are looking at retirement and perhaps would like to move to a coastal location or a location in Perth. The present system of merit selection and merit promotion means that they have to get onto the treadmill. I support the process of merit promotion, but I still believe we should shift back to a transfer system for same level transfers. Presently, all schools are merit-select; that is, if a teacher is in a level 5 school—I am assuming Halls Creek is—then he must merit promote to another level 5 school in the city, if he wants to move. It is not just a simple transfer. I think we should go back to the transfer system; it was very effective in giving people an incentive to move to those regional locations and it also gave them the mobility to get back to a preferred location at a later date. Therefore, teachers took up those options because they found they were not stuck in a location where they did not want to be for 25 years. That is another issue that I will bring up in the next day or so.

Another concern is nurses and doctors in the region. Just recently I had a nurse in Denmark who was not able to stay on simply because he could not get housing. Again, what incentives or policy settings are in place to support staffing key service delivery areas in regional Western Australia? I mention housing because I think it is an important incentive. I note that there is some effort in regard to housing, both in Homeswest and government housing. I have not discerned exactly what that means for regional Western Australia, but if the government wants to encourage people to move to these areas and to live and work there with their families, it is only half reasonable that a decent house be provided. Indeed, the government may want to extend it so there are some sort of rental incentives to move there. I will not describe it here, but the National Party has a policy position on that going into the next election, whereby there are significant regional incentives for people choosing to move to regional Western Australia to live and work in those key service areas. It is not just money and not just government support; policy settings are important in delivering services to people in the regions.

Some other service issues need to be looked at in the regions. We could ask: where is the benefit to the regions of the boom we are currently experiencing in Western Australia? As I have mentioned in this house before, we have been carting water this last summer into three of my communities. When I was going off to listen to the Minister for Health give his budget address last Friday morning, I passed a water truck going into Denmark, carting water into the community. I thought that was a little bit of irony. I have called for a regional solution to the water issue in those communities. We need to think outside the box in that regard. It may be that planning is not in place to support a budget position, but a lot of work can be done in that area.

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The other issue that we come across ad nauseam is headworks charges for power connections to people in the regions who live more than 25 kilometres from a substation. I understand that in delivering a budget for people who live in Western Australia, particularly regional Western Australia, a line must be drawn in the sand somewhere and we must ask, in the case of the south west interconnected system, how far we are prepared to push people who live on the fringe of a grid, or people who live in areas to which it is a bit harder to supply water and so on. Obviously there are some limits. I do not believe we are at those limits. We need to expand services because right now a lot of these communities have a huge demand on land availability, and in a lot of cases it is an opportunity for people who cannot afford to buy a house in Perth to get into a house and land package in communities where the price is a little more reasonable. We need to capitalise on that, and those communities would like that opportunity. What happens? We whip in a headworks charge that affects the viability of some of those projects.

These issues also affect businesses in those areas. A brand-new winery in Denmark, Matilda's Estate, has been hit with a headworks charge of over \$100 000, on top of the normal connection and augmentation costs. Interestingly, the owner has paid that money but cannot be connected up until July sometime. He has had to pay \$30 000 to buy his own generator and outlay \$1 500 a week for diesel to run his own power supply while he is not connected up. The Nationals see these sorts of things as fundamental to the growth and development of regional Western Australia, and policy settings are putting a downward pressure on that growth and development.

Commercial water charges announced about two weeks ago will increase for regional Western Australia in the next financial year, with substantial increases over the next five years because of the government's move to a more cost-reflective position. Again, it is a policy setting that hits regional commercial water users. Businesses that are trying to be successful in regional areas are being discriminated against. They are being hit; the city areas are not being hit. Amortisation is needed across the board and a policy position should be put in place in the regional development policy of this government to not put unreasonable policy settings in place that discourage regional development and growth. The government has knocked one of its own policy settings on the head and chosen to chuck in this extra charge, which is a substantial increase for commercial water charges across regional Western Australia. In some cases those increases will be more than 100 per cent over the next five years. That affects a substantial number of regional communities. I do not agree with that position and it is something I will be pursuing vigorously. Not only are support incentives lacking in regional areas in service delivery, but also the government's policy positions are a disincentive to regional development and growth.

