



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2013

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 30 October 2013

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland) took the chair at 12.00 noon, and read prayers.

OPEN HOUSE PERTH 2013 — PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland): Members, I advise that Parliament House will be open this Sunday, 3 November, as part of the public and civic buildings festival Open House Perth 2013. Parliamentary staff from across the departments will conduct tours of the building throughout the day, and we expect in excess of 1 200 visitors to our Parliament. Tours commence from 9.30 am and run every few minutes until the end of the day at 3.00 pm.

PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH BEDS

Petition

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.01 pm]: I have a petition from 1 058 petitioners. It is certified as conforming with standing orders and states the following —

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

We, the undersigned, say the current plan to build the Perth Children's Hospital with 20 beds available for psychiatric care is inadequate. Adequate access to mental health care is a critical requirement for our young people.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to ensure that the State Government's proposed new Children's Hospital incorporates a vastly increased number of Adolescent Psychiatric care beds.

[See petition 61.]

TABLED REPORT — CORRECTION

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland): I received a letter from the Minister for Community Services dated 29 October 2013 requesting that corrections be made to the Department for Communities "Annual Report 2012–2013", which was tabled on 26 September 2013. The minister has requested that an addendum be attached to the annual report to correct some errors on pages 6, 35 and 82 of the report. Under the provisions of standing order 156, I advise the Assembly that I have authorised that the necessary corrections be attached to the tabled paper.

[See paper 1106.]

PAPER TABLED

A paper was tabled and ordered to lie upon the table of the house.

SUNSET RESERVE TRANSFORMATION BILL 2013

Notice of Motion to Introduce

Notice of motion given by **Mr A.P. Jacob (Minister for Heritage)**.

PERON CAPTIVE BREEDING CENTRE

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR A.P. JACOB (Ocean Reef — Minister for Environment) [12.03 pm]: I would like to inform the house about the successful conclusion of the breeding program for some of Western Australia's rarest animals at the Peron Captive Breeding Centre at Francois Peron National Park in the Shark Bay World Heritage area. The centre, which has been operated by the Department of Parks and Wildlife since 1997, is in the final stages of releasing the last of its animals. As a key part of Project Eden, this centre established self-sustaining populations of bilbies and malleefowl on Peron Peninsula and supplied animals to other critically important conservation projects across Australia. Project Eden began in 1993 when Peron Peninsula was identified as a suitable site to control feral animals and reintroduce threatened native fauna. Some 100 000 hectares of land were set aside for animals such as bilbies to live without the threat of feral cats and foxes, and a breeding centre was established there by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management, a forerunner of the present Department of Parks and Wildlife.

Before European settlement, the bilby was found on more than 70 per cent of the Australian mainland; the species now occurs only in less than 20 per cent of its former range. Before the establishment of the Peron Captive Breeding Centre, the bilby was found only in very isolated populations on the mainland. The innovative project has helped save this vulnerable species from extinction. Between October 2000 and September 2013, Department of Parks and Wildlife staff released just over 175 bilbies at Francois Peron National Park and on south Peron. Although the number of bilbies now living in these areas is difficult to confirm, we believe that considerably more are now living on Francois Peron National Park than the number released.

I am delighted that the purpose of the Peron Captive Breeding Centre has now been achieved, with animals bred there having gone on to establish new populations across the state, including at Faure Island, dryandra woodland near Narrogin, Lorna Glen in central Western Australia, Monarto Zoological Park and Cleland Wildlife Park in South Australia, and Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Perth.

The continued success of the bilby populations on Peron Peninsula will be closely monitored. The Department of Parks and Wildlife's Western Shield fauna recovery program will also continue and be fundamental to this success story. The positive results that we have seen from the release of bilbies into Francois Peron National Park are a step in the right direction, but there is much more work to do.

NORTHERN STAR RESOURCES — COAL DISCOVERY

Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum

MR W.R. MARMION (Nedlands — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.06 pm]: Continued exploration of Western Australia is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the state's mineral resources sector. Even in a well-explored region such as the Pilbara, exploration programs are continuing to identify new finds and the future of the industry. One example is Northern Star Resources Ltd. In July 2010 it purchased the Paulsens goldmine in the Pilbara, and has since undertaken additional exploration programs for gold in both the Pilbara and Kimberley regions.

Today, Northern Star Resources announced a discovery. In its continued exploration of the Pilbara region in the pursuit of gold, it has made a discovery of coal. Northern Star Resources was targeting palaeochannels prospective for gold mineralisation in proximity to its operating Paulsens goldmine when it intercepted a coal resource. Although the discovery of coal in this region may have been initially thought to be unexpected, this discovery reinforces the possibilities of continued exploration in Western Australia and potential for new finds. With ever-improving technologies and innovative exploration techniques, this potential of Western Australia continues to grow.

Yesterday the Legislative Assembly passed the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia Bill 2013, which will continue this government's commitment to progressing research and development in the minerals sector. As resources become harder to find or more challenging to recover, we need to focus on innovation. Addressing these challenges will create long-term opportunities in sharing the knowledge we gain and the expertise we develop. Northern Star Resources' exploration programs have been successful in receiving co-funding drilling grants from the Department of Mines and Petroleum exploration incentive scheme program. The exploration incentive scheme program, in addition to the continuing excellent work of the Geological Survey of Western Australia, continues to ensure that Western Australia remains an attractive destination in which to invest and conduct exploration. I would like to commend Northern Star Resources for its commitment to mineral exploration in Western Australia, and I encourage the many exploration companies in Western Australia to make the most of the opportunities available to them and wish them every success in striking gold, or any other commodity they happen to find.

ELIZABETH QUAY LAND RELEASE

Statement by Minister for Planning

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Minister for Planning) [12.08 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house of the next stage of land released at Elizabeth Quay. Last week I announced two new parcels of land were open to expressions of interest from the private sector. The premium waterfront lots are at the northern end of the Elizabeth Quay precinct and have a combined total area of more than 7 000 square metres. The government is seeking interest for development of the lots for mixed use, which may include commercial office space, retail opportunities, and residential apartment accommodation up to 30 storeys.

This is the second release of land at Elizabeth Quay. The first release, which sought expressions of interest for a premium hotel and residential apartments, attracted 14 national and international bidders. Based on this success, we are expecting strong interest for the next stage of land release.

These developments, coupled with the public domain that is currently being built, will mean that Elizabeth Quay will become both a social and business hub in the city. Elizabeth Quay is expected to attract some \$2.2 billion

from private sector investment over the next five years and will provide a boost to the state's economy. With the works currently underway, this is already being felt, with an estimated 1 600 direct and indirect jobs created.

With projects such as Elizabeth Quay and Perth City Link, the Liberal–National government is investing in a vision for the city that will create new destinations where our growing population can live, work and play. Once complete, Elizabeth Quay will deliver a new five-star hotel; 800 residential dwellings; 200 000 square metres of commercial space, approximately the size of four Bankwest towers; and 25 000 square metres of retail space, equivalent to about the size of two Carillion City Arcade malls.

Expressions of interest for the next two lots are open until Thursday, 30 January 2014, and more information is available from the website at elizabethquay.wa.gov.au.

MINING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr W.R. Marmion (Minister for Mines and Petroleum)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR W.R. MARMION (Nedlands — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [12.11 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the bill is to make amendments to the Mining Act 1978 and the Mining Rehabilitation Fund Act 2012 to facilitate greater transparency by the Department of Mines and Petroleum, to streamline the environmental approvals processes and to strengthen compliance with the legislation. Over the last four years, the Western Australian government has implemented substantial improvements in reforming the approval processes. These reforms were in the context of the state government's priority to improve the approvals process for new business activities, and have been well supported by stakeholders.

The bill forms part of the first tranche of amendments, from the reforming environmental regulation program commenced by my predecessor Hon Norman Moore and chaired by Hon Cheryl Edwardes, being implemented by DMP. It will assist in meeting the government's 2013 election commitment. In particular, it will support the implementation of the mining rehabilitation fund prior to the commencement of the mandatory levy in July 2014. The ongoing RER program is addressing the delivery of DMP's environmental approvals and compliance processes and its interface with other regulators to remove duplication. The implementation of this program aligns with and complements approvals reform by other state and commonwealth agencies, and at the whole-of-government level.

Key elements of the bill: The proposed amendments fall within four discrete areas: first, facilitating environmental data release; second, simplifying environmental approval authorisation processes; third, streamlining issue of notices under the MRF act; and, finally, enabling recovery of MRF money in some circumstances.

I will now turn to the main provisions of the bill. A key aim of the bill is to facilitate environmental data release. Transparency of decision-making and environmental performance is important in building public confidence in the environmental regulatory system and the industry more broadly. This is particularly the case when decisions and environmental performance relate to public assets. DMP currently receives around 3 000 mining-related proposals each year, and only around 1 000 of these are made publicly available in some form—mining proposals, some mine closure plans and parts of annual environmental reports.

The MRF act, which commenced on 1 July 2013, requires clearance and rehabilitation data for approximately 20 000 tenements to be submitted to DMP annually from 1 July 2014. However, there are no specific provisions in the act about the public release of data. The bill will amend the Mining Act to allow regulations to be made to release environmental data. DMP will retain the discretion not to release data when there are commercial, confidentiality or other considerations. DMP will be consulting closely with industry and the community on the detail of the proposed regulations. The bill will also amend the MRF act to enable assessment information and mining tenement rehabilitation liability data to be released.

The bill also contains provisions to simplify environmental approval authorisation processes, to update references to specific position holders and to overcome the requirement for future amendments when position details change. Further efficiency gains will be made by the proposal to streamline the issue of notices under the MRF act when mining tenements have more than one holder. In relation to a mining tenement with more than one tenement holder, the bill will remove the need to issue MRF assessment and other notices to each liable person and, instead, enable the holders to nominate a single point of contact for MRF notices.

Further amendments are proposed to the MRF act to enable the recovery of fund money. The purpose of the MRF act is to secure adequate ongoing funds for the state to rehabilitate land affected by mining operations

when the original operator does not fulfil its mine rehabilitation and closure obligations. It establishes a pooled industry fund that will initially reduce and, over time, eliminate the state's unfunded liability for abandoned mine-site rehabilitation. Currently, the MRF act does not include any provision to allow the state government to recover the costs incurred by the MRF in undertaking rehabilitation work that the mine-site operator has not undertaken. The bill will address this issue by minimising the potential for mine-site operators to avoid bearing the costs of rehabilitation. The amendment to the MRF act will allow money that has been paid from the fund to rehabilitate an abandoned mine site to be recovered from the person responsible for carrying out the work.

In conclusion, this bill achieves amendments that are administrative in nature and will not adversely affect the day-to-day operations of tenement holders; however, it will deliver benefits to the government, the community and industry. These are consistent with the government's approvals reform strategy and the principles of best practice environmental regulation—accountable, transparent, predictable, proportional and targeted.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr A.J. Simpson (Minister for Local Government)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR A.J. SIMPSON (Darling Range — Minister for Local Government) [12.17 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Local Government Amendment Bill 2013.

In February 2009, the former Minister for Local Government announced an agenda to reform the local government sector to strengthen the structural viability of local governments. Since that time, the Liberal–National government has continued to press forward with these important reforms. We feel strongly about the need to ensure that this state has an efficient and well-regulated system of local governments that is responsive to the needs of the community.

Historically, the structural reform of the local government sector has been difficult to achieve. We are the only state that has not achieved a strategic reform of local governments to ensure that they meet the modern needs of our population. The need for local government reform is well established and clearly overdue. As structural reform is unlikely to originate from inside the sector, there is now a compelling basis for the government to drive and support the reform process at a political and legislative level.

The Liberal–National government has decided not to legislate for new local government boundaries. Instead, the government will use the mechanisms already available in the Local Government Act 1995. This is consistent with the Western Australian Local Government Association's resolutions in 2012 that the number of metropolitan local government districts be reduced to between 15 and 20; the state government should show leadership in advancing metropolitan reform; and local government councillors should lead this process.

The proposed changes in this bill are aimed at facilitating the process, largely by giving the Local Government Advisory Board more discretion in its processes. In addition, other amendments in the bill will improve the operation of the Local Government Standards Panel and will provide clarity in determinations made by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.

The primary amendments in the bill concern the Local Government Advisory Board. The advisory board is an independent statutory body established under the act for the purposes of advising the government on local government matters. The board's main function is to assess any proposal to change a local government boundary and to provide considered recommendations to the government. The bill will expand the membership of the advisory board from five members to seven. The bill provides that the two extra seats will be filled by members appointed to the board to represent the interests of the community. The bill will also amend the act so that these two additional members will be included in any committee formed by the board. To ensure that board members have access to all relevant information, the bill will also allow the Minister for Local Government to advise the board of any government policy relevant to local governments. As a result of the bill, the board will be required to take government policy into account when carrying out its functions. However, in order to maintain the board's independence, the bill provides that the board does not need to act in accordance with government policy. Furthermore, if the board is advised on any government policy by the minister, the bill requires the policy to be included in the board's next annual report to ensure transparency.

As a result of the planned metropolitan reforms, the advisory board will soon be required to deal with a large number of proposals relating to local government amalgamations. The bill will provide the board with the ability to hold combined inquiries where two or more proposals are related.

This bill makes no amendment to the Dadour provisions. Under the current act, the Dadour provisions allow a poll to be held on amalgamation proposals. If at least 50 per cent of electors in a district participate in the poll and at least 50 per cent of those participants vote “no”, the proposal will be defeated. This means it is currently possible for 25 per cent of voters in a single district to defeat an amalgamation proposal, even when it is supported by the majority of voters in the other districts involved in the proposal. I believe these poll provisions are contrary to the principles of a democratic local government system, but I do not want discussion on this to be a distraction from what I am trying to achieve—a local government system in the metropolitan area that is suited to the needs of the community today and into the future.

It is expected that the structural reforms that will occur may result in a number of local government employees finding their employment ended or altered. The bill makes provisions to ensure that any compensation paid to these people will be fair and uniform. The bill will do this by clarifying current provisions in the act to ensure that the payments for employees who choose to end their employment with the local government are limited to a year’s remuneration. Permanent employees will still be guaranteed two years’ employment. This concludes the amendments in the bill directly related to metropolitan reform.

The bill will also make a number of amendments to the act for the purposes of improving the regulation of the local government sector. The bill will delete an electoral offence from the act relating to defamatory statements. In addition to being potentially unconstitutional, the particular offence relates to matters that are now more appropriately covered by the Defamation Act 2005.

The bill will make a number of changes to the operation of the Local Government Standards Panel. As a result of the bill’s amendments, the standards panel will now gain the discretion to refuse to deal with complaints in certain circumstances. This includes cases in which the complaint is officially withdrawn or the board determines that a complaint is frivolous or without substance. Although the panel will gain the discretion to refuse to deal with complaints, this will not prevent the panel from fully investigating a complaint if the panel deems it appropriate. In the event that the panel decides to refuse to deal with a complaint or chooses to investigate a complaint after it is withdrawn, the panel must provide its reasons for taking this action.

As members are all aware, the government was recently involved in significant reforms relating to the fees and allowances of local government–elected members. The bill makes a number of further amendments to the act in that regard. First, the bill clarifies that the determinations of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal will apply to any regional local governments formed under the act. Second, the bill will ensure that council members will be paid only the fees and allowances for which they should be entitled under the act. Third, the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal will obtain the ability to make determinations to apply in circumstances in which a person holds office for less than a full term. All of these reforms are designed to increase public confidence in the local government sector regarding the way in which public money is used.

Until now, Western Australia has had a pattern of local governments virtually unchanged since Federation. As a result, our local governments are characterised by high levels of bureaucracy, decreased efficiency and ever-increasing costs on WA ratepayers. The passing of this bill will be an important step in a historic reform of the local government sector. It is predicted that the structural reforms will result in local governments that are more efficient, less costly and better able to meet the needs of their communities. I commend the bill to the house.

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

ELECTRICITY CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Second Reading

Resumed from 29 October.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [12.23 pm]: I rise to contribute to the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013, which contains amendments to the Electricity Corporations Act. The bill is all about trying to merge Synergy and Verve Energy. It is interesting to read the minister’s second reading speech, because from its content I would not have thought it had come from the same person—a free marketeer who has Milton Friedman as one of his heroes. It would be great to have a one-on-one on the psychiatrist’s couch with the minister to find how his conversion came about. In the second reading speech, the minister spent quite a deal of time on the history of Labor governments, in particular the Gallop government, and the splitting up of Western Power. The minister did not talk about his views on the privatisation of the energy market or the history of the Liberal Party in this. After the Oates report in 2009, the minister well knows that Hon Peter Collier, the then Minister for Energy, announced that the Barnett government would not bring Verve and Synergy together, and as late as 2012 Minister Collier released the “Strategic Energy Initiative 2030”, which was meant to be the blueprint for the

future of the energy sector. At the time, the minister said it was a very important document; however, I do not think that document referred to bringing these two identities together. It is interesting that the current minister has experienced his conversion on the road to Damascus; although it may be that he has not really experienced that as the fingerprints of the Premier are all over this bill. We know it is the birthday and Christmas wish of the Premier that Synergy and Verve come back together as one identity. That is completely contrary to what the former Minister for Energy announced in 2009 and 2012, and, of course, what the present minister has talked about over many years in regard to privatisation.

This is a rather complex bill but it is also confusing when one reads it. The minister touched on the government's reason for introducing this bill in his second reading speech. He stated —

The Liberal–National government is re-aggregating Verve and Synergy. Its aim is not to re-establish a government monopoly, but to address the inefficiencies in the operations of the two entities and realign their incentives so they can operate in the interests of consumers and taxpayers.

The bill contains amendments to vest all assets, rights and liabilities of the Electricity Retail Corporation, or Synergy, in the Electricity Generation Corporation, or Verve Energy. The Electricity Generation Corporation will be renamed as the Electricity Retail and Generation Corporation. It is intended that this merged entity will trade under the name “Synergy”.

That is confusing in itself, and I will talk about that shortly. The minister continues —

Verve Energy was selected as the continuing legal vehicle for the merged entity, as it holds the majority of the combined assets of the two corporations in the form of electricity generation plant. By retaining Verve Energy as the legal vehicle, there is no need to transfer these assets.

The stated intention in the bill, when it came before the house, was to reduce the cost of energy to the customer. I would have hoped that is what the government would have intended here! The minister said the merger would provide security of supply and facilitate private sector investment. I am unclear how that will happen. I do not think the minister has convincingly argued a business case to achieve the objectives contained in the second reading speech or that were outlined to the opposition in the briefing it received on the legislation before the house.

I return to the name of the bill that will bring together Verve and Synergy to form one government. The name used by the minister is “gentailia” —

Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I do not think that is its proper name, actually!

Dr M.D. Nahan: It is gentailer!

Dr A.D. BUTI: I hope Hansard picked that one up!

The SPEAKER: The member for Armadale has shocked the member for Kimberley.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Kimberley would not be shocked. She has sat next to me long enough not to have been shocked.

It is interesting that the merged company will be called Synergy, but Verve will continue as the entity, while all the assets and liabilities of Synergy will pass to Verve. Synergy will be abolished, but the merged company will be renamed Synergy. I am sure the minister would agree that that could be a bit confusing.

Dr M.D. Nahan: You have to choose a name.

Dr A.D. BUTI: A name has to be used, but maybe the government should have thought about another name rather than abolishing Synergy but continuing to use the same name for the new entity. It does not seem to make much sense, consistent with much of the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013.

The government has, of course, stated that it will ensure appropriate regulations are in place so that its objectives will be achieved. But, once again, from the legislation before us it is hard to see how that will happen. The formation of this new entity will result in a number of amendments to the act, one of which is to allow Horizon Power to continue to work within the south west interconnected system.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Horizon is outside the SWIS.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Outside?

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes. It is the government-owned electricity entity that operates outside the SWIS.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Okay.

The Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013 is very convoluted. As we and the minister know, energy is a crucial political and economic issue to the running of the state of Western Australia. Governments have an

obligation to provide security of energy supply and ensure the efficient flow of energy, while trying to minimise costs. One has to wonder how the amalgamation of Verve and Synergy will achieve the government obligations. It seems to be driven purely by the ideological position of the Premier, not that of the minister, because if it was the position of the minister, there has been a conversion on the road to Damascus. I honestly do not believe that to be the case, although he may have sold out his principles and long-held philosophies on the free market, privatisation and competition since he became a minister. There is no way that this bill concurs with the minister's long-held views on competition and private enterprise. But even if the minister has changed his views—if there has been a conversion on the road to Damascus—where is the business case that demonstrates that this bill will achieve the objectives the minister stated in his second reading speech? The speech reads —

Its aim is not to re-establish a government monopoly, but to address the inefficiencies in the operations of the two entities and realign their incentives so they can operate in the interests of consumers and taxpayers.

If they are going to operate in the interests of consumers and taxpayers, they should be trying not only to provide a consistent supply of energy, but also to reduce the cost of energy, and I am unclear how that will happen.

The minister will have had briefings and communications with industry stakeholders on this legislation, so he knows they are concerned about what is happening. This legislation has created a degree of unnecessary uncertainty in the market. It has not been brought in as a necessary evil to achieve a better outcome and it will not achieve the aim the minister hopes. It just will not do that.

Where is the business case? I know of no studies or reports that have recommended a merger. As recently as 2012, the former Minister for Energy stated that there would not be a merger of Synergy and Verve. He also stated that in 2009. In 2012, it was stated that strategic energy initiative was a great blueprint that was basically the future for the energy sector, yet it did not recommend or even discuss bringing the two entities together. Where did this idea come from? We know where—it came from the Premier. As has been stated by members on the minister's side of the house, when the Premier says "A", the ministers also say "A"; when the Premier says, "Jump up in the air," ministers jump up in the air. When the Premier says, "I want you to abandon your long-held philosophy as a champion of the private enterprise market and a champion of Milton Friedman economics", that is what the minister will do. The problem is that this government is still a one-man show. What the Premier asks for, the Premier shall receive from his trusted lieutenants. But as we know, some of those lieutenants are becoming quite nervous as time goes on due to the Premier's performance since the election. There is no business case or studies or reports that recommend a merger. Where is the cost-benefit analysis that states that this bill will achieve its objectives? As an economist the minister knows very well know that cost-benefit analyses are incredibly important when reform is sought. Where is the regulatory impact statement on this merger? Where are the figures on how much the merger will cost or how much will be saved? The minister's second reading speech referred to savings made in the reduction in the number of directors because there will be only one entity. That is quite interesting in itself because the government will be increasing the size of the single board, so it is not actually achieving a phenomenal saving in directors' fees. But surely that cannot be a major incentive for merging Synergy and Verve. This is a major economic reform—a major piece of energy reform—and surely the saving of some directors' fees cannot be a major motivating factor for the government to go ahead with this bill.

Minister, where has the government provided the evidence that this merger will save costs? The government has not even told us how much the cost will be. That is deplorable. The Minister for Energy has brought in a very significant piece of legislation but he has not provided us with a cost-benefit analysis or regulatory impact statement, and he has also not provided us with information about how costs or savings will be achieved. Further, as I stated previously, the Oates report of 2009 did not recommend the merger. I would bet anything that when the minister was a backbencher, sitting where the member for Belmont sits or nearby, he would have been in wholehearted agreement with the Oates report. Is that true, minister?

Dr M.D. Nahan: I have no comment on it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is the minister not going to comment on that?

Dr M.D. Nahan: No; no interjections.

Dr A.D. BUTI: No interjections? The minister's silence on that, I think, is an answer in itself.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It speaks volumes!

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is right, member for Cannington; it speaks volumes.

The "Strategic Energy Initiative 2030" of 2012, which was lauded by the then Minister for Energy, Hon Peter Collier, as the blueprint for the future of the energy sector in Western Australia, did not recommend what the minister has brought to the house. I am absolutely confused because the legislation is not only confusing, but also convoluted. Synergy will be gotten rid of but the name will be retained; that is confusing in itself. Let us just

leave that aside because that does not go to the actual content of the bill, although I think it is symptomatic of how confusing this legislation is. The government's own reports of 2009 and 2012—particularly the 2012 report, which was released just over a year ago—did not recommend that Verve and Synergy should be merged. It was a blueprint for the future of the energy sector in Western Australia, but it did not recommend bringing together these two entities.

We also know the minister's personal philosophical views. Anyone who had any idea of who the Minister for Energy, the member for Riverton, was before he came to this house, would never have dreamt that he would have been the author of this bill.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But of course he is not the author of the bill, is he, member for Cannington? The Premier is the author of this bill, and the minister, as a trusted lieutenant who wants to remain minister, has agreed with the Premier. Rather than the minister standing up to the Premier on his principles for what is better for the consumers and taxpayers of Western Australia, he has caved in with this Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013. The bill is convoluted and will not achieve the minister's stated objectives. It will not lead to the reduction of costs and it will not improve on the situation that the minister states is in dire need of repair. How can the Minister for Energy, the doyen of the economic rationalists in the Liberal Party of Western Australia, put his name to this bill—even though he is not the author; we know it is the Premier? How can the minister introduce into this house a bill seeking to reduce competition? It is phenomenal, is it not?

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I do not need an extension.

The disciple of Milton Friedman, who would not be out of place in the Chicago school of economics, is responsible for this bill. It is absolutely phenomenal. I think this is a very historic occasion because it shows the power that the Premier has over his ministers. Rather than the minister arguing his philosophical case and staying firm to his principle, which, of course, in this instance would agree with the views expressed by the member for Cannington, he has caved in and introduced this bill that will not do what it seeks to achieve. The aim of this bill was not to reduce costs or to ensure that there was security of supply, the aim of this bill was to please the Premier. That is the aim of the bill and the minister certainly pleases the Premier, because he has an ideological position that there should be a merger of Synergy and Verve. It is very quiet on the back benches and it will be really interesting to know whether the minister's fellow Liberal Party members, who I doubt are as ideological as the minister is on matters of economics, agree with this bill. I am sure that the Treasurer, who counts himself as a champion of the free enterprise and competition school of economics, would not have agreed to such a bill. But, of course, he and the minister have agreed to it because they want to placate the Premier. As we know, the Premier has held a position that he has repeated in this house a number of times; that is, he wants to see the merger of Synergy and Verve. That is what this legislation does, but it does it for the wrong reasons. It will not achieve its objectives, it is confusing and it will not benefit the consumers or taxpayers of Western Australia. It has raised great doubt in potential investors in the energy market.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [12.43 pm]: I would like to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013. First, following on from the members for Cannington and Armadale, I have to ask the question: why has this bill come about? As we know, the Minister for Energy was opposed to the re-merger of Synergy and Verve in his previous life. Prior to entering into politics, coming into Parliament and into his role as the Minister for Energy, he was very strongly supportive of competition in the energy sector. Now he is the Minister for Energy, all of a sudden his views have changed. His views go against his own personal and philosophical approach to competition, to energy reform and to the entire energy sector by supporting a bill that would effectively create a monopoly structure for the energy industry in Western Australia.

The new Synergy–Verve organisation will have 80 per cent of the market share of the Western Australian electricity sector. Can members imagine what chance small to medium-sized energy players, which are trying to grow the energy sector in Western Australia, have in competition against a behemoth such as the newly merged Synergy–Verve? The minister knows this. He will give some economic argument based on some weasel words about why the new merged structure will in fact encourage competition because of the manner in which the structure will be created and the way in which the retail sector will be ring-fenced from the generation sector and therefore the competitive forces will continue as they were developing under the disaggregation model. That is what he will say, but that is just not fact.

