

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 3 May 2001

THE SPEAKER (Mr Riebeling) took the Chair at 9.00 am, and read prayers.

SUPPLY BILL 2001

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Ripper (Treasurer), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR RIPPER (Belmont - Treasurer) [9.06 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This measure seeks appropriation for issue and application as supply to Her Majesty \$5 500 million out of the consolidated fund for the service of the year ending 30 June 2002 pending the passage of the consolidated fund appropriation Bills during the budget session of the next financial year.

The purpose of this Bill is no different from the purpose of previous Supply Acts. The last Supply Act was the Supply Act 1995.

Supply is an integral element of the Westminster system of government and successive State Governments and Parliaments in Western Australia have accepted and understood that the intent of supply is to give authority for expenditure from the commencement of a new financial year pending the passage of the consolidated fund appropriation Bills.

This Bill can be regarded as providing votes on account. It appropriates the consolidated fund in aggregate pending the subsequent detailed appropriations. These moneys may be issued and applied to the works, services and purposes for which the consolidated fund was appropriated by Parliament for the financial year ending 30 June 2001; or in respect of which payments of an extraordinary or unforeseen nature were charged against the consolidated fund in respect of the financial year ending 30 June 2001 under the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Act and Financial Administration and Audit Act.

The Bill prescribes a general monetary limit on drawings against the consolidated fund. By so doing, it overcomes the problems which otherwise could arise by prescribing monetary limits in respect of the individual appropriation items which were detailed in the 2000-01 estimates of expenditure.

I have covered the general purpose of the Bill, and I conclude by outlining the strategy that this Government will pursue in framing the budget. The strategy includes adopting the financial targets announced in the election campaign. These were to -

- retain the State's AAA credit rating;
- maintain or increase our net worth;
- maintain an operating surplus; and
- maintain or increase our tax competitiveness.

To make our commitment to retaining the AAA credit rating operational and measurable, it is important that we -

- maintain the Government's net debt to revenue ratio below a safe benchmark; and
- ensure real per capita expenses do not increase.

We have started the task of reprioritising government spending to deliver on our election policy commitments in the 2001-02 budget process, while maintaining these targets. We also intend to deliver additional savings of \$200 million to strengthen the State's long-term financial position and to protect our AAA credit rating.

At the same time, this Labor Government has committed itself to the task of reforming the public sector. This includes reducing the size of Cabinet and appointing a task force to review the structure of the Western Australian public sector.

Due to the size and complexity of the task involved in meeting our election policy and savings initiatives, and incorporating changes in the structure of government, the next three months will see the most intensive and thorough budget formulation process the Western Australian public sector has ever undergone. That is why the Government decided to have an August rather than a May budget this year. The extra time will be well spent - we will get it right. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bradshaw.

SPORTS DRUG TESTING BILL 2001*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Carpenter (Minister for Sport and Recreation), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR CARPENTER (Willagee - Minister for Sport and Recreation) [9.11 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The State Government condemns the use of banned performance-enhancing substances and other doping and drug-taking practices in sport because both are dangerous to the health of competitors and contrary to the ethics of sport. It recognises the need to take strong and positive action to eliminate sports doping and other drug-taking practices to ensure that participation in sport by Western Australian competitors is free of performance-enhancing drugs and methods.

The purpose of the legislation is to confer functions and powers on the Australian Sports Drug Agency to allow drug testing of state competitors. The legislation will provide for the collection of samples from state competitors and the testing of those samples for the presence of scheduled drugs or doping methods, and it will confer functions and powers for that purpose on ASDA.

This legislation is based on the Australian Sports Drug Agency (Amendment) Act 1999 and complementary legislation enacted in the Australian Capital Territory in 1999 and South Australia in 2000. It is a key element of the State Government's comprehensive strategy towards drugs in sport that includes a legislative base, education programs and policy development.

The State Government, through its agencies of Sport and Recreation WA, Healthway and the WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office, has funded the Sports Medicine Australia WA branch to conduct a comprehensive education program over three years, involving broad community awareness and targeted programs for athletes, coaches and sports administrators.

This state legislation, complementary to commonwealth law, is consistent with the national drugs in sport framework. This is to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach across all jurisdictions in Australia.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bradshaw.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

Resumed from 2 May.

MR QUIGLEY (Innaloo) [9.13 am]: I shall not forget that call, Mr Speaker. I can still remember my first call to the Bar on 23 December 1975 given by His Worship Mr McGuigan, SM whom you, Sir, will remember. I had been a lawyer for an hour at that time and it was a proud moment then. I knew you then, Sir, and I have known you for more than a quarter of a century. I have known you in your previous occupation as counter clerk, bench clerk and clerk of courts. Your reputation in my profession was that of quiet practicality, always a gentleman and always fair. You, Sir, were one of those bench clerks whom one could approach to sort out a problem in the courts in a practical way, knowing that one would not be shown favour nor shown the door. The qualities that you had and displayed at that time struck me when I came to this place as preparing you well and giving you good attributes to be the Speaker of this hallowed Chamber. I am sure that had there been an open ballot, you would have won it hands down. You are head and shoulders above any member of this House to preside over this Chamber. As a judge brings a personality to a trial, I am sure you will bring to this Chamber your personality and stamp to this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, I have a confession to make. As I have moved around this Parliament for the past several days, people have said that they want to hear me speak and have asked me what I am going to say. The confession is that I do not know exactly because I did not write it out as it kept on changing as I tried to appreciate what was happening in the people's House. However, having acknowledged and thanked you, Mr Speaker, I want to thank the people of Innaloo whom I met during the doorknocking campaign that went for a year.

I took off nearly a year from legal practice, although I worked on some cases in the past year, and doorknocked the area. It was a marvellous experience and a lot that you, Mr Speaker, have already enjoyed. The Innaloo district stretches from Trigg in the north to Brighton Beach in the south and out to Main Street in the east, covering the suburbs of Trigg, Scarborough, Innaloo, Doubleview, Woodlands, Gwelup, Stirling, Balcatta, Osborne Park and part of Karrinyup. I have lived in Trigg for some 26 years. I found the place when I was driving a beer truck while studying at university. I was sent with a load of beer to the Castle Hotel, North Beach. When I got out there I knew I would always live within a decent cricket ball's throw of Trigg Point, and I have spent the past 26 years in the same house. I therefore feel part of the community there and I am enormously honoured that the people of Innaloo have chosen me so decisively to be their advocate in this Chamber. I note that I shall not get a big head because election does not mean that I am the best or the

most community-minded person in Innaloo. They selected me as their advocate in this hallowed Chamber because they have been repressed by eight years of conservative government. The Innaloo district in particular has been stripped bare and needs some correction in the life of this Parliament. I will come to that matter in a moment but I want to give some other thanks at the outset of my speech.

Having thanked the people of Innaloo, I pledge my loyalty to them at all times. I also thank those who have helped me during the campaign - Mr Alistair Jones, a brilliant campaigner and a true believer; Mr Damien Parry, a young man in the party who also worked on the campaign; and Hon Graham Giffard. Their measure of commitment blew me away. I have been in the Labor Party for only 24 months but in the last week of the campaign, such was their level of commitment that we issued three direct mails to the entire electorate. Any member who has participated in a direct mail knows the work involved. I would return home at 11.00 pm to get ready for doorknocking the next day and when I went to get my daily paper in the morning, they would be either working or sleeping under their desks in the campaign office. They did not stop for seven days and I applaud and congratulate them for their efforts on behalf of the people of Innaloo.

I shall tell the House something about me and my family. I have lived in Trigg for 26 years. I do not know how far back my history goes in Western Australia, but I know that four generations of my family have attended Aquinas College. My father is in the Speaker's Gallery today. He is 86 years of age and I am very proud of him. He fought in the war with the 2/2nd Anti-tank Battalion which comprised part of the 8th Division that went to the Pacific war after it came home from the Middle East. After his discharge from the Army, he started a small business as a clothing indent agent. He still works in that occupation at the age of 86. He has imbued me with an incredible work ethic. If I could achieve half of what he has achieved, I would be somewhat satisfied. He has a happy disposition and treats all people equally. I am very proud of him. I was pleasantly struck on the opening day of Parliament when sitting in the dining room with him before the ceremonies began. I explained to my father that the Governor would be welcomed by Mr Colbung and Aboriginal performers. He said that that was more appropriate than having the police pipe band and the mounted police. That was a great comment from an octogenarian who was raised in a different culture in the 1950s.

I acknowledge the presence in the House of two of my three children and my former wife, Mary-Ellen. Mary-Ellen and I have had a remarkable relationship since we married in 1983. I spent about five years working on royal commissions and took my eye off the ball, so I accept responsibility for the failure of my marriage. Mary-Ellen and the children live in the house behind mine and my father lives in a house behind them. We are running a kibbutz in Trigg! The hole in the fence that allows easy and loving access for the kids is designed to allow a child access, not an adult. However, Mary-Ellen and I communicate on a daily basis and I thank her for her helpful and friendly advice during the campaign. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing my father to occupy a seat in the Speaker's gallery with my former wife and two children in deference to the condition of his legs and his inability to climb the stairs.

I also thank the Police Union of Western Australia, of which I am an honorary life member. I want to give my friends on the other side a tip because I heard that a book is being run on how long it will take Quigley to move to the other side of the House and the odds of that happening. I can remember 1975 when I was the articled clerk to Ivan Gunning and he was the Police Union barrister. He was elevated to the District Court bench and Quigley was introduced to the Police Union. I was a bit different then - I still had my hair, or some of it. The book being run then related to how long it would take the coppers to unload Quigley. However, 26 years later, I am proud to say that the bond is as tight as it ever was - I am at one with the coppers. I thank them for their support during the campaign and my preselection. On behalf of the community of Western Australia, I thank them for the job they do for the State.

I am a unionist - a life member of the Western Australian Police Union. I am indebted to my friend Mr Mike Dean and his council for their encouragement and assistance. I am also indebted to the police action committee - a committee of police officers that took over the funding of my campaign. The Police Union could not take on that role because it is a non-political organisation. I thank all those officers - serving and retired - who ran the functions and who helped man the booths.

I heard someone say yesterday that the caravan moves on and the wheel turns. I was surprised that these police officers manned the polling booths for me. I met some of them during my time as a counsel on the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters when they conducted the associated police investigations. They had been life-long supporters of the Liberal Party, but they joined the Labor Party because they experienced the treachery and betrayal of the Court Government. They arrived at the polling booths at 6.30 am on election day to get the best positions. I thank them for their support of the Australian Labor Party and their public declarations that they will never support any other party.

I have thanked those who have helped me, but, if I have omitted some, I ask them to take my thanks as read.

I have no written speech before me, so I have not had a chance to censor it - nor did anyone in my party. Some have said that I am a loose cannon. That may well be, but if I am a loose cannon rolling around on the foredeck, I can assure the House that my blast will always be aimed at members opposite. I might roll around a bit and hit the member for Murdoch or the member for Merredin - although I do not want to hit him because he is a good bloke and the father of the House. Given that I have a reputation as a loose cannon, I invite interjections. I would not like to think that

something would fall from my lips that was so offensive or provocative to my friends opposite that they did not want to have a go at me. It will not be pleasant. I saw the Leader of the Opposition attack the Premier with a wet lettuce leaf the other day. Such an attack on me would be a bit grim.

One of the reasons for my success in the electorate of Innaloo and the Liberal Party's rejection is the Court Government's duplicity. Members of that Government wrote to the community before shutting down Scarborough Senior High School and made certain promises.

Someone asked me how I will go sitting on the backbench and not having a say. At my preselection, which you attended, Mr Speaker, I promised that I would come into this place offering my support to Dr Gallop.

I have a letter written by Hon Colin Barnett as Minister for Education dated 22 October 1998 that states -
the land for community use -

The land which they intended to save for our community and which made me very envious -

- will include that land containing the hall/gymnasium and swimming pool; . . .

the Education Department will complete any necessary maintenance work to the pool and hall/gymnasium before any handover;

That letter was signed "Colin J. Barnett, Minister of Education". Well he might have made that promise, because it was the community's effort with lamington drives, chook raffles and so on that enabled their construction in the first place. Having made that promise, what did the former minister arrange to have done at the end of the 1999 school year?

Several members interjected.

Mr QUIGLEY: I welcome the Leader of the Opposition to the House.

The first facilities bulldozed were the gymnasium and the swimming pool that the community had helped to build. I do not want to forget that, so I have laminated the letter. I will keep it here in my cute little drawer. When I laminated it, I put a bit of yellow paper on the back. Mr Speaker, if you see me discreetly holding this piece of paper - exhibit A - you will know it is evidence of the Leader of the Opposition's deception.

Mr Barnett: Is this a maiden speech?

Mr QUIGLEY: This is a maiden speech. I am a backbencher. I will only occasionally get a say on behalf of the people of Innaloo, and I will not miss the Leader of the Opposition once. Before I rose to my feet, I indicated that if the Leader of the Opposition wants to interject and hit me with his wet lettuce leaf, he is free to do so.

The Labor Party promised the people of Innaloo more. It could not promise them 100 per cent of the high school, because the previous Government had bulldozed it. The Labor Party promised the people of Innaloo two things: First, consultation; and, secondly, a better deal than they would get from the Liberal Party. They said I was a loose cannon. I want to relate to the House something I was told by the Premier in the party room - the Caucus. I was cautioned never to break caucus confidentiality. I am chancing my arm on this occasion, because I was struck by the question from the Leader of the Opposition on the first day of Parliament. He said -

I take this opportunity first to congratulate the member for Victoria Park on his election success and on becoming Premier of this State. I equally congratulate all members on their election to this Chamber, . . .

He then went on to ask whether the Premier intends to maintain the net operating surplus.

Point of Order

Mr BARNETT: I most reluctantly take a point of order when a member is making a maiden speech. It is a convention of this Parliament that members making their maiden speech will be listened to in quietness and with respect. It is also a convention of this Parliament that maiden speeches will not be contentious or of a highly political nature. My point of order is whether the member is quoting from an uncorrected *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: What the Leader of the Opposition says about tradition is true. Maiden speeches are generally not political. However, it is my understanding that when a member refuses the protection of the Chair, as the member for Innaloo has done in relation to interjections, the side of the House that has remained silent throughout the speech is entitled to interject.

Mr BARNETT: The point of order is whether the member is quoting from an uncorrected *Hansard*. That is what I ask you to rule on, Mr Speaker.

Mr QUIGLEY: I was refreshing my memory of it.

The SPEAKER: Members are not permitted to quote from an uncorrected copy of *Hansard*. The member for Innaloo should not quote from an uncorrected copy of *Hansard*.

Mr QUIGLEY: It was the member's words and he knew I was paraphrasing those words. He knew that by paraphrasing those words, I was not breaking any rule of this House, and that is why I paraphrased them. He asked the Premier whether he intended to keep -

The SPEAKER: A new member is not permitted to canvass my ruling. Standing Orders do not refer to members' quoting from an uncorrected copy of *Hansard*.

Debate Resumed

Mr QUIGLEY: The Premier told us in the gathered assembly called Caucus, as new members waited to learn how we could take our social dividend out to the electorate, that he had been to see the Under Treasurer. The Under Treasurer told him what the former Leader of the National Party had told Western Australia 12 months ago; that is, unless the spending in this State was reined in, we stood to lose our AAA credit rating. He might have thought that the new backbenchers thought this was some political ploy by the Executive. The Treasurer took us to Treasury where we were briefed by the Under Treasurer. We were given a set of bar graphs rather than numbers, for which I am grateful because bar graphs are easier for me to read. The pre-election budget bottom line was deficit, deficit, deficit, with a projected surplus for this year, the election year. A smaller surplus is projected for next year and then deficit, deficit. I heard the Leader of the Opposition on the ABC news last night raving on about how we were on course for a \$98 million surplus. He reminds me of the bus driver who, when the passengers ran up from the back of the bus and said, "Hey, boss, there is a hairy bit of road ahead and a river", replied "We are on course; we are on the road." He did not tell the passengers that a crash was imminent. If he had let the passengers at the back of the bus - the people of Western Australia - know, they would have disembarked at that point. The under treasurer then went on to show us the expenditure and revenue bar graph, which is finely balanced - there are only a couple of hundred million dollars in it.

As the bus is hurtling down the road, the bus driver knows what is ahead. He is hoping that the resource exports will push them out of trouble before the next election. Are there any risks involved in this strategy? It is a hurtling ride, a scary ride. Then we learn that one of the back tyres is bald and about to blow out, because there are major assumptions and risks. The major risk the Opposition was taking was that the whole deficit was predicated on a petrol price of \$US23 a barrel. Mr Sharon is bombing parts of the Gaza Strip and the Middle East is ready to explode; yet the bus driver is saying, "The tyre will hold. Don't worry about it; go back to your seats." If we had kept going down this path, Western Australia would have been well and truly in the drink. I have not altered these accounts, other than added a red back page. This means the Opposition is totally out of control. I will happily keep my peace and not be named by you, Mr Speaker, for interjections. However, exhibit A means the Leader of the Opposition is about to deceive the lot of us and exhibit B means the Opposition is out of control and everyone should jump ship. I will put these two documents in my cute little drawer and leave them there for the life of this Parliament. I tell my good friend the member for Albany and my other colleagues on this bench that they are welcome to it any time I am not in the Chamber, because I trust them.

The Opposition came up with the slimy "Don't risk Labor" campaign during the election. That is all it had to say. The member for Albany is not a risk. He is an Olympian, Aussie family man from Albany who flogged the former member for Albany. He is welcome to the red and yellow cards whenever he wants.

I was thinking last night about this Chamber and its similarity to the courtroom. Of course, it is a sepulchre - a cauldron. The similarity is that they are both public rooms. In both the courtroom and this room, people become heroic and people become tragic and people get their hearts and ambitions broken in two; it is all in public. I will be pleased to be here on the back bench to watch it all. I was going to ask you, Mr Speaker, whether it was okay to hold up these red and yellow cards or whether I would be named for it and be thrown out. However, I should not ask authority for an advisory ruling.

If the High Court will not give an advisory ruling, why should the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly? It is more the pity that the High Court does not give advisory rulings, in my humble opinion, for had the High Court been in the position to give advisory rulings, it could have advised the Leader of the Opposition and the former Premier that the land rights legislation that they cranked up a few years ago at enormous cost to Western Australia was a nincompoop of an idea and they should not have wasted the Chamber's time with arguing it through. That is what the High Court could have done when the former Government tried to subvert the Mabo and Wik rulings.

I am proud to be on the back bench of the Gallop Labor Government - very proud. I joined the Labor Party because it was the democratic party in Western Australia; it was the party that gave the mums and dads a say. I have been in the party for only a little over two years. As I was explaining to the Father of the House yesterday, one must have a reason for being catapulted into politics and then one embraces the wider reasons. My reason was the rhetoric of the Court Government on law and order and how it created the Anti-Corruption Commission in the deficient manner in which it did. It saw the best crime fighters in Western Australia waylaid for years, as criminals from organised crime went into a closed room to tell their lies in secret to get the best of the best suspended. I could not stand by and watch that happen any more.

I had been in Adelaide appearing at a bombing inquest for eight months for Jane Bowen, whose husband's life was taken by organised crime in South Australia. Being in South Australia for eight months and working with its organised

crime squad gave me an insight into the pernicious nature of organised crime and how, in the arm wrestle in Western Australia, organised crime was besting the Court Government and running rings around it. That is what drove me. When I saw the reforms that Dr Gallop was implementing in the Australian Labor Party, I thought that they were for me.

Dr Gallop went to the state conference, stood up before the unions and all the people and said that the public of Western Australia want a direct input into preselection. The member for Hillarys was gobsmacked when I told him the other day that all the Labor Party members living in Innaloo get to vote directly on preselection. He did not believe me.

Mr Graham: When I give my speech, I will give a different view.

Mr QUIGLEY: I shall be here. I welcome the comment and interjection of the member for Pilbara. I was a bit disturbed, and somewhat concerned when I saw him sitting so far over on the third row opposite on day one, but I am more encouraged that he has come to this side.

The mums and dads of Innaloo had that direct input. Would the mums and dads of Nedlands - the Excalibur of the Liberal Party - love a direct vote on who should be the next leader of the Liberal Party? Whoever becomes the member for Nedlands will be carrying Excalibur - the Liberal Party hope. He will have drawn Excalibur from those turbid waters that flow through Menzies House. At the moment the Leader of the Opposition is trying to pull the sword from the waters. He is not the vested one; the mandarins from Murray Street will determine who ultimately sits in the seat occupied by the Leader of the Opposition.

I thank the people of Innaloo. When I leave this Chamber - when it is exit stage left - I shall come back to this part of my speech and say that during my time in this Chamber from day one I vigorously prosecuted the case of the people of Innaloo who deserve a so much better deal.

I give a particular thank you to the Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club and Scarborough Surf Life Saving Club. It is the year of the volunteer, and their members are great volunteers. Each club has carried out more than 200 rescues in the past year involving Perth's premier beaches. There was only one drowning, that of a person swimming right outside the flag area. Scarborough Surf Life Saving Club patrols three kilometres of beach from Scarborough to Swanbourne where the conditions in the water are often extremely difficult. Its members did well at the national titles, with even young Tom Webber from the Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club taking out the under-16 surf race bronze medal. Their participation in three metre seas at Kurrawa the weekend before last, demonstrated the type of people who are in that club, and what sort of service they are extending to the people of Innaloo, the visitors to Western Australia and the wider public.

[Applause.]

MR WHITELEY (Roleystone) [9.45 am]: I do not thank the member for Innaloo; he is a very hard act to follow. I will indulge in your protection, Mr Speaker. I do not want to be hit with any wet lettuce leaves or any bits of paper.

First, Mr Speaker, let me congratulate you on your election to your very important position.

I feel extremely privileged to have been elected to represent the people of Roleystone for the next four years. I am particularly excited to be a member of Western Australia's thirty-sixth Parliament which has at last the opportunity to deliver true democracy to the people of Western Australia.

With respect, I believe that the fundamental principle of democracy is that every adult citizen has a right to equal representation - in other words, one vote, one value. We are elected to represent people, not square kilometres, and we should represent the same number of people regardless of how far they are spread. As the member for Roleystone, I believe I speak with some authority on this subject because I represent a large number of people spread over a very large area. A justification often offered for the current electoral boundaries, which discriminate against the majority of Western Australians, is that geographically large electorates are harder to service. To a point I agree; large electorates are harder to service.

I believe the members for Albany, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury, Mitchell, Mandurah and Dawesville have a relatively easier job serving their tiny, relatively homogenous, electorates than I have serving mine. The total land area of those six country electorates is 505 square kilometres, which is less than a third the size of Roleystone. Roleystone is more than 63 times the size of Bunbury, 41 times the size of Mandurah, 32 times the size of Albany, 24 times the size of Kalgoorlie, 12 times the size of Mitchell and nearly nine times bigger than Dawesville. If geographical size were used to determine the number of electors, Roleystone should have far fewer voters than each of those electorates; yet the opposite is true. Roleystone has nearly two voters for every one in those seats. This is a statistical aberration which applies not only to Roleystone. Although Roleystone is the largest metropolitan electorate, Swan Hills, Wanneroo and Southern River are all much larger than the biggest of the six country electorates I mentioned. It is nonsense to argue that country seats should have fewer voters because they cover greater areas. The reality is that the country seats I mentioned are urban in nature. It defies logic, and is simply an accident of history that they are over-represented in this Parliament.

Of course, in electorates such as Pilbara, Eyre, Ningaloo and Kimberley, distance represents a huge challenge. I accept that those members deserve extra staff. However, I consider it totally undemocratic that an adult citizen in Wanneroo

has only a quarter of the democratic rights of an elector in Eyre. We are all Western Australians, and we should all have one vote with one value.

Whether there is true one vote, one value electoral reform or simply the scheduled redistribution, it is likely that the electoral boundaries of Roleystone will change significantly. It is a very diverse electorate. In many respects Roleystone is a microcosm of Western Australia or, at least, the south west corner of Western Australia. This diversity makes my job both challenging and rewarding. The electoral impact of the forest debate illustrates the diversity of the electorate. Although the Government's commitment to save old-growth forests was well received by the majority of Roleystone voters, five timber mills within the electorate employ a significant number of locals. Suffice to say I have an appreciation of the range of views on the future of our forests. Roleystone is a mix of suburban, semi-rural and rural communities. About one-third of the population lives in the suburbs of Beckenham, Kenwick and Maddington. I doorknocked those suburbs, and learnt that generally residents feel that the south east corridor of the metropolitan area has been ignored. Many believe that the northern suburbs got all the goodies on offer from the 1996 state election, and that Bunbury and Mitchell were singled out for special treatment before the last election.

When one compares police resources, public transport and road and rail systems in the south east metropolitan area with those in the rest of Perth, it is fair to say that perception is justified. For instance, the Cannington police district, which includes the northern part of my electorate, has one of the highest crime rates but one of the worst ratios of police to population in Western Australia. As bad as they are, I believe the crime statistics for the Cannington police district are probably understated. Many residents have told me that they do not bother to report minor crimes to police because they believe there is little or no chance of the police responding effectively. Although police stations are located at Armadale and Gosnells, they are often either closed or run by skeleton staff who lack the resources to respond to or even take calls from the public.

The village of Roleystone is worthy of special mention; it is serviced from the under-resourced Armadale station. When police are available, the target response time from Armadale to Roleystone is 17 minutes. Often this figure is only of academic interest as Armadale station frequently lacks the personnel to respond. Roleystone village, with a population of over 6 000, has no police presence, whereas Carnarvon has 30 police officers servicing 8 000 people. Apparently Roleystone is sufficiently isolated to prevent effective policing from elsewhere; however, it is not isolated enough to have its own police station. I will be pushing to ensure that the south east corridor gets its fair share of police resources. Furthermore, I would like to see the return to smaller suburban stations where police have an opportunity to build relationships with the community.

The south east metropolitan area has been neglected for too long. Now that government members hold the seats of Thornlie, Southern River, Armadale and Roleystone I expect that we in the south east will enjoy services comparable with those in the rest of Perth. The work done by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to speed up the construction of stage 4 of the Roe Highway is a welcome start.

Further south, my electorate takes in the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, which includes the semirural communities of Mundijong, Oakford, Serpentine, Jarrahdale and Byford. People are attracted to these communities by the tranquillity, natural beauty and sense of community. Over the past 18 months, initially as a candidate and more recently as the local member, I have spent an enormous amount of time dealing with environmental and land use issues in the Shire of Serpentine -Jarrahdale. The shire suffers from being neither regional nor metropolitan. As Perth grows the Serpentine-Jarrahdale shire is increasingly being used as a rubbish tip. The shire has numerous existing and proposed landfill sites. On the one hand, landfill proponents argue that cities create waste and burying waste in the relatively sparsely populated areas is the most economic method of disposal. On the other hand, local residents argue that dumping is polluting streams and underground water and destroying their local environment. I understand the need to develop better ways to dispose of waste other than simply burying it in the outskirts of the metropolitan area.