Increases in housing costs in regional areas are happening across the board and are a concern in regional Western Australia. Add to that these policy positions that signify that this government seems to be moving down a very economic rationalist path on such basic services as power and water, and projects are not viable. A submission from the Great Southern Development Commission to the recent inquiry into developer contributions to the Water Corporation highlights this issue. Its submission of 14 December 2007 to the Economic Regulation Authority states —

In general, with respect to commercial and residential development in the Great Southern region, the absence of any CSOs for Water Corporation infrastructure has the potential to constrain new activity which might otherwise establish in our smaller sized rural communities.

For example, in the case of rural subdivisions for created lots of 1 hectare and greater, Water Corporation's developer contribution policy dictates that full commercial service costs will apply. That is, the Standard Headworks Contribution does not apply. In some country areas the full commercial cost can be in excess of \$15,000 per lot.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The submission further states —

These high costs have restricted the availability of lots in country towns because the cost of providing the infrastructure has pushed lot prices over the market value.

This example illustrates that a risk of further reducing or removing CSOs in regional areas is that some towns and communities could end up being declared "no growth zones". From a regional development perspective, GSDC finds this unacceptable.

So do I. The submission continues —

Most of our rural communities operate under a State Government approved town planning scheme and have certain expectations entitling them to respond in appropriate ways to increased demand and the

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need for expansion. The Western Australian economy, like the rest of Australia, and indeed the Western World, is fundamentally based on growth economics and with the possible exception of places where environmental or other significant hazards exist, there is an expectation that growth will be encouraged and allowed to occur.

The Great Southern Development Commission is clearly highlighting its concerns about some of the policy settings and potential policy settings of this government that will discourage growth in regional Western Australia. I thought it was a wonderful submission.

Local governments must be encouraged to expand to meet the demands of small communities such as Frankland River, Cranbrook, Bridgetown, Nannup—probably not so much Augusta, but certainly a lot of those smaller towns in the south western and great southern regions. Local governments can use two core areas as a tool to support development; namely, LandCorp and the community service obligations it has to inland regional communities. LandCorp has CSO funding of \$4 million to be used across Western Australia to develop areas that may not be viable. I am seeing the impact of that in Walpole, in both residential and industrial site releases, and the Yerriminup industrial site at Mt Barker, which was considered not to be a viable project and is therefore not moving forward on the basis that LandCorp is not prepared to progress it. LandCorp's strong focus is on the coastal areas, where there is a lot of development pressure—and a bigger return for those investments—and hence it is not perhaps paying the attention it should do to some of these more inland areas.

The Treasurer might want to make a comment on this point: regional investment funding only goes to 2010. There is nothing in the forward estimates in the current budget beyond 2010. What will happen beyond 2010 about regional investment funding? Although I would argue very strongly that \$20 million a year is an absolute pittance for the various projects that that funding covers, it is really rubbing salt in the wound to have it stop in 2010. At the very least I thought there might have been even some short-term compensation for regional investment funding to support business development, which has been hit by these headworks charges for both water and power that I have mentioned. There is no funding beyond 2010, which is a concern.

It is not all bad news. I highlight that I am really pleased that the construction of Denmark Hospital's multipurpose service is progressing very well. The minister drops by from time to time and asks how it is going. It is pleasing to see that the completion of that facility is on track. Mt Barker Community College is a project supported by this government. The Mt Barker community has done wonderful work and made great efforts to get a project up and going that will meet the educational needs of not just Mt Barker, but also the surrounding areas, with the unique concept of a full-service school. That is on track. I did a tour recently, and it is wonderful to see that project going ahead. A sum of \$30 million has been allocated for a water supply scheme for Bridgetown, Nannup and Boyup Brook. Likewise, the Mt Barker northern bypass is being progressed. It is not all negative, although I believe that more can be done. These projects have been on the cards for some time and it is pleasing to see that in some cases they are getting support.