In answer to my question about why this bill has come about, we have to look at the history and behaviour of the Premier. The Premier, as we all know, is obsessed with state development and he has been like that throughout his entire political career.

Ms R. Saffioti: Pity he can't do it.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is nothing to be critical of; I will not criticise the Premier for being obsessed with state development—so he should be now that he is the Premier. As the member for West Swan said, it is a pity he cannot do it, and we see the litany of failed projects around Western Australia where the Premier has not been successful in his obsession with state development. However, he is obsessed with state development and he believes state control of the electricity sector is a means to further state development. He sees it as a vehicle to being able to get state development happening. That is the philosophy and attitude of the Premier of Western Australia. It is not the philosophy and attitude of the Minister for Energy, but it is the philosophy and attitude of the Premier of Western Australia. Given that I am from the left faction of the Labor Party, I do not have a great problem with that approach at all. Market intervention and direction of state government resources to further the state's ends, grow and diversify the economy, and create jobs is a good thing as far as the left of the Labor Party is concerned. I am actually surprised that we line up with the conservative Premier of Western Australia. I am shocked. I am so shocked that I am actually thinking of offering him a membership to the ALP of Western Australia, because when he retires he might want something else to do with his life.

Mr W.J. Johnston: He's going to write a book.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: He can still write the book and become a member of the Labor Party, and he can even join the left faction as well. He will not go with the member for Cannington to the right, by the way.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I'm too right wing for the Premier!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is right. He will certainly not go into the member for Cannington's faction; he is far, far too left-wing for the member for Cannington's mob! The Premier would sit perfectly in the left of the Labor Party.

Ms R. Saffioti: Comrade Barnett!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Comrade Barnett, yes! Come on over!

Ms R. Saffioti: Do you know what, member for Cockburn? We would not be even that left as a caucus!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is right, and I am literally coming to that, member for West Swan.

Mr M. McGowan: He is an extremist! He should join the Greens!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No, he is not. I will not have that said about the Premier. He does not fit into the Greens whatsoever. He fits nicely and perfectly into the left of the Labor Party. But, then again, the left of the Labor Party supported disaggregation. We supported disaggregation because it would enable us to use limited state government resources in the right and proper way. Do we want massive amounts of state resources—billions of dollars—spent on power stations, or do we want that money put into hospitals, roads and schools and various other forms of infrastructure? The choice that the incoming Labor government in 2001 faced was: do we replace the ageing generation infrastructure of Western Power and spend billions of dollars on building new state-owned and controlled power stations, or do we move to a more open market model in which the private sector is encouraged to build generation and transfer that electricity into a state-owned transmission system, and that electricity is then sold by a state-owned retailer? We believed that was the best model for Western Australia, because it would enable money that would normally be tied up with generation to be put into other forms of infrastructure—and it was; it was put into Fiona Stanley Hospital and the southern rail network, and we have seen the benefits of both those investments.

Did disaggregation work? Did it create a market structure, with competition, and downward pressure on prices? I am not talking about retail prices. The former Minister for Energy Eric Ripper was not talking about retail prices when he talked about how competition would put downward pressure on the cost of electricity; he was talking about putting downward pressure on the cost of wholesale electricity and the generation of electricity. If we had competition in the generation of electricity, and a market structure, it would lead to the retailer purchasing the most cost-effective delivery of electricity on any specific day, and that, multiplied over a whole year, and over the years, would bring downward pressure on the wholesale cost of electricity, with an ultimate flow-on effect to retail electricity prices. However, could we get any airplay on that? No, we could not, because we were drowned out at the time by the then opposition, led by none other than the member for Cottesloe, who is now the Premier, who was absolutely opposed to disaggregation, even though he had voted for it, and continued to drown out the benefits of disaggregation, particularly the introduction of the market structure and the competition that would lead ultimately to downward pressure on the generation costs of electricity.

The issue I want to raise now, member for Cannington, is the lie that is perpetuated by the Barnett government. That lie came out after disaggregation, and it continues to this today. It was repeated only yesterday by the Minister for Energy on television. That lie is that disaggregation has led to higher electricity prices for consumers. The Premier has referred to this over and over again. The Minister for Energy has also referred to it over and over again in this house, and only yesterday on television the minister continued to peddle the absolute untruth that disaggregation has led to higher electricity prices. The Minister for Energy knows that is untrue. The

bald facts are very simple. The minister knows that the price freeze on the cost of electricity to householders between 1993 and 2010 led to major problems and cost blowouts. The minister should not shake his head. The minister knows that is true. The minister knows that that price freeze had a major impact not only on the retail sector, but also, ultimately, on how those costs flowed through to the major generator, Verve Energy. We had two increases in the price of electricity to householders between 1993 and 2010. One was a very minor increase that reflected the consumer price index at the time, and the other was the increase as a result of the introduction of the goods and services tax. Those were the only increases in the price of electricity between 2003 and 2010. Was that choice made by successive governments wrong? Yes, it was wrong. I said at the time, when I was the Minister for Energy, that it was wrong. I said that successive governments, including my own, were making a mistake in freezing electricity prices, because ultimately that would lead to financial damage to what could have been Western Power but that ultimately under the disaggregation model was Verve.

However, if we cast our minds back to that time and to who was responsible for the continuation of the price freeze on retail electricity tariffs in Western Australia, the culprit was none other than the members of the current government. I say that because in 2005, when we introduced the Electricity Corporations Bill into this house, the then Liberal opposition, led by the member for Kalgoorlie, Matt Birney, agreed to support that legislation and the disaggregation process only on the condition that retail tariffs for electricity be frozen until 2010. We know the damage that has caused. It has caused the state government to have to subsidise Verve to a significant amount. That subsidy has been reduced over time since electricity prices have gone up.

Dr M.D. Nahan: No, member. We have increased prices significantly, as you know, and the subsidy has actually increased, despite those sharp increases in prices.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: If that is the case, the minister needs to explain why those subsidies have increased and what the other cost impacts on that organisation are that have led to that, because our modelling, as the minister knows —

Dr M.D. Nahan: The subsidies are much lower than they would have been —

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. Nahan: No, let me finish. If we hadn't increased the prices, the subsidy would be much larger, but the truth of the matter is, despite increasing prices, the costs have gone up commensurately.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Right. There has to be an explanation as to why the subsidies have not come down despite an increase of 72 per cent, so far, in electricity prices. As the minister knows, the modelling that was done by the Office of Energy prior to 2008 showed that if we had increased electricity prices to around 75 per cent of what it was then, we would have reached cost reflective pricing of electricity. Now the minister is suggesting that that is not the case, which means that there are obviously other factors in play, and those factors are other costs that apply to either Verve Energy or the transmission costs which will ultimately flow on to Verve Energy, and the control of those costs—all of which are within the minister's own capacity to control unless, of course, it is fuel. Nevertheless, the lie that has continued to be promoted is that disaggregation has led to higher prices, and that is not true.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It has.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is not true, Premier.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's patently obvious.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The tariff freeze from 1993 to 2010 is the culprit for the need to subsidise. Of course there are ongoing increases in other costs, including fuel, but most of it—not all of it—over that period would have been taken care of if we had been allowed to increase prices. Who put the tariff freeze in place? The former member for Kalgoorlie, Matt Birney, and the Liberal opposition put the tariff freeze and the disaggregation in place as conditions of agreeing to the passing of the Electricity Corporations Act. As I have said, the Premier stood in this place and opposed it; he opposed it, but nevertheless voted for it. He voted for the tariff freeze, and that freeze remained in place, as I said, between 1993 and 2010.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Where you're wrong, member, is that there was no price freeze in the 90s.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member for Cockburn did not ask the Premier to interject. The Premier has been in this place long enough to know the standing orders. He knows that all interjections are disorderly and I ask you, Mr Acting Speaker, to call this to his attention.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Thank you, member. Yes, interjections are disorderly. Member for Cockburn, perhaps you can direct your comments directly to me, thank you.

Debate Resumed

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Regardless of what the Premier said in his interjection, there was a price freeze between 1993 and 2010. The Premier should not come into the chamber and make things up.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I was the minister —

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I know the Premier was. He should go back and have a look at the price increases. There was one CPI increase, and GST. That was it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But it was not a price freeze policy.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Regardless of whether there was a price freeze policy in place, the former Liberal government did not put tariffs up, apart from once. Then, when it was in opposition, the Liberal Party bound the passage of the Electricity Corporations Act to a further price freeze for another five years, until 2010. That is what it did.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I wasn't the leader.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The seeds of the problem, not so much with Synergy but particularly with Verve, and the subsidies that Verve needs to operate, lie directly in the Liberal Party's decision making, because it forced the then Labor government to put in place a tariff freeze to gain its support for the passage of the bill in both this house and the other house, and the Premier knows that is true.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What you're saying post-2000 is true, but what you're saying about the 90s is not true.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: One increase, Premier—one increase. Do not try to gild the lily; there was one increase over eight years.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr W.J. Johnston: If you want to make a speech, get up and make one!

Mr C.J. Barnett: I might!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I hope the Premier does.

That is the history of the disaggregation; those are the reasons for why a re-merger is occurring now. Responsibility for the impacts of disaggregation lies completely in the hands of the party that is now in government, and now it is trying to overcome those problems by re-merging Verve and Synergy through this legislation. What will that do? It will lead to further problems in the electricity industry. Who in the Western Australian economy supports the re-merger of Verve and Synergy? Who supports it?

Dr M.D. Nahan: I do.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I do.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Ha! Two people: the Premier whose idea it is, and the Minister for Energy, who does not philosophically agree with it, but who will do as he is told because he wants to keep his job. That is all. They are the only two people—we did not hear any other voices in support in this chamber—in the whole of Western Australia who actually support this move. Does industry support it? Absolutely not. Industry has been strident in its views, certainly to us, about its opposition to this re-merger. Why? Because of the scale of the organisation that is going to be created. The Treasurer has joked about the Labor Party being North Korean in its attitude to workplace reform legislation; well, I could repeat that and say that the Premier is effectively North Korean in his attitude to the size of the organisation that he is going to create as a result of this Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill. He is creating a monster in the electricity market and it will have a major impact on the companies that currently exist in the market, particularly the wholesale market, and their ability to be able to buy and sell openly in an open, fair and competitive way. The companies in the market at the moment are companies such as Verve, Synergy, Alinta, ERM, Griffin and Perth Energy. If we look at the scale of trading that these companies undertake and the volumes of electricity—that is, the bulk of electricity bought and sold in the south west interconnected system—the retail sector is quite small. The amount of electricity that retail consumers use is still relatively small compared with the volumes used by industry, and therefore the wholesale market is the larger share of the electricity market. Now we have a behemoth in that market—the newly merged Verve and Synergy—yet the Premier and the Minister for Energy are saying, “That's okay; it's all right. We've got these firewalls in place.” I hope they are not the same firewalls that the banking sector in New York had in place prior to the global financial crisis, because they did not have firewalls in place and said, “Don't worry; the trading part of the banking sector won't be talking to the other parts of the sector.” Of course, they did, and those walls were —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Very thin.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Very thin, and ultimately it led to the global financial crisis. This is Perth; it is a very small energy sector compared with the national electricity market. It is a very small place and we have only a handful

of players in the market. Will the secrecy and the firewalls be sufficient to ensure that market information is not passed from one part of the organisation to another? I doubt it. Will the other wholesalers in the marketplace be able to buy from the new merged energy organisation at what is supposed to be a reasonable open market price? We do not know. Will the new merged entity sell the electricity to them on the basis that it is normal market practice? It may and it may not. It depends on what the traders think, the financial decision they are making at the time and what profit they want to make. An entity with control of 80 per cent of the market has a major impact on the other players. The government makes no guarantees that any part of this legislation will ensure open, fair and free competition in the Western Australian electricity market. In fact, we cannot find anything really about what the market will look like because the regulations have not yet been created. The government is, basically, asking not only the opposition but also industry—that is, the wholesale players and customers—to accept these reforms, as it calls them, without full disclosure of what we are entering into. The government wants them to accept, blindfolded, that merging Verve and Synergy will be in their best interests. The detail is simply not there for the wholesale traders in the market. The government does not provide any excuse. It tells them not worry and that they will find out about it in the future. This is in an industry in which it takes at least 10 years to plan, build and execute a new coal-fired power station.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, it does not. We did it in four—Collie A.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: For a private sector player it takes 10 years because it cannot simply max out the credit card as Hon Colin Barnett has done both as Premier and as former Minister for Energy; a private sector player cannot simply spend as it likes. It has to get approvals in place, find the land, justify the financials to the banking sector—not only here, but also around the world—for the investment structure and find customers. As we have seen with some of the bigger players in the market, it takes up to 10 years for that to happen. For projects in the renewable energy sector, such as wind farms, it does not take as long—from the idea to execution is probably about five years. Nevertheless, a private sector player has to be absolutely certain of market stability and the ongoing capacity of its investment to sell that electricity for it to execute any project. That is not what is happening here. The merger of Verve and Synergy will not provide that stability for the Western Australian electricity market and for rational financial investment decisions to be made. It simply will not do that. What will happen once this is in place and once it is rolled out? We will see a lack of investment from the private sector in future power generation in Western Australia.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [1.14 pm]: I rise to speak on the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013 and outline the Labor Party's opposition to it. This bill seeks to reduce competition in the marketplace. As we have heard, the only reason this bill is before us today is that it is a hangover from what the Premier hated during the terms of the Gallop–Carpenter governments. He did not like the disaggregation and now he has the chance to reverse it. There are no economic cases before us—absolutely none. As many people have stated, the Minister for Finance in his previous role espoused competition and the free market, yet he has introduced this bill to decrease competition. The bunch of policy zombies on the other side get a direction from the Premier in the middle of the night to start walking the streets of Perth with their outdated policies to the detriment of Western Australia. They do not get to contribute to the debate in cabinet or to the policy-making process, but are given the directive to walk around the streets of Perth trying to sell these policies. It is an absolute disgrace. In his heart of hearts the Minister for Finance does not support this bill. We know that because no person who supports the free market and competition could seriously walk into this place and introduce this bill. What motivates this? It is such a significant change to an operating market. Is there a business case to support it? No. Is there any economic case to support it?

Mr C.J. Barnett: The loss of \$1 billion.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier is lying on that. He says it all the time. If he has so much justification, he should bring it in. He should bring in facts to justify his claims, but he does not have them. He has all the resources of government, yet he cannot get people to come in and justify any of the claims that he makes. He should bring in the economic business case.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The Gallop government was advised it would lose half a billion dollars and that proved to be the case.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The government has had five and a half years and the Premier has not been able to provide advice to justify anything he has said on this matter.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Have I been wrong on anything?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Everything. Shall we go through them? The Premier said he would get Oakajee to work—fail. He said he would get Browse to work—fail.

Mr C.J. Barnett: On this bill.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry, the Premier is limiting it!

Mr C.J. Barnett: You could read 20 speeches I have made on this since 2000 and I have been absolutely consistent right through the Gallop–Carpenter governments.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier has been consistently wrong. He has taken two things that are not connected and tried to connect them to justify his philosophical position on this. The Premier likes to control industry and state development. We have all seen it. When we wanted to put the Gorgon project on Barrow Island, he said no and that it should go to Maitland for all these other reasons. He tried to control it. What did the Premier say about Browse? He knew a fair and open process was happening, but he thought he knew better and he tried to make all the companies go to James Price Point. However, the companies did not want to go. The Premier thought he was the big negotiator and he said he would go overseas and bring back Oakajee. What has he done? He has done nothing. The Premier continually tries to interfere in state development and he continually fails. He goes around the CBD of Perth telling people he is a great developer. I wish we all had that front, but we do not.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Ord River, Wheatstone, Gorgon, Karara—project after project.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When anyone throws \$325 million at any industry, we expect an outcome. Basically, when outcomes are able to be facilitated without the heavy expenditure of government money, that is some sort of an achievement, but this government never does that. It uses the public purse.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Gorgon, Wheatstone, Karara.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Wheatstone was underway. The Premier opposed the expansion of the Geraldton port that facilitated the beginning of the iron ore industry in the midwest.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There is absolutely no economic case for this change.

Let us go through some of the reforms and some of the comments made about disaggregation. I refer to comments on the website of the Independent Market Operator. It indicates that in 2006 there were nine market generators in Western Australia—in 2011–12 there were 24 market generators; over 330 megawatts have been provided through facility upgrades and there are over 250 megawatts of demand side management; and Verve had 90 per cent of the market—in 2011–12 it had 57 per cent.

The Oates report referred to some of the impacts of disaggregation. At page 5, it states —

Since the Western Australian Wholesale Electricity Market ... was initiated in 2006, competition has progressively emerged with approximately 60% of the market now open to competition. Verve's share of total installed capacity has fallen from 93% in 2006 to 70% today, and is expected to be 58% by 2013. Synergy's share of the contestable market has fallen from approximately 90% in 2006 to 66% today, and is expected to be 44% of the growing market by 2013.

It states that new private generation investment has been secured. It continues —

Since 2006 the bulk of new generation investment has been provided by the private sector. Approximately 35% (estimated at \$1b) is private risk investment which has no connection to the State and approximately 65% has been procured by Synergy under long term supply contracts.

It goes on to refer to the next 10 years. This is another key point that I will refer to later. The report goes on to state that significant further investment is required over the next 10 years. It continues —

The bulk of generation investment required to 2013 is either installed or committed. From 2014 to 2028 it is estimated that growth and replacement plant costing in excess of \$10b will be required.

That is a key issue, because today we are talking about the market's ability to provide private sector investment in generation for years to come. Once again a decision has been made in this place to serve the attitude of the Premier today but it disregards the needs of the state for the next 10 to 20 years. Again and again it happens. Policy decisions are made to serve the ego of the Premier but they ignore the key issues that will confront Western Australian industry and consumers over the next 10 or 20 years.

I attended the briefing on this bill yesterday, and I thank the officers involved for the briefing. The one thing I found striking about the briefing and in my discussions with the member for Cannington was that the majority of the briefing was about how these units will be ring-fenced. Eighty per cent of the briefing entailed how we will make sure that the three components of the same entity do not talk to each other. There will be courses for people on how not to disclose information from one part of the entity to the other. The basis of the legislation is about ring-fencing units that should never have been brought back together in the first place. If there were separate units, the entire change would not need to be focused on stopping them from talking to each other. I understand that much of the change we are promoting today will bring them together and stop them from talking to each other.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Don't be foolish. It'll be a single board.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know there will be a single board, but a lot of the emphasis below the CEO level is on stopping the two components from talking to each other because that will pose significant market risk.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Have you ever been inside a law firm or an accounting firm?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As the member for Cockburn announced, they have covered themselves with glory over the years and there were a number of scandals around the world. As I said, the focus of the briefing was on bringing the units together. The basis of what we are doing is to stop the components from talking to each other. It is absolutely counterintuitive.

In relation to comments about the price, the minister said again yesterday that disaggregation caused a 72 per cent increase in the electricity price.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No-one said that.

Dr M.D. Nahan: No, I did not.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, he did.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No-one said that. You're just making that up. Not even I have said that.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Not even the Premier, and I know that he says quite a bit.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You accuse me of everything, but I have never said that. It was a major contributor to dysfunction in the energy industry. You were warned in government that you would lose half a billion dollars, and you did.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What are the Premier's warnings? How about Muja AB? What did they tell the Premier about that?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Keep to one topic. You can't have this argument.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No; the Premier wants to talk about warnings. Has the Premier done any analysis? He has not. Where is his business case?

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Does the Premier have a business case for this?

Mr C.J. Barnett: You lost basically a billion dollars on this.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier is absolutely lying.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier is absolutely lying on this matter.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to the 72 per cent increase in electricity prices —

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Let us go back to what the minister said last night. Unless I am absolutely mistaken, he linked the 72 per cent increase to disaggregation. That is what he did.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I did not.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, he did.

Mr C.J. Barnett: He did not say that.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He did. How does the Premier know?

Dr M.D. Nahan: Where?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He said it last night on television. The key issue why electricity prices —

Dr M.D. Nahan: We had to increase prices by nearly 72 per cent. Despite that, costs have gone up and subsidies have risen. That is what I said.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, he did not. It has been a deliberate policy move of this government to increase electricity prices by 72 per cent.

Dr M.D. Nahan: We inherited your mess.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Because the tariffs were frozen.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Come on! What a weak government Labor was. If you blame an opposition for your foolish legislation, that is the weakest thing I've ever heard. It was as weak as water. So you were incapable of governing, were you? You thought we would govern from opposition.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Members! Could the member for West Swan direct her comments directly to me, and everybody else can just listen like I am.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The tariffs were frozen, so there was a differential between the cost of providing electricity and the prices. That was basically it, and that is why there was a subsidy. There was a deliberate decision to provide that subsidy through the consolidated fund. Then these guys opposite made a deliberate decision to increase electricity prices by 72 per cent. That is what happened.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You have to tell the truth. You are nowhere near the truth.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is what happened. We made a deliberate decision to subsidise electricity consumers through the consolidated fund.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! I have said that I just want to hear the member for West Swan, so I ask you to make no more interjections.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We made a deliberate decision to subsidise electricity consumers through the CF. This government made a deliberate decision to increase electricity prices by 72 per cent. There is nothing factually wrong or hysterical about that comment. It is fact. We subsidised electricity users through the consolidated fund and this government increased electricity prices by 72 per cent. Accept and wear that. There were subsidies to the user. Come on—honestly.

Let us go back to the bill. The minister walked into this place and introduced a bill that reduces competition in the marketplace.

Mr F.M. Logan: That will fix it!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Exactly. It creates a disincentive for further investment over the next 10 to 20 years. Where will that further investment come from? The government has lost the state's AAA credit rating. It is out there trying to sell things. We have a perfectly good operating market with private participation in generation, but the government wants to stop that working and the state will have to provide that funding. That is what it has done. Since the state election, the government has lost its AAA credit rating. The government is identifying things to sell. This will be a big disincentive for private generation. The government has created enormous uncertainty in the market. Even its own report reflected on the fact that significant private sector generation has occurred since 2006 and that there will need to be—not now—significant new generation in the market in the next 10 to 20 years. It is actually creating a disincentive for private generation in decades to come. I reflect again on the fact that a lot of the detail will be contained in regulations and not in this bill. The minister has brought a bill to Parliament but a lot of its key substance will not be contained in it; it will be contained in regulations.

I raise an issue about corporatised entities and their role in the public sector. Corporatised entities have a profit motive; that is what they are.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister is basically handing back a lot of market power to a new entity that will control 80 per cent of the market, as the member for Cockburn outlined. There is basically legislative priority for any board or any CEO to profit-maximise. That is their role in directing these companies. How the government will ensure that the ring-fencing holds up and that there will be no abuse of market power is something that has not been explained fully to us. I have absolutely no idea how the government will do that.

Another key point that the member for Cannington raised was the role of the Auditor General in assessing and analysing the prices, and the company statements. I do not know why the Auditor General was included and not the Economic Regulation Authority, given its significant depth of knowledge on this issue. The ERA looks at markets such as this and determines proper prices and outcomes from that. Why the government has given the role to the Auditor General and not the ERA is worthy of explanation.

During the briefing I was told that there will be savings from three key areas. I will go through them. The first related to overheads because of the merging of entities. There will be some minimal savings but they will be eaten up by all the other safeguards, including training and processes. I would say that some of the costs involved in ensuring these units are properly ring-fenced once they have been brought together will outweigh many of the savings.

The other two savings put forward were from portfolio optimisation and maximising fuel purchases. None require a merged entity to achieve —

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes, it does.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, it does not. As an owner of both, the government can achieve both of those through other mechanisms. It does not need to merge those entities to achieve the purported savings. The costs that have

been put forward are dubious. The first saving is in overheads. There may be some savings, but there are costs in trying to ensure that these ring-fenced units are not operating together but are operating independently. The other two purported savings, portfolio maximisation and maximising fuel purchases, could have been done without bringing those units together.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I did not interject on the minister. I did not ask the minister to interject. I made a quiet aside, which I do not know was even heard across the chamber, to the member on her feet.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): It was a very clearly heard aside. I heard it without any trouble at all.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am still not sure why the minister is yelling at me for that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I take your point of order, member. Minister, I would rather you did not interject on other members. Member for Cannington, I would say that if you are going to whisper asides to each other, it is probably better they be inaudible to the rest of the house.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Basically the minister has walked into this house with a bill and said, “Trust me. Trust this government on energy policy”—a government that has lost over \$300 million —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Billion! It was \$330 million just on —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That was on Muja AB.

Dr M.D. Nahan: There is an asset there. It is not lost.

Mr P.C. Tinley: It is only a loss if you sell!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Does the minister not believe he has lost any money on Muja AB?

Dr M.D. Nahan: We invested a lot of money into an asset that was going to generate income. If you call that a loss, you do not know what you are talking about.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Has there been a loss?

Dr M.D. Nahan: It is still operating.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Has there been a loss?

Dr M.D. Nahan: It will be around for 15 years.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Has there been a loss?

Dr M.D. Nahan: Not yet, because it is still operating.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The policy zombies of the government, who are called in to get instructions —

Dr M.D. Nahan: I will tell you what—Shared Services lost!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: For someone who has overseen an energy portfolio that has lost money here and there, over \$1 billion, seriously, he sits there and criticises everybody else. The minister does not accept the facts; that is the problem. Like I said, I wish we could all be like this guy and accept no guilt or blame and never accept any fact. He can argue anything, but he actually has to realise where he has gone wrong. Honestly! Muja AB —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister is sitting in here bringing in policies to reduce competition in the marketplace. That is after the government brought in legislation to increase taxes. He is sitting here trying to be some sort of economic guru. The government has lost over \$300 million in Muja AB. It completely stuffed the solar subsidy issue. The minister disregarded advice. He did not seek advice. He went into cabinet to cancel existing contracts without seeking legal advice. The minister comes in here criticising other people. The member is a minister now. He went into cabinet without seeking legal advice —

Dr M.D. Nahan: Really! Were you there?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister told us.

Point of Order

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Obviously interjections are part of Parliament—there are no problems with that. Mr Acting Speaker would notice from the chair that when the member for West Swan gets on her feet, she cops more interjections than many of us who have stood on our feet and given similar critical speeches. If the minister

is that soft that he cannot cope with that criticism from the member for West Swan, he should leave his portfolio and go back to the backbench. The minister should give the member for West Swan the respect that is due as a member of Parliament and stop interjecting on her.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: If someone points at me and makes statements, she is asking for a response.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): Member for West Swan, I have asked you to direct your comments to me. To a point, I think you are baiting the minister. It would be better if you directed your comments directly to me.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: For a minister who lost over \$300 million in the Muja AB scandal, who did not take any legal advice when he went into cabinet to cancel existing contracts, and who is critical of other people, he is absolutely hypocritical. There should be no confidence in this government on this issue. It is undoing a reform that has seen private generation into the market at record rates and would secure investment into the private generation industry for decades to come. The government has no business case and no economic case to put forward on this matter. It said, particularly in the lead-up to the election, that it would not merge these two entities.

Amendment to Motion

Given that today we are discussing the motion that the bill be now read a second time, I move —

To delete “now” and insert after “time” —

only after a comprehensive business case has been tabled which shows the costs and savings occurring through the merger of Verve and Synergy

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I understand I have seven minutes to conclude this part of the debate on the amendment I have just moved.