The peculiar geography of my electorate has given me a unique perspective on a waste disposal issue that has attracted recent media attention. I refer to the solid waste to energy facility proposed for construction in the City of Gosnells. In the north of my electorate many residents of Maddington are concerned about the environmental impact of building a new technology high-volume rubbish disposal facility in their suburb. In the south of my electorate residents of the semirural hamlet of Cardup where the City of Gosnells' rubbish is currently buried are concerned about the impact of landfill on the ground water which many use as their domestic water supply. In the case of the proposed SWERF the idea of transforming domestic rubbish into electricity is appealing. However, I share the concerns of Maddington residents that the technology is yet unproven. Fortunately members of the Maddington community have taken responsibility for developing a process to inform themselves and other locals of the merits or otherwise of the SWERF. I will be a very interested observer of that process and the EPA assessment of the SWERF.

The local issue that has attracted the greatest media attention over the past 12 months is the joint fight to save Whitby Falls Hostel and prevent mineral sandmining in Mundijong. These issues were debated in both Houses of the previous Parliament. I will not critique the previous Government's shameful handling of these issues. However, I will address a misleading statement made in the Legislative Council by the previous Minister for Mines in relation to Labor's position on the Mundijong sand mine. On 16 November 2000, in response to a question without notice, the previous Minister for Mines stated -

In this case the Labor Party candidate is saying that I should abide by the warden's environmental decisions. In other words, the Labor Party is saying that the warden should make the environmental assessment and not the EPA. I am interested to know the Labor Party's position on this matter. Whenever I ask, I receive a conflicting point of view. The Opposition spokesman on environment says the assessment should be done by the EPA, whereas the candidate says it should be done by the warden. The Labor Party is confused on this issue.

In fact, it was the former Minister for Mines who was confused. The Labor Party's consistent and very well-publicised position on the proposed Mundijong mineral sands mine was that Labor supports the full implementation of the recommendations of the mining Warden's Court in the case of Serpentine-Jarrahdale Ratepayers Association versus Iluka Resources Ltd. For the benefit of members, the mining warden recommended no mining in the majority of Iluka Resources' mining lease application area, because the land was more valuable for housing and tourism. The mining warden based his decision on economic and social considerations, not environmental considerations. To put it simply, the mining warden recommended no mining in two-thirds of the application area because the land had more valuable uses. He also said that mining may be approved in the remaining one-third of the area. He did not make a final recommendation, presumably because he did not have access to the appropriate environmental expertise. The mining warden stated -

It is my opinion that the matters of dust pollution, noise pollution, assessment of groundwater usage, and the consequences thereof, and the potential impacts upon the environment, and upon other uses of groundwater in the area, together with flora and fauna preservation and protection, are all matters, which in this case, are properly the subject of inquiry and direction by the Environmental Protection Authority .

The former Minister for Mines was wrong. There was no inconsistency in Labor's position on this issue. The former minister was both confused and confusing.

A series of Supreme Court and Warden's Court decisions relating to the proposed Mundijong mineral sands mine and another mine west of Serpentine have implications that stretch well beyond the boundaries of Roleystone. For most of our history Western Australia has derived much of its wealth from mining, and miners have virtually had the ability to mine where and when they have wanted to do so. Until recently the role of the Warden's Court was limited to applying the provisions of the Mining Act, most often to resolve disputes between competing mining interests. The Supreme Court has effectively expanded the role of the Warden's Court to consider the merits of economic, social and environmental objections. Another case that is scheduled to be heard by the Supreme Court later this year also has implications for the roles of both the Warden's Court and the Minister for Mines. The confusion created by these cases benefits no-one. The objectors to the two mines have gone through a drawn out and expensive process. Despite several significant legal victories they still have a way to go. On the other side of the argument the mining industry is concerned about the delay and uncertainty created by the Supreme Court expanding the role of the Warden's Court. I believe that a system that speedily and inexpensively deals with economic, social and environmental objections to mining proposals is needed. Inaction will lead to more court cases and confusion. The public will lose, the mining industry will lose; the only ones to benefit will be the lawyers. Obviously the nature of our political system is adversarial. At its best - as it did in the case of the Mundijong mineral sands mine and the Whitby Falls Hostel issue - confrontation performs the function of keeping Government accountable. However, opportunistic confrontation can prevent Parliament dealing effectively with contentious issues. Sometimes populism triumphs over principle.

Drug law reform is one area where a populist opposition can stymie genuine reform. Perth has a growing crime problem where addicts are prostituting themselves, stealing, sometimes with violence, or dealing drugs to finance their self-destruction. History tells us that public education programs, while valuable, can achieve only so much. As parliamentarians we need to have an open mind on this issue. Failure to do so will mean escalating crime and suffering.

The negative health and social effects of illicit drugs are well known and widely accepted. However, no general agreement exists on the long-term social, health and behavioural effects of drugs that are being prescribed to a significant and growing number of Western Australian children. I refer to the prescription of dexamphetamine commonly known as Dexies or by its brand name, Ritalin, and to a lesser extent methylphenidate for the treatment of attention deficit disorder. My interest in ADD and the related condition attention deficit hyperactivity disorder stems from my previous employment as a teacher at a boys' secondary school. The first time I was made aware of the condition was when a clinical psychologist addressed the staff at our school on ADD. The psychologist defined ADD sufferers as the 5 per cent of children who are the most inattentive, impulsive and/or hyperactive, and ADD as occurring most often in boys. He identified drug treatment, combined with behaviour modification techniques, as the most effective method to deal with ADD. At the time I accepted the experts' advice. I now have grave concerns that ADD misdiagnosis and the resultant overprescription of amphetamines is a threat to the health and happiness of many Western Australian children.

As a former teacher, father of two boys and coach of junior sport, I know inattentive, impulsive, hyperactive behaviour is a part of childhood, particularly for boys. Some children are by their very nature more impulsive, hyperactive and inattentive just as some children are taller, shorter, heavier, lighter and less or more coordinated.

To define the 5 per cent of children who are the most impulsive, hyperactive and inattentive as having a disorder has, I believe, very dangerous consequences, particularly when the option in most cases is to give them amphetamines or "chill pills" as they are referred to by the supposed sufferers and their peers. This argument is often countered by the claim that ADD is a disorder because it prevents the sufferers from functioning effectively. I am suspicious of what defines effective functioning. I believe that it is often simpler for even well-intentioned doctors to diagnose and prescribe behaviour-altering drugs than it is to deal with the underlying cause.

The symptoms of ADD - inattentiveness, impulsiveness and hyperactivity - are also the symptoms of a variety of conditions including abuse, dysfunctional parenting and depression. It concerns me greatly that some children who have behavioural problems are being treated as if they have a chemical imbalance. I have first-hand experience of students on ADD medication sitting compliantly in class. They were not hyperactive or impulsive, but they were far from switched on. Their medication had not made them more attentive but it had made them more compliant and easier to manage.

I also know of teachers who with disturbing certainty categorised particular students as undiagnosed ADD. In my experience, these were teachers who often struggled to control classes and had particular difficulty with high-spirited students. ADD is a condition whose diagnosis is necessarily subjective, as there can be no objective measure of impulsiveness, hyperactivity or inattentiveness. I would suggest a visit to any schoolyard at recess or lunchtime will reveal just how normal impulsive and hyperactive behaviour is.

My suspicion that ADD drugs are over-prescribed first arose because of my experience with one student who as a 15-year-old had his first "drug holiday" in many years when he failed to self-medicate on an extended school camp. This boy for his three previous years at the school had been withdrawn and passive, to the extent of almost complete social isolation. After a few days without medication, he began to participate and socialise with other students. For the first time, his peers and teachers witnessed his personality and sense of humour. After the camp, the boy was immediately put back on medication and for the rest of the time at school he continued to be withdrawn and socially isolated.

I suppose it could be argued that I know of only a few isolated cases of over-diagnosis and over-prescription. It is, however, much harder to dismiss the July 1996 Report of the Technical Working Party on Attention Deficit Disorder prepared by twelve Perth health professionals, including five doctors and four psychologists. Whilst the report stated that stimulant medications are effective in 85 per cent of children carefully diagnosed ADD, it identified that some unnamed Perth paediatricians are carelessly diagnosing and over-prescribing dexamphetamine and methylphenidate. The report also stated -

The parent is frequently the sole source of information and often educational and behavioural information is not sought. When information is sought from the school, the questions asked are frequently inappropriate. Behavioural observations are rarely obtained.

The report highlighted the 43-fold growth in the prescription of dexamphetamine to five to 14-year-olds in Western Australia between 1989 and 1994. It also highlighted rates of prescription per child in WA were about two and a half times the national average. Furthermore, the report identified that prescription patterns varied greatly across the metropolitan area. It concluded that it is the view of the working party that the differential rate of prescriptions may be more reflective of the prescribing patterns of paediatricians servicing the various areas than it is of social or other factors associated with ADHD in those areas.

The report was published for public comment in July 1996 before a final, slightly watered down report was presented in April 1997 to a cabinet subcommittee consisting of the then Ministers for Education, Health, Disability Services and Family and Children's Services. Both reports contained similar recommendations, most of which have not been implemented. A key recommendation of both reports was -

That the Stimulants Committee of the Health Department be authorised to carry out random audits into the use of block authorisations; and that paediatricians and psychiatrists found to be failing to abide to the appropriate criteria have their block authorisation capacity removed.

This has not happened. Currently, those paediatricians and psychiatrists who prescribe the most are assumed to be competent and are given "block authorisations" for the prescription of dexamphetamine and/or methylphenidate. Effectively, this means the heaviest prescribers are the least accountable. In my opinion, this is exactly the opposite of how the system should work.

The reports were not accepted and implemented by the previous Government. In fact, a new round of reports has commenced, with the latest being a September 2000 draft of a report entitled Attentional Problems in Children and Young People. This new report again highlights the problem of "block authorisations". It states -

One of the current barriers to data collection and safety guarantees for children is the provision of *en bloc* authorisation. Consequently this option will be replaced by a more comprehensive system.

I hope this report will at last lead to action. ADD diagnosis and treatment is a controversial topic but it cannot be left in the too-hard basket. At the heart of the issue is the health and happiness of too many children.

I finish by addressing the issue of reconciliation. I believe as a nation that we are a long way from effectively tackling indigenous disadvantage and achieving true reconciliation. The reality is that a significant but thankfully declining minority of Australians are racist and they often reserve their deepest and most irrational malice for Aboriginals. The majority of Australians, however, take people as they find them yet many rarely, if ever, meet indigenous Australians. As a result of this "distant relationship", for many well-meaning Australians addressing Aboriginal disadvantage often comes down to headline issues like land rights or an apology.

Whilst a just resolution of land issues and a prime ministerial apology are important steps towards reconciliation, they will only go a small way to addressing Aboriginal disadvantage. Too many indigenous Australians are excluded from the economy. For many, the cause is simply isolation and the lack of a local economic base. For others, it is the cumulative, intergenerational destruction of self-confidence which effectively denies economic opportunity.

All Australians need to understand our nation's history of institutionalised racism and how it relates to current disadvantage. We need to understand that landmark changes like the 1967 referendum or a future genuine prime ministerial apology did not, and will not, wipe the slate clean and provide a fresh and equal start. We need to know our history, warts and all, not to create a sense of collective or individual guilt because few living Australians are responsible for the errors of the past, but so we can understand the present and together build a better future.

I believe the public debate about Aboriginal disadvantage and reconciliation has, unfortunately, often been polarised between those who would blame the victim and those who, perhaps understandably, but ultimately just as destructively, are motivated by unquestioning guilt. I think Most Australians are fair-minded and are turned off by both racists and those who they see as self-righteously claiming the moral high ground.

We as parliamentarians have a responsibility for the quality and substance of public debate. I think a significant contribution was made by Noel Pearson in his Light on the Hill speech last August. He challenged those of us in politics, particularly those of us on the progressive side of politics, to develop a new approach to addressing Aboriginal disadvantage. Noel Pearson's basic argument was that, whilst Aboriginal disadvantage may have been caused and perpetuated by non-Aboriginal action, the only effective solutions will be those developed and implemented by indigenous Australians when they enjoy the rewards of success and suffer the consequences of failure. He argued that welfare is destructive of Aboriginal self-reliance. In general terms, Noel Pearson contended that the role of government assistance must be one of a "temporary hand up", not a "permanent hand out". Mr Pearson based his comments on his experience as a Murri and a Cape York community leader. There is, of course, a danger in generalising his remarks to Western Australia, but I believe his contribution can be a catalyst for a new, more mature and open debate about reconciliation.

My experience working with Aboriginal organisations for three years in the early 1990s made me question the then current emphasis on empowering indigenous Australians through resourcing community organisations rather than individuals or families. This approach seemed to be based on the fundamental assumption that entire communities of often hundreds of people, rather than individuals or families, are the basic building blocks of the Aboriginal society. For example, I believe numerous promising business opportunities developed using the Commonwealth Government's Community Development Employment Program model failed because they did not reward individual effort. In my experience, CDEP businesses were successful when they had the chance to grow naturally. Unfortunately, however, instead of beginning by employing a few individuals full time and letting them share the rewards of their efforts, CDEP businesses were typically structured to employ many community members on a part-time, basically "voluntary work for the dole", basis. There was little or no reward for individual effort and workers who were initially enthusiastic quickly and understandably lost motivation. This was an opinion I formed in the early 1990s. I visited a promising CDEP enterprise in my electorate last month and was disappointed to see aspects of history repeating themselves. I doubt that it is appropriate to continue to base aspects of public policy on the questionable assumption that indigenous Australians are motivated by entirely different factors from other Australians.

The issues I have discussed relate to either my electorate or my previous employment as a teacher, an accountant and as a university lecturer in financial management working with Aboriginal students employed by community organisations. I would have liked to discuss options for the abolition of payroll tax and Australia's republican future. Before I finish, I thank my campaign team, especially Kate Doust, Dean Summers and Barbara Whitely, for performing miracles on time and below budget. I especially wish to thank Dean and the Maritime Union of Australia for not only supporting my campaign but also leading the fight to save Whitby Falls Hostel. The MUA initially got involved in this issue because it was sticking up for a comrade who is a resident; however, it quickly became committed to ensuring a fair go for all residents of the hostel. I also thank and congratulate the numerous community groups in my electorate, including the William Street Action Group, Jarrahdale Linkbusters, the Save Whitby Hostel Action Group and the Serpentine-Jarrahdale Ratepayers Association for their tireless work in fighting for their communities. I especially thank Cardup resident Alan Clarkson for his work ensuring a fair go for his local area. I pay tribute to the former member for Roleystone, Fred Tubby, for his generous assistance in the handover process. I hope that if the electorate ever taps me on the shoulder and tells me it is time to go, I act with the same good grace. Finally, I thank my family - Mum and Dad, Jen and Chris, Melinda, Shane and Patrick - for their values, love and support.

Needless to say, I am excited by my latest career change. Obviously, I am proud to be a member of the new Government; however, I believe that, regardless of our political affiliations, we all have a role to play in improving the lot of Western Australians. I am looking forward to working with all members of the new Parliament, particularly on some of the issues I have discussed and for which party affiliation can and should be irrelevant. Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR BIRNEY (Kalgoorlie) [10.12 am]: In the absence of the Speaker, I add my voice to the myriad voices that have already congratulated him on his ascendancy to the Chair. He gave a commitment at the new members' seminar to give members of Opposition a fair go and, as a member of the Opposition, I look forward to being a recipient of that fair go. I begin by acknowledging my friends and family in the public gallery and the Speaker's gallery, some of whom have come from Kalgoorlie to be here today. I also acknowledge my mother, Shirley, who is in the public gallery. She has been a constant source of encouragement and a very stable foundation stone.

I come to this place today as the first Liberal member in history to represent the seat of Kalgoorlie. It has been held by the Labor Party for the best part of 100 years, with two brief exceptions around 1920. Neither of those members was Liberal. It is a tremendously overwhelming and humbling feeling to be chosen to represent a community of people who would not hesitate to give someone the shirts off their backs and then promptly forget that they did so. I quote the words of my father, Jack Birney, who passed on long ago, in his maiden speech to the Federal Parliament of Australia in 1976 -

It is with great pride, yet with a feeling of deep humility, that I accept the trust reposed in me.

My only regret is that he is not here today to witness this event.

I take this opportunity to thank the many terrific people in my campaign team who placed their faith in me during the election. These are people who ignored the odds and who thumbed their nose at history. These are the people to whom I owe a debt of gratitude that I acknowledge will be very difficult to repay. This has been a historic win and with your indulgence, Madam Acting Speaker, I name my campaign committee in this place so that their efforts will forevermore be recorded and recognised by history. They are: Brett Nazzari, Angus Moffat, Rino Borrromei, Daniel Sutton, Graham McGarry, Tammy Atkins, Keetha Wilkinson, Glenn Briers, Helen Taylor, Darren Taylor, Antonell Caputo, Alan Dungey, Tom O'Neil, Richard Harding, Matthew Eggleston and Greg Smith.

It has been said that Kalgoorlie is the mining capital of Australia. It is no secret that, to a large extent, the local economy rides on the back of the mining industry. My electorate consists only of the City of Kalgoorlie and does not include any of the outlying towns, although Kalgoorlie acts as a hub for these areas and the issues are basically the same. Kalgoorlie has a rich and unique history and even though we have achieved international recognition for our bush two-up ring, our brothels and our pubs on every corner, it is worth remembering that Kalgoorlie, while retaining much of its history, has become a very sophisticated city. We now have world-class facilities. We have a magnificent arts centre, an all-encompassing recreation centre and top-notch sporting facilities. We also have new green residential subdivisions that would rival some in Perth, and we will soon become the home to a national icon in the prospectors' and miners' hall of fame after raising some \$7 million in donations from the private sector.

The people of Kalgoorlie are also unique. They need only know someone for a short time before they will call him a mate. They are innovative and resourceful and they very rarely approach Governments with their caps in hand. I am reminded of the eastern States tourist who many years ago was passing through Kalgoorlie on his way to Perth. He stopped at a local service station to buy some fuel. The service station owner happened to be short-staffed and, after a brief chat, offered the tourist some work, which he graciously accepted. Twenty years later, that tourist was still living in Kalgoorlie and was the owner of that service station. Such is the spirit of Kalgoorlie. If there is one event in recent times that encapsulates that spirit, it is undoubtedly the actions of the group of people who are now known as the rebel road builders. In the early 1990s there was a burning need for a bypass road capable of diverting heavy traffic around the outskirts of Kalgoorlie. A request was lodged and the answer came back from Main Roads that while it was a good idea, it would take some 18 months to plan and complete. Local industry leaders were not happy with that response, so they got together and devised a plan. At dawn on Saturday morning, everyone in town who owned a bulldozer or truck gathered on the outskirts of town, and by Monday they had ploughed the road through. Such is the spirit of Kalgoorlie. A similar story can be told about our local speedway. Once again resisting the urge to throw themselves at the mercy of government, the proponents of the speedway got together and, in typical Kalgoorlie style, applied pressure to certain individuals and companies to front up with their machinery and materials. It is now a matter of history that we have in Kalgoorlie an international standard speedway worth \$1.5 million that cost the club absolutely nothing. Such is the spirit of Kalgoorlie.

I turn to some of the issues and challenges confronting my electorate. Native title continues to be the scourge of Kalgoorlie. It has been a major contributing factor to the downturn in the mining industry. Never before has a piece of legislation wreaked such havoc upon an industry, and never before has a piece of legislation decimated a work force with one fell stroke of the pen. Never before has a piece of legislation pitted black against white and black against black. This issue cannot progress until the right of a claimant to negotiate is removed. Why should a claimant be given

the right to negotiate when he or she has not yet proven his or her claim? This is a constant source of frustration for my constituents.

The Government's proposals to reform the electoral system and abolish vote weighting in country electorates that would result in the disappearance of 16 country voices from this place would be a slap in the face for those Western Australians who choose to live in country Western Australia.

In an environment where banks, post offices, services and the like are rapidly disappearing from country Western Australia, are we as legislators going to stand here and say that we do not value the contribution of those people in country WA by reducing their representation? I would hope not.

The people of Kalgoorlie are currently facing up to some very challenging times. The promoters of the so-called tax effective schemes targeted my electorate very heavily. They saw my constituency as high income earners who may be enticed into these schemes. It is now well documented that many decent and hard working people in my electorate are facing massive tax bills that will more than likely result in the loss of their homes, their cars, their marriages and, sadly, perhaps even their lives. I have seen a Queen's Counsel's opinion that says these schemes were okay and I am aware that over a long period of time the Australian Tax Office gave out some very grey advice regarding the legitimacy or otherwise of these schemes. The Federal Government must act now. It must abolish interest and penalties associated with these schemes and pursue only the refunds or profits which were paid directly to these people. I trust that if the forthcoming test cases are successful, the ATO will immediately wipe out these debts altogether and allow these unfortunate individuals to rebuild their lives.

The recent collapse of Centaur Mining and Exploration Ltd for the second time in Kalgoorlie has presented another challenge to my constituency. The ripple effect is being felt throughout the business and wider community and with reported debts of around \$40-50 million, it will take a long time for some of the businesses in my electorate to bounce back. I trust that when Joseph Gutnick decides to establish another mine in Kalgoorlie in the future, as he will, that my constituency will not be so accommodating.

For many years people have viewed Kalgoorlie as a place to go to earn a few bucks for a couple of years before returning to the city to spend those bucks. However, I never fail to be amazed at the number of people who tell me that they went to Kalgoorlie 20 years ago and they are still there now. The focus for Kalgoorlie has shifted from being a place where a person would go to work, to being a place that he might now call home. People are now demanding quality of life in Kalgoorlie and they are looking for quality recreational pursuits. Kalgoorlie needs a year-round natural body of water that is suitable for recreation, water sports and the like. Recently Lake Kopai on the outskirts of Kalgoorlie filled up with water and it was like sitting on the banks of Deepwater Point in Mount Pleasant. It was standing room only. Kalgoorlie experiences very significant rainfall events and I am sure that, with a relatively minor amount of earth works, this water could be captured and utilised for the community in one or more of our many lake systems.

Members may also be aware that the Government has called for expressions of interest from parties to bring water to the goldfields. This is an extension of the previous Government's idea. I hope that the successful bidder, when submitting its bid, considers the need for a natural body of water that may be utilised by the community.

I will now address a few issues that are not necessarily related to my electorate but have state-wide implications, and I will put on record some of my own philosophical beliefs. Before coming to this place I was actively involved in three small businesses. As a member of the Liberal Party I am very comfortable representing the views of small business people. It may come as a surprise to members that the biggest issue facing small business in this country today is not necessarily the goods and services tax, company tax or stamp duty. Rather, it is the 30-day account that frequently becomes a 60-day account, a 90-day account or a 120-day account. There is no greater impediment to small business investment in our country today than the fact that figures on paper very rarely reflect money in the bank. It is only when we, as legislators across the country, adopt a system that involves payment for goods and services at the point of sale, no matter how big or how small the sale, that we will see a significant improvement in business growth and investment in Western Australia and, indeed, Australia. Unfortunately I do not have the answer to this problem. However, I know that we, as a society, and certainly we, as legislators, need to address this problem and identify another method of payment which will become the norm in the future rather than use the 30-day account method. The lead needs to be taken on the one hand by the upper end of the corporate sector and on the other hand by the Government. To this end I congratulate the Government on its recent announcement regarding payment terms for small businesses dealing with government.

Australians and particularly Western Australians have a lifestyle that is unrivalled by any country or state in the world today. Part of that lifestyle can be attributed to our willingness to be involved in recreational and sporting pursuits. I believe that the public holiday and the long weekend should be viewed as sacrosanct in Australia and should be recognised as the vehicle that bonds families and friends together.

Affordable air travel for all Western Australians should also be a priority for successive Governments. It is a tragedy that the new airlines operating in the eastern States have not yet seen their way clear to operate out of Western Australia. In my own electorate of Kalgoorlie both major airlines charge approximately \$540 for a return fare to Perth

that takes 50 minutes one-way. This, in my view, is bordering on extortion, and it will only be when we can break the two-carrier monopoly in this State with the introduction of a third or even a fourth airline, that we will truly be able to offer Western Australians a diverse lifestyle. I urge the Government to play an active role in securing the services of another major airline into Western Australia.

I believe that successive Governments have a responsibility and indeed an obligation to continually test public opinion on issues such as daylight saving. Even though we have had three referenda on this issue in the past, is it necessarily the case that public opinion will not change over time? How many people do members know who have nine to five jobs and who actually knock off at five o'clock? Very few, I suspect. Working hours are increasing and, as a result, the number of daylight hours available for families to spend quality time together are decreasing. Apart from the obvious business arguments in favour of daylight saving, a good case can be made for daylight saving in favour of families and quality time for families. I urge the Government to revisit this issue.

I would like members to turn their attention briefly to the law and the justice system. I refer specifically to the current situation that allows the media to print the name of an individual who has been charged with an offence before that individual has been found guilty. It matters not that in a future court hearing that individual may be found not guilty, because in the court of public opinion, once that name appears in the newspaper, that individual is forevermore guilty in the eyes of the public. This is an injustice. Changing the legislation to allow a person's name to be reported in the media only when he or she has been found guilty can only protect the innocent and has very little down side. We must at all costs resist the temptation to go down the same path as the American legal system where anyone can sue anyone for anything and win. The Government must, through legislation, encourage people to take responsibility for their own actions and ensure that the option of shifting the blame to another is not available. However, we must continue to take a hardline on individuals who refuse to respect our laws by breaking them and we must be vigilant in the pursuit of these people.

I am a very strong proponent of DNA sampling at birth and it will only be when the hysteria and the emotion surrounding this option are removed, that we will be able to move forward with the apprehension of criminals. I wonder if the so-called Claremont serial killer might be cooling his heels in Casuarina today if DNA sampling at birth was introduced a generation or two ago and I wonder how many murderers and rapists who are still at large in our community today might have met the same fate if DNA sampling at birth had become a reality. The Government must empower our Police Force with the necessary tools to adequately address crime and we must not bow to noisy minority groups. We must govern for the many and not necessarily for the few. We must embrace the concept of mandatory sentencing and, where possible, we must extend it. One such extension might be to impose mandatory jail terms on offenders who commit totally unprovoked physical assaults on others. This would ensure that the scum who bash others just for kicks would be removed from our streets like litter.

All Western Australians should have the right to go about their business unhindered; that is a basic principle of democracy. The rigours of political correctness have been thrust upon us like a virus over the past 15 years and it represents a stifling of public opinion. We have become slaves to that concept. I wish to place on record that not everything I do or say in this place will necessarily conform to the principles of political correctness and I make no apology for that. I also hope to bring some humour and the odd light-hearted moment to this place. It is easy to become engrossed in one's daily activities without stopping to appreciate the lighter side of life.