Roads are a key issue for regional Western Australia. The recent Royal Automobile Club ratings for major highways for 2008 highlighted that some of the 10 worst roads in Western Australia were in the south west and parts of the great southern. The survey highlighted particularly South Western Highway, Muirs Highway, Vasse Highway and Brockman Highway. I would add Chester Pass Road to that list. These areas need substantial and immediate support from this government because they have been identified by an independent group as risk areas and they need plenty of attention.

The Walpole water and sewerage project is eight years away. Water is being carted into Walpole, and there are serious issues with limitations to growth due to the fact that the town cannot extend its deep sewerage. Those are the sorts of things I would like to have seen in this budget. I raised with the Minister for Water Resources the opportunity of using Walpole as a case study for different ways of dealing with these issues. I know it is being considered on the west coast, and Walpole, being an environmental hot spot, would have provided another opportunity.

The Augusta marina development has not shown up in this budget. This project has been in the pipeline for some time. The planning is in place and the project has full community support. There is a stress point in Augusta over clashes between the different users' groups—the boating users who need to access the ocean through Flinders Bay versus the swimmers who frequent the area during the summer months. We know that, like towns such as Denmark, it gets a lot of attention during the summer periods, and it is feeling a little left out because there is no support for its marina development. Augusta is also getting a lot of attention from people who like to visit and who want to retire to a beautiful area where the two oceans meet.

Home and community care services in Manjimup is another area. Recently, two elderly Manjimup people had to be refused vital support because funding had not kept pace with demand for home and community care services

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in Manjimup. That resulted in that one person having to remain in hospital while the other was returned home to the sole care of her elderly partner. The situation should not be happening and I have made a call to the Minister for Health about those specific Manjimup examples. This is something that clearly needs to be addressed.

I have called a number of times for iconic projects beyond the 24 or 25 mentioned in this budget overview booklet about building Western Australia. I would have liked to see something like the Bunbury to Albany natural gas pipeline included in the budget papers. That is the only area in the state that does not receive natural gas.

**Dr G.G. Jacobs:** That is my idea.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I would have thought the member for Cottesloe was thinking about that well before the member for Roe. At the very least there should be investment in the easement for the Bunbury to Albany natural gas pipeline to make sure that it happens one day. There is little doubt that it will happen. The government is saying that it is an issue of viability, but I believe that if the pipeline is built, a lot of other investment will follow. Getting the easement in place is often the most difficult part. That is something in which this government could have invested so that the project can happen down the track when circumstances change and viability increases somewhat.

I am not fully conversant with investment in Homeswest housing in this budget, but I want to highlight the fact that the needs of Homeswest are growing. Although the current boom has brought real benefits, a community cost is starting to show in some communities. When I doorknock, I see a lot of that community cost and the pressures on people requiring housing. Some people simply cannot afford to buy a house, and Homeswest is often their only option. We need to invest in that area to address some of the growing pressures from our current boom times.

I want to conclude my remarks by referring to the Nationals' royalties for the regions plan. Our fundamental position is that if we attain the balance of power at the forthcoming election, we will support retaining 25 per cent of petroleum and mining royalties for regional infrastructure projects on top of what is currently invested in regional Western Australia as a way to fund some of the things that I have been talking about tonight in this budget address.

**MRS J. HUGHES (Kingsley)** [9.55 pm]: I want to add a couple of remarks to the budget debate. Some of the things that the budget addresses, such as education, health and law and order, come up quite often when I talk to the residents of my electorate. This budget certainly goes a good way to addressing some of our health and education issues. A great number of schools are being built. The investment is very much needed. Money has been set aside in the budget for big projects such as the arena and so forth, but the budget is also about the fundamental needs of the everyday man and woman on the street. It addresses the issues that affect people in my electorate. One of the main issues in my electorate is education. It is a very important subject and one that my electorate takes very seriously. We have acquired a brand-new school in Greenwood, Greenwood Primary School, with the investment of \$13 million. The seat of Kingsley also had a large victory with the government that enabled the electorate to retain an extra hectare of land on the school site, which means that the school is on a four-hectare site, which is extremely important.