Point of Order

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member has now moved an amendment and I seek some clarification. Is she speaking on the second reading debate or is she speaking to the amendment she has just moved, and is the amendment permissible?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): She has seven minutes to speak and at the end of those seven minutes, she will have finished her comments on the second reading speech and finished speaking to the amendment.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: If the member does that, can you clarify, Mr Acting Speaker, whether we will be on the second reading debate or on the debate on the amendment?

The ACTING SPEAKER: We will be on the debate on the amendment.

Debate on Amendment to Motion Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The key reason I moved the amendment is that this bill should not have been introduced and we should not support the second reading unless a business case is properly developed. In our briefing yesterday we were told that a business case is being developed and likely to be finished around Christmas time. That is again a complete failure of process by this government. The government has come into this place and put in jeopardy billions of dollars of capital investment around the state. It will once again create chaos and confusion in an industry because it does not have a properly prepared business case. That is extraordinary. When the Gallop government moved to disaggregate and create the wholesale electricity market, it did so on the basis of clear advice. I understand—the member for Cannington will go into this in a lot more detail—that there was the 2009 Oates in report, and that the previous Minister for Energy, Hon Peter Collier, commented in the other place that there would not be a re-merger. As I said, the 2009 Oates report clearly highlighted that disaggregation encouraged significant private sector investment into the market.

This legislation is a radical move. This attempt to reduce competition in the market place—to re-aggregate, if there is such a word, or to merge these two entities—will send the whole process backwards. The normal approach in these processes is to disaggregate in order to increase contestability across the market. This legislation will send it backwards. It seeks to give a significant majority of the entire market to one entity—the new merged entity. To do so without a clear business case is the wrong thing to do. I again ask the minister: why has such a business case not been prepared? His second reading speech was one of the most political, false and incorrect second reading speeches I have ever read. The majority of it—about 70 per cent—attacks this side of the house purely for political reasons; it does not contain clear reasons for the change. It is pure propaganda. Normally, second reading speeches are based on fact and do not contain propaganda. We have no business case in front of us. All we have are some purported benefits. There is no strong business case. In fact, all the advice

we have received on this side of the house is contrary to why Verve and Synergy should merge. I think it is very important that we pass this amendment today to ensure that we get a properly prepared business case.

Question to be Put

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House) [1.45 pm]: I move —

That the question be now put.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney) casting his vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (33)

Mr P. Abetz	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr J. Norberger
Mr F.A. Alban	Ms W.M. Duncan	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr C.J. Barnett	Ms E. Evangel	Mr R.S. Love	Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr J.M. Francis	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr I.M. Britza	Mrs G.J. Godfrey	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr T.R. Buswell	Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr P.T. Miles	Mr A. Krsticevic (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Dr K.D. Hames	Mr N.W. Morton	
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr A.P. Jacob	Dr M.D. Nahan	
Ms M.J. Davies	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr D.C. Nalder	

Noes (17)

Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr P. Papalia	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms J. Farrer	Mr M. McGowan	Ms M.M. Quirk	
Ms J.M. Freeman	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms R. Saffioti	
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr M.P. Murray	Mr C.J. Tallentire	

Pairs

Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms A.R. Mitchell	Mr P.B. Watson
Mr C.D. Hatton	Ms L.L. Baker

Question thus passed.

Amendment to Motion Resumed

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney) casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (18)

Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms J. Farrer	Mr M. McGowan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms J.M. Freeman	Ms S.F. McGurk	Mrs M.H. Roberts	
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms R. Saffioti	

Noes (34)

Mr P. Abetz	Ms M.J. Davies	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr F.A. Alban	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr J. Norberger
Mr C.J. Barnett	Ms W.M. Duncan	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr I.C. Blayney	Ms E. Evangel	Mr R.S. Love	Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr I.M. Britza	Mrs G.J. Godfrey	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr T.R. Buswell	Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Dr K.D. Hames	Mr P.T. Miles	Mr A. Krsticevic (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr C.D. Hatton	Mr N.W. Morton	
Mr M.J. Cowper	Mr A.P. Jacob	Dr M.D. Nahan	

Pairs

Mr B.S. Wyatt	Ms A.R. Mitchell
Mr P.B. Watson	Mrs L.M. Harvey
Ms L.L. Baker	Mr J.M. Francis

Question thus negatived.

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [1.55 pm]: I rise to speak to this very important piece of legislation—namely, the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013. Before going into my speech, I would like to acknowledge the students in the public gallery from Forest Crescent Primary School, an excellent school in my electorate, and acknowledge as well that it was recently commended for its efforts in being a Waterwise school. I

gather it is an ambition for the school to become a carbon-neutral school in the future as well. It is entirely appropriate that we acknowledge those ambitions of the school, given that we are talking about electricity generation and how we design our electricity system in Western Australia. Considering the complexities of the huge demand that we have for electricity and all the complexities around how electricity is generated, distributed and retailed, it is very important that we look at all the aspects.

What we have just seen in this Parliament is a real travesty of what Parliament should be about. Parliament should be about debating issues and looking at important aspects such as business cases for important pieces of legislative reform. But we have seen members of the Liberal and National Parties opposed to even debating the need for a business case. No business case has been presented to us to support these reforms but the government was not even prepared to debate the need for that business case. That is a very disappointing move on the part of the government—to quash debate on the need for a business case. I really cannot understand it. Given the commitment that those opposite so often make to things such as business cases, I would have thought this would be their primary concern.

I express my extreme disappointment that this legislation has been considered urgent. It is normal practice in this place for a bill to be second read and then laid on the table for three weeks so that we can consult with stakeholders and talk to experts in the field as necessary and so that I can consult with groups I am a member of that are tackling the complexities of things such as electricity sector reform, a group like the Sustainable Energy Association. I had to speak to the CEO of that organisation this morning, explaining to her that we have had this incredibly short time frame to consider the detail of the legislation. The Sustainable Energy Association would have liked to discuss the matter with the shadow Minister for Energy and me, to have gone into it in some detail and to put forward its very legitimate concerns that those in the renewable energy sector would naturally have. But the government has decreed that this is an urgent bill and one that must be rushed through Parliament without respecting Parliament's normal procedures of laying a bill on the table for careful consideration. That does not augur well for this legislation. There is a real concern about what we are going into here. It is complex legislation, yet we are rushing it through. That is a real shame. It could be setting us up to fail. We are setting ourselves up to have legislation with holes in it because it has not been properly considered.

In my speech I want to address a host of issues, such as how we ensure that there is adequate contestability when we merge Synergy—all members and those people in the public gallery, including the students from Forest Crescent Primary School, will know about the work of Synergy, sending out electricity bills—with the biggest electricity generator in Western Australia, Verve Energy, to create an enormous organisation that will have incredible decision-making power and incredible power to drive how the whole sector operates. We are also talking about doing some internal ring-fencing within Synergy and Verve so that there is no cross-communication. There is an implausibility about that that really worries me. We have to see how our system will be designed for the future. It is one thing to talk about redesignating different roles and the components of the system but it is another to actually discuss how the model works and the arrangements for the model. I think that is the point that the government has failed to comprehend and deal with in this legislation.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5666.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BUSHFIRE SEASON — CONTROLLED BURN TARGETS

696. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the failure to meet the 2012–13 controlled burns targets, when only 12 per cent of the 200 000-hectare target was met, and the minister's refusal last week to answer about the status of the 2013–14 target. With the bushfire season almost upon us, I ask —

- (1) How much of the 2013–14 fire season target has been met to date?
- (2) What additional strategies have been put in place to adapt to the changing environmental conditions to allow more controlled burns each year?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

- (1)–(2) As was noted in *The West Australian* today, weather is a significant challenge in undertaking prescribed burning in the south west of this state. Indeed, as members will have noticed, we have had a particularly wet spring, which has meant that we have had a much later start to our prescribed burning season than we would typically like. To have a good prescribed burning season, we usually need a good wet winter and then a dry, yet cool, spring, which carries on through and opens up a very large window of opportunity. But we are in our window of opportunity for burning right now, and I would like to take

this opportunity to assure the house that the Liberal–National government firmly stands behind our prescribed burning targets. I assure the house that we will take every opportunity that we can in the coming season to meet those targets. However, if the weather should go against us and if we get too many more of these 35-degree days, that window of opportunity in the spring burning season may indeed close a little bit quicker than we would like. Prescribed burning is a very careful science. We have all seen when we have fallen short of our targets, and we have all seen when things can go wrong in that space as well. It is never a risk-free activity to undertake.

In answering the question, in response to the Keelty report the Liberal–National government has invested \$32.9 million in upgrading a suite of measures across our south west in response to fire. We now have 77 dedicated fire managers within the Department of Parks and Wildlife, 280 conservation employees, and 450 others, to a total of 800 or so staff. I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the level of skill within the department of those staff who are applying measures to prescribed burning. Indeed, I informed the house only last week that I had the opportunity to present some fire medals to some of our staff in just one region. Amongst that handful of staff there was around 2 000 years of prescribed burning and firefighting experience. Three of those staff had had 45 years of concurrent firefighting experience in the south west.

Mr R.H. Cook: What else happened on the way to school today?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I could have written it for the member. I am only halfway through it.

In addressing this current prescribed burning season, I am happy to report to the house that although we have had a wet spring and a later start to it, we are already sitting at around 30 000 hectares in our target for the coming year. We have in excess of 140 or so prescribed burns, I think, for the spring burn. Members should not forget that the autumn burn will follow that up next year, and we are about 44 burns into that, which is around 30 000 hectares in just the south west. I think it is also important to clarify for the house that there is not just the south west; there is also the rest of the state. In fact, for this current prescribed burning year, we are already in excess of 200 000 hectares statewide. It is also an opportunity to remind the house again that prescribed burning is a very important tool that we exercise in managing our bushfire loads—something that this government strongly supports—but it is also a shared responsibility. I would like to again take the opportunity to remind people in Western Australia that local governments and private landowners also share a responsibility to manage their fire loads.

BUSHFIRE SEASON — CONTROLLED BURN TARGETS

697. **Mr M. McGOWAN to the Minister for Environment:**

I have a supplementary question. Considering that the prescribed burn-off season is about to close, does the minister consider that achieving only 20 per cent or less of the ordinary target is acceptable in the lead-up to the coming fire season?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

I do not think the Leader of the Opposition was listening when I answered a similar question last week. Indeed the prescribed burning season, as I just answered his earlier question, has only really just opened because we had an especially wet spring. It is very hard to light fires in the middle of rain, so we are really only into it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.P. JACOB: The weather will tell. I cannot predict the weather. We are getting better at predicting weather but I cannot certainly predict it a few weeks in advance. Hopefully, that window of opportunity will open. There is a very good article in *The West Australian* today outlining the weather challenges that we face. We do face significant challenges from a drying climate in the south west, and that is something that this government recognises. As I said, we are only a few short weeks into our spring program. We are already sitting at around 30 000 hectares, but where we go from here will depend largely on the window of opportunity that we have. This government has put significant investment into this space. We will do our absolute best. It is very important that private landowners do their best as well. But I am curious as to what the position is of members opposite on prescribed burning. I actually have no idea. As the member for Jandakot —

Mr M. McGowan: You are the minister. We support prescribed burning; of course we do.

Mr A.P. JACOB: Does the opposition support it? Okay. That will be very interesting. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the first time. I do not want people trying to drown out speakers.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT — HIGH-PERFORMANCE SERVICE CENTRE

698. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Before I ask my question, I want to acknowledge students in the gallery from Santa Maria College, which is in the seat of Alfred Cove.

I noted with interest that Western Australia's Carrie Smith and Ella Clark took home both female and youth sailor of the year awards at the 2013 Australian Yachting Awards held recently in Sydney. With this in mind, can the minister please inform the house how these and other elite athletes in Western Australia benefit from the Liberal-National government's investment in the new high-performance centre for the Western Australian Institute of Sport?

Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:

I thank the member for Morley very much for his question, which is very timely.

This morning we undertook a very important milestone with the turning of the first sod for the new \$33.7 million Western Australian Institute of Sport high-performance service centre out there at Mt Claremont. It was great to have some of the finest athletes who have come through WAIS—Kim Mickle, Lauren Mitchell and Shaun Norris—there with us. I will just quickly acknowledge Kim Mickle, who won the silver medal for javelin at this year's World Championships. She has worked hard for many years, so well done to Kim; it was great to see her there.

This project, along with other sporting projects we have run under this government, has been carefully planned. This new facility will support and greatly assist our athletes, particularly those who vie for high honours at the Olympic and Paralympic events, at the Commonwealth Games and at World Championships. It will also nurture our young aspiring athletes as they come through the development pathways to be able to come to what will be a state-of-the-art facility. It will be absolutely fantastic.

The existing WAIS facility, which was built way back in the 1980s and is about 26 years old, has done a good job but by today's standards is serviceable at best. Most noticeably, and one aspect that the Premier and I saw when we were there some time ago, was no access or really poor access for our sportsmen and sportswomen who have a disability. This, along with a lot of other new amenities, will be addressed in this new service centre that we are building.

It will have the latest technology in it, particularly for the sports science and recovery areas. It will have laboratories for research and development. It will be one of the best facilities in Australia. The staff and the coaching staff there have pretty average facilities at the moment, and when they move into this centre they will have decent facilities in which to operate. That will ensure, along with the athletes' facilities, that we can attract the best athletes and attract and retain the best coaches, which will be great for our sport in Western Australia.

Just quickly, it will include a state-of-the-art testing and training facility, hydrotherapy and recovery pools, an indoor runway and a strengthening and conditioning gym. I will not go on but it will have all the modern things they need. WAIS runs programs for about 250 athletes across 11 dedicated sports, as well as for a host of athletes outside those dedicated sports. It is also the national base for our javelin and pole vault programs; so it is a very important facility.

This morning we also announced the builder, Esslemont Cockram, which has been awarded the contract to deliver this facility to be completed by early 2015. It will be a staged completion, so that it will actually start operating in late 2014. It really adds to that fantastic sporting complex. This is delivery at a high-performance level. The government has shown over the past five years that it has delivered facilities and programs, particularly at the grassroots level, where we are building a base. We have introduced new talent development programs and pathways for people and now this facility, which is a great achievement for sport in Western Australia.

KEELTY REPORT — RECOMMENDATIONS 3 AND 4

699. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Planning:

I refer to recommendations 3 and 4 of the Keelty report into the Perth hills bushfire that recommended respectively that the state government transfer responsibilities for declaring bushfire-prone areas from local government to the Western Australian Planning Commission and that the state government give legislative effect to the planning for bushfire protection guidelines.

- (1) Why have these recommendations not been delivered more than two years after this report was tabled?
- (2) When will they be delivered?
- (3) Is there any intention to act on these recommendations?

Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:

(1)–(3) Yes; there certainly is intention to act, and action is being taken. The issue is not as simple as it may appear at first sight. The response to the Keelty report has been coordinated by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet over the last two years. In relation to the specific questions of declaring areas as bushfire-prone and exactly how that occurs, the main issue is which agency is the most appropriate one to have that responsibility. Obviously, the WA Planning Commission is one clear possibility, but it does not have legislative authority to do so at the moment. Obviously, that could be changed if that is what is considered to be the most appropriate course of action. The Planning Commission would necessarily rely on information and advice from other agencies, in particular the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. We need to make a decision on whether it is more appropriate for DFES to have that responsibility or the Department of Local Government and Communities and/or local governments, which have a strong role to play. It is a complex issue. It is certainly being actively worked on at the moment, and I hope we will have a decision within government soon.

The essence of the issue is which agency is the most appropriate to make that declaration and to deal with the issue. The suggestion I heard through the media last week from the opposition that we have not acted on this matter because of concern about property values is not the case at all. The whole report has been taken seriously by the government. This particular aspect is being dealt with carefully and thoroughly to ensure we make the most appropriate decisions, and I hope we will have a decision soon.

KEELTY REPORT — RECOMMENDATIONS 3 AND 4

700. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Planning:

I have a supplementary question. Is the reason the minister has failed to act on this for two years that there have been too many other competing legislative priorities?

Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:

The answer is categorically no. We have certainly made other legislative changes within the planning portfolio, for very good reason. I will not remind the house of all those changes. The reason we have not finalised this issue at the moment has nothing to do with other legislation.

Mr M. McGowan: What is it then?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is entirely for the reason that I just outlined.

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS — REFORM COUNCIL REPORT

701. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:

Could the minister advise the house on the findings of the Council of Australian Governments' Reform Council report that was released today on training skills across Australia, and where Western Australia sits compared with the rest of the nation, as vocational training is of great importance to constituents in the electorate of Forrestfield?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for the question and for his interest in training in his electorate and the importance of training as a pathway to employment. Employment supports the great state of Western Australia. For those in the house who are unaware, the Council of Australian Governments' Reform Council was established in January 2009 as an independent body that reports directly to COAG, rather than to the commonwealth or a particular state or territory government. The primary roles of the COAG Reform Council are to report on the performance of governments under national agreements and partnerships, which is where the training space comes into play. Its role is also to highlight examples of good practice and performance across the nation that can be used as good exemplars for strategies in particular states, and also to report to COAG on the pace of activity across the overall COAG reform agenda.

Two reports were announced today by the chair of the committee, John Brumby. One was on education and the other was on progress under the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development. The skills report has three themes: firstly, are the skill levels of the working-age population increasing; secondly, do all working-age Australians have the opportunity to develop skills; and, thirdly, is training delivering the skills and capabilities needed for improved economic participation? At the national level the report finds that since 2008, overall the proportion of working-age Australians with a certificate III qualification or higher has gone up. That is really important, because our workforce development plans and strategies have identified that the need for higher level skills is all the more important, particularly in certificate III, diplomas and above. At a national level, that has gone up. Also, more employers are satisfied with the training system, even given its complexity. I have come to grips with its complexity in the past eight months. We are also on track to double the number of diploma and advanced diploma completions by 2020.

When we drill down to Western Australia's performance in those categories, I am very pleased to see that we rate quite well. That does not mean to say that there is not scope for improvement, and it does not mean to say that we should not be working very closely with industry to ensure that we have a training system that meets its needs and helps to support the economy of WA. But at a Western Australian level, the proportion of Western Australians of working age with certificate III or higher has risen from 48.1 per cent in 2006, to 53.5 per cent in 2011. That is a good outcome. That equates to more than 160 000 additional working-age Western Australians with higher level qualifications. The proportion of working-age Western Australians studying for a non-school qualification has gone up from 58 per cent to 63.4 per cent. One concern I have is that the proportion of vocational education and training graduates with improved employment status after training decreased slightly—about 0.9 per cent. That was a national trend, but Western Australia's performance against other states was above that average. Another interesting statistic was the number of vocational education and training completions as a proportion of enrolments. That went up from 23.1 per cent in 2007, to 27.7 per cent in 2011. Although that is a good improvement, I do not consider 27.7 per cent to be a good figure for completions from enrolments.

I think the messages here are that in a comparative sense Western Australia is performing well. But that does not mean we should drop our guard; we must ensure that we have a quality training sector, both public and private, in Western Australia to support the economy. Looking at Western Australia's economy in recent years and its performance against the other states, I think it is fair to say that our training system and the training agenda has supported the state's economy, which of course supports all Western Australians.

COMMUNITY SAFETY LEGISLATION

702. Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Premier:

Given the dearth of legislation before this house in the last couple of weeks, why has the government not presented any of the community safety legislation promised at the election? In particular —

- (1) Why has the government not introduced legislation to remove vehicles from hoons on a second strike, for offences that occur in schools zones or suburban streets?
- (2) Why has the government not introduced legislation to confiscate unlicensed trail bikes when they are driven on our roads?
- (3) Why has the government not introduced the new graffiti enforcement act, and why are we still waiting for new home burglary laws?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1)–(3) At the last election in March of this year, the Liberal–National government had a strong program on law and order issues and a strong commitment to legislation in that area. We are six months into a four-year term. We will honour our commitments and the legislation we promised will be introduced. People can probably expect to see some of that before the end of this year.

COMMUNITY SAFETY LEGISLATION

703. Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. If this is really such an important priority for the government, why has the government not introduced even one of those bills into this house?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

Legislation in this area is often complex. Both the police minister and the Attorney General are involved in drafting it.

Ms M.M. Quirk: It's all too hard.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Labor Party's record on law and order is not flash at all.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It's better than yours; you've done nothing all year.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Labor Party did not support us when we gave protection to police for assaults. The Labor Party did not support us on mandatory sentencing for violent home invasions, did it? I do not think so.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs M.H. Roberts: If you want bipartisan support, show us the bill.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: They get shrill on the other side.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Watch; when we bring that legislation in here, they will argue against it.

TELETHON PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL RESEARCH FUND

704. Mr J. NORBERGER to the Minister for Health:

I understand the Telethon Perth Children's Hospital research fund has been awarded to the first 17 recipients. Could the minister please advise of the status of this fund for the current financial year?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

I thank the member for the question. I will start by congratulating Telethon. I will wait for the member for Warnbro to finish, if he likes. He is still going; he has no idea.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Dr K.D. HAMES: I have not even said anything!

I thank the member for the question and I would like to start by congratulating Telethon on the fantastic effort it made in raising \$20.7 million, which is an amazing total. During that process, the Premier made a donation on behalf of the state and also committed to some funding for research, something we started last year. We started a program to fund children's health research in this state. We committed \$1 million as a state and Telethon matched that. Subsequently, Telethon put in an extra \$1 million, so we had \$3 million last year going to research programs. We had 56 applications and 17 were judged by an independent panel to be recipients of that money. There is some fantastic research being undertaken. Examples are research to improve follow-up care for Aboriginal infants; research to develop a long-acting penicillin G for treatment of rheumatic heart disease; and two other projects looking at management and treatment of cystic fibrosis, which is of critical importance. This year at Telethon, the Premier committed a further \$2 million on behalf of the state—so an additional \$1 million from the previous year. Telethon will either match its first \$1 million or in fact provide \$2 million, but that is yet to be decided. It means that at least \$3 million again will be provided for children's research.

Last night outside the Aboriginal People's Gallery there was a function involving medical researchers from Western Australia. There was a little confusion over invites and I thank the members who made the effort to come along and join us. The researchers were there to meet members of Parliament and to show the research work they were doing. At that event there was some fantastic new research being shown. One example is research being done in conjunction with Fiona Wood to have burns leave no scars. That is done by altering the collagen. Normally there is an alignment of collagen in a burn scar that causes all the contraction of the skin; this process disaggregates that collagen and so makes the skin smooth and without scar. That process needs to undergo a trial and the researchers will certainly apply for these funds. There was a lot of research on the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. We have already given funding for trials using testosterone to treat Alzheimer's, but there is more research to be undertaken. Another area of research was into the treatment of Crohn's disease using stem cells. Members who have been here for a while will remember that we had debates in this house over the use of stem cells. They used to be embryonic stem cells, but now stem cells can be created without needing to use that method of production. The researchers are using the stem cells as an infusion to stop or significantly improve the outcome for people with Crohn's disease, which is a fantastic new program. There is a fantastic amount of research going on in this state. As members know we have committed to and budgeted for \$30 million funding over the next four years for research and we look forward to the opportunities that brings to improve research in this state.

DISABILITY JUSTICE CENTRES — PREMIER'S COMMENTS

705. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Premier:

I refer the Premier to his statement in this house on 12 June 2013, in which he used the example of a young man who the Premier said had been held in Casuarina for several years for stealing an ice-cream. The Premier used that example to justify his decision to place two disability justice centres in my electorate. I refer also to evidence given today before the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee that revealed that the Premier had been advised that the person concerned had in fact also assaulted several public officers, including police and prison officers.

- (1) By deliberately omitting references to this person's violent offending, did the Premier mislead the house?
- (2) If yes to (1), by misleading the public on this matter, has the Premier further called into question his decision to place these centres fewer than 1 000 metres from Lockridge Senior High School, Lockridge Primary School and Good Shepherd Catholic School?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

(1)–(2) No, I did not mislead the house. In the debate, I paraphrased some examples. I did not have the clinical files in front of me. So, if it was not entirely accurate, I concede that.

Mr M. McGowan: Assaulting a police officer? Do you not regard that as important? It is an important fact.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I paraphrased some examples. If they were not absolutely accurate, I concede that. But I made the point that some of those offenders have committed very violent crimes, and some perhaps relatively minor misdemeanours. I take it that the Labor Party is totally opposed to these two centres. Is that correct?

Mr M. McGowan: Why not actually answer the question that you were asked? You misled the house!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is not misleading the house to paraphrase from memory some examples. Some of the people who might end up in one of these disability justice centres might be relatively minor offenders. Even in the case of people who have committed a serious offence, there will come a time when they are released. There will come a time when offenders, whether they have a mental health issue or are impaired in some way through a mental health disability, will be released. There will be a very careful process to determine who would go into one of these centres. I repeat what I said I think a week ago—the Labor Party obviously has no sympathy for these people. I do have sympathy for these people, because there are some people in our community who may have offended and may also have a mental disability—there are some. It may have been acquired, or in all probability they were born with that. The approach of the Labor Party is to ignore those people—marginalise them and ignore them.

Dr A.D. Buti: What a load of rubbish!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is their view! What alternative does the Labor Party offer?

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Look at the attitude of members opposite! It is there for all to see! Because people have made a mistake and committed an offence, sometimes serious and sometimes less serious, the approach of the Labor Party is to let those people be marginalised in our community. What is the Labor Party going to do with these people? Is it going to allow them to be released into a facility that is open on the street, or is it going to put them in a facility in which at least they are secure and the public is secure?

This is not an easy area of public administration. It is a very difficult area. As the Minister for Mental Health, Hon Helen Morton, has said, great care will be taken.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There is no compassion at all.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the first time. Premier, can you wind it up, please.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes, Mr Speaker.

When we have a difficult and controversial issue of dealing with people with an intellectual disability who have offended and who have not faced trial because they are not competent to face trial, I would think there would be some compassion in the community in dealing with that. Yet when the bleeding hearts opposite are faced with a real issue of compassion in our community and a real issue of justice, they are missing in action.

I understand the concerns of the local residents whom the member represents.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Face the issue! What do we do with a person with an intellectual disability who has offended? What do we do? We face up to the issue and try to deal with it in a fair and proper way, and that is what this government is doing. We have said that the second one will not be progressed until the first one is built and shown to be operating properly and safely. That is the position. There are many people in our community; some have offended, some have not. Some may have all sorts of behavioural characteristics that are offensive, and that is the reality in any society. We do not get a result for all those people in the community by yelling and screaming in here; we get a result by having a sense of social justice and a preparedness to deal with the issue.

DISABILITY JUSTICE CENTRES — PREMIER'S COMMENTS

706. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Is it not the case that the Premier has used the boy-who-stole-the-ice-cream anecdote on several occasions to push aside the legitimate concerns expressed by parents who have kids at those three schools?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I have not pushed aside their concerns, and as the member is aware, I have met with that group and listened very carefully to their case. I think that at least some of them —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I met with that group, I listened to their concerns and I gave my response. I think some of them were reassured; perhaps some were not.

Mr D.J. Kelly: No, they weren't!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member was not at the meeting.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Yes, you wouldn't let me!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Of course I would not, because of the member's behaviour! As if I would let him in there!

Mr D.J. Kelly: You've used that anecdote over and over again!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have finished, Mr Speaker.

METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME

707. Ms E. EVANGEL to the Minister for Planning:

I note an article in today's *The West Australian* about the planning of Perth. Can the minister update the house on the fiftieth anniversary of the metropolitan region scheme?

Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:

I thank the member for the question. Before I address that subject, I will add to my previous answer to the member for Girrawheen. It should not be assumed that there are no guidelines or procedures in relation to planning in bushfire-prone areas at the moment. There is the Western Australian Planning Commission's "State Planning Policy 3.4: Natural Hazards and Disasters", and also "Planning for Bush Fire Protection Guidelines". Both of these are under review at the moment, which is something I requested towards the end of last year. They actually have effect and these issues are taken into account in relation to subdivision approvals at the moment. The planning system is already, and has been for some years, addressing the issues that the member raised.

Today is the very significant fiftieth anniversary of the metropolitan region scheme coming into effect. It was launched in October 1963 by the then Minister for Planning, Hon Les Logan, MLC, and the Premier of the day, Western Australia's longest-serving Premier, Sir David Brand. I know that the origins for the preparation of the scheme go back to the early 1950s when a development boom began to take off in Perth and the metropolitan area started to rapidly expand. The government of the day realised that in order to address these population growth pressures, Perth needed a broad regional plan and the decision was made to engage a professional planner of the highest order. Over the next two years, Professor Gordon Stephenson and the newly appointed Western Australian Town Planning Commissioner, Alistair Hepburn, mapped out a long-term plan for the future of Perth and the metropolitan region scheme was born. The scheme today remains the blueprint for land use and development in the whole of the metropolitan area of Perth, covering the area from Singleton in the south to Two Rocks in the north, and east to the lakes in the Shire of Mundaring.

Fifty years on, coordinated planning for an expanding metropolitan area remains a very great need for the community and is a major priority for the government. The demand for well-positioned residential, commercial and industrial land that is serviced by logical transport corridors and reserves for public open space is a continuing challenge, and this has driven some 1 200 amendments to the metropolitan region scheme over the past 50 years; indeed, those amendments continue.

One of the things that makes the MRS unique and the envy of many cities across Australia and, to a large extent, internationally, is the funding model, which gives the WA Planning Commission the ability to reserve, acquire and consolidate land on behalf of the state for roads, railways, schools, recreation areas and other public uses, in many cases decades ahead of the need. The MRS is the master plan for a range of land uses. Over the past 50 years, about 25 000 hectares of land has been acquired under this acquisition scheme in the public interest. Fifty years is a very significant milestone in the life of —

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: If the minister is reading from an official document, can I ask him to table it?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am reading from the notes I have for this answer. I do not think a lot would be added. To conclude, it is important to place on the record of this Parliament what has been achieved by —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland, I formally call you to order for the first time today. Minister, please wind this up.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is worthy to record what has been achieved by all governments over the past 50 to 60 years in the development of planning in the Perth metropolitan area and, in particular, to acknowledge the role of former governments, past and present employees, members of the WA Planning Commission and its predecessors, and all those involved in the Western Australian planning system, for the many hundreds and thousands of hours of collective work that have given us the modern city and metropolitan area in which we are privileged to live and work.

PERTH GLORY — COMPENSATION — GOLFWEST

708. Ms R. SAFFIOTI to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I refer to the government's claim that paying compensation to third parties out of capital expenditure for projects always happens, but note that compensation paid to Golfwest was not paid out of the capital allocation for the Perth Stadium and taken to cabinet.

- (1) Why was the compensation paid to Golfwest treated differently from the compensation paid to Perth Glory?
- (2) Why did cabinet make the decision concerning the compensation to Golfwest but not to Perth Glory?

Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. It is a pretty simple answer. The two situations are different and we treat each on its merits. The compensation for Golfwest was completely different. The golf club had contractual arrangements with Burswood Park Board. It was in the very early stages of the stadium project because of the planning budget. Extra funding was needed for that. I did not handle the negotiations, but I took the request to cabinet for funding because that is what I needed to do. Nib Stadium was a completely different situation. We were at the late stage of the development and we had \$4.3 million identified potential savings. It made sense with the compensation claim, which we handled on its merit—remembering it was \$1.012 million claimed and we paid \$400 000—to pay it out of the project budget because we had the capacity. If we did not have the capacity, I would have had to go to cabinet. It is as simple as that. They were two different situations and they were handled extremely well.

PERTH GLORY — COMPENSATION — GOLFWEST

709. Ms R. SAFFIOTI to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I have a supplementary question. I refer to the minister's claim just now that it was a different situation. Why then did the department advise the minister to go to cabinet? Is it not true that the department believed it was the same situation with compensation?

Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:

The member for West Swan was probably not listening last week. Initially, I got a briefing note in the early stages that said —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: That you didn't like.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Just listen. It said I should take it to cabinet. I then at a later stage asked my department to identify the budget for nib Stadium and we found \$4.3 million potential savings. The department got advice from Treasury and the State Solicitor's Office. I said last week that it is an accounting procedure. We were quite within our rights to do that and therefore we made the decision to do —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, you asked the question; you do not need to answer it as well. I formally call you to order for the first time.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Let us be really clear. Perth Glory was impacted and its business impeded by the development work at nib Stadium. My cabinet colleagues and I were fully aware of that and that a claim would come. We did such a good job of that stadium that we had the savings and we were to be able pay it from those savings. It made sense to me, it made sense for the sport, it made sense for the government and it made sense for the taxpayer.

DOG ACT — AMENDMENTS

710. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Local Government:

Could the minister please advise the house when the changes to the Dog Act will come into effect and what benefits Western Australians can expect from these changes that have taken so long?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, member for Girrawheen. I am hearing something about paws! Member for Southern River, please repeat the question.

Mr P. ABETZ: Could the minister please advise the house when the changes to the Dog Act will come into effect and what benefits Western Australians can expect from these changes that have taken so long?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

It is a great opportunity to update the house on the passing of the dog laws last week. It has been a long time coming. It has taken 37 years to finally get the new Dog Act into Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: It is almost as good as getting the cat laws passed!

The most important thing about the Dog Act is that it will go a long way to resolving a number of issues in our community. The legislation will go a long way to protecting the community. It acknowledges dangerous dogs in the community and protects the community from those dangerous dogs. To update the house, this is the first time that dogs will have to be microchipped. As at 1 November 2013, all new dogs will have to be microchipped and existing dog owners will have another two years until 2015 to have their dogs microchipped. It might not sound like much to get the microchipping done, but it will give local governments some data on where the dogs are and how many there are. This legislation is similar to the cat legislation, which goes down the same road to identify that.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: One of the serious things in our community is that 5 000 cats each year, or 100 cats a week, are put down.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Point of Order

Mr P. ABETZ: I asked the question because I have kennels in my electorate. I would like to hear the answer. I have not heard more than two words.

The SPEAKER: Members! We have had a bit of fun with this question. Can we have some silence.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: The legislation goes a long way to resolving a number of issues. It will give us some clear data on the number of dogs. We will also be able to protect the community from dangerous dogs and dogs of restricted breeds. Most importantly, under this legislation the community will be protected from these dogs. Members would have seen on the front page of *The Weekend West* two Saturdays ago an article that stated that an average of three children a week are admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital for Children with dog bites.

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Yes, correct; it was the ones that were not their pets. Now we will be able to protect the community. The legislation provides a mechanism to protect the community. After 37 years in the making, we will finally get some real hard data. Under the Cat Act, we will be able to track the number of cats in the community from 1 November. All members in the house would agree that putting down 5 000 cats a year is not a good outcome for anybody. Desexing, microchipping and registering cats will go a long way towards regulating an industry that is not regulated.

I thank the opposition for its support of the Dog Amendment Bill when it went through Parliament last week after a long wait of 37 years. Local governments will have the opportunity to implement their own cat laws and to get information through the microchipping of dogs so that the industry can be regulated.

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER — BUILDING MANAGEMENT AND WORKS —
CONSTRUCTION SUBCONTRACTOR INVESTIGATION

711. Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN to the Minister for Finance:

I refer to the report by the Small Business Commissioner, David Eaton, into the Building Management and Works subcontractor fiasco and his statement in the report that a contractor complaints file was requested by the investigation team but “it was not produced, nor was any explanation provided regarding this”.

(1) Why was Mr Eaton denied the file?

- (2) Did the minister not mislead Parliament last week by saying that the contractor complaints information was provided to the Small Business Commissioner in December 2012 when his report clearly stated it was not and no reason was provided?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I assume the question relates to Building Management and Works and the inquiry that the Small Business Commissioner undertook into issues of lack of payment to subcontractors after a number of BMW head contractors went insolvent. The previous Minister for Finance commissioned an inquiry by Mr Eaton. I believe that the commissioner's report was issued in March this year. My understanding, quite clearly, is that there was a failure on the part of BMW to provide an adequate complaints process to accommodate that and to have it. My clear understanding is that Mr Eaton was provided the information by BMW to the extent that it had it. That is what I have been informed.

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER — BUILDING MANAGEMENT AND WORKS —
CONSTRUCTION SUBCONTRACTOR INVESTIGATION

712. Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN to the Minister for Finance:

I have a supplementary question. Who is telling the truth: the Minister for Finance or the Small Business Commissioner?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

All I can say is that BMW told me that it received a request, during the process of the investigation, for complaints. Mr Eaton said that BMW had a very inadequate complaints mechanism. One recommendation was to set up a complaints mechanism to record complaints. To the extent that complaints were made to BMW, they were provided to Mr Eaton.

ELECTRICITY CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [2.47 pm]: Before question time I was lamenting the failure of the government to allow debate on the need for a business case to be mounted for these electricity sector reforms. After seeing the content of the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013, it is apparent that there would have been other ways to tackle what the government is about to do here. There may not have been a need to have an amendment bill come to this place to achieve a degree of unification, with adequate ring fencing, between Synergy and Verve. Yet the government wants to do this by legislation and then implement some ring fencing so that there cannot be any collusion, but there are some constraints on the power of the new body. I understand the new body will be called Synergy. Quite confusingly, Synergy and Verve will merge but the new body will be called Synergy. I believe that will dominate the electricity sector in the south west interconnected system to such an extent that the role of independent, privately owned and privately operated generators—often renewable energy generators and fossil fuel generators—in the future system will be quashed by this massive organisation about to be recreated. When I look back on the need for the reforms that led to the disaggregation of the old Western Power, it was all about separating out because it was impossible for an independent operator to come into the market. It was too difficult for renewable energy generators to come in.

My particular interest relates to renewable energy generators. Global investment in renewable energy generation is around \$260 billion, as put out by Bloomberg. That is \$260 billion worth of investment in renewable energies from around the world. The Sustainable Energy Association of Australia says that Australia is set and well positioned; that we are naturally endowed to be the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy. Why then do we want to jeopardise the rise of renewable energy in our south west interconnected system and across the whole Australian energy generation sector?

The issue of how the market is designed is also at the core of this. We have seen a system developed that does not look at the spot price. I compare that with the national electricity market on the east coast where there is something approaching a spot price that enables electricity generators to work out how their business model can work and whether they can be in a market with that sort of contestability that the sector here is crying out for.

Dr M.D. Nahan: To a large extent that is because the market structure put in place in 2005–06 was different fundamentally from the market over east, which was an energy-only market. This is a bilateral contract market. It was a function of the choice of the market.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Thank you for that minister, but the point is, if we want to change things at the moment, the merging of Synergy and Verve is a separate issue; it is not the issue now. We should be looking at moving towards the more spot market–rate system.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I agree with you.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Then we would have a more sound base for individual operators to come into the market. The minister agreed with me about that, but that is not what the government is doing here. It is not seeking to create a spot-market situation, is it?

Dr M.D. Nahan: We are not changing the market rules at all.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Yet, that would be the priority. Rather than messing around with this merger of Synergy and Verve, the government should have been looking at the actual market model. That would have made sense and I think that is what the minister was agreeing with me on. The system that would bring about a spot-market rate would have been a better way to go.

Dr M.D. Nahan: We have to have a debate about the changes in the market and whether we go to a national energy market is a good debating point. But we have to do that steadily and we have to debate it because it is extremely complex.

Mr P.C. Tinley: So that won't be urgent then?

The SPEAKER: Member, just continue please.

Dr M.D. Nahan: There is no bill before us. We are doing one thing at a time.

The SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, but I think the minister's interjection was useful. I think we are of a similar mind. Yes, good debate around it would have been useful; we can do that, but we need a good debate around a greater priority—the sensible issue of the design of the market, rather than this desire to rush through merging Synergy and Verve, which does not seem to make any sense at all.

I want to say a little about some of the renewable energy options available to us in Western Australia. I have already declared my membership of the Sustainable Energy Association of Australia. I also declare my membership of an association known as Sustainable Energy Now, which provides useful information, and is doing modelling, on how we can meet our energy demand. Interestingly—I think the minister made this point in his second reading speech—at the moment, demand for electricity is in decline. I detected a tone of regret that there is a decline. I think it is a good thing.

Dr M.D. Nahan: The estimates are that only 30 per cent of that is due to photovoltaic usage; therefore, the other 70 per cent is due to technological change and people deciding to turn off electricity, and that is good.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: That is a positive sign after years of campaigning for greater energy efficiency and telling people that one of the best ways to reduce electricity demand and reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to become more careful with our usage and choose better, more efficient appliances. I welcome that our electricity demand is declining. I realise that poses something of a problem for the government if it means revenues from a corporatised entity that is tasked with making a profit out of the retailing of electricity, and profits, are dropping because consumers are not demanding as much electricity. But I think it is a good problem because it also means that we do not need the same level of investment in electricity generation. That investment can be targeted elsewhere. That is surely a positive thing.

When looking at some of the renewable energy initiatives in Western Australia at the moment, I think of the wave energy systems that Carnegie Wave Energy is developing. That is an exciting option. It has the potential to be commercialised. I would hate to think that what we are doing here with this re-merging of Synergy and Verve, creating this monster on our south west interconnected system, would in any way hamper an independent, highly innovative, new technology company such as CETO coming onto the market with its system. It is still trialling its system. It is fascinating. Mr Speaker, you may have had the opportunity to see some of the trial work going on in Fremantle. A buoy moves up and down with the swell of the ocean. That drives water through pipes and then turns around turbines. That sort of technology, interestingly, is an assemblage of technologies that are already available. It is not inventing something totally new; it is a reconfiguration of existing technologies. Its applications are just tremendous. We would love to see that sort of thing on our south west interconnected system. According to a brochure that Sustainable Energy Now has provided me with —

Carnegie Wave Energy estimates that there is enough wave energy along WA's coastline to provide baseload electricity more than five times the SWIS peak demand.

That is the potential. Maybe we do not need that amount of electricity along the whole of the WA coastline and we could designate certain areas as inaccessible. Let us keep that in mind and look at some of the other riches that we have in this area. Yes, they are new technologies and they are yet to be fully commercialised but we are not far away from that moment. I think we are getting closer. We need to design the system not for the old view of things—that is what I fear is going on with this merging of Verve and Synergy—but we need to be designing things for new technologies. That is how we should be designing our market system and that is how we should contemplate any discussion in this place around electricity sector reform.

Let me turn to another form of renewable energy generation—concentrated solar thermal. This is where mirrors reflect on a tower configuration, quite often, that then heats up a salt substance, turning it into a very hot liquid substance. That is used to boil water and generate steam, which can drive turbines and produce electricity. This form of solar technology is particularly useful because we are not limited to daylight hours when we have the potential to harness the heat from that molten salt substance. We can use that over an extended period, so we get away from that fear when people talk about photovoltaics and needing the sun to be shining otherwise we have to store the electricity. With concentrated solar thermal, electricity generation occurs over an extended period and therefore we can talk about a baseload form of generation. This is the sort of thing that this bill should have been incorporating and anticipating. Instead we have this huge monster coming onto the grid that will predominantly use the old technologies, not the new technologies. With the potential available energy from concentrated solar thermal—this is really startling—it is estimated that all electricity demand on the south west interconnected system could be supplied by just 200 square kilometres of solar thermal collectors in sunny, clear sky areas. We could so easily generate all our electricity needs on the SWIS and not even need to look at other things. I would not recommend that; I think we need a diversified system.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Diversification is the key to this. Diversifying the types of technologies generating electricity is vital. We also need to diversify the ownership of those organisations involved in electricity generation. We get back to my real fear with this legislation—that it will create this single entity that will overwhelm all others. I am sure that we will get back to a situation in which companies have great innovations and great plans for the future with renewable energy technologies. They will come to me and say, “Unfortunately, because of the power of this new entity that is to be known as Synergy, we can’t get access to the grid. They are squeezing us out and preventing us getting onto it”, or they may say that the offtake agreements are just not there because Synergy has swamped the market so they cannot get in. That is my real fear about this legislation.

I also know that this legislation contemplates allowing Horizon Power—that body that came out of the disaggregation of Western Power—to come into and be a player in the south west interconnected system. I am concerned about that because at the moment Horizon, as I understand it, is a major beneficiary of the tariff equalisation contribution subsidy. It would be very strange if an entity, Horizon, acquired public money as a subsidy fund through that TEC arrangement, came into the SWIS and then competed on the SWIS. I do not think that would make sense. It just does not seem to be a sensible way of applying a public subsidy. I recognise that the current arrangement for the TEC to keep prices down for consumers in the Horizon Power grid areas is an objective that government has had for a long time to make sure that electricity prices are fairly uniform across the state, not across just the south west interconnected system.

This legislation also fails to anticipate a whole lot of things around smart grid technologies. I know that the minister has announced some trials. The Perth Solar City project looked at the potential for a central body to control the use of air conditioning in a person’s home, and energy conservation benefits go with that. That sort of thing is fascinating; it is great. I think we are really only at the very early stages with smart grid technology. There are other developments to come. For example, if electric vehicles become more popular, we could find that each electric vehicle, with its battery, is a distributed electricity storage point. We could have masses of electric vehicles, each one with a battery which has to hook up to the grid for charging but which can also be hooked up to the grid for discharging. So, if it is already fully charged, it can then supply an area of the grid. We should be moving towards a very disaggregated system in which we have multiple producers of electricity. The model that is already well and truly established under which people generate electricity from solar rooftop systems is an example of this. There is community acceptance and community embracing of it. We need to ensure that our Western Power network is able to cope with that.

With well over 70 000 systems in place across the Perth metropolitan area, we need to ensure that those systems are adequately connected and that we do not design the grid in the way that we designed it 30 or 40 years ago, when we had all sorts of weird situations. One of the weirdest things about the way in which we designed the grid 30 or 40 years ago was that electricity generation was such that it was difficult to shut it down at night-time. If we drove past Perth city at night and looked at the skyscrapers, we would see lots of lights on. One of the reasons the lights were left on was that those power stations were not able to shut down overnight, so there was a need to keep burning electricity. That is a really perverse outcome. We should have a situation in which electricity is used when it is needed. Yes, we have gone a long way towards reducing our overall electricity consumption, but that should not be looked at just in overall terms; it needs to be looked at in 24-hour cycles. That is why this debate should really be around the market system and the eventual move towards a spot rate market. Then people, perhaps producing energy from a wind farm somewhere, would know that they were likely to have wind generation reaching the market at a certain time to meet a certain peak. I think the Collgar Wind Farm out near Merredin, which has very reliable winds and very reliable wind production levels, could be

marketed to a particular consumer level. Those sorts of designs of the market are far more important, far more necessary and indeed far more urgent than this merging of Synergy and Verve.

I will conclude my remarks there. However, I note as well that people across the country are talking about this need for a more reticulated, reliable electricity system. We are looking overseas as well and seeing an ongoing commitment in other jurisdictions towards increasing renewable energy targets. I cite the German example and the European Union's directive on renewable energy and its targets towards a 20 per cent share of the overall market there to be by renewables. We need to be keeping up with those sorts of targets and ensuring that our system is designed to accommodate that level of ambition so that we can harness our amazing wealth in renewable energy.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [3.06 pm]: I will make my contribution to this Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013 and will begin by recording my complete disgust at the fact that this government has completely mismanaged not only the affairs of this house, but also the affairs of the state. Not only has this government shown a complete disregard for the democracy and sovereignty of this Parliament as the highest law-creating body in the state, but also it has insulted the people of Willagee, the people of Fremantle, the people of Mandurah, the people of Armadale and any and every other constituent represented by members on this side of the house. I tell members what: in declaring this bill urgent, the government has effectively said to the people we represent that our opinions actually do not count, and that our opinions and the people we represent have no relevance in the democratic functions and processes of the state of Western Australia. That is to the government's eternal shame—eternal shame! The fact that this bill was not given the due time and process of this Parliament is something that we cannot let go and go past. It must be recorded that this bill is layered upon the 15 other bills that the government declared urgent, not the least of which is the one about dogs we heard about in question time today from the Minister for Local Government. That bill had been so long in gestation that all of a sudden it had to be declared urgent.

The government has also said to the people in my electorate that they do not count. When their member—that is, me—comes back to his constituents, the interest groups and the wider stakeholders in Western Australia and asks for their opinion and expertise and the government completely snubs them, it tells me that the government is steeped in paternalism. The government is steeped in this post-colonial paternalism in that it knows best and it can dictate to the people of Western Australia exactly how their energy will be generated and sold and where their hard-earned tax dollars will or will not be spent. The government really wants to have a hard think about it. I say to those members of the Liberal and National Parties who are listening in their offices and to the backbenchers from the class of 2013 and the class of 2008: please take note and acknowledge what has happened here. I implore them to go to their more experienced members who have a more level approach to this matter and ask what we did in government. How many bills did we declare urgent? How many times did a Labor government come back as a re-elected government and declare the notice paper null and void and that everything it had put on there was of no value? This government did that after it was re-elected, when it extinguished the notice paper and started again and recalled members early to Parliament for 22 sitting weeks. In those 22 weeks the government has oscillated and vacillated and backbenchers have filibustered government bills—without much substance, I might add. In the motion to declare this bill as urgent, the government has slapped democracy in the face. It has slapped the people of the electorate I represent in the face. It has slapped in the face those people in the industry that is affected by the bill; in fact, the government has put in some doubt, if not at risk, the level of the industry's effort, equity and risk capital in a market that it should be giving better attention to. The urgency of this bill belies my understanding of why the government would do this. I cannot for the life of me understand why this bill needs to be urgent when the government does not even have a business case. The government has not put in the public domain a demonstrated reason, regardless of the assumptions it may or may not use for that business case —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We have already debated the urgency of the bill. I have allowed you a fair bit of latitude now, but I would like you to focus now on the second reading debate, if you could, please.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I acknowledge your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker, but it is absolutely germane to this bill. The reason the motion to deal with this as an urgent bill is important is that the government has corrupted the process by which we can give the bill due scrutiny. The entire Westminster system is based upon a transparent arrangement by which all people can be heard—the people of Western Australia and the people in my electorate. The reason I am dwelling for a few minutes on the urgency of this bill is that we need to record that the government has absolutely corrupted the capacity for this Parliament to do its sovereign duty and run a proper eye over this legislation.

A further reason I think that the matter of urgency is relevant to the substance of this bill is that 15 bills have been declared urgent. The Premier has said by interjection, when previous speakers have debated this bill, that we have had the bill for two weeks. In that time, I have had to run around and also get advice on the 14 other urgent bills that have come to this place. If it is a parliamentary tactic, the Premier is doing well, because one

thing we all know is that none of us can pretend to be an expert on all of the matters that come before the house. Some members opposite might like to think they are expert on all things, and some have proffered the idea, in a paternalistic way, that they are the fount of all knowledge in some of these matters, but they are completely missing the objectives of this Parliament, democracy and the Westminster system that we have adopted and protected over a long time. For example, I have not been able to consult with the Sustainable Energy Association of which I am a member. The opposition has not been able to consult with the alternative energy sector or those whose capital has been put at risk and who are currently working under a set of arrangements that were put in place by the former Labor government in the disaggregation of Western Power in around 2006, I think it was. We have not been able to talk with them. They expected a certain playing field; the government has shifted it. The Premier did not tell them before the election that he would re-merge the power utilities. The government did not provide them with enough advice.

Yet again it is urgent, but we do not have the business case. We were told in the briefings that the business case may arrive sometime in December. In his response, I would like the minister to address the value proposition in the business case that led him to the point of deciding that re-merging Verve and Synergy was somehow in the public interest. That is really important to me, because even if the minister does not have a detailed business case, as he has already said, and even if he does not have all the assumptions nussed out or has not consulted widely with industry, I want to know the fiscal position and compelling structural argument that led the minister to at least start down this path. All we have before us is a framework piece of legislation. That is all it is. During the briefing we were pictorially shown the framework by the hardworking public servants who support the minister. All that tells me is that this mob is a mess that cannot organise itself over 22 weeks of sitting to get a legislative program that meets the agenda it went to the last election with. It is quite outrageous. I tell the classes of 2008 and 2013 to heed wisely the experience they have had this year. We have four more sitting weeks to go, and at the tail end of 20-odd weeks it will be very interesting to see how much is rammed into the Parliament under the guise of progress; rammed into the Parliament around some of the more important issues that confront us, rather than some of the distractions that the government has had us sit for half-days on. I remind members about last Wednesday, when at 3.15 pm the short bells went. I was in the middle of afternoon tea, stuffing a cake in my face, and it was game over. That is just a complete misuse and waste of the resources of the Parliament, and it shows an inability to lead and deliver to the people of Western Australia value for money from their Parliament, and they should expect and get better.

I turn now to the substance of the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013. When I look at its format, I am completely gobsmacked. I have only been in this place just over four years, but I am completely gobsmacked. This is another example of the upside-down world we seem to have in the thirty-ninth Parliament. We have the conservatives—the free marketeers, the people who believe implicitly in the free market and hands-off, small government—and yet in the same Parliament they have walked away from tax cuts and business. Now, we have the culmination, if you like, of this upside-down world we seem to be in, in that we now have the conservative side of politics virtually nationalising the power generation and retail component of our electricity market. It is almost akin, without overreaching, to say that the proletariat has risen up on the conservative Liberal side of this house and seized the means of production. I want to know which one of the members opposite is the “Trot” who is going to come out and call this spade exactly what it is. The government has effectively taken back the ideology of its own party; well, it cannot go that far back because it has never had this view. The Liberal Party has never had the idea that public ownership of assets was in the best interests of market and pricing. It has never had the view that this was the sort of thing that would fit neatly inside its ideology. Class of 2013 new members could be sitting there wondering what on earth they have walked into. They could think they have walked into a socialist party of the 1950s. They could actually think they have walked into some bizarre upside-down world where they have to pull out their wallets and check their membership cards to make sure they still read “Liberal Party”.