I conclude with a series of words once used by Theodore Roosevelt. I have these words framed and hung on my lounge-room wall. To date I have lived my life by their meaning. I cannot help but wonder whether this series of words is relevant not only to me but also to every member represented in this Chamber today. Mr Roosevelt said -

He who tries and knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and who spends himself in pursuit of an achievement, at best knows the triumph of that achievement and at worst, fails while daring. His place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Amendment to Motion

Mr BIRNEY: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regrets to inform Your Excellency that the Assembly notes with regret the State Government's decision to abolish the successful individual workplace agreements introduced by the previous State Government; threaten the stability of the building industry; restrict choice by individual workers; place greater workplace control in the hands of unions, and ignore the clear preference of the vast majority of employers and employees to operate in a non-union environment, which are undermining business and investment confidence in Western Australia and, accordingly, advises Your Excellency that the Government should reinstitute an approach to industrial relations that will regain confidence in the State's economic future.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley) [10.33 am]: When considering industrial relations in this State since the Labor Party formed Government, it is clear that the Gallop Government has handed over its labour relations portfolio to the trade

union officials and to the trade union movement. The Minister for Labour Relations has been shown to be incompetent in his handling of the trade union movement. A Gallop Government will not stand up to the union movement. I propose to show members reasons that that is so and the steps that have been taken by this Labor Government that show that it is jumping to the tune of the union movement at every step.

One need only consider current union membership. In 1993 union membership was 34.5 per cent of the work force. In 2000 union membership in the public service was 20 per cent and 15 per cent for the private sector. When considering the declining membership of the trade union movement it is possible to understand the reasons for the actions taken by this Government to try to restore power to the unions and to take it away from individual employers and employees. It has nothing to do with work place relations or the best interests of the workers. Under a Gallop Government members will see strikes caused by the unions in the full knowledge that the Gallop Government will not take any action against them. We have already seen that occur over the past few months. Western Australia had moved away from the days of high industrial disputation towards low unemployment, high productivity and competitive wages.

Many reports have been written by industry outlining what it expects to happen in the area of labour relations during the term of the Gallop Government. A report on 18 January by Peter Lalor, the Senior Vice President of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, stated -

“a return to structured workplace laws will return the State to the uncompetitive situation that previously existed.”

Why is that important? It is important for investment and jobs. Members opposite supposedly support workers, but they do not care whether those workers lose their jobs. Let us consider the first roll back. Why has there been a first roll back? It is because the unions said so.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Hodson-Thomas) I remind members that all interjections are unparliamentary.

Mrs EDWARDES: The principle of honesty is involved. At least the federal Australian Labor Party's policy to destroy workplace agreements is overt; however, the policy of the Western Australia Labor Party is covert. I remind members of the letter leaked in January this year about the deal with the union movement and the Labor Party to phase out workplace agreements and individual agreements. The ALP put up a pretence about wanting to introduce employer-employee agreements. Those agreements will be a farce. They will be totally unworkable and unable to be used by businesses. That has happened in Queensland. A disadvantage test will apply, and the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission will set the rules. While an industrial award applies, employer-employee agreements will be unavailable. If only one employee out of 100 wants to be employed under an award, the other 99 employees cannot sign a workplace agreement. Is that democracy? Is that fair to the other 99 workers? I do not think so. How will the Labor Party's EEAs provide choice and genuine improvements in the workplace? At the worst it is a planned return to inflexible work practices, turf wars, strikes and a return to the bad old days. It is a real threat to jobs.

The Gallop Government has a clear preference for awards and collective agreements. It wants to make life easy for union officials. The unions and their officials will tell the employers and employees what is good for them. Recently I was in a coffee shop when a road contractor approached me and asked me whether it was true that under a Gallop Government he would not be able to sit down with his boss and work out his terms and conditions of employment. I told him that that was true. It is not a new idea for workers to discuss with their bosses the terms and conditions of their employment that best suit their circumstances and lifestyle. In a modern society that ought to be the norm.

The Minister for Labour Relations seeks to limit the validity of current workplace agreements. One may have philosophical objections to workplace agreements; however, the proper processes of consultation must apply. The Government has not even finished drafting the laws. The laws have not been introduced when they were expected to be. The Government will abuse the parliamentary process. Every employer and employee has the right to enter into a workplace agreement until Parliament passes legislation that says otherwise. Workplace agreements have already been abolished in the public service. Anybody who now joins the public service must do so under an agreement or an award. In January, a man I know of applied for a job in the public service that he saw advertised in the newspaper. At the time he applied, he was informed that he would work under a workplace agreement. After 10 February, however, under the new Labor Government, he could not be given a workplace agreement. He has already started work, presumably under a workplace agreement, and he has been told that it no longer applies. As a result, he has lost \$2 800 per year. That is what this Government offers public servants.

Some 19 000 public servants currently work under workplace agreements. They will now be given no choice in their workplace arrangements. I remember when the former Minister for Labour Relations brought in a Bill to provide choice for employees. He said that the choice of employment and conditions of employment should be a basic right of citizens of a State with the wealth and level of economic development of Western Australia.

However, the current minister is changing that. Why? It is because the unions told him to do so. Then there was the no ticket, no start issue. This minister will not take any action against the no ticket, no start signs. He said that the other day. However, he obviously does not understand the law. If he has not sought advice, it is absolutely reprehensible. If

he has sought advice, I would like to see a precis of it, and so would industry. Industry representatives have written to the minister. They have said that this action breaches sections 96D and 96E of the Industrial Relations Act. I think people have misunderstood that it is an indirect hindering of workers' employment because of their union membership status, and I do not think those people have done what they should have done in providing the minister with advice. Therefore, the minister has obviously formed a strong view that no action will be taken against those sites, even though there has been a breach of the Industrial Relations Act.

Why has the Building and Construction Industry Task Force been abolished? It is because the union said it should be. Why? It is a payback to the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Workers Union of Australia, because during the election campaign the CFMEU ran a \$100 000 advertising campaign against the coalition Government in support of the election of a Gallop Labor Government. The new unit that has been established is a totally toothless tiger. The people from that unit do not cross picket lines and they do not jointly investigate with the police the actions that occur. They wait for formal complaints to be received. They do not get involved with any of the issues that are going on. They close their eyes to what is happening on site.

Then there was the appointment of the member for Peel to review the code of conduct. That demonstrates that the Government is not serious about this matter. The member for Peel has a clear conflict of interest. He is a long-term friend and a big fan of Kevin Reynolds. He was the master of ceremonies at Kevin Reynolds' wedding.

Dr Gallop interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Premier, the member is not taking your interjections. I also remind new members that some interjections are helpful in a debate. However, the member is not inviting interjections, and Hansard would like to be able to perform its task of reporting the debate accurately.

Mrs EDWARDES: Last year the *Sunday Times* sought an opinion of Reynolds from the member for Peel following a series of articles exposing corruption and thuggery of the union. The member for Peel's response was that all that stuff was nonsense. It did not shake his faith in Kevin Reynolds and his belief that the CFMEU is the wealthiest, most successful union due to Reynolds. The member for Peel has a clear conflict of interest. What do we hear from the Minister for Labour Relations? We hear newspeak. On the criticism of the member for Peel's appointment, the Minister for Labour Relations said that the member was misunderstood and that he would facilitate a consensus. When the Minister for Labour Relations spoke about the police wishing to talk to Kevin Reynolds, he said that there was no evidence of any corruption in Western Australia's building industry. Why? It is because his boys from this new special unit, this toothless tiger, are not allowed to go to the sites to investigate. They must wait for a formal complaint. They are not allowed to cross picket lines, and they do not bring in the police. Who will do anything when those people do not have the confidence that this Government will help to support them when it comes to illegal activities?

Domican is a well-known figure from the old Builders Labourers Federation days. He now refers to himself as a corruption fighter. He was also linked to the Murrin Murrin maggots incident, and he is now linked to the Woodside site. What does he say? He says that he tries to talk to people to get everyone together so he can get an agreement. What does that mean? I refer to what Kevin Reynolds said about Graham Pallott's method of getting union membership. Members will recall that last year Mr Pallott was fined \$4 000 in the District Court of Western Australia for what Judge Muller described as particularly reprehensible behaviour aimed at intimidating and forcing subcontractors to pay more than they were contractually obliged to pay. What did Kevin Reynolds, the CFMEU secretary, say in the autumn edition of *The WA Construction Worker*? He said that it was nothing more than normal negotiation tactics. If one reads the language - "nothing more than normal negotiation tactics" - one gets an understanding of where the Minister for Labour Relations and the member for Peel are coming from.

What did Reynolds say about the two building workers who were ordered off a city site? He said, "We do our best to convince them of the merits of joining the union . . ." What is happening about joining a union and actions on building sites? I refer to Gerry Hanssen's Bluewater project in South Perth. Last year Vinnie Molina and Graham Pallott claimed they were assaulted by workers. The workers got fed up with these guys coming on site and totally disrupting their work, thereby causing them to lose pay and so on. The workers put up the boxing kangaroo flag. CFMEU retaliation is now occurring against that site. An article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 30 April states -

The most blatant incident took place on February 20 four days after a new State Labor government was sworn in when four carloads of building workers occupied the Bluewater development site in Perth. The cars arrived at 9.30 am, blocked the driveway, and about 20 unionists went through the site, intimidated workers, tore down a boxing kangaroo flag, and put up a BLF flag, according to statements supplied to the police.

It continues -

In short, it is all a heady brew of intimidation, coercion, extortion, tax avoidance, compensation fraud, worker exploitation, ideological warfare, criminal influences, and costs that are automatically passed on to taxpayers and consumers.

I refer to a royal commission into the building industry that was held some 10 years ago. Nothing has changed. That is the scary part about it. According to that article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Commissioner Roger Gyles stated -

I stress that the demonstration of a lack of integrity and respect for the law by a substantial cross-section of management of companies, associations and unions in this industry should not be 'swept under the carpet'. It will not do to pretend that it is all over, or that it was a case of a few rotten apples in the barrel. It is too widespread, and too high in the echelons of a number of organisations to be so quickly dismissed.

What will this Government do? The latest outrageous allegation to hit my desk from two independent sources concerns the cash in the brown paper bag given to union officials to prevent disputes occurring on site. What is the going rate today, Premier, for union officials not to cause a dispute on site? My information is that it is \$10 000 a day. What an outrage! What is the Minister for Labour Relations doing? His boys are not allowed to cross picket lines and they do not go to sites to investigate.

I refer to disputes. There has been the nurses dispute and the bus strike. The Government has provided extra money. Mr Aslan of the Transport Workers Union of Australia has been involved in the bus strike. That strike is interesting, because it had nothing to do with safety. I quote from an article in *The West Australian* of 25 April, which states -

Mr Aslan said bus drivers had voted Labor because of the Liberal Party's disastrous privatisation agenda and they expected to be looked after.

"The TWU knows the Government has had to put more money into nursing and court security and the transport system cannot be left behind," he said.

That is what it is all about. Court security officers disrupted court cases. There has been the hospital linen strike, and the Police Union (WA) is recommending that officers convert all time off in lieu entitlements to overtime payments. It will cost \$1 million. Has anybody thought what that \$1 million is likely to provide by way of services? There has been a return to union control. Disputes are far greater under Labor. The average days lost per thousand employees fell by more than half when the coalition was in government. From May 1987 to 1993, 188 average working days were lost per thousand employees. From December 1993 to June 2000, 79 average working days were lost per thousand employees.

Workplace agreements will be abolished, along with the Building and Construction Industry Task Force. The New South Wales police are investigating allegations of corruption. No action is being taken on these matters. It is said there is no evidence. There is no evidence because members of the new task force are not allowed to go out and investigate, because they want to protect their jobs. Although the Premier and the Minister for Labour Relations are not in the same faction, the day they take any action against Kevin Reynolds will be the last day they hold those offices. The Opposition knows that Kevin Reynolds is pulling the Government's chain. Whenever he wants something, the Government will jump.

Dr Gallop: He has not done too well under my leadership.

Mrs EDWARDES: We know who is running the Labor Party: It is Kevin Reynolds and the trade union officials. The editorial in *The West Australian* on 21 April shows that we can have no confidence in the Gallop Labor Government on industrial relations. During the election campaign the Premier had to endure union heavyweight Kevin Reynolds' quip that the Premier was like a dog chasing a car - he would not know what to do with it when he caught it. It is now up to the Premier to show that he knows what to do. The Federal Government is contemplating a royal commission into the allegations of corruption in the building industry. Will the Premier support it? Absolutely not, because the Government supports illegal activity on building sites, does not want to know about it, does not see it and will take no action on issues that involve the union movement or trade union officials.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [10.52 am]: The term I used to describe the victory of the Australian Labor Party at the election on 10 February was to the effect that the Labor Party had come out of the wilderness. The Labor Party spent a lot of time in its opposition years talking to the people of Western Australia about what the priorities should be, and the way in which Western Australian Government needed to be reformed so that it could deliver on behalf of the people. When the Labor Party arrived at what it thought would be the oasis of government, it declared, as the title of the Frank Muir children's book put it, *What-A-Mess!* This is what the Labor Party has inherited from the previous Government. A whole range of contracts entered into by the previous Government are constraining what a new Government can do on behalf of the people, and are costing an arm and a leg - money that cannot be spent on core services like health. I refer to deals like the Matrix government car deal, which the Government will be talking about in this Parliament. Day in and day out these deals cost the people of Western Australia millions of dollars. Then the new Government decided to have a look at the health system. It is a total mess. The budget is blowing out, there are no controls and no accountability, and the health system is not delivering to the people of Western Australia the service that they expect.

What about the broad public sector, that exists to serve the people of Western Australia? Talking about a mess, that is what exists in the public sector. Some workers are employed under certain conditions while others are under different conditions, and they work alongside each other. It is impossible for the public sector to deliver on behalf of the people. Under the previous Government, the number of people in senior executive positions increased, while the number of people actually delivering services was on the way down. The present Government will reverse that trend, and I will be

saying something about that to the Parliament later today. The public sector, and particularly the health system, is in a total mess. Contracts entered into by the previous Government circumscribe the ability of the present Government to deliver services on behalf of the people.

The Government went to the well at the centre of the oasis, put down the bucket, and there was nothing! All the money had been blown by the previous Government, and now we are faced with the hard work of looking at all of the programs and activities of government to bring about the sorts of changes that the previous Government lacked the courage to implement. The previous Government went out of power into the sunset, and threw a big party at the expense of the taxpayers of Western Australia. There was a little bit of water at the bottom of the well. We pulled up the bucket, and found that that water was poisoned by eight years of coalition Government. The previous Government reinvented the class struggle. The Labor Party has spent a century in Australia trying to get employers and employees working together for the common good. As a result of the previous Government's eight years in office, the class struggle is back on the agenda. Vicious anti-union legislation passed through this Parliament against the will of the democratically-elected upper House. The legislation was sneaked through before the people who had been elected took up their positions in the upper House. At every occasion the previous Government made it clear that people who wanted to join together and work collectively through unions were not to be given any chance whatsoever. This was made clear through the legislation and the actions of the previous Government. Trade unions were not considered an acceptable part of the fabric of our community. The point I wish to make to the member for Kingsley, the former Minister for Labour Relations, is simple: She has not learned anything. The man who carried through the previous Government's industrial relations policies lost the election for the seat of Riverton. The people of Riverton made a clear statement about those extremist policies. What has happened in Western Australia as a result of those extremist policies is the revival of class conflict. It will take some time for the new Government to get balance back into the system and to create a situation in which individuals, unions and employers can start to work together for the common good again.

With regard to the public sector, the former minister had the gall to talk about discrimination. I remember only too well holding a press conference outside this Parliament with two workers from the Ministry of Sport and Recreation. They had been told by the previous Government that unless they signed a workplace agreement they would not be employed by the Government of Western Australia. That issue went into the courts, which made it absolutely clear that the discrimination practised by the previous Government was illegal. Now the Opposition has the gall to come in here and talk about the new Government, which is trying to bring a sense of balance back into the system. The other aspect of industrial relations under the previous Government affected low-paid and unskilled workers, as well as newly-arrived migrants without knowledge of the English language. The previous Government set up a system under which its mates could exploit these workers, which was exactly what they did. Individuals in the community who were low-paid and vulnerable were driven into the ground so that profits could be earned by the mates of the previous Government. The Opposition has the audacity to come into this Parliament today and talk about the relationship that exists in the Labor Party between trade unions and the political Labor movement.

Vulnerable workers were exploited. That is an indisputable fact. People who would not sign workplace agreements were discriminated against. That is an indisputable fact shown in the courts of Western Australia. People who were active in unions on work sites throughout Western Australia were discriminated against. This Government will bring balance back into the system. However, because the well has been poisoned, it will not be easy. Some people think that as there is now a Labor Government they will be able to do anything. I send a clear message that that is not the way it is going to work. We will give trade unions the right to do what they deserve to do in a democratic society - but no more than that. Individuals will still have the right to choose whether to join a union. When the Government introduces legislation to the Parliament it will provide for the flexibility that are needed in a modern economy. It will be a difficult task, as many people in the community are angry. They are angry because they have had eight years of being told that they were not decent human beings and their organisations were not part and parcel of a democratic society. We will have to let them know that their anger is perfectly legitimate. However, when they go over the top and break the law or act improperly, we will take a stand. It will be unlike the previous Government, which ignored discrimination against unionists and people who would not sign workplace agreements and legislated to try to beat unions into the ground so that they were not part and parcel of our community. We have seen all the prejudices seep out today. It has all bubbled up - the frustration of losing an election and the anti-union prejudices. That is the sort of poison we want to take out of the system. Western Australia faces many challenges. We want to build an outward looking community that participates in the global economy through the strengths of its economy.

One strength of our economy that we will have that the previous Government did not have is that we will protect our old-growth forests. We intend to tell the whole world, because it will be the basis of creating new jobs and opportunities for Western Australians. We will ensure that there is productivity at the workplace on the basis of the mutual recognition of the interests of all those who participate in the workplace. We will make sure that fairness underpins the system and that there is legitimate choice. I have met workers from all over the State and the constant theme - whether in Port Hedland or Kalgoorlie - is that they want choice. Workers have been driven into workplace agreements and they now want a proper choice that is underpinned by a standard. The former Government created the system and it has two standards. The former Government had its standard down low and the award standards were up

high. The aim of the exercise was quite simple. The former member for Riverton knew what he was on about: It was to push levels down to their pathetic standard.

This motion is completely misplaced. The new Government will restore balance and fairness to the labour market.

Mr Board: Do we not have the lowest rate of youth unemployment in the country?

Dr GALLOP: This Government is concerned with creating employment in Western Australia that is fair and reasonable for all involved. The member for Murdoch must acknowledge that some of the people who were employed during his time in government were exploited. He will not answer the question. He is really saying that employment can be obtained only through exploitation. That is not going to happen under this Government.

Mr Board: Some people may have done the wrong thing.

Dr GALLOP: It was done with your Government's sanction.

Mr Board: It does not mean that the whole system must be thrown out.

Dr GALLOP: Let us look at what is happening around the other States in Australia. In which State did the most important national event of 2000 occur? One has to agree that it was New South Wales, with the Olympic Games. It was a most magnificent achievement of the Australian people. I use the expression "the Australian people" because we were all involved. The New South Wales Government coordinated the efforts of volunteers and other Governments. Is it not strange that that major event in Australian history was brought about without Graham Kierath's third wave legislation? The Opposition has the gall to come into the House and talk about productivity and achievement! The Olympic Games occurred because the State's well was not poisoned. The former Government in this State poisoned the well of industrial relations. This Government will need time to purify it. The Government will bring fairness back into the system and allow for flexibility. We will make it clear that people have the choice about whether to join a union. In respect of flexibility in the labour market, it will be reasonable and fair for all concerned. We will see a regeneration of the commitment of the common good to people. That is what has been lost in the past eight years in Western Australia - trust has vanished. People became cynical about the system because the system was set up by the previous Government to exploit the less fortunate. That was the problem. One of the first things that my new Government did was to increase the minimum wage to \$440 a week as of 22 March. That is a clear sign of the Government's direction in industrial relations. There will be fairness and flexibility. Choice will be underpinned by standards and we will start to get rid of the poison that has been created during the eight years of coalition Government.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [11.07 am]: This issue is very important for its politics - and I recognise there are philosophical differences across this Chamber. There are philosophical differences between the Liberal Party and the Labor Party. The issue of what happens in the workplace has an immediate implication for the conduct of good government in this State. It will have a long-term implication for employment, financial independence and the opportunity for people to pursue and achieve throughout their lives. There is no doubt that the economy is headed for a reasonably difficult period ahead. We will not enter a recession but there will be a tightening up; there are already indications of a financial squeeze being placed upon corporations. It is affecting a number of Western Australian businesses.

Dr Gallop: Your previous Government blew the budget. That is what we inherited.

Mr BARNETT: The new Government inherited a \$98 million surplus. That is the surplus on the operating balance. The Premier is welcome to argue with the Treasury. It does not matter how much he bleats or protests, his Government inherited a \$98 million surplus. It is not a large surplus but it is a surplus.

What has happened since the Labor Party came into power? There have been statements about setting up a new unit to look at the building industry task force. The new minister, the member for Nollamara, made various comments. What was the immediate response of the unions, in particular, the construction unions? I quote from *The Australian* of 10 March -

Unionists privately describe John Kobelke as a "weak bastard" with little clue as to the complexities of Western Australia's volatile industrial relations portfolio.

They picked the minister for being weak and ill informed. Straight away Reynolds and his mates dictated to the minister what would happen in the workplace on industrial sites in the construction and building industry. Immediately we started to see, for a variety of reasons - and every industrial dispute is different as some have right and wrong on their side - a rapid deterioration in the industrial relations environment in this State.

In the 15 years or so that I have observed, followed and participated in industrial relations issues, I have never seen such a rapid deterioration in the industrial relations climate as has been seen in the first part of this year. The first issue was the linen care dispute. The Government made an immediate announcement that new workplace agreements would be valid for only six months. The Government has made questionable announcements concerning the current law in this State. The Government may well announce its intention; however, it has affected the rights of people according to the law in the workplace. The Government's authority to do that was questionable. A dispute over court security and

transportation followed. Then, 200 bus drivers held a stop-work meeting. There has also been continuing disquiet within the nursing profession.

The Minister for Labour Relations abolished the building industry task force and announced that it would be replaced by a building industry and special projects inspectorate. On the surface, this does not appear to be much different. However, as my colleague the member for Kingsley pointed out, the difference is that the task force set up by the previous Government was proactive. That task force worked with the industry - unions, employers and contractors. The new entity will respond only when a complaint is made. Members know that in the building and construction industry, those who make a complaint are targeted. The threat works when an owner of a project is most exposed financially and is trying to complete the project on time and on budget. The unions spread the project out, slow it down and disrupt it. The builder, the small businessman and the contractors go broke. People lose their jobs. That is why the new department will not receive many complaints. People will not complain because they would be directly targeted if they did. Many will wear that and will take it on. However, they know that the subcontractors who work for them will lose their contracts and the employees of those subcontractors will lose their jobs. That is the reality. That is why the task force will not receive complaints. The task force must be proactive and constructive.

The member for Kingsley pointed out that "no ticket, no start" signs appeared on building sites early in the term of the new Government. It was said to be a public middle finger salute to the deposed Liberal Government and its industrial relations reforms by Kevin Reynolds. It was a political, industrial campaign. Every opinion I have received is that those signs are illegal. However, the responses of the minister and Premier were that it did not matter.

Mr Hyde interjected.

Mr BARNETT: Billboards are allowed, but signs that say "No ticket, no start" are not. People cannot be prevented from lawfully entering their place of work. That is what is happening and it is against the law. The use of intimidation, threats and now the question of money changing hands have been posed in this House. The industry has gone back to the thuggery, threats and intimidation of previous times in this State. In addition to comments made by the member for Kingsley today, is the minister aware of money changing hands on building sites?

Mr Kobelke: No.

Mr BARNETT: Will the minister investigate?

Mr Kobelke: How can I investigate when you don't give me a site or someone to talk to about it?

Mr BARNETT: An allegation has been made. Will the minister investigate? Will the minister ask the department whether there is any validity to that allegation? Will the minister send inspectors out to ask questions and investigate? Yes or no?

Mr Kobelke: To what?

Mr BARNETT: Will the minister ask for an investigation into the allegation of money changing hands on industrial sites?

Mr Kobelke: The department will investigate all allegations it receives. It cannot investigate the allegations unless it is told what they are. I cannot say yes to your nonsense question.

Mr BARNETT: The minister will not do it.

Mr Kobelke: I have instructed the department to investigate all allegations.

Mr BARNETT: The minister will not do it. The Opposition knows that the Government will not do it. The Opposition knows that money is changing hands on building sites. It is a fact. It has been said that it costs \$10 000 a project.

Mr Kobelke: If you give the information to me or to the department it will be investigated.

Mr BARNETT: Will the minister give me a personal guarantee to investigate and act on the no ticket, no start issue if he is provided with evidence?

Mr Kobelke: I will not personally investigate. I will instruct the department to investigate.

Mr BARNETT: Will the minister be responsible and publicly announce that he will investigate that issue?

Mr Kobelke: I will say publicly that I will instruct the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations to investigate.

Mr BARNETT: Weak! Kevin Reynolds was right. He got the minister in one.

The minister formed his new inspectorate. What is it called? He has appointed the member for Peel to chair it. I do not have any objections to the member for Peel. However, when a person is appointed to chair a group, he must be, and must be seen to be, impartial - to have a degree of neutrality - particularly in a sensitive area. It was improper to appoint the member for Peel, who is a close friend of Kevin Reynolds. There is nothing wrong with that friendship.

However, to appoint him as the chair of that body when he has a declared close friendship with one of the major protagonists is improper. The minister could have found someone else. I do not mind the appointment of the member for Peel to government roles. He will probably do a good job. However, he should not be given that job. There is a clear conflict of interest. The minister has put the member in a difficult position.

The issues go on. Not only are there allegations of intimidation, threats and cash changing hands, the New South Wales Police Service is investigating allegations that organised crime has infiltrated the building industry. The New South Wales police are specifically interested in the relationship between Kevin Reynolds and Tom Domican. Does the minister know of Tom Domican?

Mr Kobelke: I do not know him. I have read about him in the newspaper.

Mr BARNETT: This is not a political allegation. The New South Wales police are looking at the relationship between Domican, a well-known crime figure in Australia, and Kevin Reynolds. Reynolds does not seem interested, nor does the minister or the Premier. There have been allegations of intimidation, threats and money changing hands. There is a sense that a link exists between organised crime in Australia and the construction and building industry in this State. The minister should do his job. He should make sure that this does not get out of control. It is always a difficult industry to manage - everyone is aware of that. It has a long history and some extreme people. I sincerely hope that organised crime does not infiltrate the building and construction industry in this State in any way. The minister should be out there. He should have the support of the Premier, who does not seem to want to get involved. The Government should nip this issue in the bud before it gets out of control.