One of the issues raised by the community relates to infill and the possibility that our residential population could change quite markedly in coming years with some of the new planning policies in the pipeline. With that one hectare of land now being placed back into the school site, we have the capacity to expand the school should the population continue to increase as a result of a future zoning change. There were discussions within the community about retaining a school oval. A decision has been made to move to a shared oval agreement, the same as applies to the other schools that are being built in the northern corridor. Some people are unhappy about that decision. However, if we are to look at ways to accommodate population change, the expansion of schools and extra school needs such as language development centres, autistic centres and so forth, we will need to build on that northern end of the Greenwood Primary School site without an oval breaking up the buildings and creating a very bad planning outcome for people in Greenwood. As a result of the consultation process, which gave residents the opportunity to feed into it, we reached an excellent outcome for the people of Greenwood and for the students and their future education needs.

One of the very important issues that arose during the Greenwood consultation process was the loss of our autistic centre. I would very much like to be able to look into the future to see how those services can be put back into Greenwood and that northern corridor sector. I am looking forward to further discussions about that issue when the new Greenwood Primary School is operational.

**Extract from Hansard**

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Another project that is coming to a close is the installation of traffic lights at Kingsway and Wanneroo Road and the Woodlake Retreat extension. That community had only one entry into and one exit out of a subdivision. It was being built out more and more by aged facilities and so forth. We were able to negotiate an extension to Woodlake Retreat and also a four-way intersection on Wanneroo Road. The people from that area will now have a much safer community as they will be able to access Wanneroo Road through lights. That project will be completed on 8 July. People in that area previously had to come out onto the road, turn left to head north—even if they had to go south—and do a U-turn in front of oncoming traffic. That was not a safe passage for people who had to travel to the city. It has been a wonderful outcome.

We have also been working on the Luisini winery project, which is a heritage project. Most of the planning and development approvals are now complete. We have been able to go into Lake Goollelal, where the Luisini project will be situated. We have been down there on Saturday mornings doing some replanting and getting rehabilitation done before the structure is put in place. We are hopeful that the project will coincide with 100 years of settlement for the Italian community. It will be an absolutely wonderful project and we are looking forward to those first shovel loads of dirt being moved so that we can get started.

One of the issues is the closeness to Lake Goollelal. We have had some problems lately in Lake Goollelal and that is due to the water quality changes. We are very keen to get that area on to deep sewerage as quickly as possible. At the moment they are one-acre sites—very large sites—and they are all on the old septic systems. We are hoping the Luisini winery project will be able to get on to a deep sewerage system as early as possible to stop any further contamination of Lake Goollelal. There has also been some investment in this budget in the Gngangara area, which will be taken up by environmental issues, such as runoff affecting Lake Goollelal and the wetlands throughout Yellagonga Regional Park. That was a welcome addition to the budget, so I was really pleased to see that.

Of course, there is also the \$18 million commitment for parking facilities at the railway stations on the northern line. That commitment is for Greenwood and Whitford stations. We have had quite a few community consultation evenings, and although people are very happy to see the commitment for parking facilities, they are also extremely aware that as quickly as we build the parking facilities, more cars keep using them. There is a great deal of illegal parking due to the fact that we are in the process of building parking areas at the railway stations.

A lot of what has been coming out of consultation, and something that we have been working on for several years, is the implementation of more bus services to complement our railway stations. In Kingsley, the 373 route has been extended from Perth to the Greenwood area. It now travels to Greenwood Senior High School and is able to service areas much further east. When we first implemented it, it was there to service Greenwood Senior High School as many Landsdale students needed to access it because it was their closest high school. We found that the bus was too small, and a link bus is now operating, so the service is becoming more and more popular every week. This shows the acute need for east-west services. The 373 route has a junction at the Kingsway City Shopping Centre, which is one of our major centres, where many of my residents like to do their shopping, go to the post office, do their banking and so forth. I am very keen to continue pushing for the east-west services. We have had several discussions with the Public Transport Authority to have a bus from deep Landsdale into the Greenwood station. Originally, the PTA was anti any buses going into the Greenwood station because the station was not designed to be a bus interchange. However, through continued discussions, we now have a red line on a map that basically starts at deep Landsdale through to the Kingsway City Shopping Centre, down Hepburn Avenue and into the Greenwood station. We now need the funding to turn that red line into a physical bus route. I am hopeful that very soon the PTA will see its way clear to introduce that bus service. It will service the community very well. It will be a quick run and, hopefully, take some of the pressure off the parking facilities at the railway stations. It will make some of my residents very happy if some of the illegal parking is moved off residential streets.