Right now there is plenty of evidence before this thirty-ninth Parliament to the contrary that the government adheres to anything close to the ideology of its heritage. We have not been able to consult widely or, more importantly, deeply on this legislation. We have been asked to contemplate what is simply a framework legislation, and I would be very keen to get into the regulations to understand what the substantive regulations will be and what the operative regulations will be that the minister from time to time might want to use. More importantly, when looking at those regulations, we will be looking through the prism of certainty or uncertainty for the market—the very market that the government professes it wants to create. There is no better embodiment of this dichotomy than the minister himself. The minister is a longstanding adherent of the free market—of setting market conditions, stepping away and letting private enterprise and the private capital that can be raised fastest and deployed quickest with the greatest agility deliver the most cost-effective outcomes. We do not have to go too far back to see this, but I decided to go back to 2000 because I cannot let this debate go past without recording the minister’s DNA. I refer to an article he wrote in 2000 in the *Herald Sun* about the Victorian privatisation program. Now, of course, the Victorian market is largely different because of the scale of it and also because of its connection to the grid of the eastern seaboard. Some of the key aspects of what the now minister

wrote about have in their essence an application to the state of Western Australia—that is, the idea that if we privatise, if we insert profit motive in the delivery of a cost-competitive industry, we will deliver lower prices.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Are you advocating privatisation in the electricity utility?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am trying to work out what the hell the government is doing with this. I am trying to work out where the government stands. The only thing I have heard from business —

Mr C.J. Barnett: You are just advocating privatisation; that is fine if that is your policy. That is what you are advocating—privatisation of the electricity utility. Is that what you are saying?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: What is the government doing?

Mr C.J. Barnett: We are putting Verve and Synergy back together; that is pretty obvious.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: No, the government is putting public money at risk. It has already put \$330 million of public money at risk. It has an oversupply of capacity and is doing nothing about it. The government's answer to that is to simply close things up and to bring the issue to the house so it can be silenced. The minister is on the record saying —

Those consumers free to choose their power supply, including virtually —

In this case —

all Victorian businesses, have seen the benefit in lower bills.

It is as simple as that. There is a complete free-market knight—somebody who is completely committed to the idea of the free market. The Premier might interject on me to try to find out what the policy is from the Labor side of the house, but the policy from this side of the house is not relevant. The logic and the ideology of the government side of the house is the most relevant thing in play in this debate. The logic and the ideology of the government are on the floor for debate because they are really important, because businesses and consumers in Western Australia have a right to an understanding about the certainty of the market in which they will play. No further back than August last year, the then Minister for Energy, Hon Peter Collier, was moving away from the merger. Imagine a business like Perth Energy that has put at risk a lot of capital to participate in a market that has no capacity to go anywhere else.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Going back to late last year, an article in *The West Australian* stated the following —

According to Mr Collier, stitching Verve and Synergy together was no longer the focus of moves to reform the electricity sector and reduce pressure on rocketing bills.

Is that not a slap? As we would expect, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy immediately responded. This is one of those stakeholders we could not get to have discussion with because of the nature of this Parliament and the way the government runs it. Later, the article states —

The Chamber of Minerals and Energy questioned Mr Collier's refusal to rule out a Verve–Synergy merger, saying such a move would “decrease competition and put upwards pressure on energy prices”.

I will take an interjection. There is no quarter in the business community, be they stakeholder representatives, that has said this is a good idea. I will leave a pause for an interjection.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry said in 2004, or thereabouts, that disaggregation would lower electricity prices. You might go back and ask some of your colleagues who wrote your policy going into 2001.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: That is history.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Who wrote it?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I do not know. I am not interested, actually.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I think you might find that the Chamber of Commerce wrote a fair bit of it for you.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am not interested, Premier. What I am interested in is the dysfunction and uncertainty that the Premier has wreaked upon the system of government in this state, and also upon the business community in this state. It beggars belief.

I turn now to an article written by Gareth Parker and Peter Kerr in June of this year, in which they talk about these very things. I might as well put on the record the opposition to this from people in business—the very constituent base that the Premier says the Liberal Party represents as the party of business. The article states —

Ky Cao, managing director of private retailer Perth Energy and a former Western Power executive, —

So the guy might have a bit of background —

claimed the Government's merger plan would amount to a monopoly tax on consumers and warned the impact on the WA economy would be worse than the carbon tax and mining taxes combined.

We will see whether that is the case. The article continues —

His prediction came as the Economic Regulation Authority estimated that excess generating capacity in the South West cost households and businesses an extra \$26 million last year.

It beggars belief. Do not call it Synergy. Why not just call it Western Power—because, really, that is the final stitch.

I did appreciate, minister, the opportunity for the briefing, as short as it was, to get at least some background depth to what is proposed here. But I have to say that there were more questions than there were solutions or answers. It was pictorially well represented. We get what is going on here in terms of the words “ring-fence”. But the very fact that we need to deploy some sort of Chinese walls inside an existing company smacks of the underlying problem behind this whole idea; that is, that the wholesale business unit, which in some way will be the centre of this new model, will be virtually a windowless room from which information going in or out is completely disclosed only to the board.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It has been ring-fenced since 1995. It has. I put the legislation through.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Has it worked?

Mr C.J. Barnett: It was working okay until you disaggregated it. But the entities have been ring-fenced since 1995.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The idea of ring-fencing is not new.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, it is not new; it has been around for a long time.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The point I am making is that for the 25-odd people who are expected to occupy the WBU, what is seen cannot be unseen. What will happen if they are promoted—or moved, not even promoted—into the retail area and into other areas, either franchise or the contestable area? How can the customer base contemplate any certainty when there will be very little capacity for transparency? Why would we not have both a wholesale and a retail? Why would we not completely separate those two businesses anyway?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I will not interject again, but why would the chairmen of both Synergy and Verve write to the Premier of the day and say, “This does not work; you need to put the two entities back together”? One of those chairmen was appointed by the Labor government.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Then table the letters, Premier! I am not privy to that information. Again, that strikes directly at my point. I spent nearly 10 minutes of my speech talking about the perversion of the process here. Why not table those letters, Premier?

Mr C.J. Barnett: You can have them if you want them. It is not a secret.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Thank you. We would appreciate all the information, because there is no business case.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is pertinent when those two chairmen, both experienced business people and experienced in the industry, make the point that this does not work.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Fine. I am completely happy with that. I do not have to agree with that, though, Premier.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, but I am just saying that I take notice of that.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Absolutely. But, again, the Premier underscores the very point that I am making; namely, that the Premier is completely ignoring the processes of this Parliament. The Premier had that case put to him. Why will the Premier not put that case to the people of Western Australia through the instrument called the Parliament? Why will the Premier not table that? Why will the Premier not table the financial information that he has?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I have not refused to table it. I am saying that they both requested that that happen.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes, but why will the Premier not table it?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No reason to. I'm just saying it's a fact.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: So the Premier is committing to table those letters from the chairmen?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, I'm not committing. You can ask me a question about it tomorrow if you like, and I'll answer it.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: So the Premier is not committing to table the information that led him to believe —

Mr C.J. Barnett: Ask me a question tomorrow.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: No, I am asking the Premier now.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I'm just telling you that the chairmen of the two utilities wrote to me in a joint letter, saying, "This does not work; put it together." Fact.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: So they colluded to actually write that to the Premier? No wonder he is leaving! Seriously!

Mr W.J. Johnston: No wonder he's walking out! First whiff of grapeshot and he leaves the chamber!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Cannington!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The puerile nature of what we have just seen would, I hope, make the government members of 2013 absolutely blanch. This is the Premier of the state. Where is the statesmanlike leadership style? He sits there and snipes, backbites and throws little misdirections about getting two letters. "Will you table them, Premier?" "Oh, ask me and I might. Oh, yes I will; no, I won't." Please!

Mr W.J. Johnston: It was two letters and then it was one letter.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: First it was two letters, then it was a colluded letter. Come on, members. Come on you members, in your offices, with the sound up just enough to hear over your email replies! You are part of the proletariat that has risen up to reclaim the means of production—in this case, the electricity market and the generation of electricity! You have created a rod for the back of the Western Australian taxpayer that you will not be able to walk away from as long as you are class of 2008 and 2013 members in this place. As long as you come in and out of this place, regardless of which side of the Speaker's chair you walk, you will have hanging around your neck forever the shame of having walked away from the ideology of your party!

We are reliably advised that not only the corruption of this process but also the word of the Premier needs to be called into question, because the letter—first two letters, then one letter—he cited in his interjection, which was apparently written by two CEOs in collusion to promote the idea of remerging does not, in fact, contain the information the Premier said it contained. I think it is incumbent upon the government backbench, the Liberal Party and the Minister for Energy for the Premier to come back into this chamber and explain what exactly was in those letters from the chairmen of Verve and Synergy. He should come back and tell the chamber—and the constituents of Willagee, who he has so disregarded in declaring this bill urgent—what exactly was contained in that information. He should table the letters that seemingly were the spark, if not the vinegar stroke, of the government's decision to bring to this Parliament the idea that we should again merge our energy retailer and generator, and thereby somehow deliver a better outcome for those people who are struggling under the weight of the cost of living impost that this government has visited upon the good men and women of the state of Western Australia.

I will conclude with some questions for the Minister for Energy. I want to know exactly what Horizon Energy's role will be in the south west interconnected system. I want to know exactly what contractual arrangements it has with its customers and what its relationship will be in terms of pricing et cetera. I want to know why the government is going away from the Economic Regulation Authority and seeking to have the Office of the Auditor General provide oversight. I want to know how transparent that process will or will not be. I also want to know—by way of opinion, I suppose—the minister's idea about the future value of this merged entity, because he is on record as saying that there is the potential for two gentailers. I would like to know how he sees a pathway to a future divestment, if indeed he presents the opportunity to introduce better and more effective private funds into this market. I want to know whether the minister can unpick the idea that some time down the track this may turn into two gentailers and how the value of the total asset will be any better than it is now.

Minister, members present and members listening remotely, this is very, very serious on two fronts. It shows a lack of transparency on behalf of the government. It is a disingenuous sleight of hand in a parliamentary sense to deliver to this Parliament this bill without a business case and preamble. It is also disingenuous to think that this side of the house has no opinion, no capacity to improve legislation and no contribution to make. I hope that the number of speakers who have risen to get involved in this debate advertises that the government may not be the absolute gift to the people of Western Australia in regard to policy, a vision for this state and the opportunities that it provides to those constituent groups within our community that deserve better. There are 2.5 million people in the state of Western Australia. It is not hard; all the government needs to do is consult and the answer will be before it.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle) [3.36 pm]: I am grateful for the opportunity to join other members on my side of the house in voicing concerns with not only the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill but also the way the debate has been brought to the house. I want to focus on one area close to my electorate—that is, a proposal for a renewable energy project at North Mole. I will speak about the possible impact that reaggregation of the WA energy corporations could have on that community wind farm project. I had hoped that the state government would take the opportunity to look at these sorts of exercises, rather than concentrating on remerging other corporations. I query whether that will end up being a distraction to other projects, such as those in the renewable energy sector.

Originally, the proposal for a number of wind turbines on the North Mole in Fremantle was commercial. It was given some attention by the City of Fremantle and the Western Australian Planning Commission, but, unfortunately, the original approvals for that project have expired. I understand that one of the barriers to that original commercial project were the commercial terms with the Fremantle Port Authority on the purchasers of any electricity generated by that wind farm. The terms of that project could not be agreed between the Fremantle Port Authority and the commercial venture. The port authority owns and controls the land on which the turbines would be placed at the North Mole. Since then the community has proposed to renew this project. It would not be the first community wind farm in Australia, but it would make it a viable project. The community proposes eight to 12 turbines on the North Mole. I understand that if there were eight turbines, the project would have a capacity of something like 20 gigawatts per hour.

The model for a community initiative is similar to that adopted in Daylesford in Victoria in 2011. That process has two turbines and produces four megawatts for the local power retailer. In fact, the chairman of that proposal is Simon Holmes à Court of the Western Australian Holmes à Court family. He says that when the Victorian project got up and running in 2011, it was expected that that community project would pay for itself, as I said, in about a decade. People invested in the community project, which was expected to produce enough power for about 2 000 residences and would pay for itself within about 10 years. In fact, Simon Holmes à Court came to that project not from any green credentials, but from his business software and engineering background. People who have supported the community wind farm project around Fremantle have been working very hard to continue to advocate for the possibility that this government might lend an ear to that project and also might bring the Fremantle Port Authority to the table to consider a good use of that commercial land around North Mole. In fact, the ABC did a 7.30WA report on it recently.

If we need a demonstration of the benefits of wind as a renewable energy source and the positive contribution that it can make to our overall energy capacity, we can go to the Western Australian Department of Finance's website, which states —

Harnessing the wind for the generation of electricity is one of the most advanced and commercially deployed renewable energy technologies. Wind energy is one of the cheaper renewable energy technologies and is a major source of power in over 70 countries across the world.

We know that at the end of 2011–12, Western Australia had a capacity of about 424 megawatts of wind generation, and we have added to that capacity since then. Most of that capacity is connected to the south west interconnected system. The output from wind accounted for about 65 per cent of the electricity produced by renewable energy sources in the state and 75 per cent of the renewable energy produced in the south west interconnected system. Collgar wind farm produces 206 megawatts, Walkaway produces 90 megawatts and Emu Downs produces 80 megawatts. Of course, the Albany wind farm expansion was completed in 2012, which brought the capacity to 36 megawatts, and it produces about 80 per cent of Albany's electricity needs. I know that the minister recently opened Mumbida wind farm, which has a 55-megawatt capacity. People in Fremantle feel buoyed by the success of other wind farms and hope that a community effort will not only contribute to local power needs, but also be a visible metropolitan demonstration of those members of the community who want an increased use of renewable power.

I know that other speakers on this side of the house and government members have talked about the complicating factors of the overcapacity of our current system. In fact, I came across an article by Giles Parkinson, who was a former deputy editor of *The Australian Financial Review*, a columnist for *The Bulletin* and *The Australian* and a former editor of the *Climate Spectator*. It is a recent article in which he refers to the minister's conundrum of, on the one hand, needing to contribute to our own target and the national target of 20 per cent renewable energy by 2020 and, on the other hand, dealing with the overcapacity in generation in Western Australia. The frustration is that we have local producers, such as the community wind farm proposal in Fremantle, as well as ordinary residents contributing to renewable energy in their own way—like I do and like I am sure many members in this house do—by installing solar panels on rooftops. It seems to make sense. According to Giles Parkinson —

West Australian households are installing rooftop solar systems at a rate of 2,800 a month—far beyond the rate anticipated by the government ... The rooftop solar capacity in the state is now more than 300MW.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Member, over the last two and a half months that has gone up to almost 4 000 a month, so it has almost doubled. It is very rapid.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Thank you, minister. The capacity is escalating. It demonstrates that not only is commonsense associated with renewables—that is, no carbon emissions—in that it will be efficient for households to install solar panels to reduce household bills, but also people's willingness to do their bit to contribute to reducing emissions produced from fossil fuels. The frustration is that although community efforts, such as the community wind farm and people with solar panels on their rooftops, are contributing to renewable

energy, I am unclear what impact the bill before us, to re-aggregate the electricity corporations in our state, will have on those efforts and the complicated energy production in our state.

I will also mention another innovative renewable energy project, as the member for Gosnells did—the Carnegie Wave Energy project which is taking place north of my electorate in North Fremantle. I had the opportunity to visit that project last year and was impressed by it. In fact, I was not the only one impressed by it; it seems as though investors are also impressed by that market. The project has been doing quite well in terms of its ability to attract private investors. A 720-kilowatt plant is being established near Garden Island next to the naval base. It is a commercial testing of Carnegie's CETO wave energy technology. Although there has been some assistance from federal and state governments, so far the lion's share of the project, about \$70 million, has come from private investors. Carnegie has drawn down only about \$4 million of the \$22 million in federal and state government funds towards that project. I congratulate Carnegie Wave Energy for its efforts in not only harvesting existing technologies in an innovative way but also doing its bit to make sure there are private investors in that project. The project is particularly relevant, as are wind farms, for remote communities that are reliant on diesel and other fossil fuels. There might be a capacity to use those sorts of renewable energy sources in more innovative ways. Fremantle is not a remote community, although sometimes from the way this government treats my electorate, it feels a little that way. There is a lot of passion for the renewable energy project. I do not say that there is universal acceptance of wind farms and I do not know whether the Fremantle Port Authority's reticence to enter into discussions with the community has come from some community concerns about wind farms. But I have not experienced any of that community reticence; it has not come across my office, nor in any way have people said that they are concerned that eight or 12 turbines might be built on the North Mole. In fact, I have heard only quite enthusiastic support for the project and would like to participate and add my efforts to seeing whether we can continue to garner community support in Fremantle and North Fremantle for that project and get the government, through the Minister for Energy, and the Fremantle Port Authority, through the Minister for Transport, to come on board for an innovative project.

I was interested also to see some recent work that has been done on the possible health effects of wind farms. One of the concerns in the community is whether wind turbines close to residential areas can have adverse health effects. In fact, a recent New South Wales planning report backed up findings that there was very little evidence of adverse health effects. It backs up some 20 quite credible studies, including one quite recent study by the Victorian Department of Health on the possible health effects of wind farms on nearby residents. I do not know whether that is why the Fremantle Port Authority is reticent or why this state government is not assisting the Fremantle community wind farm project. But I hope they will come on board and work with the community to overcome any objections to this proposal and see some innovation when it comes to renewable energy. As I said, the reason the community I represent is very passionate about this project is not just that it will make good use of commercial space in the Fremantle area—the recipient of the Fremantle doctor and the roaring forties, the most obvious place for us to harness wind energy—but it wants to make sure there is a metropolitan demonstration of renewable energy. I think situating a wind farm in Fremantle would be quite popular among my electorate, just as popular as I think is the Fremantle city council's efforts to restrict plastic bags. Unfortunately, that is not the view of members opposite—those in the National-Liberal Party caucus room. On Friday the Tasmanian state government will enact its bill to ban plastic bags throughout the state. It will join South Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory in banning plastic bags. It is unfortunate that the Liberal and National Parties in Western Australia could not see themselves allowing a local government—in this case the City of Fremantle—to ban plastic bags within its own local council confines. I know that is not relevant to the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill, but it is relevant to the environment and there is a connection with renewable energy.

I hope this government will reconsider allowing us proper consideration of the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill, which provides for our electricity corporations to re-merge. I hope government members will focus their minds instead on our efforts to increase renewable energy sources in Western Australia and not rely on renewable energy projects in other states to meet our target of 20 per cent renewable energy by 2020.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [3.55 pm]: It is my pleasure to speak on the Electricity Corporations Amendment Bill 2013 and to watch the Minister for Energy on the other side of the house, who is intently interested in this debate. We all know that the minister is a member of the flat earth society, which believes that market forces should take the absolute best position in the world, with no government interference, yet he has brought in a bill that will enable the government to interfere in what will happen in the areas of electricity generation and production. I reckon he might have a few knife marks on his back or even a few marks from the flogging he got when the Premier put him up against the wall. I have worked with this minister on a committee that carried out an inquiry into gas. The end result of that inquiry was to let market forces regulate and set the prices into the future. Now we have interference from the government in a deregulated market; it is probably not totally deregulated but certainly deregulated to some degree. How can the minister sit in this chamber and pretend that he is interested? He should at least have the decency to stand outside and then come back in and say that the Premier made him do it.

I believe that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia has been threatened by this government; it has gone very, very quiet. The minister has five minutes to put up with me; he should not worry about looking at the clock. When this idea was first floated around election time, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry was very vocal in its opposition to this. All of a sudden it has gone quiet. Why? No-one knows.

This bill has no structure to it whatsoever. We do not know what the regulations will be. How can we go forward without knowing exactly what will happen in the future? It is about being open and honest. It is about allowing the private people who have already invested in the electricity generation area know what the rules are. I have received complaints from people—they have phoned me and requested meetings with me—about exactly that. They have invested millions of dollars in the generation side under a free market view, only to be stifled by a government that says that it supports the free market one minute and then does another thing in this house. The deception we have seen from the Premier and the minister is shameful. The minister will just do as he is told because he is desperate to hold his position. When the Premier says that he wants the minister to do that and the minister says that it is against his best wishes, he must bend over and say to his colleagues, “I am sorry but the Premier made me do it.”

Some time ago the minister said that the energy system is starting to mature and that people are starting to understand it and invest in it as well. They have invested nearly 3 000 megawatts. Then government interference came along in the form of the Muja power station. The government said that it will keep it under the cap and it will put a private \$2 shelf company there so it is outside the cap, and then it lifted the cap. What market will invest in a government entity such as that when the government does not know what the rules are and it changes them every couple of minutes? We are back in here again. Because of the shortage of time, I am paraphrasing to some degree. I would like to have gone into a lot more detail.

Dr M.D. Nahan: You can talk tomorrow.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The minister should not worry; he will get a bit more tomorrow.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Second Reading

Resumed from 12 June.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [4.00 pm]: I would like to start by congratulating the member for Collie–Preston for bringing the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013 into this house. This bill was introduced and read in back in June this year. I congratulate him on bringing forward a really important piece of legislation. It is legislation that would bring us into line with just about every other state in Australia that has moved in this direction. The fact is that South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have also been slow to move on the secondary supply of alcohol to minors, but other states have some laws in place to deal with this issue. We have a government that talks a lot about community safety and the priority that it places on it, but when it comes to delivering, it does very little. Just today in question time I highlighted that when it comes to community safety, the government likes to talk the talk, but it does not get around to walking the walk. Everything just takes too long. It is too complicated; it is too difficult; it is not simple. The government has every excuse under the sun.

I would like to remind people that in the lead-up to the state election in March this year, the government said that it would give priority to community safety matters and, as a matter of priority, it would introduce legislation to remove vehicles from hoons on the second strike for offences that occurred in school zones or suburban streets. If that is too complicated or if it is not right, perhaps the government should not have promised it. It also said that it would confiscate unlicensed trail bikes when they are driven on the roads; so rather than just the regular penalty being applied, the government would have the right to seize these unlicensed trail bikes so that they could not continue to be driven on the roads. That seems to make sense, but again there has been nothing from the government. We have yet to see that legislation. The government said that graffiti was a problem and that it would have tough new legislation. It even gave that legislation a name and said that it would introduce the graffiti enforcement bill. We are still waiting to see even a draft of that. Of course, it also promised to toughen the home burglary laws for people who are assaulted. Again, we have not seen any detail of that proposition, let alone the legislation.

This government promised to give priority to community safety and community wellbeing, and these were supposedly its priorities. But six months later it has yet to even show us a bill. With only four sitting weeks left, there is no real prospect of any of these bills being passed this year. So we will get to February next year and we will still be in the position of having a year of legislative inaction by the Barnett government.

In contrast with the government, the member for Collie–Preston has been pretty quick to progress this legislation. It is a very important issue. No doubt many of us in this house have children and, as parents, we have

dealt with many of the issues that arise when we have teenagers and older children. The fact is that it is illegal for a person under 18 years of age to purchase alcohol. It is illegal for a liquor store, a hotel or other drinking venue to sell alcohol to someone who is under the age of 18. That law is in place for a very important reason. It is because the community as a whole does not believe that people under 18 years of age should be drinking. That has been the community opinion with broad support for a very long time. Prior to that, the drinking age in Australia in just about every state was 21 years of age. I do not fully know the history of it, but I guess around the time of the Vietnam War there were some people who said, “We can send people off to fight for the country; why don’t we allow them to drink and have other entitlements?” The minimum age for drinking alcohol, I suppose, matched up aspects such as the voting age; the age for criminal responsibility; and the age at which someone was asked to fight in a war, especially given the compulsory call-up to the Vietnam War.

In recent times, though, a number of consequences have occurred. Some very prominent Australians have said that they think the drinking age should be raised. I think it is widely acknowledged that excessive alcohol consumption by young people, and for that matter by older people, is a real problem Australia-wide. A greater volume of alcohol is drunk now by Australians on a per capita basis than there was 10, 20, 30 or 50 years ago. This is a problem, but it is a particular problem when young people’s brains are still forming and they are still growing. There is also plenty of medical and other research that indicates that the earlier one starts drinking, the more likely they are to develop alcohol problems in later life. The more likely they are to become an alcoholic, the more likely they are to suffer other adverse health problems as a result of drinking alcohol. There is a direct correlation in very many studies worldwide between the age at which someone first starts drinking and the likelihood of them developing problems with alcohol in later life and developing health problems as well. That has caused people such as Ita Buttrose to call for the drinking age to be raised to 21. I think most of us concur that the combination of the age at which people start drinking, the amount they are drinking and the more-than-anecdotal reports that young people—and others no doubt—are drinking not just for enjoyment but also actually to get drunk is a very sad thing.

I come back to the issue that parents face in this regard, which is something the member for Collie–Preston focused on in his second reading speech; that is, it can be difficult for parents to say no. We hear stories that 13, 14, 15 and 16-year-olds turn around and say to their parents, “Mum, Dad, other kids are doing this. Other kids are drinking. Other parents allow it at their house. Why can’t I have it?” We hear stories that parents are buying alcohol for their 14, 15 and 16-year-old kids. We hear evidence when schoolies week is on of parents going into bottle shops and buying cartons of beer and other alcohol for their kids to drive down south with. That is just plainly irresponsible.

I think there is now a big disparity between the regulated environment of a hotel or licensed drinking venue and the unregulated environment of someone’s backyard or home. Most responsible parents would not like their child or young person under 18 years of age to be offered alcohol in someone else’s home when no permission has been given. I believe that the majority of people would not want the alcohol offered in any circumstances, but particularly in the circumstance when the parent is not even informed or asked for consent. Why should another parent be able to give alcohol to my 15, 16 or 17-year-old child when that child is by law not able to purchase it or be sold it in a pub, club or another venue? The answer very clearly is that they should not. Alcohol is a drug, and it has consequences. Depending on the age at which young people start drinking, it has ongoing health consequences for them in later life. This is very much a commonsense measure. If this government was serious about community safety and wellbeing, it would have brought forward this kind of measure a long time ago. It should probably have done this in its first term in government, because that is when most other Australian states moved on this. I get pretty tired of hearing the government say that it is a good idea but it is more complex than the opposition realises, and that the government will not vote for our bill because it will bring in its own bill and get the kudos itself for having done something—that is, when it eventually gets around to doing it! In the meantime, it is children and the community who are losing out.

If this government really cared about young people, it would vote for the member for Collie–Preston’s bill. It is a very simple amendment to the Liquor Control Act 1988 that would afford some protection for young people in this state. It would also send a very clear message to parents and other adults that if they supply alcohol to a minor, they must get the permission of their parents to give them that drug, because it is a drug. Although I am sure that many people in certain places have a different view from others in the community and think it is okay for a young person to have a toast of champagne, sherry in a trifle, a half glass of beer or whatever at the age of 15 or 16 years in the home and family environment, my view is it is up to parents to make that decision for their own children. If that is what parents allow their own children in their own home, so be it. However, nothing in the bill that the member for Collie–Preston is proposing prevents parents from doing that. If that is their culture and what they believe and has been the practice in their family or community for decades or even a short time, they are entitled to give their own child alcohol under supervision. Likewise, if a child is visiting their aunt or uncle or some other responsible adult and the parents have given permission for the consumption of alcohol, that would not be caught by this bill either.

A lot of parents object, when they allow their child to go to another family's home perhaps to stay overnight or for a weekend or a week's holiday, if their child is supplied a substance that they are not supplied in their own home and they do not have permission to supply to them. This also helps parents who want to be able to enforce their household rules. It is difficult to be able to enforce your household rules with teenagers when other households have supposedly different or more relaxed rules. I am in the position of having two children over the age of 18 and one child under the age of 18. Although I have no personal anecdote to tell members, I know from my experience and that of many of my electors that at things such as school balls, where some kids are 17 years old and others are 18 years old, it certainly is a problem. I do not intend to talk at length about parties before, during or after school balls, dinner dances, socials, discos or whatever the occasion, but it is becoming difficult and this will increasingly be the case with the half-cohort coming through school and more young people turning 18 years in year 12. We will end up with a situation in a couple of years' time when that half-cohort reaches year 12, and children born in the first half of the year will be 18 years of age. We will have this mix of kids who are over the age of 18 years and under the age of 18 years.