The minister has said that the no ticket, no start issue does not matter and he has been backed by the Premier. The Government does not seem to think it is illegal. It does not care. However, it is important for what happens on industrial sites. The building industry has always been the most volatile industry. This volatility has also been seen in other areas of the community. There is a sense of disorder in industrial relations in this State. There is a sense of chaos, of a Government and a minister who are weak and not prepared to act. The situation is deteriorating rapidly.

I again refer to some figures. When the coalition Government was formed in 1993, admittedly following a severe economic period in the early part of the 1990s, the unemployment rate in this State was 11.4 per cent.

Mr Kobelke: That is not true. Your previous leader used those figures several times, but they are not true.

Mr BARNETT: Okay. I will look at the figures. Unemployment was of that order. The point is that the unemployment rate through the 1980s and early 1990s was in excess of 10 per cent. The unemployment rate in December 2000, when the coalition handed over government, was 5.9 per cent. Members should bear in mind that the former Government managed this State through the Asian economic crisis, which many commentators believed would have a dramatic and disastrous effect on Western Australia given that 70 per cent of the State's exports go to the Asian region. However, the former Government managed this State through that crisis of 1997.

We handed over an unemployment level of 5.9 per cent. During that period we had growth of some 203 000 jobs in this State. Our Government had a term of employment growth, in spite of the Asian economic crisis.

This Government will face a particular challenge because, although the domestic Australian economy is not headed for a recession, it has slowed. The international economy is reasonably strong but it is mixed; there is a sense of some uncertainty.

I understand the Government's philosophical objection to workplace agreements, but it should understand that there are changes in the structure of the economy, the workplace and people's aspirations. The economy is not as it was in the 1960s and 1970s, where much of Labor's philosophy and views seem to come from.

Members on the other side might chuckle. More than half the people in this State work for small business. The growth sector has been in the services industry. Small business employment accounts for approximately half; most employment is found in the services sector, which tends to have myriad different areas. There has also been a change in the nature of people. Everyone shares the concern that the number of full-time jobs relative to part-time jobs is diminishing, but that is a worldwide trend. Increasingly, people in the community are opting for part-time and differing working relationships. That is a demographic fact; it is a reality. A long time ago a union official, the ex head of the United Auto Workers union in Detroit, one of the tough old crusty union officials, described to me what in the late 1980s was the "me, too" generation. He could not have said it better.

It is now a generation of people of varying ages who opt for greater flexibility in their life and working arrangements, they do not necessarily want full-time work, and increasingly there is a demand for part-time flexible working relationships. This does not apply to everyone, but there is that change in the aspirations of the population worldwide. This is related to the fact that the participation rate has trended up over time. We no longer have the typical situation of the man going to work with mum and the two kids staying at home. The participation rate has risen as people of varying ages - younger people and older people - stay in employment because they like to work and they like flexibility,

variability and variety in their work. That is a basic demographic fact. Members on the government side are back in the 1960s and 1970s. That is what the people in this society in the twenty-first century want.

We are also seeing the expansion of the so-called “new” economy. The new economy is not in the industrial relations environment that those on the government side seem to think. Those members are still stereotyped in traditional manufacturing industries. The new economy is nothing like that. The young people working in these industries are not the nine to fivers. They do not have an industrial award; they do not think that way.

Members on the government side are out of touch. I am not disputing their philosophy or concern for the weak or the low-paid worker or anything else. They should get up to speed; understand the importance of small business as the employer; understand the importance of the services sector; understand the “me, too” generation which wants variety and variability and which does not necessarily want full-time work; and, understand the expansion of the new economy and the variations in work relationships. They are not political consequences; they are demographic, economic and social changes taking place in the community. I am not saying there cannot be changes or improvements, but workplace agreements operate almost like the transmission mechanism in a car. They allowed flexibility. Workplace agreements allowed employers to have flexibility in whom they employed and the employee to have flexibility. I want to tell the whiz kids up the back what will happen -

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr BARNETT: The member is in the sin bin. She has enough problems in the sin bin. Here she has to do her job.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call members to order.

Mr BARNETT: Madam Deputy Speaker, it would be a good idea in debates such as this if the Speaker was in the Chamber, and I hope he will be in future. I mean no disrespect to you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is when the Speaker needs to be in the Chair.

Ms MacTiernan: The Liberal Party is not comfortable -

Mr BARNETT: Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not want interjections. Will you act, Madam Deputy Speaker? I do not want interjections; I have three minutes left.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mr BARNETT: I have three minutes left and I want to make one point. I want to tell members what is likely to happen in the labour market in this State. The reality is that the participation rate is high; it has traditionally been high in this State. The participation rate is the proportion of people over 15 years of age who have or are seeking work. In the next couple of months the participation rate will start to fall, because people will see job opportunities drying up. Therefore, those who are optional as to whether they work or not will not continue to look actively for work. We will see the participation rate start to edge down. When the participation rate falls it will for a while mask what is happening in the labour market. We will not immediately see a change in the unemployment rate.

The unemployment rate is a residual statistic; it is defined by the work force - the lower the participation rate, the lower the number of jobs. It will fall to a level at which it hits those people who really want to work or need to work. When it reaches that point it will not go any further and at that stage the unemployment rate will jump. The first sign of this will be the participation rate fall. However, I regret to say that under this Government and the types of practices it follows, plus the outside economic environment, unemployment will rise around July-August of this year.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BARNETT: I hope members opposite have the ability in government to manage this, and I hope they can manage it half as well as we managed the Asian economic crisis. They are in government now. Stop blaming the previous Government; stop being weak as a minister; get out there and start behaving like a Government.

MR SWEETMAN (Ningaloo) [11.28 am]: I wish to comment on some of these issues because a number of them relate to my electorate. I will confine my comments to my electorate rather than refer to the broader state issues. I have been concerned for some time about a dispute at Newman that involved approximately 30 per cent of the work force wanting to shift across to individual contracts, which would have put approximately 80 per cent of the work force on individual contracts. That has never automatically meant that union membership would cease. Unfortunately, when workers have made the move to individual contracts they have been ostracised and treated with such ridicule and disdain that many of them have relinquished their union membership.

There was no need for the union to take the stance it did against those workers. I find it extraordinary that under the federal Act an inducement could be construed to mean getting approximately \$20 000 more in their pay packets. I am sure that at the time the legislators drafted that legislation they assumed that intimidation, bullying or pressure to shift to

an individual contract meant risk of sacking, intimidation, fewer jobs on site or whatever. I am sure that is what the legislators would have defined as coercion from shifting to individual contracts. It gave the employer greater flexibility and the company was able to offer greater returns to the workers when they went on individual contracts.

Within two weeks of the election I returned to Newman and spoke to some of the people I have got to know very well in that town - most of them work out on the hill, and some are on the award and some are on individual contracts - and I found it extraordinary that intimidation had started. There was none prior to the election. There was whispering and murmuring in town, but on site the workers and the company had it under control. By that I mean it was a more harmonious workplace than it had been two weeks after the election. Placards were put on the dashboards of people's cars, even stuck to their pushbikes, on their lockers or whatever. It is nonsense. That is the sort of softly, softly mind game approach that is used now that more than 50 per cent of the work force is on individual contracts. Workers are made to feel vulnerable.

Mr Logan: Is financial coercion by the employer not acceptable?

Mr SWEETMAN: It is acceptable if the worker's situation will improve. My brother works for Rio Tinto Limited at Lake MacLeod, outside Carnarvan. About 150 people are employed on that site and, since the individual contracts have come in, less than 10 people are on the old award structure. It is a happy and contented workplace and it has never been more productive. As a result, the company is more viable than ever and is expanding its contracts. It recently secured an additional 400 tonnes, so more people will be employed.

Mr Hyde: Under a Labor Government.

Mr SWEETMAN: That is incidental to this process. It is significant that the majority of the work force - more than 90 per cent - is on individual contracts and the company is expanding. I put the politics and the ideology to one side. The minister is the Minister for Labour Relations, and also the Minister for Employment and Training. As the Leader of the Opposition said, when the downside of this starts to manifest, whether it is in three months, six months or 12 months, the minister must, as he took an oath to do, represent the best interests of all people and all workers in this State. He must ensure that when he concludes that he has gone the wrong way, he returns to the direction we have been taking for the past 10 or 12 years. It is not isolated to eight years of coalition government.

I caution the minister. The workers in my electorate are already anxious, whether they work on a gold or salt mine or with gypsum or iron ore. Many of those miners are there only because the workplace is more flexible. There will be problems in the event that many of our initiatives are wound back. The minister must be man enough to front up to them.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara - Minister for Labour Relations) [11.31 am]: I am pleased that the Opposition has brought on this debate. I am happy to talk about industrial relations at any time. The members did not address the amendment, although they covered related areas. I do not suggest they had no right to address those issues, but I did not hear any speaker on the other side talk to the points of the amendment. I think it appropriate that I respond to the specific matters raised by opposition members and then, if time permits, refer to the details of the amendment we are debating. The Leader of the Opposition, as he has done in this place for many years, gave a speech that was largely rational and to the point. He is absolutely right about the matters regarding the employment cycle and small business.

Mr Barnett: What about the bit about you being "a weak bastard"?

Mr KOBELKE: I will come to that. It leads me into my next point, which is that some of the assertions of opposition members were not factual and were less than honest. I put on the record my reasons for believing that the Opposition was not honest in many of the matters it raised. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kingsley both made the accusation that the Government would not stand up to unions. The Leader of the Opposition referred to accusations by a union leader that I am weak. I accept that those accusations were made; they are public knowledge. However, the accusation was made because he believed that I was not doing enough for the unions, that I was doing the things employers wanted, and therefore he considered me weak. I have no problem with that, because we want to try to get the balance right. If it comes down to colourful language or people wanting to heap abuse on me, I will take that, and I will give it back when I think it appropriate.

The members referred to the no ticket, no start signs and suggested I was not standing up to unions. I am working on the advice given to the previous Government that legal action could not be taken. I am waiting for further advice. However, the advice given to the Government five years ago was that nothing could be done about it. I am acting on that advice.

Mrs Edwardes: Having been Attorney General, I wouldn't ask you to table that advice, but could you give us a precis of it?

Mr KOBELKE: No. I told Crown Law that there are signs along St Georges Terrace and that people are suggesting they are illegal. If they are illegal, I want action taken. Crown Law replied that the previous Government had sought

advice, and the advice given was that there was no basis on which legal action could be taken. I asked for further advice. That advice has not been provided. Legal action cannot be taken because there is no basis for it.

Mrs Edwardes: We are not talking about the 100 per cent union and proud of it signs. They are a different form of sign from the no ticket, no start signs. We are talking about indirect intimidation, and that is quite clearly covered under the Act.

Mr KOBELKE: This is the area in which the Opposition was less than honest. The sign itself does not necessarily amount to intimidation. It could be construed as part of intimidation in the light of the other things, but the sign itself is not. The member knows that quite well.

The Opposition also made some false accusations that the inspectorate is not going out to the sites unless a report is made. The inspectorate is visiting sites and trying to get people to make reports. There is a difference between the new building industry special projects inspectorate not visiting sites and the fact that prosecution and legal action cannot be taken unless a formal complaint is made. The inspectorate will talk to any builder and employee if there is any suggestion that it can help when things are not as they should be. It was asserted that the police would not be involved. We have developed special contact between the police, the inspectorate and the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations so that they can work cooperatively. We are pursuing that aim. If we find a better way of doing it, we will implement it. The Opposition asserted that things were simply not happening.

The member for Kingsley is upset that a union official went onto a site and used crude language and spoke to someone in a rough way. She thought it was somehow threatening. My colleagues will vouch for the fact - although I do not claim it as a credit - that I tend not to use rough language. It is not my style. I was not brought up that way. It is interesting, however, because there is a record, through police tapes, of the member for Kingsley's involvement in a meeting with the office of the mayor in the City of Wanneroo. There is a strong suggestion through those tapes that the member for Kingsley likes to be vivid and expressive in her language. Yet she takes offence at a union official on site with some workmates getting a bit fulsome in his language.

Mrs Edwardes: I refer to his behaviour. It was referred to by the court as reprehensible behaviour.

Mr KOBELKE: Given what is on the public record about the member's language, I would not have thought that she would find that person's language offensive. However, it is another matter.

Ms MacTiernan: I think she was described as foul-mouthed.

Mr KOBELKE: Yes; I believe one commentator involved in the judicial investigation suggested it was foul language. I suppose foul language is not the same as crude language, which could be seen to be intimidating.

I have limited time, and many points were made by the opposition speakers. One was that union membership has declined. That is factually correct; it has declined markedly and there is a range of reasons for that. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the change of culture in most western countries away from mateship towards the "look after myself" mentality. That change in social values has clearly been a factor undermining union membership, but I put to the House that the biggest single factor in declining union membership over the past 10 years or so - and I say this with some regret - was Labor Governments. Labor Governments implemented the accord, which delivered much for the working people of this nation. Many union members concluded that, with Labor Governments at the state and federal level, they did not need unions to stick up for them. I believe that was the biggest single factor in driving down union membership. Labor Governments were looking after the working people of this nation at both the state and federal level. However, when conservative Governments were installed at the federal and state level, people started to realise that without the defence of unions, they were very vulnerable.

The member for Kingsley was also misleading in again referring to a letter which the Opposition has tried to put into the context that we have done a deal with unions on our industrial relations law reform. The Opposition does not want to admit that in the extensive consultation I had with the unions and industry, we were given many different points of view, both verbally and written, and at a number of those meetings the unions rolled up with letters of request, and those letters of request were considered. I rejected the letter of request to which I assume the Opposition is referring. It did not become part of our policy. However, the Opposition would like to say that somehow a deal was done, because it has a copy of a letter written by a union leader putting his case - as he had every right to do. I said to that leader and to union leaders in a joint meeting that I would not accept the requests that were placed in that letter. Therefore, no deal was done whatsoever.

The member for Kingsley also referred to the public servant who started work earlier this year but then found that he would be paid less because we had withdrawn his workplace agreement. I believe the member for Kingsley was less than genuine in the half-case that she put. If that person had taken on a job under a workplace agreement, that workplace agreement should have been registered, and it would then still be in force. We stated clearly that as of the date of the announcement, we would not offer new employment on the basis of a workplace agreement; and the Government, as the employer, has the option of doing that.

I now take up the request from the Opposition for a royal commission. I remind members opposite that it was a federal Liberal coalition Government that established the royal commission into the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union. That was very interesting for the Liberal Party of Western Australia, because the Liberal party and its mates were up to their necks in bottom-of-the-harbour deals. Therefore, while there was clearly a mess in the painters and dockers union that needed to be tidied up - and I am glad that was done - we found that the real corruption was with the mates of the Liberal Party.

There are problems in the building industry. If there is also corruption in the building industry, that should be rooted out, and I am on record as giving full support to that and have told my departments they must cooperate fully with the New South Wales Police Service if it makes any request of them. I am on public record as suggesting that union leaders should also cooperate with any investigations into corruption by the police or other appropriate authorities. Again, that union leader called me weak, because I said he should talk to the police. He has his point of view, and he is entitled to it, and I have mine. My view is that corruption has no place in Western Australia; and this is the point of the debate within the building and construction industry.

The point that was well made by the member for Innaloo in his maiden speech is that it was under the former Government that corruption became evident in Western Australia, yet that Government did nothing about it. One such incident is the maggots at Murrin Murrin and the claim of extortion. That happened years ago, but what did the former Government do? It ran off and tried to get press coverage, because it was trying to create a false enemy, a false devil, in the form of some members of the union movement. That is what it used it for, and that is what the federal Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Tony Abbott, seems to be about now. He is not about cleaning up messes in the building and construction industry. He is about grasping at straws and creating out of industrial relations some issue that can be run in the next federal election; and of course his Liberal colleagues in Western Australia want to do everything they can to assist their federal colleagues to be re-elected. That is what it is about. If there were any genuine attempts to deal with corruption, the various authorities would be doing their job. That is not what it is about. It is about trying to create an image that somehow corruption is linked to the union movement; therefore, unions are corrupt, and because the Labor Government has a special relationship with unions, the corruption can be smeared onto us. That is all it is. We could take the same line with the Liberal Government in its connection with big business. We could drag out all the well-known crime figures and show where they or their associates have given money to the Liberal Party. That does not make the Liberal Party corrupt.

Point of Order

Mr BARNETT: The member opposite has made the allegation that well-known crime figures give money to the Liberal Party. I ask him either to substantiate or withdraw that comment.

Mr KOBELKE: That is not covered by any standing order. If the Leader of the Opposition had listened to the last part of my comment before he interrupted me, he would have heard me say we are not making that allegation, because it would mean that the Liberal Party was corrupt because some people who are known to be involved in corruption might have passed money through the Liberal Party.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member is not impugning a member of this House. It is a matter of debate.

Debate Resumed

Mr Barnett: You are a disgrace. You said "well-known crime figures". I challenge you to nominate one.

Mr KOBELKE: The Saffrons.

Mr Barnett: Made a donation to the Liberal Party?

Mr KOBELKE: Yes - a member of the Saffron family. Does the Leader of the Opposition want more names of people who donate regularly at Liberal Party functions? However, that does not make the Liberal Party corrupt, the same as if one union official were found to have acted corruptly, as has happened in the past and will happen in the future, that would have no connection to the Labor Party. An issue arose a few years ago - it received little press coverage - when I believed a union person in this State whom I knew had been involved in corrupt activity. There was clear evidence. I told the union officials to take that matter directly to the fraud squad. I made inquiries months later and found that no prosecution had ever occurred under the former Government. I believed there was prima facie evidence for a prosecution. I urged that the proper approach be taken, and I believed charges should be laid, but they were never laid.

Mr Barnett: Your allegation is that Saffron has made donations.

Mr KOBELKE: Saffron and the Saffron family, and they have been known to be at Liberal functions - and they have the right to be there; does the Liberal Party want to bar them from coming through the door?

Mr Barnett: You are a big shot now; you are a minister. Your allegation is that Saffron has made donations -

Mr KOBELKE: The Saffron family.

Another point raised by the Opposition is employment. That is a very worrying issue. I turn first to the figures raised by the member for Murdoch. During most of the term of the last Government, the unemployment figures in this State were low. That is great. The issue, however, is what did the Government of Western Australia between 1993 and 2000 do to contribute to that. That question is much more difficult to answer, because employment growth in the first seven years of the former Government was about 26 per cent. Employment growth in the first seven years of the Labor Government in the 1980s was 29 per cent. Therefore, the former Government did not even match Labor's growth figures for a comparable period. The figures are clearly cyclical over the longer term. The Leader of the Opposition is completely wrong when he says that when the former Government was elected in 1993, unemployment was 11.4 per cent. It was not.

Mrs Edwardes: What was it?

Mr KOBELKE: I cannot give the figure off the top of my head. It was around 9.4 per cent. It had come down substantially. It was 11.4 per cent at the worst part of the recession 18 months previously.

Mr Board: Did we have the highest unemployment figures in Australia in 1992?

Mr KOBELKE: We know that unemployment and employment are cyclical. What we have had in Western Australia under both Liberal and Labor Governments is the lowest unemployment figures in the nation. A number of years ago under the former Government, and also under Labor in the 1980s, Western Australia had the lowest unemployment figures in the whole of Australia; and at the depth of the recession in 1990-91, we had the highest. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to go on with his stupid nonsense of using figures inappropriately, he can do that, but he will have no credibility.

Mr Board: Would you with integrity agree that between 1993 and 2000, Western Australia had a lower level of unemployment for both the general population and youth than it had had for a long time?

Mr KOBELKE: That is based on the fact that we have had sustained economic growth, and that sustained economic growth has been driven largely by the international marketplace. That is very clear from the figures. The point we need to make - and I accept the warnings of the Leader of the Opposition - is that we are on a downturn. We have been on a downturn for 12 months. In the past 12 months there has been no growth in full-time employment in Western Australia; it has been static. Growth has occurred only in part-time employment, and that is a reflection of the slow nature of the Western Australian economy compared with the good times we experienced in the preceding years, especially in the 1980s.

Mr Barnett: We have set you up so well with projects in this State.

Mr KOBELKE: The Leader of the Opposition has got it wrong. The Labor Party has formed Government during a downturn in the economic cycle; however, we will do everything we can to turn it around as quickly as possible.

Mr Barnett: Your colleagues are boasting about the \$2.4 billion North West Shelf project. Who approved that?

Mr KOBELKE: That project got off the ground under this Government. It is similar to the first export phase that was approved by the Burke Government in the 1980s. The great boom in the gold mining industry happened during the Burke Government in the 1980s. Members opposite are less than honest when they use these facts and figures in a selective way.

I will address a couple of points in the motion, as opposed to responding to the matters that have been raised. The first point of the motion notes with regret the State Government's decision to abolish the successful workplace agreements introduced by the previous State Government. I am glad that the Opposition considers them to have been successful, because I believe they were a major factor that contributed to the former Government losing the election. Unlike the Opposition, the public does not believe that having the lowest minimum wage in Australia is a success. The Labor Party also does not believe that is a success. It rejects totally that proposition. On the basis of the previous Court Government's study by Associate Professor Crockett and Dr Preston from Curtin University, the introduction of workplace agreements by the former Government also meant that women in Western Australia were, on average, over \$20 a week worse off than women in the rest of Australia. Having made women in Western Australia worse off than women in the other States of Australia is the Opposition's basis for saying workplace agreements were a success. The people of Western Australia reject that. They threw out Graham Kierath who they considered to be the symbol of workplace agreements. He was rejected totally by the electorate in a safe Liberal seat.

Similarly, I could go through the other points relating to choice in the workplace. What the Opposition says is not true; it is not the reality and it is not perceived as the reality by the electors of Western Australia. They have elected the Gallop Labor Government to put fairness back into workplace relations and to ensure that employers and employees are looked after so that it can achieve Western Australia's potential and not be dragged back into the old class warfare approach that the Court Government foisted onto this State.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (20)

Mr Ainsworth	Mr Cowan	Mr Johnson	Mr Sullivan
Mr Barnett	Mrs Edwardes	Mr Marshall	Mr Sweetman
Mr Birney	Mr Edwards	Mr Masters	Mr Trenorden
Mr Board	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Omodei	Mr Waldron
Dr Constable	Mr House	Mr Pental	Mr Bradshaw (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (30)

Mr Andrews	Mr Hill	Ms McHale	Mr Ripper
Mr Bowler	Mr Hyde	Mr McRae	Mrs Roberts
Mr Brown	Mr Kobelke	Mr Marlborough	Mr Templeman
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kucera	Mr Murray	Mr Watson
Mr Dean	Mr Logan	Mr O’Gorman	Mr Whitely
Mr D’Orazio	Ms MacTiernan	Mr Quigley	Dr Woollard
Dr Edwards	Mr McGinty	Ms Radisich	Ms Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Gallop	Mr McGowan		

Pair

Mr Day

Ms Martin

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR D’ORAZIO (Ballajura) [11.58 am]: It is indeed an honour to stand here today to deliver my maiden speech. I congratulate the Deputy Speaker, for being elected not only as the member for Wanneroo, but also as the Deputy Speaker, and for being a member of the class of 2001. A new term was mentioned today, “the whiz-kids”, although I am not sure whether I fit into that category.

Mr Barnett: We thought “the weakest link” might be right.

Mr D’ORAZIO: Thanks. It is a privilege for me to rise to make my maiden speech. I dedicate this speech to my mother and my father. My mother passed away a number of years ago and I hope that wherever she is, she is proud of me today. The road I have travelled to get here has been a slow one, and I will record some of that history. I am the product of Italian migrants. I am the first parliamentarian anywhere in Australia from Abruzzo. It is the only region of Italy that is of any consequence, in case anybody does not know! Interestingly, I think I am the example of what the ethnic fabric of this community is. My father arrived here in 1949, and for the next two years he pushed a pushbike 19 kilometres to work. That is how it was done in those days. He arrived here with a pair of trousers and an empty suitcase. Two years later my mother arrived, and I remember her describing her early days in this wonderful, fortunate country. She recalled how for six months she cried every day because she had been brought to this forsaken place. She could not speak a word of English, had no way of communicating, and even to get a loaf of bread or a bottle of milk, she had to ask her next-door neighbour, who could not understand her anyway. For me, it highlights some of the problems that some of our migrants suffer today. However, it also shows that this is a great State and a great country and the land of opportunity. Those peasants - my family - who came from a background of subsistence farmers in Italy, where they basically worked for their food, a house in which to live and nothing else, were able to come here and make good.

After buying land in Bayswater and developing a market garden and a small home in which mum and dad, my grandparents, my uncle on my mother’s side, my uncle on my father’s side and three boys lived, by supporting each other and working together we were able to make a difference. We worked extremely hard, and I think that is where my work ethic and my role model has come from. My father worked for something like 18 hours a day catching bags of superphosphate that weighed 80 kilograms each. I could not catch one even if it were handed to me on a plate. The work ethic of those days stands us all in good stead for the role we play today. It taught me that if I took nothing for granted, worked hard and was dedicated, I would succeed.

The privilege of being a member of Parliament was brought home to me by a dear friend, James Miorada, who said, “You can have no greater privilege than to be selected by members of your community to be their representative to make laws for them.” After 20 years in public life, I had forgotten about some of those duties and responsibilities. Coming into this House three days ago for the first sitting suddenly brought all that back to me and made me understand that, as law-makers, we have responsibilities and must make sure that we look after those people in the community who are less fortunate than we.

My passage into public life probably began as a 17-year-old when I said to my father, “I’m not sure whether this market gardening and this hard work is my caper.” He commented to me, “I never had the opportunity. You have the opportunity. Make the most of it.” Hopefully, today I make him proud.

My first foray into public life was as a chemist. After working hard for three years, I decided that I would go into my own small business and open a chemist shop. Therefore, I went to the local authority with a wonderful plan to develop a chemist shop. Then I came across that wonderful word "precedent". The block that I had was 13 metres wide. I went to the town planner, who said, "We have these wonderful rules that say you need an 8 metre setback from one side boundary and a 2 metre setback from the other boundary." I said to him, "Do you understand what you are telling me? You are telling me that from a 13 metre block I will end up with a 9 foot wide chemist shop." He said to me, "They are the rules." I said, "But you have discretion to vary those rules." He said to me, "No, it would create a precedent." Hence my love affair with precedents. I thought that after 20 years in local government I would have created enough precedents to exhaust the supply. After three days in this place, I realise that precedents are alive and well, and there are still many more to overcome.

I went to the meeting at which the council - the elected representatives of the community - was considering my application. Interestingly, my application was dealt with and not one elected representative made any comment about how absurd the regulations or what was happening were. There was I, as a young 23-year-old with hopefully a future in small business, being destroyed by the lack of representation of those people around that table. They probably wish they had approved my application, because they probably would not have had me in local government for 20 years. Interestingly, when we appealed to the minister, the setback was nil - but it did launch my 20 years in local government.

At the age of 24 years I entered local government. At the age of 27 years I became mayor of the City of Bayswater, and served uninterrupted for 17 years until the election on 10 February when I resigned. I thank the chief executive officer, Mario Carosella, who is in the gallery, and also the new mayor Lou Magro and councillors of the City of Bayswater for the support they gave me during those 17 years.