Another issue that the community has been dealing with is how to improve the sporting and educational opportunities for the students of Woodvale Senior High School. The school has been working very closely with the Wanneroo Wolves Basketball Association for the school to use its facilities, and further discussions are continuing on how to move that forward. The Wanneroo Wolves has a special league facility and is very keen to promote it as much as it can and, at the same time, allow Woodvale Senior High School to use the facility so that it can improve its amenity to its students. I am looking forward to continued negotiations with Woodvale Senior High School and the Wanneroo Wolves. It should be an interesting process. I am keeping my fingers crossed that we can make headway on that.

I was pleased that the budget includes funding for additional supported accommodation for 121 disabled people. It is an extremely important area and members know that the need constantly outstrips supply. I had the pleasure

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of spending some time with Mitchell Wood, who is my adoptee through the adopt-a-politician scheme. He has just turned 17 years of age and is fabulous. I had the opportunity of looking at some of the respite facilities at which Mitchell's family can leave him in safe hands while they get on with their family activities. I found it interesting that currently 12 respite beds are available in the northern corridor to accommodate children with disabilities up to the year they turn 18. These places are earnestly sought after by families with children with disabilities because they give them the opportunity to recharge their batteries. However, only three respite beds are available to children aged 18 years and over who require a high level of care, such as Mitchell. The shortfall in the number of beds available to disabled children up to age 17 and when they turn 18 is nine. I know from talking to Ann that she is already very concerned about how she will manage when Mitchell turns 18, and, taking into account that there will be a shortfall of nine beds, whether she will be able to access a respite bed for him. The northern corridor needs additional beds for respite care, not only for young disabled children but especially for disabled children who are 18 years of age and older. There are not enough respite care beds available in the northern corridor. Of course, we are now finding that we need to assess people with disabilities and determine how things work with pensions, because those who are being cared for are getting older.

People in the northern corridor have other social needs. I refer, for example, to homes for people who suffer from the debilitating effects of motor neurone disease and multiple sclerosis and for people who have suffered severe head trauma. Such people need a high level of care and cannot live independently. However, many do not have families to look after them and need somewhere to live. The northern corridor is lacking in that regard.

When I first became the member for Kingsley three years ago, there was not much call for increased housing. However, the need for an increase in housing has become more prevalent. More and more people are coming to my office to express their accommodation needs. It seems as though the men in my community are suffering the most. Many men have found themselves homeless after the break-up of their marriage. They are happy to leave the family home in the care of their ex-wives and children, but often they have nowhere to go. Some young men have had to live in community buildings because they have nowhere to go. The government must consider ways to house the men who find themselves in that situation. We are happy to send our men off to war to protect us, but often we fail to provide them with a roof over their head. We seem to cater for women and children, because there are many shelters to which women and children can turn, particularly if they are involved in domestic violence. We must look after the other half of the equation. I am very keen to work on that in the future.

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the graduation ceremony of some overseas police recruits who will be stationed in the northern suburbs. They will boost police numbers in the northern corridor. The budget provides for a continuation of that project and an increase in police numbers. I am pleased that that is the case. I was able to sit and talk with some of the overseas graduates. They are really happy to be in Western Australia. They are energetic and looking forward to getting on with the job. The government's program has been super successful. I talked to police from Ireland and Germany. It is a fabulous project and it was wonderful to attend the graduation ceremony. I am pleased that the government is continuing to move in that direction.