Parents need to know where they stand. A law such as this will give parents the comfort of being able to say, "I'm not providing the alcohol, because the law says that if I don't have permission from each and every one of those young people's parents, I am not any more at liberty to give you alcohol than the bottle shop or the hotel is to sell you alcohol." I think it is simple. Maybe a lot of people will say that that is surely commonsense. How did we get by without a law such as this in the past? I think it is because the prevalence of alcohol drinking has not been at the level it currently is. People such as Ita Buttrose and others are speaking out because this is a national problem that is affecting people around the country. Whether she is absolutely dinkum about a drinking age of 21, I do not know; personally, I think it would be very hard to wind the clock back and tell young people they have to wait until they are 21. But maybe there is some merit in the age being 19, because at least then there would not be this mix that there is now in year 12 of half the cohort turning 18. People can get other things at other ages; people can get a driver's licence at 17. We have not said that everything should be uniformly 18, so I do not see that it necessarily has to be the same age. But I think what Ita Buttrose and others have been grappling with is the outcome. This is a huge problem. To me, it is morally wrong to give someone else's child who is under the age of 18 alcohol without the permission of the parent to do it in a home environment.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: If this government was dinkum about supporting the community and interested in doing the right thing, as are people such as Samantha Menezes, a mother of four children ranging in age between eight and 21—I note that my children are aged between 14 and 24—it would help those parents greatly. It will reduce, hopefully, the amount of alcohol consumed by young people. But, more importantly, it will send a very strong message to the community that the law does not support people under the age of 18 drinking without strict parental permission. Some people might try to suggest that this will have unintended consequences or be somehow more complicated than it actually is. Whichever way we go, there will be problems. Will this be the silver bullet that deals with all alcohol problems and stops absolutely everyone under the age of 18 from drinking? No, it will not, but it is an important step. I note that it is a step that has been taken in just about every other state of Australia. It is the right thing to do. It is the responsible thing to do. It is irresponsible to hold this law up, and that is why I am very keen today to see the member for Collie-Preston's bill go to a vote. We will see the government's response and whether it wants to support parents in this community who want an end to under-age drinking, and who do not want their child in an environment in which it is seen to be okay and in which the law supports other random adults giving their child alcohol that it is illegal to buy at a pub or bottle shop. It is wrong; let us make it legally wrong. Let us send this strong message to the community. All of us in this chamber today have the opportunity to send that message and to start putting it into law. If members vote for the member for Collie-Preston's bill today at the second reading stage, we could go straight into consideration in detail. This is a very small bill. I am confident we could then send the bill to the Legislative Council and it could become law before the end of the year. That would be a great thing.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.21 pm]: I rise to make a few comments on the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013. This is obviously an area of my portfolio that is of acute interest because of alcohol and its impact on our community. In relation to health services and expenditure, this issue represents a huge burden upon the health budget. It is important that we examine this bill. I commend the member for Collie-Preston for bringing it forward. It is not dissimilar to the changes made to the Tobacco Products Control Act about two or three years ago now. Those changes were brought forward by the then member for Alfred Cove, an Independent member of this place, and they were passed with the support of both sides of Parliament. Why were they passed? They were passed because the changes that the former member for Alfred Cove made to the Tobacco Products Control Act were straightforward, and were accepted as commonsense and as the orthodoxy of where the tobacco debate was at—they were uncontroversial. That is also the case with this bill before us. What this bill seeks to do is fairly straightforward. The measures in this bill are legislated for in other states and I hope no-one in this place thinks it is okay for an adult to provide alcohol to a young person in their home without the express permission of that young person's parents. This is very

straightforward, unambitious, commonsense legislation. I know the minister has a review of the Liquor Control Act on at the moment, and the Minister for Health constantly reviews the Tobacco Products Control Act, as he is required to under that legislation. However, the Minister for Health, to his credit, accepted that what the former member for Alfred Cove brought forward on the Tobacco Products Control Act was very simple and straightforward stuff. The government accepted those changes in a mature, dispassionate and objective way, because they were straightforward, uncontroversial and, quite frankly, accepted by the community as doing good. That is what we are doing today. By virtue of the member for Collie–Preston, we are bringing forward legislation which is very straightforward and commonsense and about which there is no argument.

We might reflect from time to time that we stand in this place at a point in history, and I can only imagine that in the early 1970s people were perhaps confronting a similar debate about tobacco. People might have said that it was a bit unreasonable to expect people to stop smoking in restaurants or to expect them not to smoke on planes—that it was a bit unfair. They might have asked about the workplace. They might have said that next people would be expected to leave the workplace to have a smoke. They would have thought that was really unreasonable and said that it could not be done. Of course, no-one nowadays questions that it is right to have those laws in place—no-one at all questions these things. We are now confronted with similar legislation and in five, 10 or 20 years' time, people will ask whether it was really debated. They will comment that it must have been a bizarre situation for people to have thought there was another side to the argument. This is straightforward stuff and it is stuff we should be doing. This is not stuff that will interfere with the detail of the minister's review of the Liquor Control Act; it is straightforward. I suspect that the minister's own review of the act will also conclude in this way. What we should do today is just say, "Fair cop. Thank you, member for Collie–Preston, for bringing this bill forward. We will vote for it, and we look forward to seeing what the Minister for Racing and Gaming has to say when his review is concluded." That is a review that we have been waiting and waiting for. That review was announced early last year. It was formally started towards the end of last year; is that right, minister?

Mr T.K. Waldron: Yes, at the end of December.

Mr R.H. COOK: It was supposed to report by the end of June, and then by the end of September, and we are now waiting for it to be brought down some time in November.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Yes.

Mr R.H. COOK: That review is ongoing at a glacial pace, missing deadline after deadline that the minister himself has set. I do not know what the delay is. But there should be no delay for this very simple and commonsense change to the legislation.

Alcohol is a drug that permeates our society. It is everywhere. It is one of the most destructive drugs in our society. It is also the most popular drug, and the one that costs our nation the most. But it is because alcohol has such prevalence in our society that we find this legislation somewhat uncomfortable. I saw the minister squirm when he was asked a question in Parliament the other day about Cricket Australia's attitude to Healthway WA's campaign around sport. I suspect that in a few years' time, people will say, "Do you remember when the members of the Australian cricket team had that drug advertising written across them? Do you remember when Ricky Ponting, this leader of sport and fitness and youth and vitality for the nation, had that drug slogan written across him? What a peculiar state of affairs that was. What a bizarre thing that was".

Mr T.K. Waldron: I hope I am still around!

Mr R.H. COOK: The minister will be, because I think this debate is starting to gain some momentum now. It is extraordinary that Cricket Australia should be saying, "Hang on. We are not going to have these little messages that might interfere with our broader branding. We do not want to detract from the branding of this major drug sponsor and our cricket." Do members remember how the world was going to come to an end because we could not have the Benson and Hedges Ashes series, or something like that, and people were trying to visualise the ring around the cricket field without "Benson and Hedges" emblazoned across it? We must put some historic context to this.

But imagine if we were talking today about a drug that had been discovered recently. Let us say it was some sort of artificial cannabis, because that is the thing that tends to be occupying our legislative minds lately. Imagine if the minister stood in this place and said that this new drug accounts for 3.3 per cent of the total burden of disease and injury in Australia, 4.9 per cent in males and 1.6 per cent in females. Imagine if the minister said that this new drug is second only to tobacco as a preventable cause of drug-related death and hospitalisation, and that between 1992 and 2001—so this is not a new drug, but let us say it was—more than 31 000 deaths were attributed to the risky or high-risk consumption of this new drug. Imagine if the minister said that in the eight years between 1993–94 and 2000–01, this new drug was responsible for over half a million completed hospital episodes. But of course we are not talking about a new drug. We are talking about alcohol. Imagine the outcry that there would be.

Mr P. Abetz: You would never get it registered!

Mr R.H. COOK: Yes, we would never get it registered. We would be in in this place in the blink of an eye to legislate against it. Imagine if we said that this new drug accounted for 13 per cent of all deaths among 14 to 17-year-old Australians. Imagine if we said that it was estimated that this new drug was responsible for the death of one Australian teenager and more than 60 hospitalisations each week. Can members imagine that? Let us get some perspective here: we are not talking about some harmless activity when providing alcohol to a child under the age of 18; we are talking about a deadly drug, which is why, historically, we have restricted the sale of this drug. We have kept it behind closed doors—smoked windows, usually—and it has remained highly stigmatised. We have highly regulated the times during which one can enter a place to consume this drug; of course, we are talking about pubs. It is not unreasonable for the member for Collie–Preston to bring this legislation forward, because, as the member for Midland said, all this legislation will do is stop an adult providing alcohol to someone under the age of 18 without the express permission of that person’s parent, guardian or carer. All we are doing with this legislation is providing support to adults who are supervising young people and saying, “No, sorry; there are laws against this, so I can’t provide you with that alcohol.”

We all know the pressures around this; we all know about the social coercion in relation to alcohol and we all know how much we enjoy consuming it, but it is important to have this legislation in place to bring about these very commonsense, simple and straightforward changes to make sure that we provide some regulation and support around the supply of alcohol.

The statistics I mentioned earlier are from a report by the National Health and Medical Research Council titled “Alcohol and health in Australia”. It provides us with a stark reminder of just how damaging alcohol can be in our society. It reads, in part —

Alcohol consumption accounted for 3.3 per cent of the total burden of disease and injury in Australia in 2003; 4.9 per cent in males and 1.6 per cent in females.

Further along, the report continues —

In Australia:

Alcohol is second only to tobacco as a preventable cause of drug-related death and hospitalisation

between 1992 and 2001 more than 31,000 deaths were attributed to risky or high risk alcohol consumption

in the eight years between 1993–94 and 2000–01, over half a million completed hospital episodes were associated with alcohol

As I said before, alcohol accounts for 13 per cent of all deaths among 14 to 17-year-old Australians—more than one in 10. It has been estimated that one Australian teenager dies and more than 60 are hospitalised each week from alcohol-related causes.

From that point of view, I think this legislation is very straightforward. It is not controversial; this is an issue on which the community, which is watching our actions, is almost unanimous. Research undertaken by the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth found, from a sample of 1 600 people, that 88 per cent supported the legislation in relation to secondary supply, and only five per cent opposed what we are trying to do here today. Amongst parents with children currently at school, 91 per cent supported what we are doing and only three per cent opposed it. We are not standing here today sticking out our political necks and undertaking a task for which there is no community support. There is ample community support. There is no reason that we should not simply give this piece of legislation the tick. If there are some technical concerns, we have the consideration in detail stage. The minister took the opportunity to tweak the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill brought in by the member for Alfred Cove to ensure that it fitted with the government’s overall legislative perspective. However, he did not push back on the principles of what the member for Alfred Cove was trying to do and today the Minister for Racing and Gaming should not push back on the principles of what the member for Collie–Preston is trying to do, because this is pretty straightforward stuff.

As the member for Midland said, this is not a silver bullet. As I am sure the minister is finding out in his review of the Liquor Control Act, this is a complex area in which to exercise public policy. We know that people like to consume alcohol; I am amongst them. It is highly prevalent. A huge amount of economic activity is driven by the consumption of alcohol and a lot of people are employed in the industry surrounding alcohol. This is very simple, straightforward and effective legislation that we can bring forward. The minister might say it is pretty hard to police this. How do we know whether they have permission and all that sort of stuff? But we are not blazing a trail here. We have slipped behind other jurisdictions in Australia. Western Australia has a strong tradition of being ahead of the game, particularly in tobacco legislation, but we are significantly behind the game on this. Secondary supply legislation has been in place in New South Wales since 2007; in Queensland since 2009; in Tasmania since 2009; and in Victoria since 2011. Lord knows the Northern Territory has a reputation

for enjoying alcohol and even it legislated in this area in 2011. We are playing catch-up and marking time with the other states by legislating in this way today. From that point of view, there is nothing to fear when supporting this bill. There is nothing controversial about it from a public opinion point of view or a legislative point of view.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.H. COOK: There is nothing controversial about how this will be played out on the ground. We know that this is not a silver bullet; this will not end alcohol abuse in our community. This will not stop the serious impact of alcohol on our economy and our health system. It will not stop the trauma that it brings to many families, but it is a good first step because it will demonstrate to young people that alcohol is a serious drug and has to be used responsibly. This is about starting the process of undermining that bland and dumb acceptance of alcohol as prevalent in our society and somehow something that we should take for granted. To consume alcohol to our heart's content is not a right. We need to think about the public policy consequences and the effect on our economy and families. This is the first commonsense step.

I do not know about other members of this place, but I occasionally welcome the odd angry tweet from the Australian Hotels Association in response to some of my opinions on alcohol. I place on record that I do not believe the problem with alcohol abuse in our society exists in our pubs and our clubs. That is where we have the opportunity to control it. I think the biggest problem our communities face is the rampant rollout of cut-price bottle shops, which, for some reason, we do not have the legislative clout to stop. I want to draw upon an example in my electorate alone.

Mr T.K. Waldron interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: Yes; it is planning legislation, is it not?

In one block just down the road from my office, there is a bottle shop attached to the pub, within about 200 metres of that there is a Liquorland bottle shop and within about another 100 metres of that—I have not seen the Taj Mahal, but I suspect it is not much bigger than the tilt-up building that is going up at the moment—there will be a Dan Murphy's bottle shop. It is a monument to the alcohol that is flooding our community. I commend the member for Maylands, who has had some success in stopping this stuff. I am really concerned about just how big these bottle shops are and how aggressively they market to our community. I cannot for the life of me see the public good in the current rollout of all these cut-price bottle shops. Do people want cheap alcohol? Of course they do. We all want to buy a nice bottle of wine or a slab of beer that is a bit cheaper than it is down the road, but that is not the point. That is not what we are here for. We are here to manage the public policy surrounding these things. We all know that these bottle shops, if left to their own devices, will wreak extraordinary havoc on our community.

We have gone through a period in our community when we have said, "Let us wind back the closing hours for pubs because we know how to manage alcohol. We don't need a paternalistic state government telling us when we can drink." We now seem to be letting bottle shops sell alcohol as they like because they are just shops like any other part of the community. We are starting to come to the realisation that we have never managed this stuff well as individuals. Perhaps that is why we had restricted trading hours. Perhaps that is why we have a stigma around drinking alcohol in pubs, perhaps driven by the church. Perhaps that is why, when the Salvation Army men and women came around with the box in the pubs inviting people to give them their loose change, people thought, "I'm not supposed to be here. I'm drinking. I will give some money to the poor." They relied upon the stigma around the consumption of alcohol. Perhaps that stigma around the consumption of alcohol was holding us back. It was not what we might consider to be responsible adults taking alcohol in a manner that does not need to be regulated. Perhaps we are not up to this. I really look forward to seeing what the minister's review reveals.

Mr T.K. Waldron: So am I!

Mr R.H. COOK: I am really keen to see it, minister, if we can have no further delays. It is important that we get hold of this stuff. The changes to the laws for small bars that the member for Rockingham made when he was the Minister for Racing and Gaming were part of the solution to changing the pattern of the consumption of alcohol.

Mr T.K. Waldron interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: Yes.

What I am trying to say is that, yes, this a complex area in which to exercise public policy. This is not straightforward. However, one aspect of this is straightforward. There is one aspect of this area that we can act on today, because it is quite simple. We can say that we got that bit right and now we will look at the other bits that are more complex and respond to those in a comprehensive way. But today we should do one thing—that is, support this very simple, straightforward, commonsense, responsible, uncontroversial, legislatively sound piece of legislation, which will simply legislate against the secondary supply of alcohol to minors without the express permission of their parent or guardian, because it is the right thing to do. This is straightforward. This is not

difficult. I know that the minister will resolve all these issues through his liquor review, but today we should just act on this one important element. Lord knows we are not getting any younger—we could be significantly older before we see the review and we could be significantly older again by the time we see the legislation as a result of the review. But we should act today on this very straightforward piece of legislation to at least demonstrate to the public that we are up to the job.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [4.45 pm]: I rise to contribute to the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013 introduced by the opposition spokesperson, the member for Collie–Preston. I am a bit disappointed that there are not more members in this place this afternoon to debate what I think is a very serious concern in our community.

Mr M.P. Murray: Call a quorum!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I might do that.

I remember once in teachers' college doing an assignment on the history of prohibition. I do not think I scored a very good result.

Mr T.K. Waldron: Which teachers' college?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Claremont Teachers' College; a fine teachers' college.

Part of its scope was to look at the history of how alcohol as a drug has been regulated and deregulated et cetera. It is interesting to watch how different countries and different cultures have moved to deal with the regulation of alcohol, alcohol consumption and the education behind alcohol. Some cultures do not partake in alcohol at all. Various examples of governments over the years have moved to try to address the social and financial impacts that the abuse of alcohol can have on communities. In the past five years or so the United Kingdom has introduced a raft of legislative measures to try to address the emerging major problem of binge drinking. When visiting a place like London, and even small villages and larger towns, we see that the culture of drinking is almost innate as those communities develop. When I first went to London in 1996—I was much younger then of course!—one of the great challenges was to see how many of those wonderfully named ale and beer establishments one could visit—places such as The Slug and Hare, The Dirty Dog and The White Horse. I think in some respects Australia, since colonisation, has had its issues with alcohol, including the Rum Rebellion back in 1789, or whenever it was. Issues associated with alcohol have been prevalent throughout our colonial history to the present day. Unfortunately, many hundreds of thousands of families over many years have sad tales of alcohol abuse that has had a profound impact on children and young people, and on partners and wives. It is true that with greater awareness—the emphasis on domestic violence for example—the link between alcohol and alcohol abuse and the prevalence of domestic violence is a very raw and sobering statistic. The statistics for my region are also very raw and sobering. Unfortunately, the domestic violence statistics in the Peel region are catastrophic, and I mean catastrophic. Allambee Counselling services in Mandurah provided me with statistics earlier in the year, before the election, that showed that—I am not proud of this at all—of all the nine regions, the Peel region accounts for nearly half of all reported domestic violence in Western Australia. That is an indictment on the community. I could not believe the statistic when I first saw it. Yet until now, government has been reluctant to fund additional services for counselling children who witness domestic violence.

Interestingly, the days of pubs and clubs being the primary places to enjoy alcohol has rapidly changed. I think that is an indication of people's financial circumstances. Indeed, I think in the hotel industry the volume of alcohol consumed on premises has declined. I know that for many years, the amount of alcohol sold at the Liquorland store in the Mandurah Forum was larger than that sold in any other place in Western Australia. I grew up in Northam, and when I left there in 1982 I think the population was around 6 000. I was and still am astounded that with that population it supported about 12 licensed premises from the old Northam Workers' Club in Fitzgerald Street to the Grand Hotel; the Club Hotel; the Northam Hotel —

Mr J.E. McGrath: The Shamrock.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: — the Shamrock Hotel; the Northam Country Club; the Trans Hotel, which has burnt down; the Tatts Hotel; and the Commercial Hotel. They were almost all in Fitzgerald Street. I have always been amazed that a town with a population of 6 000 to 7 000—admittedly, it caters to a hinterland—which has not changed dramatically over the years, supports a dozen licensed premises. Fast-forward to Mandurah with a population of 80 000, which has fewer than a dozen licensed premises. In my electorate are the Madora Bay Tavern, the very famous Silver Sands Tavern, the Peninsula Hotel on the point, which is still a licensed premises, and the Boathouse Tavern in town. Out further in Halls Head are the Peel Alehouse, as it is now known, and Cobblers Tavern, which is being rebuilt and I understand will be opened just before Christmas. Further down the line is the Bouvard Tavern. I have always been amazed that with that population, there are not more licensed premises. The reality is that alcohol in my region features as a cause of domestic violence and is one of the key reasons many people inflict pain and suffering on loved ones, including children. It is a sobering statistic. I do not mean that as a pun. It is very sobering to think that so many people in my community are part of that statistic.

That brings me to the issue of the Australian psyche. I honestly believe that a large proportion of the Australian population has a problem with alcohol. I have not travelled as widely as some members in this place, but it always interests me when someone comes back from another country and I ask them what it is like in Italy, for example. The member for Warnbro has been there. When people go out in Italy or somewhere else, how do young people behave when alcohol is in the equation? I do not know whether it is all purely cultural. I am not best placed to say this but people tell me that in some cultures, like the Italian culture, alcohol—wine in particular—is part of the culture, but it comes down to when it is consumed, how it is introduced to children and how they see it consumed et cetera, which can influence the value placed on alcohol. When I went to Scotland, I always remember going to a pub in Drumnadrochit near Loch Ness, which the Loch Ness monster supposedly inhabits, and being amazed when I went up to the bar and saw these old Scotsmen sitting there with their beer and whisky chaser. Sometimes in words that I could not quite understand, they would invite me to imbibe with them. I would be interested in other members' comments on this cultural aspect. I honestly believe that, unfortunately, a significant number of Australians have difficulties with alcohol and alcohol abuse and that we need to do things to address this. One of the ways we can address this is in the spirit of the bill that the member for Collie–Preston has introduced in this place; that is, by fundamentally putting the responsibility back onto parents and people who are legal guardians of others.

During the debate on out-of-control parties in this place in the last Parliament, there was a lot of talk about the reasons we see more out-of-control parties or why we have gatherings like that. Partly, it is because a lot of events are now held in private homes, with fewer events held in formal licensed premises. A cost factor impedes a lot of people from organising an eighteenth or twenty-first birthday party in a hotel or licensed premises so they sometimes choose to celebrate in a private home. Over the past four years I have been corresponding intermittently with a lady named Naomi Oakley, a former senior policewoman in Victoria who established Safe Partying Australia. Admittedly, Naomi has a security business and she now basically provides party security in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

Ms L.L. Baker interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: She is effectively. Because of her expertise, she and her team are hired by people who fly her in. If someone wishes to hold a party, she puts them through a template process, which is all focused on responsible service of alcohol, checking people coming in and being well aware of the safety aspects of the venue. An assessment is done of the venue. It can be very complex, depending upon the size of the party, the number of young people expected to attend, the public transport implications for the venue or the site and the like. Naomi is very strongly of the view that a lot of the issues regarding the serving of alcohol to young people in particular can and indeed should be controlled at source—that is, by responsible parents and parents being well aware of the implications of social media and the threats to any gathering potentially getting out of control.

In this state we have heard on many occasions of parties that innocently, I think, get out of control. Mum and dad may have had a daughter or a son who was turning 18, or sometimes even 16, or 21 years of age. They have a party at home and do the right thing. They inform the police that the party is going to happen, but very little other preparation is done. The party gets out of hand and a massive police presence is required to disperse crowds. Bottles are thrown and violence occurs. There are clashes with police, and problems with neighbours, or people disturbing neighbours, including damaging property et cetera. Naomi Oakley believes that good planning and good, clear guidelines can help mitigate such events.

The question that this raises is: how do we deal with the introduction of alcohol into a family? I thought the member for Midland made some very pertinent comments in her contribution earlier this afternoon when she talked about parents' responsibility when they make decisions to effectively introduce alcohol to their kids. I have four young kids—they are six years of age and under. I have not even thought about it now. But my wife and I enjoy a wine every now and then; I like a Matso's beer from Broome every now and then. I must admit that I have started to think about what they see. I know that some of the government advertising has been focusing on this issue of what little kids see in terms of learnt behaviour from their parents. They are the advertisements that we have seen on television in which the father keeps on saying to the son, "Get us another one, will you, son?" and the son goes to the refrigerator and gets another beer for his dad. The implications and the learning elements of that are all explored, I suppose, and the underlying message is, I think, pretty clear.

I think what we are doing in this amendment bill goes some way towards addressing the issues and the problems that we face with alcohol. This bill puts in place responsibility of the secondary supplier and mechanisms by which to make sure that there is responsibility and that there are results of that responsibility. One of the clauses also, I think, addresses juveniles on unlicensed premises.

I do not want to be seen as the modern-day temperance movement advocate at all, but I think we need to face up to the fact that we have a major problem in Australia. I do not know whether it is cultural. I do not know what the answer is or how it has come about, but it is a problem, and this bill that the member for Collie–Preston has introduced should be supported by members on all sides of the Parliament so that we can begin to address a serious problem in Australia's psyche.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [5.04 pm]: I also rise to talk about the private member's Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013 moved by the member for Collie–Preston. Speakers before me have articulated the issue and the problems that alcohol can cause in our society. The whole purpose of this bill moved and presented by the member for Collie–Preston really centres on the issue of the secondary supply of alcohol to children under the age of 18 years. By “secondary supply” I mean adults supplying alcohol to children under 18. As we very well know, the law prevents the selling of alcohol to people under the age of 18 but, of course, that does not mean that people under the age of 18 do not drink alcohol. The consumption of alcohol in a domestic situation seems to be becoming more prevalent. This legislation therefore seeks to bring the force of law into a domestic situation, although the domestic situation does not have to be in a home but could be at a party in a park. One of the reasons this legislation is being debated today is the concern expressed by some members of the public and parents that children are being given alcohol by adults in a house. That presents its own problem that I will talk about shortly.

The member for Mandurah talked about his experiences in England and the drinking culture there. During my time in England I worked in the west end of London in a pub called the Tom Cribb. I was amazed by the volume of alcohol that was consumed on a daily basis by people who came into that pub. It was phenomenal to find that business people would come into the pub in their hour lunchbreak and consume three to four pints of beer. At the end of the working day, they would come back in and consume another two or three pints. Then they would get the tube home, have some dinner and then go to their local and consume some more pints. That was happening on a daily basis.

I also come to this debate from my own cultural upbringing in a largely Italian home where alcohol had a different significance from the significance imported from the United Kingdom. The member for Swan Hills may be able to identify with this. In many Italian families, and I was in one, our parents would allow us to consume some alcohol underage, but it was done in a very controlled way when very little was consumed and it was always consumed in a social setting and with a meal. I therefore grew up not seeing alcohol as this mystical, magical product. So when I turned 14, 15, 16 or 17 years of age, I did not want to go out and indulge in binge drinking because it was not a magical substance to me. I am mindful of not trying to encourage parents to give their children alcohol at a young age, because I know that studies have been done that state that any amount of alcohol given to children can have an effect on the brain. So I am not encouraging that. All I am saying, though, from my own personal experience in the Italian cultural way is that alcohol did not hold this magical attraction to me. I actually remember going to parties when I was 17 or 18 years old and I would end up being the skipper because I was the one who would drink the least as it just was not magical. However, I want to place on record that the scientific evidence now would not support under-age drinking of any amount. But it must be said that we have to be careful that it does not create this substance that holds a magical appeal to people, especially to young people, and that they do not engage in binge drinking.

The culture of alcohol consumption in Australia was inherited from the Anglo–Celtic culture; one could almost say Anglo–Celtic baggage. Alcohol was a very important substance in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Western Europe. It was often used for medicinal purposes and that culture was imported into Australia. The practice of shouting was also imported, and people would shout a round, and then the obligation would be for the next person in that group to shout a round, so that by the end of the night people could have consumed many beers. That would depend, of course, on whether your friends wanted to hand over money and had participated in the shout, which would be noted later on in the evening! That practice also encouraged heavy drinking. In the early days in the outback, the culture was to work hard and drink hard, which added to this culture of heavy drinking. This culture has been replicated in football clubs with mad Mondays, which I am sure the Minister for Sport and Recreation knows all about. After the end of the season, players go out on mad Monday events, with much consumption of alcohol.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Members, the conversations are getting too loud and I ask you to quieten down as much as you can.