Local government is a great instrument of the people. It allows people to have a say. It is important that we foster that vehicle called local government. When I was in that place called local government, my criticism of all the members who came from local government into this House was that they forgot from where they came. There seemed to be a wall through which they passed, which was called "forget me local government". I do not intend to go down that path. I give a commitment to my colleagues that I will not. Local government is very important, and those of us here on the hill should give the people involved in local government due recognition for the work they do. They are the representatives closest to the people.

The achievements of the past 17 years are too numerous to mention, but I will highlight some of them: Making the City of Bayswater the first local authority in this State to be debt free; the introduction of the first integrated recycling system, including green waste; the provision of security patrols within our community to make it safer - not instead of police but as an adjunct to the Police Force; the first wave pool in this State; and, probably the most recent initiative, the launching of the Bayswater community bank, which was an initiative of the community, with the people reacting to what they saw as unfair treatment by the big banks. That launch was the most successful in Australia, and at this point that community bank is on track to be the most successful community bank in Australia.

Some of the interesting times that I had in local government concerned the current planning legislation. As a representative of local government, I will remember for a lifetime going into bat with Hon Richard Lewis, the then Minister for Planning. It became legendary that the first 15 minutes of our meetings were set aside for screaming, yelling and abusing each other, and subsequently hopefully getting a result. The evidence is that the result for local government and for the State was exceptional. It integrated the planning and environmental processes. It has been in place for six years and there have been no problems. It shows that if we have people who are interested in protecting the community's interest, reasonable negotiations are achievable. I honestly think that Hon Richard Lewis was only giving me practice for when I came into this House. I still remember some of the colourful language he used about the abilities of those of us in local government.

I thank the councillors and the community of the City of Bayswater for some of the honours they have awarded me, including Freeman of the city. It is only the second time in the history of the City of Bayswater that that honour has been awarded. The only other recipient of that award is a previous Speaker of this House, Merv Toms. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to be following in the footsteps of Merv Toms as a member of this Parliament.

In my time in local government I also had many meetings on planning. I spent eight years as a planning commissioner. I was also Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission, hence my interest in and love of planning. It is important that planning be a tool that is used to be proactive and creative rather than restrictive. It is easy to say no - we all know that bureaucrats find that easy - but it is much harder to say yes. It is our role to make sure that the planning process helps the community develop.

My elevation to membership of this Parliament has been a slow process. I have been campaigning for five years, and I thank my predecessor Ms Rhonda Parker for the work she did in the electorate. As it was the most marginal seat in the land there seemed to be an endless supply of money from the Government. I make no apology for that. It was wonderful to receive the money, and I hope it continues now that the Labor Party is in government. For five years I was Ms Parker's shadow, and it is great to step out of that shadow into the light, as part of a Geoff Gallop Labor Government.

The electorate of Ballajura extends from the Morley Galleria shopping centre through to Gnangara Road, and is bounded by Alexander and Beechboro Roads. It includes the suburbs of Ballajura, Noranda, three-quarters of Morley, a small part of Beechboro and Dianella, and Cullacabardee, as well as the Malaga industrial area. Ballajura is an area not dissimilar to the northern suburbs, with a mix of residential types.

One of the major problems facing our community is transport. The member for Southern River yesterday talked about a transport report that he prepared for his electorate. We did a similar report for our area, and the results were an absolute disgrace - even worse than Southern River. If you live in south Ballajura, and want to get out of the area on the weekend, forget about it. If you want a bus to the Galleria shopping centre on the weekend, forget about it, but you can get a bus to Perth. It is ridiculous. Constituents who worked in Perth telephoned me to say that the shops in Perth were open on the Thursday before Easter, instead of Friday, but they could not get home from work, because there was no public transport back to Ballajura. People have called me to say that they cannot work overtime at night because the taxi fare would cost them more than they earned. These issues need to be addressed, and I am sure the Labor Party will address them in government. I have had discussions already with the Department of Transport and we are looking at ways to improve the public access to bus transport. My electorate has the highest average number of children per family in the Perth metropolitan area. Those children need access to public transport. Having young people tied up in a community over the weekend with no access to decent public transport creates social problems, which need to be rectified.

The previous Government decided to scrap the subsidies for bus shelters. This might seem a minor point, but in Ballajura it is a major point. Senior citizens aged in their seventies and eighties must wait for buses in the hot sun or the pouring rain, and often the buses do not even arrive. I am glad the Government is committed to spending \$2 million to improve bus shelters, and I hope that my electorate is the first to receive the benefits from this measure. It is unacceptable that the community, especially senior citizens, must put up with this situation.

Lightning Swamp, within my electorate, is a wonderful, 75-hectare area of natural bushland. It is Perth's best-kept secret, but it is important that the community take ownership of this area and protect it. The City of Bayswater has taken the step of asking that the area be vested in the council, so that some protection can be afforded. What is really important is that the State take ownership and make sure the area is protected for future generations. We also need to develop a regional active recreation reserve adjacent to the Reid and Tonkin Highways, to remove the pressure on the active recreational spaces in Noranda and Morley, which are subject to huge demand. That demand needs to be met.

I will now float a proposition that I would like to pursue in government. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, in response to my question yesterday, spoke about my passion for railways. During my term here, I want to float the planning option of linking Wanneroo and Armadale with a railway, via the Reid and Tonkin Highway reservations. This proposal has been considered before, but I want to pursue it during this term of government, to make sure that we get the planning right. Such a railway would link the northern suburbs line to the Midland line and the southern line via a cross-regional link. It would pick up Perth Airport, and allow the current planning, already in the Metropolitan Region Scheme, to extend the Midland line, up the middle of the Tonkin Highway, to Ellenbrook. It would provide access to the industrial areas of Kewdale, Malaga and Balcatta. It would also provide residential access to the suburbs of Embleton, Morley, Noranda, Ballajura, Westminster and Balga. If this planning is done properly, a whole loop could be created from Perth, via those suburbs and back to Perth via the Midland line. It would also provide access for the people of Wanneroo and Armadale to the whole north eastern corridor, without having to go through Perth. Armadale and Wanneroo could become the Parramattas of Sydney in Perth in 20 years' time. We need to put the planning in place now to make sure that that comes to fruition. I undertake to work hard with the councils involved, which have already done some preliminary work on this proposal, to make sure that it is in the planning documents for the future.

An issue that has cropped up since I have been elected has been the problem of men over the age of 45 who find themselves unemployed. I did not realise this was a major issue during the election campaign, but on becoming the member for Ballajura, one of my first tasks was to talk to a gentleman who had worked for 27 years for a glass manufacturer, and had lost his job at the age of 50. He came to see me because he wanted a job. What made it even worse was his fear that if he did not get a job he would lose his house, because he had a mortgage, and he could not make the payments. It is unacceptable, in this age, for people to be put under that kind of pressure. The gentleman was crying. I could not help him with a job, but I tell this story to make two points. Firstly, we as a community, and industry within our community, must understand that once a person reaches the age of 50, it does not mean that his working life is at an end. We need to make special allowance to assist these people to find employment. Since that time, I have had 41 men come and see me asking for work. That number may have been high because I was previously the local mayor, and council is a big employer, but whatever the reason, they were all over the age of 45 and had lost their jobs, and they had no access to special assistance. The second point is that, if a person is unemployed, he can get bond and rent assistance, but if that person has a mortgage, no mortgage assistance is available. Why is it not possible for the Government to consider a scheme under which the equivalent of rent or bond assistance is paid as mortgage assistance to people who are in that position? Homeswest tells me that it is cheaper to assist a person in his own home than to offer rent assistance. I am meeting with Homeswest to try to find a way to address this problem. It is important not just to keep those people in their own homes, but also for their self-esteem. Society needs to make sure that those who need the help most are looked after.

I will now touch on the effect of the goods and services tax. I am a small business operator, and at the election four years ago a number of small business people asked why I, as a successful businessman, was running as a candidate for the Labor Party. Four years on, not one of those people is still asking the same question. The reason is the goods and services tax. It is absolutely killing us in small business. My fellow retailers in the Galleria shopping centre are crying out about the effects of the goods and services tax, and are seeking help. I know this is a federal issue, but Parliament needs to understand that small businesses are experiencing extreme difficulty. Not only must they provide the software and the hardware to cope with the implementation of this new tax, but also they have the compliance costs, and the requirement for extra staff to make sure that the paperwork is in order and is put into the system. They face extra accountancy costs, smaller margins and, even worse, a reduction in turnover. What an absolute disaster for retail and for small business!

I will indicate some of the additional costs I must face as a chemist. The computer hardware and software cost me \$38 000. One full-time staff member is required to input the data on the computer. I require an accountant to assist for four hours a week to input data so that my business activity statement balances at the end of the accounting period. In addition, I pay \$15 000 a year in extra accountancy costs. Pharmaceuticals are exempt from the GST. Cosmetics and other products attract the GST. This results in the situation that the amount I pay to the Australian Tax Office in GST collected is equivalent to the refund from the ATO for the GST on the pharmaceuticals I pay to the wholesalers. In other words, all this extra work and cost is for a nil return. What a wonderful new system!

The situation is worse for some others in small business, because they have to pay, and when their bottom line is shrinking it is very difficult. We in the Labor Party know that small business is the backbone of our economy - the Leader of the Opposition mentioned it today - and how important the small business sector is for creating employment. It needs protection, for the benefit not only of our State's economy, but also the economy of Australia. The State Government has a limited ability in this area, but we need to understand that small business is hurting and is screaming out for help. The small business sector has turned to the Gallop Labor Government for help.

I would like to thank a number of people who helped me get to where I am today. Thanks go to my party's leader, Dr Geoff Gallop. During my preselection a number of issues were raised. I thank Dr Gallop for standing up and being counted when it mattered and for showing that principles do exist in the Labor Party and that his word is his word. I thank him for his support. I thank Michelle Roberts, John Kobelke, Jim McGinty, Damian Karmelich and Ted Cunningham, affectionately known as Father Ted, for their support. Around the time of my preselection there was a change in the Australian Labor Party's preselection processes. After the preselection I was told that I did not know what I had done. I still do not know what I have done. However, I see members around me today who would not be here if the structure had not been changed. After seeing their performances over the past two days, I am glad they are here. I think they will form part of a whiz-kid team of the future.

I want to thank some of the lay people of the party who supported me through my preselection. I am forever indebted to them. I thank the federal member for Perth, Stephen Smith. I refer to him as General Smith. He is probably the shrewdest tactician I have ever met and the best politician I have ever dealt with. He is a friend from the days when we were in the same class at Christian Brothers College in Highgate. I owe him the majority of praise for my being in Parliament today. I thank him for his support, loyalty and guidance and, as the state member for Perth indicated, for his bluntness when I needed to be told. Boy, has he told me a few times!

I thank my supporters. We have been campaigning for five years and not once have my supporters wavered. On polling day I had 400 helpers. I thank them all for their help. At one stage it was quite embarrassing as we had 17 people handing out how-to-vote cards at one booth. I had to take a few of them away as it looked over the top. I sincerely thank them. I thank my campaign managers, Graham Lilleyman and Adam Spagnolo, and my treasurer Fred Ward for their support. I thank my brother Tom who is my biggest fan and my hardest worker. I sincerely thank the others on my campaign committee, Lou Magro, Terry Kenyon, Sam Minniti, Charlie Tricoli, Charlie Fazio, Barry McKenna, Victor Rosenberg and Ian McClelland, for their help and support. I thank my son, Greg, and daughter Jessica and my partner Ailsa for the support shown to me. It was very difficult to operate a campaign office from the back of a chemist shop, particularly when it had to be done with six computers, and with pills flying left, right and centre. Ailsa did a wonderful job and, were it not for her, I would not be here. I thank all the other workers who have helped so much. Finally, I thank the electors of Ballajura for their support and confidence. I look forward to returning the trust that has been placed in me by working in the Geoff Gallop Labor Government knowing it will make a difference.

[Applause.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Kobelke (Leader of the House).

[Continued on page 205.]

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, REFORM

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [12.25 pm]: No matter how attractive and innovative its policies, no Government can see its programs and objectives carried through to reality without an efficient and effective public

sector. However, the current organisation of the Western Australian public sector is characterised by wasteful complexity, overlap and, in some areas, inadequate focus on the needs of the customer. The need for improvement has been apparent for a very long time. Even the previous Government acknowledged this need by setting up a number of inquiries to examine aspects of the public sector. Despite critical reports, very little was done to make real improvements to how the machinery of government is arranged and operates in this State. The time for more inquiries has long passed. This Government will take concerted, practical action.

I am pleased today to be able to outline our program of action to deliver on election commitments to reduce the number of chief executives and senior executives; significantly reduce the number of departments; and restructure departments and agencies around key areas of government.

Immediately after coming to office, the Government appointed an informed and experienced senior task force chaired by Mr Stuart Hicks, and comprising Mr Mal Wauchope, Mr John Langoulant and Dr Ruth Shean, to critically assess the machinery of government and to advise on necessary reforms. The Government will receive and consider the task force's report in June.

Since its establishment, the task force has received some 130 submissions and engaged in wide consultations with ministers, public servants, unions, business and the community. The task force has taken detailed account of all this information in recommending a broad structure for the public sector. Further detail will be developed around this structure over the next few weeks.

Major reform cannot, however, be achieved overnight, for two simple reasons. First, significant legislative amendments will be required. In greater proportion than in any other Australian jurisdiction, Western Australian government agencies have been created by separate Acts of Parliament. Previous Administrations have too often resorted to legislation to create agencies. Secondly, people sustain the agencies and institutions of government. The State public sector's 111 000 full and part-time employees are its strength.

The structural changes that I will outline today will inevitably impact on staff. The nature of some jobs will change, as will the requirements on some people, and there will be new and additional challenges for many. This historic reform of the public sector will be completed quickly, but sensitively, and I repeat the Government's commitment that there will be no involuntary redundancies.

The Government acknowledges and appreciates the primary leadership and managerial role played by the members of the senior executive service. Nonetheless, the Government has committed to reducing the number of senior executives by 60 positions, or 14 per cent. To assist in the process of streamlining the senior management of the public sector, management-initiated retirement packages are to be offered to senior executives in compensation for the early termination of their contracts of employment. Acceptance of those expressions of interest will be at the discretion of the Government, ensuring that there will be no loss of key personnel.

While the main report of the task force, which will be available in June, will detail the reforms, the Government is now keen to signal the broad direction of change in order to provide guidance to affected parties, and to minimise speculation or rumour. In accordance with its terms of reference, the task force's report will cover a wide range of machinery of government issues, including necessary changes to legislation underpinning the management of the public sector; ongoing principles for machinery of government arrangements, which will affect all agencies, including statutory authorities; and linkages with other government initiatives, such as the adoption of a strategic plan for the whole of government and the use of indicators to set priorities and to measure progress. The report will also deal with the need for agencies to work together in a more integrated and cooperative fashion.

Upon election, the Government inherited 46 conventional departments of State. This is more than any other Australian Government, either State or Commonwealth. The full complement reflects anachronisms and historical anomalies that arose over many years. Current confusion is intensified by various agencies that are termed offices - some of which are technically departments while others are not. To help reduce this confusion, the task force has proposed that those agencies that do not carry key executive, policy, regulation or control duties - in support and on behalf of ministers of the Crown - should no longer be termed departments. This would end the current classification of 12 agencies as departments. A number of these will be converted to a new category of small units known as administrative offices, which will be created to support an independent statutory office holder. Others will continue solely as statutory bodies - the basis on which they now effectively operate. That leaves 34 agencies on the current list of departments, which is still substantially more than any other State except New South Wales.

The task force does not agree that what are sometimes called mega-departments are necessarily better than small departments. As members will see, a number of comparatively small departments will continue to stand alone. Neither the task force nor the Government has been given any convincing reason that such agencies should be pushed into a conglomerate organisation for the sake of tidiness or in the interests of reducing the number of departments at any cost. On the other hand, when the functions and activities of agencies demonstrate a tight and continuing interrelationship, it is timely that those functions and activities be brought together into one department, with one chief executive and one minister.

I will now outline the changes, which will result in 19 departmental portfolios and 23 departments of State. As is customary, there will also be a number of non-departmental portfolios, each identifying ministerial accountability in a priority interest area of government. For example, there will continue to be portfolios of science, women's interests, seniors and youth. As now, no stand-alone departments will serve those portfolios. Instead, appropriately resourced departments will serve the minister's needs in each of those portfolios.

As recommended by the task force, there will be one additional non-departmental portfolio. The new portfolio of government enterprises will carry ministerial responsibility for a nominated collection of commercially oriented statutory authorities, or government trading enterprises. Administrative support for the minister in this portfolio will be provided through the Department of Treasury and Finance.

The current interim portfolio structure will continue until some details are finalised by the task force. I expect to put the new ministerial commissions to His Excellency the Governor within a few weeks. A number of minor changes in the distribution of portfolios will arise from this.

The key elements of the changes to departments are as follows: The State's primary industries, which are currently served by Agriculture Western Australia, Fisheries WA and the Forest Products Commission, will in future be serviced and supported by a new Department of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries.

The current Department of Commerce and Trade will be significantly strengthened to provide powerful and concerted impetus to the State's economic development. In addition to most of its existing functions, the refocused department will incorporate the industry development functions currently performed by the Department of Contract and Management Services.

The new Department of Community Development will include not only the activities of the existing department of Family and Children's Services, but also embrace a wider, more inclusive set of objectives, aimed at building a strong, rich and diverse community for all Western Australians.

Selected functions of the Department of Education Services will be incorporated into the Education Department of WA, although the administration of the non-government education sector will remain separate. As the Minister for Education has recently indicated, a separate review of education resourcing will be undertaken.

There is a need for Government to maintain a watch and, at times, to intervene with regulations, policies or practices to ensure that the rights of individuals and organisations are protected. The new Department of Employment and Consumer Protection will combine the functions performed by a range of existing protective agencies - the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations, the Ministry of Fair Trading, WorkCover WA and WorkSafe.

Through the 1990s, the Government's management of its assets and projects has become increasingly fragmented. For example, the motorplex, Swan Bells and the Barrack Square redevelopment, the Fremantle Maritime Museum and Geraldton Museum are each sponsored, funded or managed by different government agencies. Under new arrangements, a highly-skilled, professional approach to government assets and projects management will be achieved through a consolidated department. The new Department of Housing and Works will bring together the built environment functions of the existing Ministry of Housing, the Department of Contract and Management Services and the Government Projects Office.

With nearly three-quarters of the State's export income derived from the minerals and energy sector, it is timely to cohesively harness the endeavours of the existing Departments of Resources Development and Minerals and Energy by bringing them together into one department.

In line with the Government's commitment before the election, the Department of Transport and the Ministry for Planning will be combined into a new Department for Planning and Infrastructure. For the first time, the planning and control of the State's transport and land use will be fully integrated within the one agency. For now, the Department of Land Administration will remain largely unchanged. While its residual land development function will be transferred immediately to LandCorp, the remainder of the organisation will be subject to further review over the coming months.

In a State as large and diverse as Western Australia, it is imperative that the strengths and interests of individual communities be recognised and supported. Government should never lose sight of the wisdom and knowledge of people at the grassroots in both the city and country. A new Department of Regional Development and Local Government will consolidate the opportunity to tap into regional and local communities, combining the roles of the current Department of Local Government with those regional functions currently undertaken by the Department of Commerce and Trade. The new department will also provide support and assistance to the regional development commissions. These commissions will continue their broad role in assisting the development of, and advising on and promoting, each region's social, economic and environmental fabric.

In line with the Government's pre-election commitment, the Treasury and the State Revenue Department will be amalgamated into a new Department of Treasury and Finance to provide an efficient and coordinated approach to the management, collection and disbursement of the State's finances.

The ministerial position of Chief Secretary will be established and will include responsibility for the activities of the current Office of Racing, Gaming and Liquor and the Valuer General. The Chief Secretary will also assume responsibility for a new office with responsibility for economic regulation, as foreshadowed in the Government's pre-election commitments.

Departmental arrangements in the conservation and environment portfolio are also under review. A number of other departments will continue with no major change to their broad range of functions. However, no agency at any level will be immune from the need to pursue appropriate efficiencies of administration. In some cases, the most immediate need may well be to enhance internal processes and administrative arrangements. I anticipate that the task force will include further comment on this in its report.

It will be clear from what I have outlined that some changes to ministerial portfolio allocations will be a necessary part of the reform process. However, the number of ministers will remain at 14. Together, these changes will constitute profound and far-reaching reforms to the machinery of Western Australia's Government. Compared with the radical changes that have been wrought on several other States, they may be moderate; nonetheless, they are the most significant public sector reforms embarked on by any Government in this State. They are sensible and realistic. They will help public servants to maintain clear directions and purpose; they will enhance understanding and communication. Most importantly, they will assist government to provide better, more cost-effective services to the community. In many cases, full implementation of the changes will depend on the drafting and passage of legislation. To the greatest extent possible, however, the changes will operate from 1 July 2001. I will make further statements to the House as work progresses.

In closing, Mr Speaker, I table a document outlining current and proposed arrangements for the machinery of government.

[See paper No 171.]

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [12.41 pm]: The Premier has made a significant statement, and I wish to comment on it, but first I inform members that in broad terms the Opposition is supportive of the changes being made. I intend to question a number of elements of detail and the motivation, but it is fair to say that the time was overdue for a reorganisation of the public sector within Western Australia. Questions will go on for some time and be scrutinised and debated, but it is the impact on individual agencies and on individual people that is important. In broad terms, it was time for a change to be made along these lines.

I wish to distinguish between the important issue, the structure of the Public Service - we need to look at that very carefully - and the financial implications and the claims about what might come out of this reorganisation. Perhaps not surprisingly, I go back to the election campaign to refer again to an issue that arose during that campaign. During the election campaign, I made the statement on a number of occasions that the Labor Party in government will not - I repeat will not - be able to deliver on its election promises, and if it seeks to deliver on all of its election promises, it will do so only by increasing taxes and charges or by significantly increasing the state debt through borrowing. That is a truism.

During the election campaign, the commitments and promises made by the Labor Party amounted to in excess of \$1 billion. The Premier, the Treasurer and the Treasury are now faced with the question of how they will handle this dilemma. They cannot deliver on the commitments made without driving this State into debt or driving up taxes and charges. The inevitable outcome will be that state debt will rise, and rise significantly.

The starting point for this Government's broad economic and financial parameters is as follows: There is a hesitancy among some sections of the media to understand the basic reality -

Dr Gallop: What about dealing with the public sector?

Mr BARNETT: I listened to the Premier in silence. The starting point of the tight budget position -

Dr Gallop: This is about the public sector, not the budget.

Mr BARNETT: Yes. I listened to the Premier in silence. The budget position of this State, as confirmed by Treasury figures released in January this year, indicated an operating balance in surplus to the extent of \$98 million. That is the Treasury's budgetary position. That included all decisions made by the former Government up until that date; it included the assessments and reports from all agencies.

This Government inherited a position of being in surplus to the extent of \$98 million. That is not a large surplus - about 1 per cent of the total value of the government sector - but that is what it started with. The Premier can protest, and I recognise there are strains and stresses in this State in the areas of public administration - hospital and health care, in particular. The previous Government grappled with it and this Government will grapple with it. However, this Government started in surplus. This Government also started with a net debt position of \$4.6 billion for the State. When we came into government in 1983, we inherited a net debt position of \$8.5 billion.

Dr Gallop: You flogged off assets; it was easy!

Mr BARNETT: Yes, a large part of it was due to the privatisation of assets. That is not denied. However, the Premier's financial management is now assisted by the fact that he has a net debt of \$4.6 billion and, therefore, significantly lower interest servicing costs compared with a debt that we inherited of \$8.5 billion. Do not believe that this Government has to manage an impossible financial position; it does not.

Dr Gallop: Come on; what rubbish!

Mr BARNETT: This Government started in surplus and it started with a net debt of \$4 000 million less than we inherited in 1993. That needs to be recognised on the public record. It also started with the unemployment rate below 6 per cent. Yes, there are always uncertainties in the economic world of today, but this Government inherited an essentially strong position in the labour market and a position of low unemployment compared with the past 15 or 20 years in Australian economic history. That is what this Government started with.

The Premier made all sorts of commitments during the election campaign.

Dr Gallop: What about dealing with the public sector?

Mr BARNETT: That is what I am talking about.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr BARNETT: A little bit of courtesy would go a long, long way. I am attempting to respond.

The SPEAKER: It is clear that the Leader of the Opposition wishes to make a speech without interjection. I ask members on my right to acknowledge that.

Mr BARNETT: The point I make by way of introduction is that the Government has a problem, but a problem largely of its own making as a result of making election commitments in excess of \$1 billion and now trying to deliver on them without undermining the budgetary position, the debt position and inevitably, therefore, the AAA credit rating that is important to the standing of the State.

Approximately 70 per cent of all government spending - some \$10 billion - is accounted for by direct and indirect wages and related costs. If this Government wants to reduce spending, inevitably it must reduce the number of people working in the public sector. That is a truism. There is no other way around it. Any large-scale reduction or saving in government expenditure translates to reducing the number of employees.

When Brian Burke and the Labor Government came into power in 1983, one of the first things they did was to cut public sector wages by 10 per cent. I do not believe this current Government will do that, but we will see a substantial cut in the number of people employed in the state Public Service and the various agencies related to and operated by government. That is an absolute truism, because those on the government side cannot do what they purported they would do, what they promised the Western Australian public, without driving this State into debt.

Changes have been made. I am responding by going through the Premier's statement and referring to a number of matters. First, I refer to a claim made by the Premier in his statement that the Government proposes to reduce the number of senior executives. The objective is to reduce the number of chief executive officers by 60, and claims have been made that that will save \$40 million. The advice we have received - the Government probably has the same advice - is that at best that could save \$15 million. That is the reality, because however many chief executives go or leave or are given redundancies, redundancies are expensive. Entitlements, salary in lieu and contracts have to be paid out. The immediate exercise of "getting rid of" CEOs is very expensive in itself. An amount of \$15 million is probably all that will be saved.

The next point - a point that was never made clear - is that although most of those CEOs may be on five-year contracts, those contracts are for a particular job. Many of those people are permanent public servants. The Government can abolish the positions in the department, but the person and his permanency in the Public Service remains. That is the Government's dilemma. Many of these people are permanent public servants; the contract relates to the particular job.

It is acknowledged in the statement that there are 110 000 full and part-time employees in the state Public Service. The Premier said -

This historic reform of the public sector will be completed quickly . . .

It requires legislation. We have already seen the shambles the Premier has made of the transport portfolio - an absolute shambles. Who is responsible for ferries?

Ms MacTiernan: Fairies or ferries?

Mr BARNETT: No, ferries. We will check that. I doubt this will be completed quickly. It will require enormous amounts of legislation -

Dr Gallop: You did not have the guts to do it.