It is great that the government is making good on its commitment to ensure that 20 per cent of all energy used by government by 2010 is renewable energy. It is good that that appears in the budget in black and white. That commitment coincides with the extension of the solar schools program. Last year 165 schools participated in the program. That number should increase in the coming year. Of course, the federal government has a grant program that involves an allocation of \$20 000 to each school. If we started to piggyback those together, we would be able to create a terrific educational tool that would be vital in informing our young people about how the industry works, what photovoltaics are and what they can do. That would hopefully encourage our young people to look at ways of implementing alternative energy generation in their own lives, rather than them feeling that all they need do is plug in to the coal-fired power grids. It is a wonderful thing. I look forward to getting as many of the schools in my electorate as possible involved in the solar schools program.

[Members' time extended.]

**Mrs J. HUGHES:** One of my personal passions is climate change and how to take the message about climate change to everyday men and women in my electorate and beyond. We managed to pull off a terrific environmental energy forum last Saturday with about 40 exhibitors. Those who attended the forum were able to look at ways of implementing alternative energy sources and making sustainability choices through water recycling and other things. We also had a "cook smart" exhibit, which showed people how to cook and get the best out of their food. It was a terrific expo. One issue that came out of the expo was the need for the government to look at the feed-in tariff, which is something I would like to pursue with the government in the next year. South Australia has a 44c per unit feed-in tariff. In Western Australia, depending on the time of day and year, the feed-in tariff sits at between 14c and 23c. I would really like that tariff to be lifted. If it were, it would give people more impetus to consider hooking into the solar industry and changing the way in which they use power.

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By doing that, everybody would probably use power quite differently. Once people install solar panels in their homes that generate five kilowatts of power a day or whatever, they tend to use less energy. They become much more conscious about which lights and switches are being used. That is a wonderful way to highlight our use of power. Since my involvement in the energy expo, I have noticed that I am turning off more switches around my home. That has occurred just from my being around the industry and grabbing tips from people all the time. The expo was a wonderful success and I look forward to being involved in another one next year. The industry is also looking forward to holding another expo next year. Industry representatives had a fabulous time and were able to network and socialise. The launch of the expo was held on Friday night and the networking opportunities this provided for the industry were invaluable. For example, some people came across other businesses that could complement their own businesses and so forth. Hopefully, a bit of value-adding occurred for the industry from the expo. It was an excellent day.

There is always a need for improvement in our electorates. Every day, people come up with different ideas and ways of doing things. I refer particularly to Yellagonga Regional Park in my electorate. We need to continue to develop and look after Yellagonga Regional Park and to make sure that money is available to continue to enhance it. Some money was allocated in the last budget for a feasibility study into building an environment centre within Yellagonga Regional Park. The project involved a partnership between the state government and the Cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup. Unfortunately, the two cities have now shelved that project, which is extremely disappointing. I would have very much liked the Cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup to embrace that project. As we know, the northern corridor is growing. It is building up very quickly, and so is east Wanneroo. The environment centre could have been a wonderful haven for us to showcase some of the important sustainability factors for the building industry, such as solar orientation, roof and eave colours and air flow, to name just a few. Of course, it would also have been of value to school communities, which could have learnt more about the Waterwise campaign, photovoltaic systems, wind energy and composting. I am hopeful that those local governments can take the centre off the shelf, reanimate it and move forward with it. That is another job that we will need to do in the coming year.

There is a big year ahead of us. I think it will be a good year. I know that my community will be very pleased that this government has acknowledged that health, education, and law and order issues are the primary focus of this budget and that it is building some of the large and expensive infrastructure that is required in the city while it has the money to do so. A hospital the size of Fiona Stanley Hospital, which will be fully paid for, will be a real boon for this city. Unless someone bites the bullet and decides to build these pieces of infrastructure, they never get built. I am pleased to be part of a government that is biting the bullet and making a commitment to provide the huge infrastructure that is required in the health system and so forth. It is fabulous that 26 schools will be built. I know that a lot of those schools are being built in the northern corridor. I think 10 or 12 schools will be built in the electorate of Wanneroo. One school will be built in my electorate, which neighbours the Wanneroo electorate. It is a fabulous budget. It is a very grassroots budget. It is a budget that this government can be proud of. I am really looking forward to seeing all the money get spent.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr C.J. Barnett**.