Dr A.D. BUTI: In Australia, alcohol is central to our culture. It is also central to the Mediterranean culture, but from my understanding, and on the evidence, binge drinking is not as prevalent in the Mediterranean culture as it is in the Anglo–Celtic culture, although that is not the genesis of the debate before us.

The issue of under-age drinking and alcohol being served to young people is a worry. Many Australian states have enacted laws to control the secondary supply of alcohol; Western Australia has not, which is the reason the member for Collie–Preston has presented this legislation to us. New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria and the Northern Territory have legislation in place to control the secondary supply of alcohol, and generally it is unlawful to supply alcohol to people under the age of 18 years if it is not served by the parent or guardian and there is not a responsible supervisor of that alcohol consumption. We also need to look very carefully when we try to bring in laws to regulate the secondary supply of alcohol to people under 18 years of age. We need to look beyond any legislation to control the culture that has developed and to consider the advertising of alcohol. People cannot watch a game of Australian Rules Football or National Rugby League on

television—I have not done the math—without 50 per cent of the ads being filled up with alcohol ads, but particularly beer ads. They are fantastic ads. They are probably some of the best ads we see on TV. That in itself is a real danger, because this can promote alcohol consumption. When people sit down to watch the football with their kids, they see these beer ads. It is a real shame that 50 per cent of the ads are for beer and 25 to 30 per cent for gambling. I do not know whether those percentages are correct, but Australia is probably the only country in the world, when it comes to watching major sport on free-to-air television, where 50 to 80 per cent of the commercials are for alcohol and gambling.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Fast food.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Then the other 20 per cent is made up of fast-food commercials; it is all there! What an unhealthy existence to be associated with sport! The irony of it all! I would hope the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013, brought in by the member for Collie–Preston, will act as a catalyst for the curbing of advertising of alcohol at certain times and events, and also gambling and maybe even fast food. Of course, the libertarians on the other side will talk about the nanny state, which is so easy to do, but the health consequences of not doing something means that we will all pay. Day in, day out in this house we debate the AAA credit rating or governments not supplying enough doctors or not having enough beds in a hospital. But if we look seriously at alcohol, gambling and fast food, maybe governments would not have to worry so much about how many beds there are in a hospital and how much money is spent on the health budget and traffic accidents et cetera. I know that the Minister for Sport and Recreation has talked about this at times, and it is not a far-fetched suggestion. If we go back in history, banning cigarette advertising on television was once criticised and shouted down. It will be a long process. I am not a wowsler, but I do believe —

Mr J.E. McGrath: You're getting close!

Dr A.D. BUTI: What was that, member for South Perth?

Mr J.E. McGrath: You're getting close!

Dr A.D. BUTI: I like to enjoy alcohol in the right environment, but I do not see why an AFL game needs to be flooded with advertisement after advertisement from different brewery companies and ad after ad about gambling. To me, that is not being a wowsler; a wowsler is someone who does not enjoy life. I think the consequences of too much gambling and drinking et cetera mean that those people might think they are enjoying life, but their families would not be. The member for Mandurah talked about domestic violence; the number one contributing factor to domestic violence is alcohol. How could we as a Parliament argue that it is not important to look at the factors that contribute to a crime? I think domestic violence is the only serious crime that has continually increased over time; I am not sure if that is correct, but from my research about a year ago that was the situation. How could we not look at the consequences of too much alcohol consumption in our culture? It is just absurd that the national pastime, in sporting terms in Western Australia at least, is AFL, and there are these ads on TV after every goal is scored. Of course, if it was the West Coast Eagles playing, there probably would not have been many ads this year because there were not many goals! But, seriously, I think this bill should be supported. On its own it will not suffice, but it is an important step. The argument against supporting this legislation should not be that other things need to be done; other things always need to be done, but we have to start somewhere.

It is significant that the member for Collie–Preston introduced this bill not only because it is his portfolio area, but also because he comes from Collie—the town of my birth—and country towns have a strong history of associating alcohol with social environments. We should do anything we can to try to reduce that. This piece of legislation is a simple method of seeking to curb the consumption of alcohol by juveniles while they are in the care of responsible parents. As a parent of an 18-year-old son, I can say that if he goes to a party I would like to know that the host parent may face some legal consequences if they do not have a responsible environment. There should be some consequences. Law is not the answer to everything, but in this situation I think the legislation will have a significant contribution to make, if not in alleviating the problem, at least in sending the right message. The message is that this Parliament does recognise there is a problem in regard to the secondary supply of alcohol and it has introduced legislation that will go some way to try to address that situation.

There is always a problem in law when it seeks to regulate a private situation. The history of law has always had a delineation between the private and the public. Lawmakers have historically engaged in legislation to deal with public environments and transactions, and when it came to the home the law was generally silent. That is why it has taken many, many years for domestic violence to be taken seriously by politicians and by the police force. It was not that many years ago that rape by a husband against his wife was not a crime in the United Kingdom and even in Australia. It was not that long ago that a judge in South Australia basically said that a man could engage in non-consensual sex with his wife. This comes to this history of the law staying out of the private sphere and therefore the home. One could argue that this piece of legislation seeks to intrude in the home, but of course in introducing this legislation the member for Collie–Preston is not addressing the situation of a parent giving alcohol to their child. In most states, the law is that a parent can give alcohol to their child, but it has to be done

responsibly. The member for Collie–Preston is looking at the situation of friends or other people coming to the house. It is not a completely private situation; the family or that house has invited members of the public—they are friends, but they are still members of the public—and the member for Collie–Preston is seeking to regulate that situation. As I said, we have regulation in Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, and I cannot see any reason that the Parliament of Western Australia would not support this legislation. I sincerely hope that the government will not block this piece of legislation purely because it has been introduced by the member for Collie–Preston, a member of the opposition, because I am sure that many members on the government side would agree with the intent of this legislation and with the actual legislation itself. It is not radical legislation; it does not seek to do more than have some influence in trying to reduce the secondary supply of alcohol to under-age people. One may have a review or one may have an inquiry, but we do not need an inquiry or a review to know that adults giving alcohol to children or under-age people in an irresponsible manner is bad. We do not need an inquiry about that; we know it is bad. There is no reason I can surmise that the government would not support this legislation. It will send a fantastic message to the public and parents of Western Australia that this Parliament is serious about trying to curb the secondary supply of alcohol to juveniles.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [5.24 pm]: This is an issue I am very concerned about and I am delighted that the member for Collie–Preston has stepped forward and put up this important Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013, which, as we have heard, addresses the secondary supply of alcohol to young people. I am very glad that the minister is in this place to listen to these discussions and the contributions from all of us. I sincerely doubt that there is anybody in this chamber lacking the intelligence, or emotional intelligence at least, to understand that children in this state are suffering from the impact of alcohol. I have some research that I want to refer to to start my presentation, because this debate should be evidence based. We cannot continue to guess these things; we must have evidence and research. This research is by the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth. It was contracted out to Painted Dog Research. This research was released in November last year. I want to read to members a couple of the questions and answers from this research. Anyone who is interested in the methodology and the veracity, reliability and validity of this research is more than welcome to consult the relevant reference to assure themselves that, statistically, this information is foolproof.

One of the questions that was asked of nearly 2 000 people was, “How concerned are you about alcohol use among young people in Western Australia?” Seventy per cent of men agreed that they are between slightly and extremely concerned, with 40 per cent saying they are extremely concerned; and 85 per cent of women said that they are concerned, with 49 per cent saying they are extremely concerned.

Another question was, “How concerned are you about alcohol-related violence in WA?” Of the people surveyed in this statistically reliable survey, 98 per cent said that they are between slightly moderately and extremely concerned; in fact, 65 per cent of that total said that they are extremely concerned.

It is important to point out some of the evidence that is available now, because it is easy to dismiss this kind of bill as being nanny state and trying to control people’s private lives. But the community is changing and attitudes are changing, and I will talk a bit about that in a moment.

Another question was, “The WA Cricket Association has announced that, like Perth Glory and Perth Wildcats, it will now be sponsored by Healthway to promote healthy messages, instead of sponsors that promote alcohol and junk food. To what extent do you support or oppose that decision?” The survey showed that there is outstanding support for the decision that those agencies have made to come online with Healthway’s new direction.

We have heard mention that Healthway was the ground-breaking organisation that set global standards for the control of tobacco when that legislation was first put through. Unfortunately, one of the key levers that we were able to use when Healthway was established originally was state taxation and levies on tobacco. Those levies were removed in the 1990s. There is a federal tax on tobacco, and state levies were also being paid. We were able to use those state levies to establish Healthway and to fund the incredible work that it does, and part of that money was kept by government to enable it to continue its research into health. But we do not have that lever in the alcohol industry, so we need to look at doing other things.

Another question from this same piece of research that was done just under one year ago was, “To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose the introduction of laws to prevent the supply of alcohol to minors without parental permission?” I would encourage the minister to look at this research, because it shows that 88 per cent of the total sample said that they are strongly supportive of that. So there is no argument for not passing this amendment bill based on a lack of community support for it. An interesting point is that that was the total sample figure. If we look in that sample just at the number of people who have children currently attending school, we can see that 91 per cent said it was extremely important and they would support laws on the secondary supply of alcohol.

That research is well worth looking at. However, we know that around three-quarters of Australians—around 72.6 per cent—drink below levels that are high risk. Most people drink sensibly. They do not make a habit of

binge drinking or uncontrolled drinking. Most people are fine when it comes to their consumption of alcohol. However, short-term consumption of alcohol at harmful levels, even if it is only occasionally, is also a big feature of Australia's drinking culture. The statistics say that one in five Australians—that is, 20.4 per cent—drink at short-term risky or high-risk levels at least once a month. To put it another way, that equates to more than 42 million occasions of binge drinking in Australia every year. We know that the overall levels of alcohol consumption and drinking patterns have not changed markedly over the past decade, but there has been a lowering of the age at which children start drinking and a shift in the type of drinking, with the emergence of the “pre-loading” and binge drinking attitude, particularly in children. Alcohol consumption accounts for 3.2 per cent of the total burden of disease and injury in Australia: 4.9 per cent in males and 1.6 per cent in females. Beyond that impact, it also has a massive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities because the harmful consumption of alcohol, as we have heard, impacts on workforce productivity, health care, hospital use, ambulances, road accidents, law enforcement, property damage and insurance administration.

Just for the record of *Hansard*, the source of the information I am referring to is from a document released by the federal government's Preventative Health Taskforce titled “Australia: the healthiest country by 2020”, the third technical report of which has the subheading “Preventing alcohol-related harm in Australia: a window of opportunity”. I will refer to some of the information in this booklet to record for *Hansard* some of the reasons why this legislation is particularly essential. Alcohol is causally linked to more than 60 different medical conditions in our country and is linked to 3 430 deaths a year and 85 435 disability-adjusted life years; the statistic is adjusted to take account of that. In the 10 years between 1992 and 2001, more than 31 000 Australians died from alcohol-attributed injury and disease. A greater number died from acute intoxication than chronic conditions. The point to note is that deaths from acute alcohol intoxication are most prevalent amongst people between the ages of 15 and 29. That is abhorrent; that is absolutely unacceptable in this society. The statistics show that alcohol abuse contributed to 918 deaths, including 553 suicides and self-inflicted injuries related to alcohol and 396 road traffic accidents. These are horrific, alarming statistics that underline the need for this legislation. Drinking contributes to the three leading causes of death among adolescents: unintentional injury, homicide and suicide, along with risk-taking behaviour, unsafe sex choices, sexual coercion and alcohol overdose.

In common with adolescents, we can say that young children are at the greatest risk because they tend to be big risk-takers and their decision-making skills are sometimes not developed enough to make the right choices in these circumstances. Alcohol affects brain development, and it is really important to know that one's brain is not fully developed until the age of 25. Every bit of alcohol that one puts in one's system up to the age of 25 impacts upon one's brain development. That, again, is a pretty alarming statistic when we correlate it with the incidence of binge drinking amongst 15 to 29-year-olds, and the acute health crises being created by alcohol abuse.

Members will have heard me speak before about the work I was privileged to have completed in the Education and Health Standing Committee and the 2011 report titled “Alcohol: Reducing the Harm and Curbing the Culture of Excess”. That report contains all the evidence one needs to understand why it is so important to have this kind of secondary supply legislation in place. Affordability, availability and accessibility are the three As of alcohol abuse. The reasons people abuse alcohol or subject themselves to its ill effects can be attributed to excesses in those three areas.

Let us talk about advertising to start with. I refer to the “Alcohol Advertising Review Board: Annual Report 2012–13”, which lists the “Top 10 Alcohol Advertising Shockers of 2012–13”. One that I want to mention is a liquor advertisement for “Berri Estates 5 Litre Wine Casks—3 for \$30 sold by Woolworths Liquor”. The annual report describes the advertisement as —

Promotion for Berri Estates 5 Litre Casks by Woolworths Limited, offering three Berri Estates 5 Litre Casks for \$30.

That is unbelievable!

Mr J.E. McGrath: I bought three bottles of wine the other day for \$30; I thought it was a bargain.

Ms L.L. BAKER: That is unbelievable! The price is a very important part of this issue, particularly for young people. The complaint against that particular promotion was upheld in the determination. It was proven to have —

Contravened section (3)(a)(i) as the advertisement was not prepared with a sense of responsibility to society;

Another example is Skinnygirl Cocktails. The complaint was —

Name and packaging of Skinnygirl Cocktails would have strong appeal to young people and is associated with youth through the name ‘Skinnygirl’ and the image used on the package. In addition, the name ‘Skinnygirl’ suggests that consuming the product will help you be skinny.

That complaint was upheld. That is outrageous abuse of marketing to adolescents. It also contravened sections of the act and —

... the Panel believed the name and packing of the product would have strong appeal to young people and the term ‘skinny’ could be viewed as suggesting you will not gain weight when consuming the product.

I want to specifically talk about the advertisement under “Exposure to young people”. I am probably one of the worst offenders because I have a Budweiser ad from America that I use when I give presentations. It makes me cry when I see it because it is just beautiful. It is a Budweiser ad. I am sorry but I cannot help that it is a Budweiser ad, but it does its adverts brilliantly and is very clever about its markets and its products. A complaint was made about a Budweiser ad seen on a public telephone box outside Living Waters Lutheran College in Warnbro —

This was the fourth time an alcohol advertisement had been placed on the same telephone box in a 20 month period.

...

Concerned about the placement of an alcohol advertisement outside a school, as children and young people would be exposed to it. The complainant noted:

“I am concerned about this advertising of alcohol outside the school as it always promotes alcohol as a ‘fun’ product. All through our curriculum we try to educate students on the risks, both mentally and physically, alcohol as a drug can have on people. These sorts of ads work against what we are trying to say. They are unnecessary and I believe even detrimental to my students and the community at large. Parents are not being given the choice re their children’s exposure to such advertising ...

That complaint—thank goodness—was also upheld.

I have heard my colleagues talk about Mediterranean drinking patterns and different drinking cultures and styles. I point out that all the evidence, including evidence to be presented tomorrow morning when we go to the breakfast hosted by Hon Graham Jacobs with Sir Ian —

Mr P. Abetz: Professor Ian Gilmore.

Ms L.L. BAKER: The breakfast is with Professor Ian Gilmore, who is a UK leading exponent on the issues to do with alcohol and youth. It is very clear that advertising has a strong impact on children and young people in our society.

In my last five minutes I want to give the minister a kick. I hope I plant it fairly and squarely where it will make an impact. The stakeholders with whom I have affiliations are scratching their heads about why the Liquor Control Act review has not yet been completed. It was announced back in March. Submissions were accepted, they closed and a document was meant to be released in, I think, June or July. That was postponed and then it was to be released in October and now it has been postponed again. That is not good enough. People are waiting to see the outcome. I can only hope that when the minister stands to make his announcement to the house, he will say that part of the review includes secondary supply laws. I sincerely hope that our bill and the review of the Liquor Control Act that the minister has been involved in point to the urgent need to have this kind of secondary supply legislation in place.

The culture of drinking in Australia is very different from the culture of drinking in other countries. I am sure that the professor we are having breakfast with in the morning will point to the fact that it is now changing in Mediterranean countries.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): The conversation is getting a bit loud. Can members bring it down a notch, please.

Ms L.L. BAKER: French children say “le binge”. Binge drinking is now part of European societies. Whatever happened to keep people safe in that environment and the wonderful acceptance and slow introduction of alcohol in a manageable way are going. It is no longer the state of affairs in those countries. They are not immune to this. We may look to what was and think admirably that it was great, but it has very much changed.

So, minister, where is the review of the Liquor Control Act? Many people are waiting to see it. One of the huge crises that I have to deal with in my electorate is from the many constituents who come to me with complaints about the big destination liquor outlets. The minister will remember that we fought Coles and stopped it building a 1 000 square metre liquor barn in the Maylands precinct. We are just about to go back to the Liquor Commission to fight another application, but this one is by Woolworths—the \$30 for five litres company. These kinds of destination liquor outlets are a real problem for the commissioner. As the minister knows, it is very difficult to balance them with the current objects in the act. They are all given equal weight. That is completely unacceptable. I understand the need to invest in tourism and entertainment, but not to the detriment of the health

of our country, our children and our people. That is not a balance that I am prepared to strike. The weighting given to the objects in the act must go more towards protecting the social fabric of our community, not allowing this great proliferation of clustered bottle shops. In my electorate, there are 16 liquor outlets within one kilometre. That is why the 1 000 square metre liquor outlet that Coles wanted to build was not welcome. That is why the 945 square metre one that Woolworths is trying to build is not welcome. We have a very high incidence of street drinking and antisocial behaviour. It is seasonal; however, it is there. These are very vulnerable people who are trying to cope, and they are constantly being given big deals with the lowest price guarantee. That is not acceptable in our community. It is about time the minister released the review of the Liquor Control Act so that we can, hopefully, start to plan a more sensible way of managing the abuse of alcohol in our community and everyone can have a drink, enjoy themselves and take part in entertainment but not suffer the negative consequences that we are currently seeing.

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [5.43 pm]: I thank members opposite. It has been really interesting for me as the minister to listen to a lot of the comments that have been made this afternoon. Some really good points have been made about the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013, but many broader points were made about alcohol generally. I welcome that. Obviously, the issue of secondary supply has been around for some time. It was advocated in this place by the previous member for Alfred Cove, who talked about this quite often. I agreed with her in this place back then that there may well be a place for secondary supply legislation. I agreed that it may be a deterrent and that it should be considered.

The liquor review was referred to. I will talk about the timing of that in a moment. The announcement of a review of the Liquor Control Act reactivated the secondary supply debate, which is a good thing. A lady called Samantha Menezes, who has already been mentioned this afternoon, submitted a petition about the secondary supply of alcohol. I met with Samantha earlier this year. I listened to her concerns about alcohol and young people, and her desire to see secondary supply legislation introduced. It was a really good meeting. We had a good exchange of views and ideas. There is no doubt that she is a good person and a very caring lady. I welcome her comments whenever.

I recognise that there is community concern about this issue. I have stated on a number of occasions that the government would be supportive of any initiatives leading to less harm to children and less exposure to alcohol when growing up. Properly considered legislation may well prove to be a deterrent. This is a really important point that I want members to listen to: that is why the government specifically included the issue of secondary supply in the terms of reference for the review of the Liquor Control Act. It is in the terms of reference because we want it to be properly considered. It would be irresponsible of me to pre-empt the review when the committee has been asked to look at this complex issue. A lot of people think it is simple—it is not; it is very complex.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I let everyone speak without interjection. I did not interject on members the whole afternoon. I let everyone speak. I gave everyone a full go. I would like the opportunity to speak.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): I will protect you, minister.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: It would be irresponsible to pre-empt the review when the committee has been asked specifically to look at this complex issue and make recommendations based on evidence gathered from other Australian jurisdictions and overseas. Members have mentioned that there are secondary supply laws in other states. I want the committee to look at those laws to see the positives and any negatives. That is what it has been doing. I am on the record as supporting the philosophy behind secondary supply controls. However, I make it clear that I am absolutely committed to ensuring that any legislation put forward is, firstly, effective, and, secondly, does not create any unforeseen negative outcomes. The potential negative outcomes really concern me. That is one of the reasons I want the review to look at those issues.

In terms of possible negative consequences, we do not want to over-regulate to the extent that responsible adults regard the risk of hosting an event to be too high and our young people are forced out of their homes into unsupervised environments such as parks and beaches. I do not want it to get to that. I am also really keen to avoid situations in which an adult hosting a function where juveniles are in attendance—even though they have done as much as they possibly can to prevent an under-age person consuming alcohol, a juvenile sneaks alcohol into the event or is provided with alcohol by one of his or her mates—is considered liable and charged. I do not want that to happen. I want to make sure that if we introduce laws, it is done properly. I would not consider that to be a very positive outcome at all.

Members opposite are right: secondary supply legislation has been introduced in other jurisdictions. New South Wales and Victoria have similar legislation that prohibits a person from supplying alcohol to a juvenile on private premises unless the person is the parent or guardian of the juvenile, or has the express consent of the parent or guardian of the juvenile to do so. It is different in Queensland and the Northern Territory. They have very different legislation from New South Wales and Victoria. Their legislation prohibits the supply of alcohol to a juvenile on private premises unless the alcohol is supplied by the parent or guardian of

the juvenile, or by a person who is exercising the responsibilities of the parent or guardian of that juvenile. It does not necessarily include the host of a party; it is different legislation. Furthermore, the Queensland and Northern Territory provisions stipulate that the parent or guardian who supplies alcohol to a juvenile must act responsibly in the supply of the alcohol. This aspect is not present in the New South Wales or Victorian legislation. In Queensland and the Northern Territory the focus is on the responsible supply of alcohol by the parents or guardians and there is no provision for parental consent. Parental consent can be provided to another adult, as applies in Victoria and New South Wales.

I have no problem with the intent of the amendments proposed by the opposition. I understand them, but the amendment is a direct copy of the New South Wales legislation. It does not include any aspect of responsible supply, and that is why I want the review committee to study it. We need to get the right advice before we rush in and do something that does not achieve what we are trying to do. The bill does nothing to address the concerns I have expressed about the possible consequences of over-regulation. In addition, the New South Wales legislation has been criticised by health groups as being ineffective in protecting young people from alcohol harm. I have heard people speak passionately tonight about wanting to protect people, yet health groups say it will not do that.

I am sure the member's intention is fine, and I congratulate him for that, but it is no good having good intentions if we cannot deliver them. I do not want to be part of that; I want to make sure we deliver, otherwise we are wasting our time. There is also a view that the response to contraventions of secondary supply legislation should be more aligned with education than punishment. That is something I think we need to consider. I am not saying it is right, but it has not been considered with this bill. There is a range of responses to secondary supply legislation from around Australia and a host of views about what is effective and what is not. I do not claim to be an expert in this field and I do not think the member for Collie–Preston claims to be an expert in the field. The interesting thing is that the member for Collie–Preston and I both have four daughters, who we have raised and gone through this with, so we both have practical knowledge from our own history, but we do not have expert knowledge. If I am making decisions that will affect people —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): If members are going to have conversations, I will have to ask them to leave. They are getting a bit loud. Thank you.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: The Parliament must be responsible. If we are going to make decisions that will affect people across the state, we want to be sure that we get them right. I do not believe that this bill is right. As I said to the former member for Alfred Cove, we need to consider this thoroughly and if we bring in legislation, we need to make sure that it is good legislation.

There has been some criticism about the review committee being late to report. It will report in November this year.

Mr R.H. Cook: Can you guarantee that?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: One of the reasons the review committee has asked for more time is that many of the people and groups making submissions have asked the committee for more time to lodge their submissions. The committee granted the extensions because we want to do the damn thing properly. We do not want to rush it and find in two years that we have not covered it properly. I have consented to those extensions because I think it is important we do the job properly.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: In November. Hopefully, it is only two or three weeks away. It is almost completed. The executive officer got sick so we lost a couple of weeks. We could not do much about that. I have not pressured the committee—members can criticise me for that, and I will take that criticism—because I want it to do the review properly. I know the amount of work it has done; it has done heaps of work on this. It is really important.

Mr J.E. McGrath: When the review committee hands down its finding, will you make that public or will you take it away to decide with cabinet what you will do?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: It will be made public. I will go back to all the industry groups et cetera and discuss the recommendations before I make recommendations to government because I want to let them have their feedback on the review. I would be silly if I did not do that. I want to consult with all those groups and give them the opportunity to comment. We have to consider the recommendations responsibly.

The review committee is now due to report in November. It is the view of government and a strong view of mine that we should await that considered advice and recommendations. I am not knocking what the member for Collie–Preston has tried to do; his intentions with this bill are fine. I have said all along that I have no problem with the possibility of bringing in secondary supply legislation. However, as I have just said, with the review committee due to hand down its recommendations in November, it would be foolish of the Parliament and irresponsible of me as minister to rush through a bill that has some holes in it, even though its intentions are good.

Comments have been made about the liquor stores. I do not want to get into that but we should remember that this review is about that as well. The original legislation was introduced by the Leader of the Opposition when the Labor Party was in government. Things change over time. I have no doubt that its intentions were good; I am not criticising it. But things change and we need to have another look at it, as the government did back then, which was responsible.

I have outlined the reason we will not be supporting this bill. I have doubts about the bill. People have been saying that it is urgent and we should get it done. With all due respect to the member for Collie–Preston, this bill was introduced in June and we are just debating it now, so I do not think it was really that urgent.

Mr M.P. Murray: What have you been doing? Don't worry about what I've been doing.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: If it was really that urgent, it would have been debated straightaway. I did not think the member thought it was that urgent. The review is coming down and I will act responsibly on the recommendations of the review. Although we understand its intent, we will not be supporting the bill.

Ms M.M. Quirk: I am curious to know who is conducting the review.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: John Atkins heads up the review.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Who is he?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: John headed up the ANZ Bank. He has been involved in business and sport. He is a leading community member. Nicole Roocke is involved. She is a lady, obviously.

Ms M.M. Quirk: She is the shandy component, is she?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Ian Stanley is a farmer from country WA who has been involved in the oil mallee industry. He is quite a leader in that industry. He is highly respected in his own community and across Australia. I have tried to get a balance of people.

Ms M.M. Quirk: This Nicole Roocke, other than her gender, what other qualifications does she bring to the review?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: She holds a high position in the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. I have known of Nicole and have seen her work. She is a fine young woman.

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.58 pm]: I rise to make a brief contribution to the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013 that was introduced by the member for Collie–Preston. I also congratulate the member for bringing this in because I think alcohol is an issue in society. It is a problem throughout Australia. I do not think this issue or many other steps that we might attempt to take to address the problems with alcohol will change things that much. That just happens to be the way our society is.

From my own experience, my father never encouraged me to drink. He was quite a heavy drinker but I was never offered alcohol at home. As a young bloke growing up, the boys would get together and have a beer after a game of footy or something like that but it was never encouraged at home. Similarly, I never encouraged my children to drink at home. I have a son and a daughter. My daughter probably drinks more than my son. There is no rule for whether young people will be drinkers or not. The concern I have is that I do not think we want to categorise all young people as being heavy drinkers and in danger of suffering harm through drinking too much. There are a lot of young people in my electorate, and I think they are pretty responsible young people. There will be exceptions to the rule, and I know that there are sections of society in which drinking among young people and binge drinking are huge issues.