Mr BARNETT: It will require an enormous amount of legislation. The public sector will be totally consumed by this process for the next 12 months.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr BARNETT: I listened to the Premier without interjecting. The Premier also said -

I repeat our commitment that there will be no involuntary redundancies.

I believe him; I am sure there will be no involuntary redundancies in the public sector. However, what happens when a person's job, his department, his function and his reason for going to work is taken away from him? These people are permanent public servants. They will be sitting in offices without anything to do. What if two positions are rolled into one? We all know people who have been through that. What will happen when loyal public servants suddenly find their jobs are no longer there? What will they do? If someone's job is no longer there, if he no longer has a role, a future or a career, he will take voluntary redundancy when he is offered it. He will take it because he has no option. His job has gone, his career has gone and his daily functions, his pride, his integrity, his skills and his qualifications are no longer needed. That will be the reality. Will there be no involuntary redundancies, given that 70 per cent of public sector expenditure is through direct and indirect costs? The Premier did not address that in his statement. If he is to save money by this and restructure government -

Dr Gallop: When did I talk about that?

Mr BARNETT: During the election campaign the Premier repeatedly boasted about his savings.

Dr Gallop: I did not.

Mr BARNETT: He did; I can give him all the press releases. Not only is this about restructuring, which is important and has some validity, but also it is about reducing the number of public servants. When agencies, jobs and support services are combined, it affects not only the chief executive officer, but also his or her support staff, the finance operation, the corporate promotions operation and the information technology operation. It involves changing offices, moving partitions and lease changes. The list goes on. Secretarial staff will be affected. The impact will be felt throughout the system. Members opposite know this. They purported in their speeches, and I believe them, to support the workers. Hundreds of public sector employees are going to be affected by this. The Premier says there will be no involuntary redundancies. I accept that. I accept that all redundancies will be voluntary. However, I point out that once someone's job goes, that person accepts voluntary redundancy because he has no options. Pride and dignity in the workplace are important to everyone. The Premier failed to indicate to the public of Western Australia how many redundancies will be offered. Will it be 100, 500, 1 000 or 5 000? There are 110 000 people working for the government sector in this State. How many will go through this process? I suggest that we are inevitably looking at the loss of between 1 000 and 5 000 public sector jobs. I invite members opposite to tell me if I am wrong. How many jobs will be taken out of the public sector?

Dr Gallop: Do you support the change?

Mr BARNETT: I am not saying it should not happen, but I am asking how many jobs will be lost. The Government raised these issues. It has announced a restructure of government departments. It should be honest with the public sector in this State. It should tell those 110 000 people if the number of jobs lost will be 100, 500, 1 000 or 5 000. Given that 70 per cent of expenditure is on wages, on-costs and related employment, the only way in which money can be saved in government in this State is to reduce the size of the public sector. The Government has a responsibility to its employees in the public sector to be forthright and indicate how many jobs it expects to be lost and in what time frame. That is not an unreasonable question. It is not unreasonable for public servants to ask that of this Government. It has announced a restructure, and I think it has some merit. I have said that since the beginning. I disagree with some of the points, but in broad terms, it is an improved structure of government administration in this State. I acknowledge that. However, this is also about people and their livelihoods and their careers. The Government has failed to indicate how many jobs will go.

I am running out of time, but I allude to a couple of brief points. What happened to tourism? That was not mentioned in the Premier's speech.

Dr Gallop: It is a statutory authority.

Mr BARNETT: Again that industry has been neglected. This Government initially did not have a tourism minister. Members should look at the Government's front bench. An important part of this State is its business and industrial environment. The front bench of members opposite contains no resources or mining minister. It has a Minister for State Development. He is one person and, although he is a nice guy and works hard, he has no background in business or industry. He does not even get to sit on the front bench. This Government has consigned industry and the business and development role of this State to the one minister, who does not sit on the front bench. No matter how capable he might be, he is one person and cannot handle issues of commerce and trade, and resources development - which involves a lot of energy issues - as well as the issue of tourism. That is already proving to be the case. The Premier

needs to look at the structure of his ministers and give more importance to the production and employment sectors of this State.

During the election campaign, members opposite made all sorts of claims. They underestimated many things, probably deliberately. For example, they underestimated by \$70 million what was needed for information technology in schools. They said they would build a road through Tom Price that would cost \$100 million. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure knows that the minimum cost of building the Tom Price road is \$238 million. The list goes on. The Government made \$1.1 billion worth of commitments, but many of those commitments were grossly under-funded. The Government cannot and will not deliver on its election commitments without driving this State into a perilous financial position of rising debt.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [12.56 pm]: During the election campaign the Government made a commitment to restructure the public sector. It has a direct responsibility to deliver to the people on the commitments it made during that campaign. I have a related responsibility to tell the Premier that we will be watching. In his statement, the Premier signalled that New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria went down similar routes. The response from rural New South Wales, rural Victoria and, particularly, rural Queensland is not good. That must be recognised.

Dr Gallop: Our plan has a difference: We will establish a department of regional development.

Mr TRENORDEN: I will talk about that in a minute. The actions about which the Government is talking were not greeted with enthusiasm by country Queensland. I mention it so that the Government knows the situation. The Government runs the State and, therefore, the restructure, but I want to make the point that it is running a risk because there is concern in country Western Australia about the loss of access and services. It is the Premier's job; I am pointing it out to him. I am being friendly and putting to the Government -

Dr Gallop: We have taken it into account.

Mr TRENORDEN: Access and services are the issues that people in rural and regional Western Australia will put to the Government. The reform was not delivered well in the other States and access by and services to country people were affected. It is the Government's responsibility to implement its changes without those things happening. It is its responsibility to demonstrate the benefit of the changes. No matter how one looks at it, this is rationalisation at its best. We lost government, particularly in country areas, because of rationalisation. The Government is embarking on rationalist activities.

Dr Gallop: They are sensible rationalist activities.

Mr TRENORDEN: I cannot argue with that. That is the way it will be viewed. The Government has the responsibility of going into those areas and convincing country people that the next wave of rationalisation will be good for them. It is the Government's responsibility; not mine.

Mr McRae: Won't the test be that services have improved?

Mr TRENORDEN: Absolutely. There has been a truism since I have been a member of Parliament - people are saying a lot about truisms today - that whatever gets delivered in the city as a service is a cost in the country. That cannot be argued with. It is a fact. Members should look at the services that are delivered within the metropolitan area. When those same services are delivered in the country, it is a cost. That is why rural people from one end of Australia to the other are angry. I am trying to be friendly, and point out these things. I could sit down and not make a contribution, and watch the Government get whipped, because if it does not do this properly, it will get whipped. Its support comes from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Institute of Public Affairs, and its opposition is from the Public Service. I know; those people are coming to me.

Dr Gallop: We put all this to the people at the election.

Mr TRENORDEN: It does not make them happy. The Premier knows that when people are directly affected, they are unhappy. The Public Service officers to whom I have been speaking are confused and unhappy. When Public Service employees are confused and unhappy, poor service results.

Ms MacTiernan: I cannot believe the National Party has the audacity to say this after it destroyed Main Roads and Westrail in regional Western Australia. It is absolutely unbelievable.

Mr TRENORDEN: The minister is doing a wonderful job of doing just that at this very moment. We can talk about Jarrahdale Road if the minister wants to. The direct promises the minister has made to the south west of the State about costs and services have been broken straight up-front. The Opposition is out in rural Western Australia at this very moment talking about what the minister has done to the south west of the State. The cost of weeties has now risen in Esperance. In the minister's responses she has indicated that whatever has happened to Jarrahdale Road has involved stock transport. The minister does not seem to realise that B-double trucks also carry general freight, and that all citizens must bear the 30 per cent cost to be added to transport expenses.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS POLICY

22. Mr BARNETT to the Premier:

Given that throughout this week the State Government has focused on the Aboriginal community and reconciliation - which I and all members on this side applaud - can the Premier explain why the Labor Party did not regard Aboriginal affairs as important enough to warrant the release of an Aboriginal affairs policy during the election campaign, as did the coalition?

Dr GALLOP replied:

I find that question incredible. If the Leader of the Opposition were to go through the Labor Party policies one after the other, he would find reference to the needs of our indigenous people. We understand that if we are to address the needs of those people, a number of things must happen. First, we must give proper recognition to the place of indigenous people in the history and culture of our State. Indeed, we must ask: What is it to be an Australian? Part and parcel of that answer is the special place of indigenous people in our community. We supported all of the reconciliation processes, and our spokesperson on indigenous affairs, Hon Tom Stephens, made it clear that we would give more money to support the reconciliation processes.

Secondly, on the issue of native title, the Labor Party released its policy in Kalgoorlie, as the new member for Kalgoorlie would know only too well, and that policy indicated how the Labor Government would move away from litigation and focus on agreement. Thirdly, and most importantly, all our policies on health, education, crime prevention, family support and community services refer to what we need to do to improve the status and role of indigenous people.

I find it extraordinary that the Leader of the Opposition would raise this matter in this Parliament, because for the eight years we were in opposition and members opposite were in government, they tried to deprive the indigenous people of this State of their rights; and I say thanks to the High Court of Australia for knocking them off 7:0. In the Opposition's second term in government, it tried to use the John Howard 10-point plan to undermine and frustrate the rights that the High Court had established for indigenous people in Australia. We are proud to say that we did have policies in the election campaign to deal with the status of our indigenous people and with native title, and with what we will do in health, education and community services to ensure that the needs and interests of indigenous people are properly represented and promoted by this Government. I am also proud to say that the Government's new Minister for Indigenous Affairs said to me upon our election that we needed to do something significant at the opening of the Parliament - and I thank him for raising that issue - to say to the indigenous people in general, and the Nyoongah people in particular, "You are part of our community; we are proud of you; we want you to be part of our processes."

Government members: Hear, hear!

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, CODE OF CONDUCT

23. Mr QUIGLEY to the Premier:

Does the Premier intend to introduce a code of conduct for all members of Parliament?

Dr GALLOP replied:

Yes, the Government intends to bring into this Parliament a code of conduct for members of Parliament. It is now being drafted on the basis of work that is being done in all the States and Territories. Obviously, we then intend to table it in the Parliament so that every member of Parliament can consider the matter and vote on whether that code will become part of our processes.

Mr Barnett: Do you not think that is a matter for the Parliament?

Dr GALLOP: Yes, obviously, but we intend to take the initiative of tabling something so that we can debate it.

Mr Barnett: It is for the Parliament.

Dr GALLOP: The Parliament will do it, but we are taking the initiative, because we are a Government that wants to reform Western Australia. We will not sit back and wait for someone else. We will take some initiative.

On the question of standards, I refer to the attempt by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday to prevent me from speaking on the Bloffwitch affair. The Leader of the Opposition raised a point of order and tried to stop me from raising a matter that had been mentioned in the newspapers. The Leader of the Opposition claimed in the Parliament yesterday that he had not made a reported statement concerning Mr Bloffwitch's breach of the law. That breach was serious. It is a requirement that all members of Parliament declare their financial interests. Mr Bloffwitch did not declare his 84 000 shares in Kingstream Resources. The Leader of the Opposition said that I was impugning his integrity by ascribing that statement to him, and he raised a point of order to get me to withdraw; and of course, in deference to the process, I did not raise that issue again.

Yesterday, I referred to two quotes from *The Geraldton Guardian* of 7 February. The article is headed “Bob a job in Cabinet says Deputy Leader” and states -

“It happens to everyone at some stage of their political life - something goes wrong, they don’t do something they’re supposed to or whatever.

Did the Leader of the Opposition say that?

Point of Order

Mr BARNETT: Point of order.

Mr McGinty: Petulance!

Mr BARNETT: No, it is not petulance. The point of order I made yesterday was to correct the Premier and make the point that I did not make the statement that he had quoted. I am happy for the Premier to debate what I did or did not say; he can debate that after question time.

Mr Ripper: This is an abuse of process.

Mr BARNETT: It is not. It is not up to the Premier or any other member of this Parliament to imply or state that I have said things that I simply did not say. That is the point I made yesterday, and that is the point I make now.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr GALLOP: The second quote, which is the one that offended the Leader of the Opposition and is the basis on which he said I impugned his integrity, states -

He insisted Mr Bloffwitch would retain his seat and continue a very good career in Parliament “and hopefully as a minister before too long”.

The Leader of the Opposition said that I impugned his integrity by quoting that statement and that he did not say that. Did the Leader of the Opposition say that? Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition attempted to impugn the integrity of *The Geraldton Guardian* by saying that I raised a matter in this Parliament that was not true. Would the Leader of the Opposition like to hear the tape of the comments that he made at the meeting of the Liberal Party in Geraldton, just to solve the matter once and for all? Does the Leader of the Opposition want to hear the tape now or does he want to hear it afterwards? When does he want to hear it?

The SPEAKER: Order! It was indicated that a tape would be played in this place. That would be inappropriate, and perhaps the Premier would move on.

Dr GALLOP: That tape indicates that the Leader of the Opposition misled the Parliament with regard to *The Geraldton Guardian*. His integrity is on the line in this matter, and any person who is interested can listen to this tape later. *The Geraldton Guardian* correctly referred to the speech that the Leader of the Opposition made, in which he described Bob Bloffwitch as ministerial material. That is the standard members opposite set.

Mr Barnett: That is not what you said yesterday.

Dr GALLOP: What the Leader of the Opposition said is, “and hopefully as a minister before too long”. That is what he said, and it is on tape. The attempt yesterday by the member for Cottesloe to stifle me from debating this matter was based on a complete misrepresentation of the truth. That is the type of Leader of the Opposition we have today.

MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE APPLICATION

24. Mr JOHNSON to the Attorney General:

I refer to the debate in this House yesterday about the lack of appropriate and open action by the Premier following the revelation of the appalling driving record of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure who is also a justice of the peace.

- (1) Is the Attorney General aware that the application for appointment as a justice of the peace states that persons who have a record of criminal offence, or those who have a serious traffic conviction less than five years old, are excluded from applying to become a justice of the peace?
- (2) Will the Attorney General inform the House when the minister applied to become a justice of the peace and whether the minister’s driving convictions were declared on her application?
- (3) Given the minister’s three driving convictions for drink driving and speeding, is she a suitable person to be a justice of the peace; and, if so, is the Attorney General prepared to accept such low standards of community propriety from people serving as and applying to become justices of the peace?

The SPEAKER: That question asks for a legal opinion as to the suitability of a person to be a justice of the peace. If the member would like at some later stage during this question time to rephrase that question to comply with the

Standing Orders, I will accept the question. As a further explanation, because the minister seems to be confused, the member is asking for a legal opinion about the suitability, and that must be corrected.

PRIVATE PORT, JAMES POINT

25. Mr McGOWAN to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

After having the opportunity to review the contract with James Point Pty Ltd to build a private port at James Point, will the minister advise members what studies have been undertaken to support claims that the port would result in lower costs to port users?

Ms MacTIERNAN replied:

I understand that the member for Rockingham is concerned about this proposed private port development in the vicinity of his electorate. The previous Government justified the commissioning of a private port operating in competition with the Fremantle Port Authority on the grounds that it would reduce costs. Now that the Labor Party is in government and has finally had an opportunity to examine the secret contract, I can inform members that there is nothing in the contract with James Point Pty Ltd that guarantees lower costs to port users.

As we suspected, no economic study has been undertaken on the need for, or the feasibility of, another port in close proximity to Fremantle. Alarming, at no time was any analysis conducted of the likely impact on port users of the effect of the diseconomies of small scale that would be imposed on the Fremantle port. The former minister for roads, parading as the former Minister for Transport, did not appreciate that ports have high fixed costs which makes trade growth important to reduce costs. Far from reducing costs, this new port is likely to result in higher charges for most users.

Fremantle is a relatively small port by world standards. Numerous ports around Australia and overseas trade many times the amount of goods than does Fremantle. We have been unable to find a single example in which a Government has introduced a new port into the middle of an existing port to promote competition. Further, it is the height of economic irresponsibility to proceed down this path without an evaluation of whether these diseconomies of scale are outweighed by the perceived benefit of competition. One can conclude only that, given that the need for the private port had not been established, and given that no economic analysis had been undertaken, the former Government's support for the port had more to do with the former minister for road's rabid antipathy toward the Maritime Union of Australia and looking after his mates than with properly integrated transport planning.

MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE APPLICATION

26. Mr JOHNSON to the Attorney General:

I have already read the preamble about the debate in the House yesterday, which I hope is on the record.

- (1) Is the Attorney General aware that the application for appointment as a justice of the peace states that persons who have a record of criminal offence or those who have a serious traffic conviction less than five years old are excluded from applying to become a justice of the peace?
- (2) Will the minister inform the House when the minister applied to become a justice of the peace and whether the minister's driving convictions were declared on her application?
- (3) Given the minister's three driving convictions for drink driving and speeding, will the Attorney General accept such low standards of community propriety from people serving as and applying to become justices of the peace?

Mr McGINTY replied:

- (1)-(3) The member for Armadale's application to become a justice of the peace was made after she was elected to the East Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council, a position she commenced on 22 May 1993. The application was made in the second half of 1993 and was approved in late December 1993. The application form had two relevant provisions. The first was a question that asked whether the applicant had any convictions. Two boxes were provided to tick the answer either yes or no and the applicant ticked the relevant box. Underneath that a note stated that a check would be made of the criminal/traffic records subject to the consent of the applicant. A question on the consensual form asked whether the applicant consented to the Attorney General making such confidential inquiries as to the applicant's character and suitability for appointment as the Attorney General may consider necessary. That form was signed by the member for Armadale who had ticked the box indicating that she had a conviction, as was required. It is clear that the member for Armadale disclosed the fact that she had a conviction as required on the form when she made that application in 1993. Yesterday, the member for Hillarys suggested that the member for Armadale had made her justice of the peace application in the 1980s; that was wrong.

Mr Johnson: I said that I was under the impression that she had made it in 1986.

Mr McGINTY: The member for Hillarys suggested that his impression might have been correct. He also suggested that the member for Armadale did not declare her convictions; again, that is not correct. The member also suggested that the member for Armadale should have been removed as a justice of the peace. That is wrong for the reasons I will now explain.

I know that adjustment to life in opposition is difficult, particularly if one has had the benefits of ministerial staff to conduct research work and preparation. However, the test of the effectiveness of the Opposition is the rigour of its research and whether it can get its facts straight. On this occasion it is true to say that the member has been found wanting.

Mrs Edwardes: What about Wanneroo? Did you get your facts straight? I do not think so.

Mr McGINTY: I am coming to the member for Kingsley. I will answer her question, do not worry about that. The person responsible for appointing justices of the peace in 1993 was none other than the member for Kingsley, who received an application from the member for Armadale declaring that she had a conviction. It was the member for Kingsley who then appointed the member for Armadale to be a justice of the peace.

The Ministry of Justice advised me that a five-year waiting period applies after a conviction has been recorded before the application to be appointed as a justice of the peace can be considered. The member for Armadale's conviction was in 1986. She was appointed to Parliament in 1993, some seven years later, therefore, it fitted squarely within the policy of a five-year period after the conviction before the matter is considered. This is strictly in conformity with policy. The member for Kingsley was still in charge of justices of the peace at that time. The Ministry of Justice further advised me that a drink-driving conviction in itself would not result in a recommendation from the Ministry of Justice to the Attorney General to cancel a JP's commission.

Mr Johnson: There were two convictions, plus another one.

Mr McGINTY: I am telling the House what the ministry has advised me. A drink-driving conviction in itself would not result in a recommendation for the cancellation of a JP's commission. I presume that is the reason the member for Kingsley, when she was responsible for the administration of this area, quite properly took no action in 1994 when this matter occurred. I cannot speak for her, but I presume that was the reason she took no action at that time. It is a bit rich to now come into this Parliament, some seven years later, and criticise the new Government when the coalition Government administered the policy for the past eight years and it quite rightly took no action at that time.

The Ministry of Justice has also advised me that the loss of a licence due to the accumulation of demerit points, which is the issue that has brought this matter to a head during the course of this year, would not result in a justice of the peace losing his or her commission. When one thinks about it, that is right. In other words, the member for Armadale's remaining as a JP is perfectly in accordance with established policy, which the coalition Government administered for the past eight years.

Mr Barnett interjected.

Mr McGINTY: Would the Leader of the Opposition just be quiet.

Mr Cowan: Would demerit points for registering 0.05 still hold?

Mr McGINTY: I have not received any advice on that. I will undertake to obtain that advice for the member for Merredin. I was asked yesterday whether the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure was a fit and proper person to hold a commission as a justice of the peace, and I answered with an unequivocal yes. The real question is what is the Opposition's standard. Should traffic convictions result in someone losing his or her commission as a justice of the peace? It never has been the case. I do not think it should be, and I am sure that in the future it never will be.

The SPEAKER: That answer was extensive, and it was one that everyone in this place wanted to hear. Because of the length of it, I will allow time for sufficient questions today, which will take us over the normal half-hour limit.

PETROLEUM PRICES, COMPENSATION FOR RETAILERS

27. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

I guess one could say that we will now move from wowsers to bowzers. The 12 April order of the Prices Commissioner includes an exclusion to the maximum wholesale price order for resellers who are the subject of price agreements with major oil companies. That exclusion clause is a loophole that is being used by the oil majors to disadvantage independent retailers in the marketplace. Earlier today I gave the minister three separate statutory declarations that demonstrate clearly that the major oil companies are in breach of the Petroleum Products Pricing Act 1983.

- (1) Will the minister instruct the Prices Commissioner to take immediate action to order compensation for these retailers?
- (2) Will the minister also use the powers available to him under section 13 of the Act to strike down the loophole in the legislation?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for Pilbara for some notice of the question.

- (1) I recognise up-front the member's long interest in petrol pricing and trying to get the best deal for motorists, particularly in electorates such as his and the Speaker's where fuel is so important. He was a key mover in the establishment of the select committee, whose recommendations we are seeking to implement through a Bill currently in the Parliament. The two matters the member raises are important and of some complexity. Perhaps I should make sure members understand the detail.

First, when the maximum wholesale price was put in place by an order of 12 April, the actual wording of that order meant that the requirement to sell at the maximum wholesale price did not overturn contractual arrangements. The member is asking that the Government, with the stroke of a pen, strike that out, which would mean that existing contracts could simply be overturned and everyone would have to sell at that price. I am not willing to do that, and I should explain why.

Mr Cowan: You cannot.

Mr KOBELKE: I may not be able to do it because the wording in the order is the same as the wording in the Act. A point is arguable there, but it is not now appropriate to enter into a debate about whether I can or I cannot. The point is that it is not clear cut whether I can do it. If I did, it is not certain what the consequences of litigation would be as people squabbled over what is now the basis of the contract. Therefore, it would end up being a field day for lawyers as they tried to work that out. The key issue is that, as a matter of principle, we do not want to retrospectively overturn those contracts. In only very special circumstances would the Government do that. The Government believes that through the range of other measures it is putting in place, it will be able to get those competitive pressures and not be required to renege on existing contracts.

I will make one more comment on this matter before I move to the member's second point. If a retailer is locked into a contract with a supplier at a price above the maximum wholesale price, but the maximum wholesale price is available to other retailers in the market, market forces will come into play on that retailer and that contract of supply. If someone down the road can get fuel at the maximum wholesale price of, say, 90c to 91c and is therefore retailing at a price that flows from that, the contract will be undermined if it is too high. I would prefer that the market forces do it, rather than the minister abrogate what is a proper contract. Therefore, I am not willing to meet that request.

- (2)-(3) The second request in the question is to take up the issue whereby retailers have gone to a supplier asking to buy fuel at the maximum wholesale price and some terminals have refused to supply. I thank the member for the statutory declarations he gave me in the past few minutes. I will pass those to the ministry to add to the complaints that have already been received. That matter is being investigated and action will be taken on it. The member for Pilbara is suggesting that I should order the commissioner to immediately put in place a claim for compensation for the retailer because the supplier has failed to supply. That is one measure that is open. However, it is open to put in place a compensation order and to prosecute. The Government is currently seeking legal advice on whether taking action on one leg would undermine taking action on the other. The Government wants to make sure that it has the option to prosecute and to require compensation orders, and it will do that on good legal advice so that it is effective in the action it wishes to take. If that action is effective, it will have much greater repercussions throughout the whole industry. Rather than a knee-jerk reaction of getting in quickly and asking for a compensation order, the Government will move on the basis that its action will be effective.

PETROLEUM PRICES, MAJOR OIL COMPANIES

28. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

I have a supplementary question. As every hour goes by during which fuel companies do not have to sell to their competitors, their competitors are disadvantaged. I wonder why the Government will not take action against the major oil companies and is in fact siding with them against small Western Australian independent businesses.

The SPEAKER: Before I ask the minister to respond to that, the member for Pilbara knows very well that he should not include argument in a supplementary question. However, I think the nature of the question is known to the minister, and I ask him to respond.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

My friend the member for Pilbara is engaging in a bit of gross misrepresentation. The fact is that when BP Australia Ltd threatened to close down if the Government proceeded with its program, the Government said that it would go forward with it. The Government has not been intimidated in any way by the major oil companies. However, people have been going to the media - I know the member for Mitchell has engaged in this today - saying there is a quick, simple fix, there is a magic bullet, there need be only a stroke of the magic pen of the minister and the situation will be fixed. I do not work on that basis. I work on the basis that the Government will continue to pursue this regulatory

regime so that it will make the oil companies accountable, and the prices in Western Australia will be lower because of that regime.

BUILDING UNIONS, ALLEGATIONS OF ORGANISED CRIME LINKS

29. **Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Police:**

Can the minister confirm that the New South Wales Police Service commercial crime agency is investigating allegations of links between organised crime and Western Australian building unions?

Mrs ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for Avon for the question. If he had given me even limited notice of it, I could have made further inquiries and would have been able to answer the question in more detail. The media has reported that the New South Wales police are making inquiries. I have raised that matter with the Commissioner of Police. Minutes of meetings I have had with the commissioner record that I have asked him to offer full cooperation to the New South Wales police in this matter. I do not think it is my role to inquire into New South Wales police business. The important role for a Minister for Police in this State is to ensure that, when cooperation is requested, whether it be by the New South Wales police, the National Crime Authority or the Federal Police, cooperation is given in full. I have given that brief to the Commissioner of Police of this State.

SCARBOROUGH SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL SITE

30. **Mrs HODSON-THOMAS to the Minister for Education:**

The member for Innaloo has said that the results of his community survey on the future of the former Scarborough Senior High School site should determine what happens to the site, and that more than half of the respondents to this survey said that the site should be 100 per cent public open space.

- (1) Does the minister support the site being given over entirely to public open space?
- (2) If so, how does he propose to fill the hole in the education budget if the site is not sold, bearing in mind that the previous Government quarantined the sale money to the education budget?

Mr CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

I take this opportunity, however, to discuss briefly the issue that has emerged on Scarborough High School and the duplicity with which the former Government treated the people in that area. We heard a really eloquent exposition of that position by the member for Innaloo, who, as I recall, was able to visually demonstrate the community's anger, symbolically, with the exhibition of a card. That is pretty much the community reaction to the former Minister for Education's treatment of Scarborough people in relation to that site. His treatment of the community was nothing short of lamentable. It made them very angry and was one of the very important reasons that the new member for that seat was elected. It was typical of the attitude that led to the massive, overwhelming defeat of the former Government. The role played by the former Minister for Education in that defeat is still very vivid in the public's memory. In particular, the former Minister for Education's performance in the election campaign played a very significant role in his party's defeat.

Mr Barnett: But what is the Government going to do?

Mr CARPENTER: I have already given the short answer. The answer to the first question was, no, it will not be 100 per cent open space, and therefore the member for Carine's second question does not apply.

FINANCES, WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S POSITION

31. **Mr WHITELY to the Treasurer:**

- (1) Is the Treasurer aware that, on ABC radio yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition said that it was obvious that the financial position of Western Australia has deteriorated very quickly, but that the Government had a clean set of accounts, and a clean surplus, when it came into power?
- (2) Can the Treasurer advise whether the Leader of the Opposition's assertions are a full and frank assessment of the State's financial position?

Mr RIPPER replied:

I thank the member for Roleystone for his question.

- (1)-(2) I am aware of the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition. The Labor Party used to accuse the former Leader of the Liberal Party, Richard Court, of suffering from deficit denial. It seems as though deficit denial is

contagious. It must be a virus passed on with the tenuous mantle of authority that constitutes the leadership of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. These are tough times, but I notice that it is not exactly happy hour on the other side of the Chamber. My mother used to have a saying about being wary in case the wind changed and facial expressions became permanently fixed. The scowls we have been witnessing from the members opposite during this question time bear out the truth of her assertion.

Under coalition financial management, Western Australia had four operating deficits in a row, and was facing two more in future years, totalling \$110 million. The Leader of the Opposition said there has been a deterioration in Western Australia's finances, and so there has been, but that deterioration occurred during the time of the previous coalition Government. The chart I have here shows two sets of forecasts. The forecasts shown in blue are the surpluses that the previous Government said would apply at the time it brought down the last budget. The chart shows that in 2003-04, a surplus of \$219 million was forecast. The position that constitutes the legacy for the incoming Government is the position revealed in Treasury's pre-election statement, which are the figures shown on the red bar. That \$219 million surplus in 2003-04 becomes a \$41.4 million deficit - an almost \$250 million turnaround in the forecast. Why did that sort of deterioration occur? It was because the previous Government went on a billion-dollar spending spree in its last desperate year, between its last budget and the election. What was left for the incoming Government was a financial time bomb, with two deficits on the way. The Leader of the Opposition says that the previous Government left us with clean accounts. What clean accounts? The Swan Bells project was \$2 million over budget. The health system has a \$90 million blow-out. The failed Matrix bus deal left a \$2.5 million bill. Which set of accounts is clean? What the present Government has been left with is a situation in which forecast debt is rising relative to revenue, to an alarming degree. That is one reason Treasury has advised the Government that the AAA credit rating of the State is at risk. As soon as it had a chance to advise the incoming Government, the first advice given by Treasury was that the credit rating was at risk.

The current Leader of the Opposition cannot run away from this issue. He was on the Cabinet Budget Committee of the previous Government. He was one of the ministers responsible for overseeing the budget. More to the point, he was one of those maverick senior ministers who let the former Treasurer down and contributed to the financial indiscipline of the previous Government. The present Government will not be like that. It will exercise some long overdue spending restraint. It will implement its election commitments, but will need to be very careful about its priorities. I make no apology - a tough budget will be brought down this year, but that is made necessary by the economic and financial legacy left by the previous Government.

BILLS, CONSIDERATION PRIOR TO ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Standing Orders Suspension

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [2.39 pm]: I move -

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2001 and the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill 2001 to be dealt with prior to the adoption of the Address-in-Reply and pass through all remaining stages in one day.

This motion is designed to enable the House to deal with two specific pieces of urgent legislation: The Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill and the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill. Members will be aware of the urgency attached to these Bills from the second reading speeches given yesterday. The Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill must complete its passage through the Parliament by the start of June. If that does not happen, funds may not be available in some designated areas to meet the Government's commitments. That was spelt out in the Treasurer's speech. This matter is urgent. We cannot have a situation in which the Government cannot pay its bills because it is waiting for Parliament to pass the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill.

The Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill is urgent for a different reason. It requires that we fund a liability of \$93 million, \$36 million of which falls next year. If the approach taken is the same as the last time supplementation was required, it will mean that funds are supplied after the event. It can be done retrospectively. The reason for the urgency is that business needs certainty. It will save money if interest does not have to be paid on carrying costs. Business needs to know that a levy will apply from a specific date, such as 25 June. That being the case, the Bill must pass through Parliament by the beginning of June. There is no intention in this motion to remove the precedence of the Address-in-Reply debate, as was done by the previous Government from time to time. The Government proposes that these Bills be dealt with this afternoon. Standing orders would then be resumed, giving precedence to the Address-in-Reply.

The Opposition has suggested that these Bills be progressed through the House after the forthcoming two-week break. If that were done, there would still have to be a suspension of standing orders as the Address-in-Reply still would have precedence. If the Bills were dealt with in three weeks, the Legislative Council would have to deal with them on a very urgent basis. We should take special steps to expedite the passage of the Bills through this House and then ask our colleagues in the other place to expedite the Bills in the first week of sitting after the recess. The Bills would then be cleared by the end of May.

There are many examples of previous Governments suspending the Address-in-Reply to progress legislation. On 6 and 7 July 1993 the former coalition Government suspended the Address-in-Reply to debate and pass four pieces of legislation that it considered urgent. The legislation was the Supreme Court Amendment Bill, the Judges' Salaries and Pensions Amendment Bill, the Local Government (Superannuation) Amendment and Repeal Bill and, interestingly, the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill. The last Bill is of the same form as that which the Government is now seeking to amend.

In April 1995 the former coalition Government suspended the Address-in-Reply to debate the Industrial Relations Amendment Bill - part of its second wave industrial relations legislation changes. As the then Opposition we did not support the legislation, but, in the spirit of cooperation, we supported the suspension of the Address-in-Reply in order for the Bill to be debated. I have canvassed members on both sides of the House to determine who wishes to speak on the Address-in-Reply. I appreciate that one or two members wish to speak today and will be disadvantaged and inconvenienced by the suspension of standing orders. I apologise for that. More members have asked me whether they can speak in the next sitting week rather than today. I do not believe that the proposed suspension will disrupt the key intent of the standing orders that gives precedence to the Address-in-Reply. Many members had indicated that they wish to give their Address-in-Reply speech when the House resumes its business after the break. It is not an unusual practice to ask for a suspension. The Bills are subject to considerable urgency and need to be progressed through Parliament with haste. It is the Government's intention that the two Bills progress to the other House as soon as possible to give that House time to consider them when Parliament resumes in two weeks. That is the only purpose of the suspension of standing orders and the precedence of the Address-in-Reply.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [2.45 pm]: It does not take long, does it? How many times did members on this side of the House sit and listen to self-righteous speeches by other members, particularly the now Premier, about parliamentary standards, the role of Parliament and the need for proper timing to conduct proper debates? How many times did we have to endure that? These issues are important. The Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill relates to the collapse of HIH Insurance. The collapse of the company has created exposure in workers compensation insurance of many millions of dollars. My colleague the member for Kingsley is well attuned to the problem. My understanding is that the broad solution is to impose a levy of 5 per cent across all policies covering that area. This would be an increase in tax. It may well be warranted and supported by members on this side of the House, given the circumstances. It would be an increase in tax of 5 per cent - one dollar in 20. On the first full day of the session, the Government introduced and second read a Bill that seeks to impose a tax - not a tax on HIH Insurance, but on all small business constituents. They are the people whom the Government said it would represent in this Parliament. Members talked about representing their small business constituents - businesses that are a major provider of employment in this State. On their second full day in Parliament, the new backbenchers are going to allow a 5 per cent tax to be put through without any scrutiny or realistic opportunity for members on this side of the House to look at the issue. The member for Kingsley, who is handling the Bill, is aware of the details and has started the process of talking to employers and insurance groups. What opportunity has any member of this House had to talk to their small business constituents? They have not had a single opportunity. This is not just a piece of government machinery; it is not a form of Treasury advance arrangement. This is about imposing on employers in this State a 5 per cent tax for workers compensation. It is not a trivial matter. It is not something that members of Parliament, particularly newly elected members, should just sit and accept. New members have a direct accountability to their constituencies - the small businesses and the people they employ. We all know that the labour market is tight and that there are economic problems. For many employers, whatever the merits or otherwise of this legislation, the imposition of a 5 per cent - one dollar in 20 - tax will no doubt drive some of them to the wall. It will be the straw that breaks the camel's back. It will affect employment. Members of Parliament, at a minimum, should be talking to their constituents and to the minister handling the issue. They should be thinking about it properly. None of the members would have had the opportunity to do so; certainly, no-one on this side of the House, whether they be Liberal, National Party or Independent, has had any opportunity to talk to the interest groups, let alone individuals.

The decision to suspend standing orders should be related to the importance of the Bill. The Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill is a taxation Bill. It is not a machinery of government Bill; it is not a trivial amendment or correction of an anomaly from a previous piece of legislation. It does not deal with minor amendments. It is not an omnibus Bill. It is a significant decision to solve a problem that is not of the making of the Government or the Opposition. The Opposition agrees that the issue needs to be addressed. The implication for all employers and policyholders in workers compensation in this State is very significant. I am certain that anomalies will arise between different categories of workers compensation, sectors of the work force, industry and employers in different types of financial arrangements. There is no doubt about that. Some cases involving compensation for accidents in the workplace are proceeding, but some are yet to proceed.

The Minister for Labour Relations should not sit there and grin. He should do his job properly. He has a serious and difficult issue to deal with. The Opposition recognises that. However, the minister's first action should not be to take for granted this Parliament, the Liberal Opposition, Labor backbenchers, small businesses, larger employers in this State or the hundreds of thousands of people who are covered by workers compensation. This is not a trivial issue.

The Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2001, which relates to Treasury funding for the ongoing operation of government, is the type of Bill that Government's of both persuasions have brought forward. This Bill is internal to government - it is a machinery arrangement - and has no great policy implications. When those Bills come forward there is a bit of debate about the state of the budget and whatever else. It does not contain the same sort of serious issue as the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill 2001. It is internal to government and there can be general debate about it, as is generally the case with budget Bills.

The workers compensation issue is not just about government. It concerns hundreds and thousands of employers and employees. Many businesses, in particular in regional and rural areas, are under severe stress. Every elected representative has the responsibility to talk to his constituents. Members should be given a fair opportunity to look at the issues, consider the Bill and come back to this Parliament.

I refer to Standing Order No 59, which refers to the priority for the Address-in-Reply -

Bills may be introduced and taken to the stage that the motion "That the bill be now read a second time" has been moved but no other business that is not of a formal or procedural nature will have priority until -

- (a) after 4 sitting days . . . have been dedicated exclusively to the debate on the Address in Reply; or
- (b) immediately following a general election after 7 sitting days (including opening day) have been dedicated exclusively to the debate on the Address in Reply.

This Parliament has returned following a general election. The Deputy Premier, along with members of this side of the House, played a significant role in redrafting the standing orders. I worked cooperatively on standing orders and reform when I sat on that side of the House. It was done in a bipartisan way to improve the operation of this Parliament, to set up standing committees and to simplify procedures. The Deputy Premier was passionate, quite rightly, about the need to do that. The standing orders state that the Address-in-Reply at the beginning of the parliamentary year should go for four days before other matters are dealt with. After an election, it should be seven days.

When the Minister for Labour Relations raised this issue, he discussed it with the member for Kingsley and briefly with me. The Opposition recognises the importance of the Bill. It is prepared to suspend the Address-in-Reply once there has been a reasonable, albeit short, opportunity to talk to interest groups - the financial sector, small business and other constituencies. The Opposition does not support the suspension of the Address-in-Reply on day two of Parliament to deal with a matter concerning a significant tax increase to the community, whether or not it is justified.

As I told the Minister for Labour Relations, the matter can be dealt with after the recess. This House is scheduled to have a two-week recess. The Government could make it a one-week recess while the Centenary of Federation celebration is on in Melbourne. The Opposition will wear that. Even though it will be difficult, the Opposition will be prepared, certainly by the Wednesday, to debate this issue following a full week's break. That is not unreasonable. Alternatively, the Government could stick to the two-week break and - I think the member for Kingsley would agree - the Opposition would be willing to debate the Bill on the first Tuesday. While the Opposition is reluctant about a tax increase, it will be satisfied to deal with the Bill at that point. There will be issues and anomalies that must be raised and dealt with. It will then be dealt with in an efficient way; hopefully then it will progress through the Chamber on that Tuesday. That is not an unreasonable position. The Government has the choice. The Opposition will agree to the suspension of the Address-in-Reply, but not on day two of Parliament.

Mr Ripper: It is actually day three.

Mr BARNETT: There was no Address-in-Reply of any consequence on opening day, as members know.

Several members interjected.

Mr BARNETT: This is the second full day of Parliament. The opening day of Parliament is largely ceremonial. The Address-in-Reply is given by one member; this year it was given by the new member for Kimberley, and members applauded her for that. This is the second full sitting day of Parliament. If this debate were brought on during the Tuesday following the one-week break, the Opposition would be allowing it to be debated on the third day. At least the Opposition would have been given a week in which to look at the issues. Alternatively, the Government can leave the two-week break in place, after which the matter will be dealt with. That is not unreasonable.

Dr Gallop: You briefed your member here three weeks ago.

Mr BARNETT: This Bill was brought into the Parliament. The Premier can talk about the issue. The collapse of HIH Insurance has been widely canvassed and reported in the media. The legislative solution - the 5 per cent tax increase - proposed by the Government was introduced to Parliament yesterday during the second reading speech. It was the first opportunity that the details of, and justification for, the legislation were made public. It was the first opportunity, as the member for Kingsley rightly pointed out, for industry groups to find out about the 5 per cent levy. What will they say to every member of Parliament? They will ask why they had not been told about it. The first thing this Government will do is to introduce a 5 per cent tax. The second thing it will do is not tell anyone about it. The Government will try

to ram this legislation through Parliament today by suspending standing orders instead of having the decency to show respect for its constituency or even a modicum of respect for proper parliamentary process.

The offer is open to the Government. The Opposition does not support the suspension of standing orders today. The Bill can be debated when the Parliament comes back in two weeks - immediately it comes back if the Government wishes - or, if there is only a week's break, the Opposition would be prepared to debate the Bill perhaps late on the Tuesday afternoon or evening. That is not unreasonable. I am sure that our colleagues in the upper House will similarly cooperate with the passage with the Bill if they are satisfied. I cannot be more reasonable than that.

Mr Masters: Hear, hear!

Mr BARNETT: The same should apply to the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill, even though it is a less contentious Bill that does not directly affect the outside community. Again, propriety suggests that it should be dealt -

Mr Ripper: We absolutely must pass the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill.

Mr BARNETT: I suggest it should be dealt with in the same way. I am Treasury spokesman for this side and handle Treasury information. I saw the Bill for the first time yesterday. I have not had an opportunity for a briefing by Treasury. That has not been offered to me, has it?

Mr Ripper: No, but you can have one at any time if you wish.

Mr BARNETT: Gee, thanks mate! Will that be before or after afternoon tea? This is the reality.

I understand the pressures and financial problems of government. I was there for eight years. I understand the needs of Treasury. The Opposition will cooperate with that. However, the Bill should be dealt with on the Tuesday following the break.

Mr Ripper: By the way, did you ask for a briefing?

Mr BARNETT: I received a copy of the Bill only yesterday. I did not know that the Government would try to slam it through Parliament today.

Mr Ripper: You were told yesterday. Did you ask for a briefing?

Mr BARNETT: Did the Treasurer speak to me yesterday?

Mr Kobelke: I spoke to you about it yesterday and I told you that tomorrow we would suspend standing orders to get the Bill through.

Mr BARNETT: For HIH Insurance. Yes. Did the Treasurer speak to me yesterday?

Mr Ripper: No. The Leader of the House spoke to you.

Mr BARNETT: Does the Treasurer not think that it is his responsibility? It is. The Minister for Labour Relations did speak to me and I do not doubt what he said. My focus was on the issue of HIH Insurance because the member for Kingsley had approached me about it. The Minister for Labour Relations had spoken about it to the member for Kingsley. She did discuss it with me. The urgency of that Bill was in my mind. That was the only thing the member for Kingsley and I discussed. The minister may have referred to the other Bill. Frankly, if he did, I did not take any notice of that comment, because I had no reason to assume anything other than that the standing orders would apply.

If members have not yet read the standing orders, they state that when a piece of legislation is introduced and is second read, it will lie on the Table for three weeks - not three sitting weeks. Why would I ask for a briefing yesterday? I had every expectation, if I wanted to talk to Treasury officials about that Bill, that I would have three calendar weeks. That is the reality. My focus is not on the Treasury matter. The Treasurer now says I have to respond to this today. He has a problem. He has to do his job. If he has a problem with the Treasury financing issue - I do not doubt that he has - he as Treasurer should have spoken to me last week or the week before. He knows I would have been sympathetic and supportive to his cause. It is no good his second reading the Bill without even saying a word to me, and his now wanting to push it through at three o'clock on a Thursday afternoon. What an appalling approach to management and an absolute arrogant disregard for the functions and operations of this Parliament. He has not got off to a good start.

Dr Gallop: A bit like the way you misrepresented your party yesterday.

Mr BARNETT: We are talking about Parliament. How many times did the members opposite stand over here and lecture the former Government about Parliament? They have had a chance to think about the offer, which is to come back in two weeks. We will then suspend standing orders and, assuming we agree with the legislation, as I believe we will, we will facilitate its passage. However, we want to consider the implications of and anomalies in the legislation. Some members from the Liberal Party and the National Party have already raised issues of concern to them. There are issues that perhaps the Government is not even aware of. They should be considered before a money Bill - a tax Bill - leaves the Legislative Assembly. Money Bills originate in this House. It is here that the Treasury function has to be administered and tackled, not in the upper House. These Bills have to be dealt with by the two ministers in this place

and they have to be dealt with properly. My offer is a reasonable one. Members opposite have had time to think about. Is there a response before I sit down?

Mr Kobelke: I will reply during my right of reply, but the Treasury's advance has to go through. Delaying the supplementation will make it much more complex for business. It will go through. We will consider the complaints and issues raised by members and I will give a detailed answer when we debate the matter.

Mr BARNETT: How can we raise issues today?

Mr Ripper: The issue has been around for months.

Mr BARNETT: No, it has not.

Mr Ripper: Of course it has.

Dr Gallop: Courtesy of your federal colleagues who could not regulate the industry.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Hopefully the Leader of the Opposition has the information and I ask him to continue with his comments.

Mr BARNETT: I have made what I consider to be a reasonable and generous offer. The offer is fair to not only members of Parliament but also the community, particularly the small business community. The Government has that choice: It can deal with the legislation on Tuesday in two weeks when we will agree to suspend standing orders, or it can bring Parliament back a week early. If the Government is worried about the passage of the legislation through the upper House, it has the capacity to bring the upper House back earlier, too. The Government has an issue with some urgent legislation. It should not compromise this Parliament, the members of Parliament and the community; it should deal with the issue at hand, which is how to get the legislation passed by the Parliament in a reasonable and efficient manner. We are being cooperative and I hope that the Premier or Minister for Labour Relations will indicate before I sit down whether -

Dr Gallop: We want to hear the other people on that side of the House. You are not the only person on that side. What about the National Party and the Independents? We want to listen to what they have to say.

Mr BARNETT: I am giving the Premier an opportunity.

Dr Gallop: Yours is not the only party on that side of the fence.

Mr BARNETT: I have made a fair and generous offer, and the Premier can accept -

Dr Gallop: I want to hear from the National Party.

Mr BARNETT: The Premier can accept that offer now. He knows what the issues are.

Dr Gallop: Come on, let them speak!

Mr BARNETT: Mr Speaker, I am trying to make myself heard.

Mr Pandal: Mr Speaker -

Mr BARNETT: I am sorry, I have not finished. There are other speakers but -

Dr Gallop: You are trying to stop them making a speech.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition is trying to continue with his comments. Perhaps members on my right will allow him do so.

Mr BARNETT: The offer is fair and reasonable. The Premier has the opportunity to accept it or reject it. That is his choice. If he decides to accept the offer of our agreeing to debate this matter in one of two weeks, this debate can now finish and we can continue with the Address-in-Reply.

Dr Gallop: Do you speak on behalf of those people?

Mr BARNETT: I speak on behalf of the Liberal Party. That offer is there. The alternative for the Premier is to not accept the offer and for debate to continue. Members will express their views on the merits or otherwise of suspending standing orders and the merits or otherwise of the HIH legislation. I am sure they will speak at some length about their not being given the opportunity to discuss this issue. I think the Premier would be well advised to accept this offer to deal with this issue properly and fairly in a week or two weeks.

Mr Kobelke: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to put something on the record. If these Bills do not pass today, what guarantee can he give on behalf of his Liberal colleagues in the other place to cooperate with the standing orders to ensure that both Bills are passed by the end of May?

Mr BARNETT: As the minister knows - I speak only on behalf of the Liberal Party - if the Liberal party room agrees to the legislation, we will cooperate with its passage. However, the minister and I know that members in this House cannot reflect on members in the other House or comment on them or implicate them in any way in our discussions.

Dr Gallop: What sort of leader are you?

Mr BARNETT: I am answering the question and I ask for some decency and courtesy to allow me to complete it. What I am saying is that, as the leader of the Liberal Party, I will use all of my endeavours with the members in the upper House to ensure that the Bill passes according to time. However, I cannot dictate rules to the other House. That is the best I can offer. That is our position.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [3.09 pm]: I have gross concerns about the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill 2001. My major concern is that I have not had time to investigate this legislation, and some members would know that I have some experience in the insurance industry. I wish to put on the record some issues which the Government, and certainly the back bench, should be thinking about. A \$93 million workers compensation liability has been placed on this State following the collapse of HIH Insurance. That money will be replaced, according to this Bill, with a 5 per cent levy on employers. I want to ask questions of the industry - the minister will not be able to answer them - to try to get some answers. Where did the HIH reserves go? If the reserves were the prudential requirement of HIH -

Ms MacTiernan: Ask your federal colleagues.

Mr TRENORDEN: I am asking the minister. The minister is the one who is trying to ram this legislation down our throats. Where have those reserves gone?

Ms MacTiernan: Good question! Part has gone into your campaign funds.

The SPEAKER: I draw to the attention of the House and members who intend to speak on the motion that we are discussing the proposal to suspend standing orders, not the content of the legislation. I know the Leader of the National Party is about to return to that issue, and I urge him to do that.

Mr TRENORDEN: I would never contest your rulings, Mr Speaker, but I was on that topic. Neither I nor members of the National Party have the information to answer some simple questions, so I put them into the stratosphere. I will not take long to do that. If the legislation is passed, we will take 5 per cent of the workers compensation premium and put it into the supplementation fund, and ask the employers of the State to replace it. Why? The figure is only an actuarial projection. It is not an actual \$93 million loss, but an actuarial projection over seven years. The Government is asking us to tell taxpayers we want \$93 million because an actuary said that that is the figure as workers compensations is a seven-year process. Somebody has come up with this figure and our constituents have to pay for it. Is that fair? I have not had the opportunity to ask these questions. Who gains under that scenario? The creditors of HIH will gain. The taxpayers of Western Australia will not gain, nor will the workers who were hurt in the process; but the creditors of HIH will.

As Leader of the National Party, I will not agree to such legislation until I know where the taxpayers stand, particularly the employers. At the moment, it is likely that I might penalise the wrong people. I have heard quite a few of the maiden speeches delivered today. Members talked about fairness and equity. That goes to the core of the matter. Why should the employers pay? If the Government believes in the argument I have put forward, it should take the money from the consolidated fund. Why take it from the employers? The Government did it with the Teachers Credit Society, so why not do it here? Why hit the employers? Why are they being singled out because one insurance company has collapsed? Was it their fault? The Premier can turn up his nose. However, the reality is that this could bite him. There is no way that I or other members of the National Party can support the rush to pass the Bill, because it is a \$93 million liability that will run for seven years. I want time to investigate it fully.

I indicated to the Leader of the House that I was not fully informed about the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill, but I have consulted my colleagues, and I agree that the processes of the House should be followed. Therefore, I will not support the Government on that either. It is early days. It is the first week of the sitting. As a government member rightly pointed out, we will be here for four years. Let us go through the processes correctly. The only way the Government can justify the speedy passage of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill is if it knows it will be sent to a compliant upper House. Is the Government saying it will go through the other place quickly? Otherwise, we are wasting our time. If we are wasting our time, we should simply go through the normal and correct procedures for running this place.

MR BOARD (Murdoch) [3.13 pm]: The Government has been caught out because it is doing something incredibly undemocratic. It knows that and government members are not proud of it. The Government is denying the new members - including its own - the opportunity to have a say in this legislation. It won an election that it did not expect to win. It was caught out. It delayed the start of this Parliament. Why did the Government delay the start of the Parliament to 1 May? It could have started the Parliament much earlier. In that case, it would not be in this position.

Mr Kobelke: When you were elected in 1993, you didn't sit until June.

Mr BOARD: It has been nearly three months since the election. The Government had three months in which to recall the Parliament, yet on the second full day of the sitting it tries to ram through a piece of legislation that will impact on every employer on this State. I have listened to the speeches of new members of Parliament. They say they want to represent small business. What say have they had in this? What chance do the new members have to speak on this legislation? If they speak in this debate, they lose their right to make a maiden speech. The Government is denying new members the right to speak on the legislation and also make a maiden speech. Why? Because it was caught out.

Mr Kobelke: Who has not made a maiden speech?

Mr BOARD: Some members in this Parliament have not yet made their maiden speeches; for example, the member for Alfred Cove. She must vote on a Bill when she has not had the opportunity to make her maiden speech. The Government wants to ram through important legislation that will have an impact on all Western Australians, particularly employers. It will show that the Government was caught out. The Leader of the Opposition offered a good compromise. We can come back early and then suspend standing orders and delay the Address-in-Reply to help the Government deal with this issue. Why deny members of Parliament the opportunity of representing their constituents? The maiden speeches have been made with dignity. I am proud of what the members have said in this House about how they aim to represent the thousands of people in their electorate and how they will be in touch with those people. They have spoken about how they will let their voters have a say and will consult with them. The Government has talked about arrogance. It went to the election talking about arrogance. Yet, on the second full day of the parliamentary sitting, it is being arrogant, and it knows it. It is not proud of this. It ought to accept the compromise and uphold the democratic right of members to have a say and represent their constituencies.