There is another thing about the legislation. If my son or daughter was going to a party at another person's place, I do not know whether I would really feel comfortable about giving permission to that person to give my son or daughter a drink if I was not there. I think that a lot of parents try to oversee those things when their kids are going to parties or when they know they are going somewhere. Just to sign off on or to give a letter of approval for a person whom I might not know —

Mr P. Papalia: At the moment they can give it without even asking.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Yes, I understand that, but I do not know that I would give that permission anyway. I would prefer that my son or daughter —

Mr P. Papalia: In that case your child wouldn't get any.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: No. I would prefer them maybe not to have it than to let them have it in a circumstance in which I had no control over it. We know that kids will drink when they get away from home. When they are out and about they might be tempted and they might drink, but I am not sure that a lot of parents would say to someone—they might even know the person—that it is okay for Mary or Johnny to have a few beers tonight when the parents will not even be there and do not know what will go on at the place. However, I think the legislation has good intentions, and I can see what the member for Collie–Preston has raised. Binge drinking is

an issue among young people, but in my electorate I do not hear of wild rave parties at which extremely young people are drinking, and I would like to think that that is not the case.

I also want to mention quickly that the minister raised the review of the Liquor Control Act. I think the review will take up an enormous amount of time in this Parliament when the minister finally gets some legislation, because it is a subject that we are all concerned about. I believe that we will go well into next year once the minister consults with the various stakeholder groups after the report is handed down. I would like to see this legislation taken into consideration, as the minister mentioned it would be, because it could be part of a wide-sweeping overhaul of the liquor laws in our state. Having said that, I do not think our laws are that bad. The laws are there. People under 18 years of age cannot drink and they cannot buy alcohol. We know that some kids have been known to slip through the net and buy alcohol at a liquor store or a bottle shop, but most responsible people who work in those types of outlets, hotels and nightclubs will always seek to identify the proof of age of young people who go into those outlets. We have laws in place so that if people are underage, they should not get in. We have those proper restrictions.

As far as the advertising of alcohol goes, how are we going to stop it? It is a legal product. If there is to be any change to advertising, I believe it can be done only through the federal government anyway. I do not think our state government could do it. A lot of advertising could be seen as borderline. Some advertising encourages people to invest their money in all sorts of ventures. Not everyone feels the need when they see an ad to have a beer. I know that advertising can be quite subliminal, but are we going to prevent footballers from having a beer after they win the grand final? Are we going to stop the person who wins the Melbourne Cup from having champagne? People might say that subliminally that says to some young person, "When you have a big win you've got to have a beer to celebrate." Unfortunately, that is the Aussie way. I think a lot of people do enjoy a beer or a glass of wine but they are not necessarily involved in domestic violence or in drinking and driving.

Ms J. Farrer: How do you know?

Mr J.E. McGRATH: No, I said we cannot categorise them and say that they all will. Certainly some will, but a lot of people will not.

With the liquor review the minister will try to find out what the community is really saying about a lot of these things. People are saying now that we should raise the drinking age to 21 years. I could never support that. I think that when kids are 18 and want to have a drink, they should be able to have a drink. They can vote and they can be sent to war. They are adults the moment they turn 18. The drinking age was 21 when I was a young fellow, and young guys then were drinking when they were 17, so they were drinking four years underage.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: No. What I am saying is that I do not think there is a lot of need for too much change in our liquor laws. There needs to be some finetuning, but young people know that they cannot have a drink until they are 18.

I heard Steve Mills on the radio the other day say that his son—I think it was—turned 18 and suddenly he was allowed to go to the casino. At midnight on the day before he turned 18, they all got dressed and went to the casino. At one minute past 12 the young bloke was allowed to enter the casino because he is an adult, and he would also have been allowed to have a beer. That family looked at the issue quite responsibly and said, "It would be fantastic if you want to have a beer when you're 18. You can have one, but we're not going to give you one before you turn 18." He might have had one at home but he could at least then go to a licensed venue. I think a lot of responsible people say that they are never going to encourage their kids to drink if they are under 18. Sometimes their kids go out and find a drink, but who knows where they will find that alcohol?

I say to the member for Collie–Preston that the tenet of his bill has a lot of merit. I take on board what the minister has said. I think the minister supports where the member for Collie–Preston is going with the bill. However, I would like to think that I and other members can look at the recommendations from the review when they come in. I think it is accepted that there will be a penalty for any adult who breaks the trust of the parents of a juvenile at a party at their home by providing them with alcohol without the consent of a parent.

I think the member for Collie–Preston is on the right mark here, but I think we have to wait until the liquor review comes through. I will certainly be supporting the review and, hopefully, the minister will bring in some legislation along this line.

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [6.10 pm]: I rise to address the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013. When it comes to the issue of liquor and the damage that it does, at a very young age I saw firsthand the horror of what happens when young people drink excessively. I was the youngest in my class in a small primary school, Blackmans Bay Primary School. There were nine boys in my primary school class and we went through to high school together. Being born in December, I was the youngest in the class. In Tasmania, we got our driver's licence at the age of 17. By the time I got my driver's licence, two of those boys had killed themselves with drink-driving. I made up my mind that I did not need this stuff that had killed two of the kids I went to school

with. I have softened a little, in that I do occasionally drink the toast at a wedding with a glass of champagne or have the occasional glass of wine with a meal.

I had the privilege of serving on the Education and Health Standing Committee, which produced the report “Alcohol: Reducing the Harm and Curbing the Culture of Excess” in 2011. I had the privilege of travelling overseas with that committee to look at alcohol and drug issues. One of the things that struck me when we were in Europe was the huge myth that seems to permeate our society that in European culture—Italy, France and so on—because kids learn to drink at a young age, they drink responsibly. That is absolute rubbish. France had the highest rate of alcoholism and cirrhosis of the liver of any country in Europe. The French recognise the seriousness of that problem and put very strict restrictions on advertising alcohol. I do not have time to go into the details of those restrictions, but, basically, advertisements are only allowed to provide technical information about the wine or whatever it is, and spirits are not allowed to be advertised at all. The French are very strict because they realise the damage that alcohol does. Because binge drinking is the norm in Australia, to some extent we think that is unique to Australia. We should not kid ourselves. I have just visited relatives in Germany, which has exactly the same problem amongst its young people. Binge drinking is a massive problem in Germany. When the Education and Health Standing Committee was in France, we were told that people were binge drinking and that alcohol consumption was moving in that direction. Part of the issue is that while alcohol consumption in Europe has been dropping, binge drinking has become much worse. A bricklayer who would previously drink two or three bottles of beer throughout the day is not allowed to do that these days. The beer that was consumed all through the week now gets consumed, in a lesser volume, on a Saturday night, with massive health problems. We were told by a liver specialist in Britain that he was now seeing cirrhosis of the liver in people who had not reached 30 years of age. He was in his 60s, and he said that when he started out the youngest people he would see were in their late 40s; now he sees people in their mid to late 20s. We certainly have a major problem with alcohol.

I think parents who want to do the right thing and prevent their kids from drinking until they reach the age of 18 years should be given every support we can give them. On 11 June I very proudly presented a petition for secondary supply laws that Sam Menezes had organised, and I certainly support the principle of secondary supply laws.

The idea of secondary supply laws is basically that no-one other than a parent can authorise their child to drink. If I send my child to someone else’s birthday party, I expect no-one to give my child alcohol if my child is under the age of 18 without my express permission. Currently, there is no law against that. If my child goes to the bottle shop and tries to buy alcohol, they cannot do it—they are forbidden from doing that—yet they can go to somebody else’s place and that parent can serve my child alcohol. I consider that totally unacceptable, and I believe that kids put lot of pressure on each other to have alcohol at their parties. I have some figures from a Ray Morgan research poll done on behalf of the Salvation Army in the early 2000s that showed that 22 per cent of kids aged 14 to 16 admitted to drinking nine to 10 drinks in one session—that is dangerous drinking—and a little more than one in five admitted to having done that in the past month.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Where did they do the survey?

Mr P. ABETZ: That is Australia-wide.

That is a serious issue. Kids will say to mum and dad, “You’re so old-fashioned! Everybody else has alcohol at their parties! Everybody else’s parents let them! You’re the terrible parent who won’t let me drink! I’m going to be the only one not drinking!” Secondary supply laws will require the host parent of the 14, 15 or 16-year-old’s birthday party to get their Johnny to make sure that all his friends’ parents sign something to say their children can have alcohol. Johnny knows full well that most of his mates’ parents will not actually sign for that, and so it will make it so much easier for the parent to stand up to their child and say, “Hey buddy, it’s against the law unless you get written permission from all those kids’ parents.” I believe we need to provide that kind of support to parents in this state.

The serious alcohol problem is exacerbated by alcohol being so incredibly cheap. Back in 2010 somebody alerted me that in a bottle shop just a few hundred metres from my office, a good quality—I am not sure how good the quality was—cleanskin 750-millilitre bottle of wine could be bought for \$1.99. That is cheaper than Lift or Sprite!

Dr M.D. Nahan: What was the name of the shop?

Mr P. ABETZ: It was the one on the corner of Amherst Road and Warton Road. It used to be called Harry Brown’s; I think it is a Dan Murphy’s now.

Mr F.A. Alban: It is cheaper than what’s in the bar, member, as well.

Mr P. ABETZ: Yes.

When the Education and Health Standing Committee did its alcohol inquiry in 2011, the average consumption for every person over the age of, I think, 14 in this state was 12.4 litres of pure alcohol. That was significantly

higher than in any other state, so we do have a problem with the excessive consumption of alcohol. We need to recognise that alcohol actually costs this state an enormous amount of money. The figures presented to our committee indicated that state government funding directly expended on medical bills because of road accidents and people suffering ill health because of alcohol-induced sickness and so on was between \$1.5 billion and \$5 billion, depending on the figures used. But the minimum amount that anybody considered a direct expense was \$1.5 billion. If we think about that, the excessive consumption of alcohol is equivalent to building a Mandurah railway line every year.

Mr M.P. Murray: It wouldn't be an Ellenbrook line, would it?

Mr P. ABETZ: We could probably afford it then, and we could get the Canning Vale railway line as well—first! That has to come before the Ellenbrook line, member!

At the time our committee handed down our report, we made 60 recommendations, which is a lot of recommendations for a government to consider. I was very pleased to see that it eventually led to the liquor review, which will hopefully hand down its report very shortly. I hope that whatever legislative changes are put in place will include secondary supply provisions. I certainly accept that there need to be some protections for people who host the parties to recognise that if a kid sneaks out and brings grog in, the parent who is hosting the party did not actually supply it. There need to be some clauses in the bill that state, "It can be a defence that", and then go on to explain what the defences would be. The principle of having secondary supply legislation I support 100 per cent.

The other thing we need to recognise is that all the research into alcohol that our committee came across indicates that there are three words beginning with "A" that affect the problem of alcohol. They are accessibility, advertising and affordability. The fact is that the more liquor stores there are per square kilometre—or whatever measurement we want to use—the more alcohol-related antisocial behaviour there ends up being in that particular area.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Just on that point, what do you say to the people who have travelled overseas and seen where you can buy alcohol at a 7-Eleven store or a supermarket? In Japan you can buy it on the street out of vending machines. Did your committee look at that?

Mr P. ABETZ: In Europe alcohol can be bought in the supermarket, but not by children. Again, the easier it is for kids to access alcohol, the more likely there are to be problems.

Mr J.E. McGrath: The point I am making is that it is no easier for a kid to access it here than it is in the UK or Germany or somewhere where you can buy it in a 7-Eleven.

Mr P. ABETZ: They certainly have massive problems with antisocial behaviour. Let us not kid ourselves that this is something that is unique to Australia. It is a problem in the whole western world; there is no question about that.

Another issue was advertising, which the member for Maylands mentioned, so I will not discuss that. The other issue was affordability. The cheaper alcohol is, the more likely kids are to access it because they can afford to get it. One question that has been asked is what impact it would have if we could raise the minimum legal drinking age back up to 21. It is interesting that research in Australia has shown that decreasing the minimum age in the 1960s or 1970s, depending on the state, actually resulted in a 10 per cent increase in road trauma per 100 000 people in that age group—that is, people killed or seriously injured in motor vehicle accidents. It is interesting that in the United States in 1986, when Ronald Reagan was President, he pushed to get the drinking age in every state up to 21. He got every state to toe the line because if they did not, they did not get federal road funding.

Dr M.D. Nahan: A lot of those states had lower alcohol beer available, at 3.2 per cent, which is our light beer.

Mr P. ABETZ: Which would probably make a difference.

Dr M.D. Nahan: You could not buy full strength beer until you were 21.

Mr P. ABETZ: That brings me to the point I was leading up to. If a young person aged 18 goes into a pub, it is a controlled drinking context where the responsible service of liquor laws require that if the person is intoxicated they are not allowed to be served any more alcohol. It is too difficult politically to raise the minimum drinking age to 21; however, one thing we could do, and I put it in a submission to the liquor review, is allow young people to drink at the age of 18, but not purchase takeaway liquor. One of the things that is happening is that because an 18-year-old may have mates who are only 15, 16 or 17, he will go to a takeaway liquor store and buy grog for his mates, and that means they will have greater access to alcohol. If we do not allow young people to purchase takeaway alcohol until they are 21, by that time their mates will probably be 18 or 19, and it will not be as big a problem. I believe that would make a significant difference to the issues that we face with alcohol in this state.

Whether we like it or not, alcohol is a problem for not only young people but also a lot of older people. One in four Australians will at some stage in their lives struggle with alcohol addiction. That is a massive percentage of people who drink too much and struggle to limit their intake of alcohol. WA Police told us in our inquiry that 75 per cent of all police call-outs are alcohol related. If we could eliminate the excessive consumption of alcohol, our police would not know what to do with all the time that they would have. That is the reality. I am sure that they would find useful things to do, and perhaps there would be more police patrols on our roads and more burglaries would be investigated and so on —

Mr J.E. McGrath: If you went back to the days of the horse and cart, we would not need police on our roads at all!

Mr P. ABETZ: We would, because people could be drunk and fall off their horse, and the police would need to pick them up!

Another issue is foetal alcohol syndrome, which often affects teenage girls. If girls drink during the early stages of their pregnancy, the result is that their child will suffer from foetal alcohol syndrome.

The move to increase the minimum legal drinking age is gaining some momentum. Professor John Toumbourou, the chair of health psychology at Deakin University, authored a report in 2013 in which he argued strongly for the importance of increasing the minimum drinking age. That is because young men's brains are not completely developed until the age of 25, and alcohol consumption—particularly excessive consumption, but even low-level consumption—can cause significant damage at that early brain development stage.

I absolutely support the principle of the member's bill to introduce secondary supply laws. However, we need to do a bit more around that. I therefore look forward to the liquor review report, and hopefully we can bring before this Parliament before too long a range of measures that will help to reduce the alcohol problem in this state. The focus of the Liquor Control Act is to regulate the development of the alcohol industry. I believe that the primary focus of the Liquor Control Act should be public health. Public health should be the number one priority, and secondary supply laws are an important part of that.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [6.29 pm] — in reply: It has certainly been a very good debate on the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2013. The variations that have come out of this debate all have one theme: the overconsumption of alcohol has many ages and occurs in many areas. I believe that people set their patterns early in life, and that is one of the reasons that I brought this bill to the house. The bill, very simply, revolves around the term "secondary supply", which is the term that applies to the provision of alcohol in a private home to people under the age of 18—in other words, minors. That is the idea behind the bill. I was very surprised at the Minister for Racing and Gaming's comment that we have waited this long for it; we have not waited as long for it as I have waited for the review to be completed, and that is one of the reasons why the bill did not come before the house. I was hoping that the minister would get a move on and get some work done and bring his bill into the house so I could support it. Although it looks as though the government will vote this bill down, I am hopeful now that I will be able to come back and have a simple, easy-to-read resolution within the minister's bill. I was concerned at what I heard about getting the regulations right. Over-regulation is just as bad as under-regulation, but, over and above that, this is about empowering parents to say no. I am sure everyone in the chamber who has children would have experienced, on many occasions, "But Jane's going to have half a dozen UDLs and I'm not allowed!", or, "Jane's dad's going to supply half a dozen; it'll only be a little bit!" Parents do not want their children to have alcohol; that is where I am trying to make the point, by inserting some very simple provisions, such as proposed section 119AA(2), which states —

A person must not supply liquor to a juvenile on unlicensed premises unless the person is a parent or guardian of the juvenile.

That is quite simple. Proposed section 119AA(3) provides that if a person is going to supply liquor to a juvenile on unlicensed premises, that person must obtain the said juvenile's parent or guardian's permission to supply it. That is very, very basic and very simple. That is the intent of the legislation. If we move away from that, it will be a lawyer's field day, and I do not want to see that. I want parents to be able to have their say and say, "No, you're not going to have that", or, "You've got permission; you can have two beers because dad said so on the way to the party". Something like that keeps it simple, minister.

As we go through this, there is a time factor involved. We have heard the stats from many speakers about how many people have been injured. While we are sitting here tonight, someone will probably be seriously injured, and whether overage or underage, alcohol will be involved. We also heard this statistic about 75 per cent of domestic violence cases being attributed to alcohol.

I am not focusing on that; I am focusing on young people, and most people have forgotten that children as young as 10 years of age are admitted to hospital with alcohol problems. That is what I am looking at. That is where the real focus is. Yes, under the liquor review other areas will be looked at, but let us bring it back to the simple equation about having the right to say no. How many parents have said during schoolies week, "Yes, it's good

that you're taking the kids down to the beach house at Augusta", or wherever it may be, "but I don't want my child to drink"? That can be disobeyed by the supervising parent who may—may—go down with the children, and there is no breaking of the law by that parent. That is the real basis of where I am coming from; it is about having some say as a parent. It is quite a wrap-up on that that we cannot do enough to prevent young people from getting hurt. I am sure that many people would be appalled if they were to go to the emergency departments of some of the suburban hospitals and see the age of people coming in who have been affected by alcohol.

The minister said it took a long time for me to bring in this legislation, but, in the meantime, we have presented petitions, and I would like to congratulate Sam Menezes, who presented to this house a petition bearing 6 030 names. I met the lady and she is a mum who cares. She would like to have had the right to say to her children and to the people whose parties they were going to, "No, you cannot drink and, no, I don't want you to supply that alcohol." Again, that is very simple. She is also concerned about the bigger picture. That is why we brought in this bill.

It is amazing to have the support of various people. I will read them out because it is fair on the people who wrote to me and said they support my actions: the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, Mike Daube; Youth Affairs Council of WA, Craig Comrie; Commissioner for Children and Young People, Michelle Scott; Australian Drug Foundation, John Rogerson; Leigh Clark Foundation, Bruce Clark; Keep em Safe, Helen Torpy; Deakin University's chair in health psychology and representative of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, Professor John Toumbourou; and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support. They are all very high on the ladder in professional help and trying to prevent problems associated with alcohol and children. There is support in the community for this bill. I would like to think that the support will be here tonight, but I do not see that coming, so I am looking at the support that the minister will give to this amendment in the future. The support will be there to ensure that people, such as those health professionals, get a result from their hard work. We see tragedies involving children aged 10 to 17 years. I am not talking about older people engaging in over-the-top binge drinking. I am talking about younger people. Having been a 17-year-old, I concede that if I could have jumped 10 fences to get half a dozen beers, I would have done it, and I am sure 17-year-olds have not changed that much. Alcohol abuse is problematic for younger people, particularly young girls. There is nothing more appalling, I think, than a very well-dressed 16 or 17-year-old girl wobbling along on high heels and coming out of a party rotten. It is appalling to see people lying on the ground throwing up and being very ill, which stops them from drinking for about a day.

I am not quite sure how to put this, but I refer to something called FUBAR. I do not know whether people have heard of that, but it is a saying used by teenagers when people get over-intoxicated. The acronym starts with an F, and I will miss the first word in the acronym, but the rest of the acronym stands for "up beyond all recognition". That is a saying for when someone is lying on the ground, absolutely out of it, vomiting, and cannot stand up. Young people say, "Look at that; they're FUBAR-ed." That means they are out of the game. People do not understand that it is not funny. It is not funny to see a young person lying on the ground vomiting when they could choke on that vomit and die. That is not funny and in my world it is not the way to go about it. We need this legislation to make sure that in the future we have some control as parents. I am sure that if I took this *Hansard* home to my children, they would tell me to get over it, but I understand that the age at which people start drinking is getting younger and younger. The age of 21 was mentioned by the member for South Perth. I remember the days when 21 was the legal drinking age. I would have a squash in front of me and a beer beside that. When the police came along, I would drink the squash. It was a different era when the Vietnam War was on. One of the arguments we had if we got pulled up by the coppers for drinking was, "You'll send me off to war, but you won't allow me to have a drink." That was a standard argument, and people never got booked for underage drinking, because it was a fair one. As we have gone along, the drinking age has been lowered to 18 years of age. There was a spread from 21 to 18 years of age, and now the spread is from 18 to 14 years of age. That is a problem. Too many people think that it is okay. The attitude needs to change.

It was refreshing to hear the member for Southern River say that it is a problem not just in Western Australia. I went to Norway and there were a heap of young kids in a park with bottles of vodka. They would have been underage. The price of alcohol there is extremely high. Norway thought it could fix the problem by pushing up the price of alcohol. I suppose it works in some ways, but, again, they can get a cheaper brand—the \$1.99 bottle—to satisfy their need, and it does become a need. They were very young people in the park. Another time I was walking through Kings Cross and there were about five young kids of 10 or 11 years of age who were off their face on alcohol or drugs. They looked as though they had not had a wash for many months. They were walking up and down the street and harassing people for money. That is how far we have declined. Anyone would think it is a Charles Dickens story. It is not; it is an Australian story that we have to deal with quickly with a review of the act.

I have heard enough to understand where we are going tonight. I really implore the minister to get a move on with the bill. Bring it into this place so that it can be debated. I think the member for South Perth said that the bill will take ages to go through because it is wideranging. Maybe we could take out a section and try to look after

our youth, even if it is just for the summer period. The last thing I want to see is a child—not a young adult—who is affected by alcohol go for a swim and drown or get run over on a pushbike on the road. These are the sorts of things that I do not want to see. It has been going on for long enough. Yes, I can understand the reasons for the extensions of time for the inquiries and the review, but we cannot say that there are no papers to look at. There is a paper by the Legislative Assembly Social Policy Committee of the New South Wales Parliament. The papers are there. We do not have to do it over and again. Pick the eyes out of it, bring it in here and let us get the legislation done. Let us give the mums and dads of today some comfort that when they send their children out, they know that they will come home safely. In saying that, I commend this bill to the house.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (15)

Ms L.L. Baker
Mr R.H. Cook
Ms J. Farrer
Mr W.J. Johnston

Mr D.J. Kelly
Mr F.M. Logan
Mr M. McGowan
Mr M.P. Murray

Mr P. Papalia
Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Mrs M.H. Roberts

Ms R. Saffioti
Mr C.J. Tallentire
Ms S.F. McGurk (*Teller*)

Noes (29)

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

Mr M.J. Cowper
Mr J.H.D. Day
Ms W.M. Duncan
Ms E. Evangel
Mr J.M. Francis
Mrs G.J. Godfrey
Dr K.D. Hames
Mr C.D. Hatton

Mr A.P. Jacob
Mr S.K. L'Estrange
Mr R.S. Love
Mr W.R. Marmion
Mr P.T. Miles
Mr N.W. Morton
Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr D.C. Nalder

Mr J. Norberger
Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr J.E. McGrath (*Teller*)

Pairs

Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr P.B. Watson
Ms J.M. Freeman
Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr D.A. Templeman
Dr A.D. Buti

Ms A.R. Mitchell
Mrs L.M. Harvey
Ms M.J. Davies
Mr D.T. Redman
Mr A. Krsticevic
Mr R.F. Johnson

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House) [6.49 pm]: By way of explanation, although there is still 11 minutes before seven o'clock and the normal expiry of private members' time, I am informed that the opposition is happy for the house to adjourn at this point. I move —

That the house do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.49 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

EDUCATION — BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

1263. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) With respect to education funding arrangements announced in the recent state budget, can the Minister advise how these changes will affect staffing (teaching and support staff), as well as the effects on funding within the School Support Program Resource Allocation at each of the many schools in the Electorate of Moore?
- (2) With specific reference to small country schools, can the Minister outline the assistance available to the teacher of a class that includes kindergarten to year three students including any changes to the Rural Integration Program?

Mr J.H.D. Day replied:

- (1) Please refer to [See paper 1105.]. Note that the changes to the staffing allocations are estimated on the basis of forecast enrolments for 2014. Schools have the flexibility to purchase additional resources or staff to put in place programs that meet the specific needs of students.

The Government has determined that 2013 teacher levels will be maintained in 2014. Across the system, this will result in an increase of less than half a student per teacher.

- (2) The allocation of education assistant (EA) time for 2014 will be made on a better and fairer funding model in Kindergarten to Year 2 classes. Education assistant allocations will be made on a per-student basis, rather than on the basis of class structures, or school type or location. All Kindergarten to Year 2 students will now attract an EA allocation, and the total EA allocation available for each class will be dependent upon the distribution of year levels and the number of students in the class.

Every school, other than education support facilities, with students enrolled in Kindergarten to Year 2 will receive a base allocation of 0.2 FTE EA time. The per-student allocation is determined by the year level of the student. The year level is multiplied by the number of students in each year level and the general multiplier of 0.040 to determine the total per-student FTE. There is an adjustment for schools with socio-economic indices of less than 100. The year-level weightings are as follows:

Kindergarten 6.5
Pre-primary 11.0
Year 1 1.0
Year 2 1.0

All public school principals have been provided with in-depth information regarding staffing formulas and resourcing allocations for 2014.

EDUCATION — SERVICES COST

1274. Mr B.S. Wyatt to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

I refer to the difference between the budgeted total cost of services and the net cost of services provided by the Department of Education for 2013–2014 and ask:

- (a) what is the breakdown of the retained revenues used to fund this difference, including revenues retained as the result of planned expenditure and/or investments that have been either delayed or cancelled; and
- (b) what is the breakdown of other adjustments in the 2014–2015 budget made to reconcile appropriations that were provided to deliver services?

Mr J.H.D. Day replied:

- (a) The difference between the Department of Education's Total Cost of Services and Net Cost of Services is explained by the Department's forecast Adjusted Total Income (which is shown on page 284 of Budget Paper 2, Volume 1, 2013–14 Budget). Adjusted Total Income includes:

- user contributions, charges and fees (\$103.5 million), such as voluntary contributions, and charges and fees generated by schools and retained by schools;
- Commonwealth Government grants and contributions (\$583.2 million);
- other revenue, such as bookshop and canteen receipts, donations to schools, and hire of facilities (\$79.2 million); and

- interest income generated by schools and retained by schools (\$9.1 million).

Adjusted Total Income excludes Income from State Government, Administered Income and Extraordinary Items (income used for capital works purposes).

- (b) The 2014–15 Budget is calculated the same way as the 2013–14 Budget. The difference between the Department’s Total Cost of Services and Net Cost of Services is explained by the Department’s forecast Adjusted Total Income.
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