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [3.16 pm]: We have been asked to deal with a very serious matter. I have consistently voted against motions to suspend standing orders or to apply the guillotine. Why? I have said it before and I will say it again: Every time the Parliament acts precipitously by bending or even breaking and setting aside its own rules - and that is what we have been asked to do today - errors happen. I hesitate to mention this phrase, but it is as though the days of WA Inc never happened. Everyone was hoping we had reached the point at which that issue was in the past. Elections have been won or lost on the merits of that. Yet, WA Inc was about this very issue. The royal commission reports and the subsequent Commission on Government reports are all about the weaknesses within the parliamentary system, incidents in which the system was held up to abuse or, when it was not being abused, where it was stretched beyond the point that anything should be stretched beyond. This is not something we should do lightly. We have been asked not just to suspend a set of standing orders that have served us for 100 years, but also to set aside a set of standing orders that were passed and approved by this House as late as last year.

This morning I had a discussion with a journalist about the role of Parliament and the upper House, and whether we should find ways to expedite things through Parliament. I made the point, without knowing what we would be dealing with this afternoon, that Parliament has the responsibility not to speed things up but to slow things down. That might sound odd to many people, but the reality is that every time we stick by the rules and abide by the time-given limits imposed by our standing orders, we have at least a reasonable chance of passing laws that will not reverberate on us. There is another way out of this process. If standing orders are suspended today and two important pieces of legislation are rushed through this House, they will arrive in the upper House two weeks from next Tuesday. This is a dangerous action that will haunt the new Government, elected quite properly and fairly on the basis of accountability. What will members have achieved by suspending standing orders, passing the two Bills and sending them to the other House? We will have achieved nothing because the upper House cannot debate them any earlier. Getting the Bills out of here quickly will be to no advantage. Common ground may be found if the Bills are left on the Assembly's Notice Paper and the Government gives us due notice that they will be dealt with on Tuesday fortnight. There can then be an arrangement that the Bills will pass through all stages on that sitting day and go to the other House. Unless I am told otherwise, or unless someone informs me that we will run out of money before then, the sense of urgency that the Government is placing on the matter simply does not exist. The Government will lose nothing by deferring these decisions today and obtaining some sort of guarantee from the Opposition that the Bills will be dealt with in an expeditious manner on Tuesday fortnight. It is not as though we have painted ourselves into a corner.

I disagree with the Leader of the Opposition on only one point. He indicated that the issue of the indemnity legislation was something of which we all needed to take close account, and I agree with that, but he went on to imply that the other Bill was not as important. I disagree with him there. What does the other Bill seek to do?

Mr Barnett: I have not looked at it.

Mr PENDAL: It is a Treasurer's Advance; however, I do not even know the amount of money we are dealing with - that is how remiss I would be to agree to its speedy passage through this place.

Mr Cowan: The amount is \$300 million.

Mr PENDAL: Only \$300 million! Governments have fallen on lesser amounts than that.

Mr Cowan interjected.

Mr PENDAL: I realise that, and that is partly what I am saying in response to the Leader of the Opposition. Members will be forgoing their rights to make a speech on the Supply Bill, and I remind the new members, no matter which side they are on, that the Supply Bill is like the Address-in-Reply.

Mr Ripper: No, it is not the Supply Bill, it is the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill.

Mr PENDAL: No, with respect, I have just dealt with that matter while the Treasurer was having a talkfest with the Leader of the House. Earlier it was mentioned that it was hoped that the new Government had not caught the same disease that brought the last one down. I interjected and expressed the hope that the Treasurer had been inoculated against that sort of behaviour. The Treasurer, who has carriage of the Bill, was quoted from page 2868 of *Hansard* dated Wednesday, 18 August 1993 as saying -

The proper remedy is for this House to sit longer.

Whoops! He went on to say -

The Opposition -

That is, the same group of people in government now, except they were sitting on this side of the House -

- is happy to sit next week -

So not much changes -

- or even the week after -

A government member: What did the Government at the time do?

Mr PENDAL: I am starting to think that not even that changes.

Mrs Roberts: People are not consistent.

Mr PENDAL: Exactly, the minister is quite right. I have the luxury of always being beautifully consistent. Sometimes I think I should have traded-in that consistency, but the minister is not going to divert me with that sort of interjection. I repeat what the current Treasurer said when he was seeking to get the House to see the seriousness of the matter members were confronting in 1993 -

The Opposition is happy to sit next week or even the week after, if that is what is required. Perhaps the Government is not happy to debate these matters next week or the week after. Perhaps the Ministers would rather be travelling elsewhere instead of defending the Government's performance and the decisions it has made in the Parliament.

Its pretty damning stuff. It was not even said halfway through the previous Government's term when the now Treasurer was beginning to rise to his present dizzy heights. The comments were made a few months after the member went into opposition. He felt as passionately about it then as I continue to do now through that consistency about which I have just been reminded.

The Government cannot have forgotten the lessons of the Commission on Government. I hope that not just the Labor members but members on both sides of House learnt a lot from the Commission on Government and the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters because it always takes two to tango. The Government's preparedness to come into this place on the second full day of the session and say that it wants to set aside all of those rules that are intended to avoid WA Inc situations will stain the record of this Government for many years to come.

Finally, I reiterate the point I made earlier: We simply do not need to be discussing this motion to suspend standing orders. Does anyone suggest that we are going to run out of money before Tuesday fortnight? A few minutes ago I tried to have a private conversation with the Premier on the matter. He did mention the date but I could not hear it in the din.

Mr Trenorden: July.

Mr PENDAL: If we are to run out of money in July, that tells me we are not going to run out of money in the middle of May, therefore we should proceed with other business. We have now spent an hour and a half dealing with a motion to suspend standing orders that should never have been moved. Had the suspension been necessary because the services of the State were going to come to a halt by next Tuesday or Wednesday, one may have handled the whole thing differently. I for one would appreciate the chance to speak on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill. I am very concerned about the other legislation we are dealing with as a result of the HIH collapse. For all those reasons, I ask the Government to back off slightly and say that it will not proceed with the suspension as long as there can be some type of agreement. When members return to this place in a fortnight we can all agree then to deal with both of the matters with as much dispatch as possible. What will that achieve? The interesting thing is that it will have been almost three weeks to the date since this legislation was introduced and therefore the sense of betrayal against the standing orders will simply not be an issue.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley) [3.28 pm]: The Government obviously is facing another test of its accountability. I refer to HIH Insurance Ltd and the legislation to introduce a levy on the employers' indemnity supplementation fund. I was concerned at the comment made earlier by a member of the Government that we should agree to rush the legislation through this House and not worry about whether there are any problems with it, because any problems can be fixed in the upper House. The Legislative Assembly is where the Government is formed. The comment was an absolute disgrace. I would never have heard such a comment from members of the Government when they were on this side of the House. The Opposition has offered - as did the current Treasurer when he sat on this side - to come back early if the matter is so urgent that it cannot wait until Tuesday fortnight. The Government thought it was fine to brief me Thursday week ago and to give me copies of legislation without the second reading speech on Tuesday afternoon. It also apparently was fine for the Government to bring in the legislation and make the second reading speech to this House only yesterday. I had asked for several assurances to be incorporated into that second reading speech. The information went out to the industry sector only yesterday, and I indicated at the time that I wanted to talk to both small businesses and industry to gauge their concern.

Obviously people in the industry are aware of the issue. The minister has already flagged the five per cent levy. The method of implementation is a concern for industry. I spoke with members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Combined Small Business Association. They did not think that the Government would bring the matter on today. They have not had a chance to examine and comment on it. So much for the Government's views on consultation. The Government thinks it is all right not to consult when it is happy with an expected outcome. Neither industry nor the Legislative Assembly is ready to deal with this legislation. The Government has failed in its first test of accountability in this House.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [3.30 pm]: The operations of the current Government can be likened to the operations of the previous Government; in other words, clear lines have been drawn. Unfortunately, that conclusion can be reached within three days of this Parliament's sitting. Most keen observers of Parliament usually come to that conclusion only after a Government has been in office for a reasonable time. The operations of the Government bear no resemblance to the principles that were espoused by the members of the Labor Party when they were in opposition. The current principles reflect those of the Executive of this State. In other words, the members of the Cabinet and the ministry dictate to those people, who provide the numbers to the Executive to give it the privilege of being there, that they can go ahead with this proposal. That is disappointing, given the issue of principle stated by those members who had the privilege of delivering their maiden speeches; namely, that their priority lay in representing their constituencies before anything else. That is a nonsense because government members have given the priority to the Executive of this State.

I suggest to the Leader of the House that it would have been appropriate for him to give a clear indication to the House, as Governments are wont to do, that at times it is necessary to debate some government business before the Address-in-Reply is completed. That requires the suspension of standing orders. There is no question about that. It would have been appropriate for the Leader of the House to indicate to all members that they can expect this matter to be brought before the House for debate when we next return to Parliament. Members like to know what is on the Notice Paper and they like to think that the Notice Paper is an accurate reflection of the business that will be conducted by the House. However, a motion is now before the House to suspend standing orders. That motion was moved two and a half hours before this Parliament, according to convention and standing orders, would have risen for the week.

The Leader of the House has been unable to tell us whether he wants to deal with the matter today, although I assume that he does. Given that this debate may last for some time, we will have approximately an hour and a half to debate two important issues, unless we again defy standing orders and rise after 5.30 pm. The first issue is whether we ask employers in this State to contribute \$93 million to the Government, and the second is the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill. That Bill provides for payments of an extraordinary or unforeseen nature in anticipation of, or in addition to, the relevant appropriations made by Parliament. I will not dwell on the substance of that Bill, although every day we have heard comments by members of the Government about budget blow-outs. I am sure that some of the issues to which those ministers refer have been of an unforeseen or extraordinary nature. I can think of a number of them, including payments to the dairy industry and to cover locust infestations, drought and transport matters, and to provide support for the timber industry and its rationalisation or adjustment. Those issues were not anticipated when the budget was produced. That is why we have the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill.

I agree with the member for South Perth that to deny members the opportunity to debate those two important issues by limiting the debate to one and a half hours is something that members of this Parliament should oppose strongly. I am disappointed that, within three days of its operation as a Government in Parliament, the Government has introduced a motion that indicates that the Executive wants not only to get its business done but also to dominate its party members and deny them the principles they espoused in their Address-in-Reply speeches. The new members are not in this Chamber only to support the Government. They want to support the Government, but not to the extent that they must compromise their principles and deny their electorates the opportunity to be heard through them as their spokespersons. Mr Speaker, the Government is denying them that. The best way to deal with this in your reply, Mr Speaker, is to indicate that you might deal with this when we come back in two weeks, but not today.

MR RIPPER (Belmont - Deputy Premier) [3.37 pm]: I will explain why the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill is so urgent. The Government can spend money only on the authority of the Parliament. The authority of the Parliament is given through two processes. The first process is the budget. The Government can spend money on the authority of the Parliament as expressed in the Parliament's approval of the budget. The Treasurer's Advance Account is the second mechanism that allows the Government to spend money. If the Government wants to spend money beyond the budget, it must use the mechanism of the Treasurer's Advance Account. That is the mechanism through which the Government spends moneys when unforeseen or extraordinary circumstances arise, or when budget blow-outs occur in government agencies.

This Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill is urgent because retrospectively we are seeking to double the Treasurer's Advance limit for the past financial year. The Parliament approved a Treasurer's Advance limit of \$300 million for 2000-01. The Bill proposes to retrospectively double that to \$600 million. I agree that that is an important issue for the Parliament. However, it is also an important issue for the Government and the State. The previous limit on the Treasurer's Advance Account has virtually been reached because of the budget blow-outs that I mentioned during question time. If we do not quickly retrospectively increase that limit, the Government will run out of authority to make expenditure beyond the budget.

Mr Cowan: You knew all of this. You could have orchestrated the sittings of the Parliament to manage this.

Mr RIPPER: Wait a minute. I have been advised by Treasury that if we do not increase the Treasurer's Advance limit, in the first week of June the Government will lose the capacity to make unforeseen and extraordinary expenditure or to fund budget blow-outs. One can understand why any Government and any Treasurer would not want the State to be in a position where we can spend within budget but we do not have the capacity to spend beyond budget.

There is still some time before the first week of June, but the Government wants to take a prudent approach, bearing in mind that it does not have a majority in the upper House and that in the past the upper House has been known to delay consideration of legislation. If we delay the legislation here, particularly because we cannot seem to get a definite guarantee from the Leader of the Opposition about the behaviour of his members in the other place, we run the risk of not knowing whether we can get that Bill through both Houses of Parliament in time to ensure that the Government retains spending flexibility until 30 June. Those are the stakes.

I do not back down from the statements that the member for South Perth quoted. Of course, parliamentary consideration, and adequate time for it, is important. However, I put the other side of the argument: The Government must have the ability to make unforeseen and extraordinary expenditure. The position that we are in is not the result of this Government's spending; it is the result of decisions made by the previous Government to spend beyond budget. The previous Government spent up to the limit of the Treasurer's Advance and created a position whereby the Treasurer's Advance limit will not sustain us throughout the entire financial year. If the previous Government had not made all those decisions for additional expenditure between the time it brought down the last budget and the time it called the election, we would not be in this position. I hope that in this place and in the other place there will be no unnecessary delays of this Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill. If there are unnecessary delays, the State will lack the capacity to respond to a natural disaster, for example, or to some other extraordinary or unforeseen circumstance, or, indeed, to respond to the spending blow-out in the hospital system. Think about that. Think about the position the State would be in if the Government could not respond to the spending blow-out in the hospital system. That is a serious matter and that is why the Government has taken the extraordinary step of asking the Parliament for urgent consideration of this Bill.

MR JOHNSON (Hillarys) [3.43 pm]: I will not go over the ground that has already been debated by members on this side of the House. We are only asking for what is reasonable; that is, the opportunity for our members to examine the Bill and to talk to the small businesspeople in our community. I am a member of a businessmen's association. None of the people in that association has seen the Bill. I want the opportunity to have the Bill in front of me, to talk to them and to ascertain their views. What the member for Merredin and the member for South Perth have said is absolutely right. This goes back a few years to days we prefer not to remember.

Dr Gallop: We agreed to similar things when we were on the other side.

Mr JOHNSON: I am glad the Premier interjected, because he is the next line of attack. I remind the Premier that when he was a member of the Commission on Government joint parliamentary committee, he agreed with every recommendation. He said that if he ever got into government he would implement all of them. He said those words.

Mr Kobelke: Not every recommendation. He never said that.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, he did, other than one.

Mr Kobelke: Wrong again.

Mr JOHNSON: I will dig them out for the Leader of the House. He is the next one to whom I will refer, along with my good friend the Treasurer, I am sorry to say, because I have always found him to be a fairly decent person - he knows that - and the member for Midland. Those three members sat on the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee for a

long time. That committee examined all the standing orders of this House. Those three members know that the government members who were on that committee at that time, including the Speaker, bent over backwards to accommodate all the things they wanted in those standing orders.

Mr Ripper: I hope I am not breaching parliamentary privilege, but you will remember that the committee always considered that there was a safeguard if there was a problem, and that was the possibility of suspending standing orders if the structure that we created resulted in any difficulties.

Mr JOHNSON: I do not think the Treasurer is breaching standing orders by saying that. However, I want him to think back and remember the points that were brought up during those countless meetings.

Dr Gallop: We remember them.

Mr JOHNSON: No, the Premier does not remember them, because he was not there. His colleagues sitting on either side of him remember them.

Dr Gallop: We agreed to this sort of thing when we were on the other side of the House.

Mr JOHNSON: No. These standing orders were developed with a massive amount of input from the Treasurer, the Leader of the House and the member for Midland. They were convivial meetings at which many agreements were made. There was give and take on both sides. That was the attitude. At the end of the day, we all wanted updated standing orders of which we could be proud and on which we could work today. These are the updated standing orders. They do not go back 100 years. They were updated last year. The Opposition has already offered to come back a week early to accommodate the Government if it considers this matter is so urgent. We will come back a week early - not a problem. Those opposite often made that offer to us.

Mr Ripper: I do not ever remember your accepting it.

Mr JOHNSON: We never saw the need for it because we did not show the hypocrisy that members on the other side of the House are showing today. This House has standing orders by which we are supposed to abide. There are many ways to accommodate the needs of -

Several members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, if my colleagues would give me a chance to speak, I would appreciate it. They have had their say; I want my say now. We are prepared to accommodate the Government as much as we possibly can for the good running of this House. We have offered to come back a week early. I am sure many government members do not want to do that, but we will do it. Even if we do not come back a week early but come back at the stated time, various members have already said that by then the Government will have control of the upper House and it will be able to do what it wants for the next four years.

Mr Ripper: Thirteen out of 34 is not control.

Mr JOHNSON: When have the Greens (WA) ever voted against the Labor Party? The Government will have enough members in the upper House after that date to be able to pass its legislation. However, it should at least do the right and proper thing by this Parliament, the people of Western Australia and, in this instance, the small businesspeople, of whom there are thousands, and give us all a chance to see the legislation. The Opposition and the Government's backbenchers should be given an opportunity to talk to those small businesspeople, because the Government's backbenchers would not have a clue what the effects will be because they have not had a chance to look at the legislation. Do not treat them like the vegetable patch. I am sure they are intelligent members of Parliament who will welcome the opportunity to carry out their responsibilities in the way they are charged to do as members of this House.

MR AINSWORTH (Roe) [3.49 pm]: My concern about the process that the Government is proposing is twofold. First, I am concerned about distortions of the standing orders, which will work against what many of us have worked hard to achieve in this place; that is, to get a better set of standing orders and a better procedure in this place so that the community at large regains some of the respect it has lost for the conventions of this place and the people in it. More important for me and my electorate is the issue of the second Bill that is proposed to be brought forward quickly - that is, the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill - because some of my constituents who are in small business have been impacted upon severely by increases in their workers compensation premiums in the past year or two. Increases of 100 per cent or more have occurred in some cases. The increases have been quite horrific, and have caused some people to decide that it is easier not to be in business than to bear these costs and try to absorb them, when they are working in an industry in which they cannot pass on those costs. It is a disgrace to suggest that the Opposition should agree to rush through a piece of legislation in this House in the dying hours of the first week of the Parliament. This would preclude those people from even being aware of what the Government is proposing, let alone having an opportunity to have a good look at the Bill and convey their concerns to the Government. The House should not even be considering this sort of motion today. As regards the other piece of legislation, the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill, it has been made clear by other speakers that with the willing cooperation of this side of the House, there is still ample time to get that piece of legislation passed by both Houses by 1 June. That would certainly not leave the Government without sufficient scope in its budget to cater for extraordinary items.

Mr Kobelke: That is not true.

Mr AINSWORTH: That is certainly the indication that has been given to me. Unless the urgency is greater than the Leader of the House has led this House to believe, then that is true.

Mr Kobelke: We will run out of money if it does not go through before the end of June.

Mr AINSWORTH: My major concern is the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Amendment Bill. At the very least members of both sides of the House should be given time, first, to become more aware of the implications of that legislation, but, more particularly, to advise their constituents, who are the ones who will foot the bill if the legislation is passed. We need to give those people the courtesy and the right to have a say as to what they believe should happen before they are handed a fait accompli by a Bill being rammed through this place.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [3.52 pm]: I was hoping the Leader of the Opposition would return so that we could achieve some resolution on this matter. It is certainly not the intent of the Government to use any form of guillotine, so unless there is an element of cooperation, we are going to be here for a very long time tonight. The issue is genuine, and the Treasurer has clearly put on the record the problems the Government has had with the Treasurer's Advance, which it became aware of only in recent weeks. Therefore, there was not a lot of lead-time.

Mr Barnett: What an insult that is to the Under Treasurer.

Mr KOBELKE: The Leader of the Opposition should listen for a moment; I am not going on with the cant we have had from some of the members opposite. There is no breaking of precedent here. The Labor Party agreed, while in opposition, when the previous Government did this, so there is no precedent, but there are substantive issues, and those members opposite who have raised those issues have done so very genuinely. The issue is that the Labor Party has had huge problems with the upper House. I am going to seek, by way of interjection from the Leader of the Opposition, a clear undertaking that if this motion is now withdrawn, when Parliament resumes in two weeks at least the Liberal Party members will put both Bills through the House that day. They might also use all their good offices with the members in the other place to ensure that in that week, or the following week, we put both Bills through the upper House, so that they are passed before the start of June.

The issue with the Treasurer's Advance is that when I was a member of this House, as was the member for Merredin and others, in the early 1990s, a ludicrous situation occurred in the upper House. The Corporations Bill, legislation that was required across the whole of Australia, was rejected by the other place. To the Government's embarrassment, later we came back in the days between Christmas and New Year to deal with it, such was the outcry from business and the community at the stupidity of the then Liberal-National Party coalition in blocking absolutely essential legislation. The legislation now before the House is also absolutely essential. There is no argument about that. We cannot decline to give nurses the pay increase because the Opposition has not passed the legislation. It must go through. We understand proper process, and if the Opposition needs more time, the Government will give it, along with any briefings that are required. However, the Government requires a clear undertaking that, on the first Tuesday upon which Parliament resumes, the legislation will go to the other place and get cooperation from Liberal and National Party members there, so that the special provisions in the standing orders may be used to move it through faster than it would normally proceed.

Mr Cowan: We have never been able to exercise any influence over the other place.

Mr KOBELKE: The Government was taking unusual steps here so that, by proceeding in unusual ways, it could persuade the other place to do the same.

Mr Cowan: There is no way the Government is going to get this Bill, or both Bills, through the upper House in this way. It is not going to happen. The Opposition will see to it that that does not happen unless the Government introduces time management. The minister will have no advantage whatsoever in doing anything other than saying, while he is on his feet, that this is a motion that everyone can perhaps agree to so long as we are prepared to implement it in two weeks. If the minister gave an undertaking, he would lose nothing.

Mr KOBELKE: That was the point of my remarks. I do not wish to delay the House. That is the first point I will come back and ask the Leader of the Opposition to respond to by way of interjection.

Mr Cowan: The other point is that both of those Bills, particularly the Employers Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill, would normally take at least two or three days to debate. That in itself is bad enough, but to bring it on for today is just nonsense. It is bad management.

Mr KOBELKE: I will briefly comment on the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill. The member for Kingsley has had briefings on it and I do not think she has any problems with it. I offered briefings as soon as the decision was made, before the legislation was finally drafted. There was a delay in the drafting, so there was not a lot of notice of the draft legislation. The issues, and the Government's method for their resolution, have been made public for some time and briefings have been available. I accept there are real concerns about it, but I put it to the House that there is no other viable solution. The alternative solutions will cause more pain for business. The Opposition may need to ascertain that for itself, which I understand, because there are real issues with it. I put it to the

Opposition very genuinely that the longer the delay in giving certainty to industry, the more problems that will be created. Any delays will build up extra interest bills, which business will pay. At the end of the day there will be more cost and more uncertainty to industry, but because it is a very important matter, which will impinge directly on business, the Opposition wishes to reassure itself as to the facts, which I appreciate. Time will be allowed for that purpose, but I argue very firmly, once again, that any delay will cause uncertainty and potential extra costs to business. The Government needs to give business, as soon as possible, absolute certainty, so that when business people sit down to sign up for workers compensation premiums, they will know the basis upon which they are doing that, and the full potential cost. I reiterate that the total workers compensation premium bill in this State is in excess of \$600 million. Approximately half of that is paid on 30 June. That is the reason for the urgency. In June when business people negotiate with their insurers, they will need to know the basis upon which they will be signing. The urgency is not that they cannot do it after 30 June. The last time this levy was put in place in the 1980s, it was done with that retrospective element. It will work that way, but it is better for business to know the situation up-front, and that is the reason for the urgency. I made that clear in my speech.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition if he is willing. The Government will withdraw the motion if it can get a very clear undertaking that the Opposition will expedite this legislation. We will not use time management, but we will ensure that members speak to the point and, if necessary, we will sit late so that the Bills go through on the first Tuesday that we come back. The Opposition must use its good offices to the fullest extent to ensure that we have cooperation of the opposition members in the other place, so that they use the various devices available in their standing orders to make sure that the legislation is passed before the start of June.

Mr Barnett: What the Leader of the House is saying is acceptable to the Opposition. There are genuine concerns about the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill, but the member for Kingsley has already said publicly that, in broad term, she, and therefore by implication the Opposition, will be supportive of it.

However, issues and anomalies need to be looked at. When we return on Tuesday 22 May, we are prepared to cooperate with the passage of the Bill. I am not aware of all the issues but I will use my best endeavours, if we are satisfied with the Bill, to assist its passage through the upper House. The Government has some time available to it on the Bill and it is not as serious a matter as it imagines. Once the Opposition indicates its support, the industry should be satisfied with the passage of the Bill. There are some issues with the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill but the Opposition will support its passage. The Government would be wise to put that Bill through as the first item of legislation for that day. I anticipate that it will go through the upper House, but I cannot commit members of the other place. I can encourage Liberal members to assist with the passage of that Bill. I think that is reasonable. We recognise the problems with the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill. It seems that the Bill has a fair bit to do with trying to settle the nurses' pay issue and paying for increases in salaries. The Government should be up-front about it if that is the problem it has to face. It should try to accommodate the issue rather than bleat about blow-outs in the budget. This Bill is largely about the nurses' pay dispute. The Opposition is happy to come back in one week but if the Government wants to have a two-week recess, that is fine. It will not make much difference. The Bills will be debated and dealt with properly and will not be delayed. I will do what I can to assist the passage through the upper House in due time.

Mr KOBELKE: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his response by way of interjection. I want to make two points. The legislation is not only about the extra money that is required to pay the nurses. It is a crucial part, however. Even before the deal is done, we must realise that the money has run out. The Bill is not just about the nurses' dispute. I am worried about the Opposition's qualification that its undertakings will be carried out if it is satisfied. That provides an out for the Opposition if it decides it is not satisfied. The member for Kingsley, the Opposition's spokesperson, was given copies of the Bills to take into the Liberal party room. She received briefings on the matter before it was even cleared through Cabinet. From the earliest possible date, I sought to be totally open and to provide whatever data was available to ensure that the Opposition was part of the loop and that it would get whatever briefings it required due to the urgency of the matter.

Mr Trenorden: There was no consultation with me.

Mr KOBELKE: I apologise to the member for Avon. Due to the rush I did not approach him personally about the matter.

Mr Barnett: The Opposition is not complaining about the minister's role. The minister is dealing with a difficult issue.

Mr KOBELKE: On that basis, I seek approval to withdraw the motion for the suspension of standing orders.

The SPEAKER: According to Standing Order No 119, there cannot be a dissenting voice for the motion to withdraw. Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BILLS (2) - APPROPRIATIONS

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the following Bills -

1. Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2001.
2. Supply Bill 2001.

BROOME PORT AUTHORITY, NOTICE OF DIRECTION*Paper Tabling*

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale - Minister for Planning and Infrastructure) [4.04 pm]: I table a notice of direction that I gave the Broome Port Authority on 14 March 2001. It concerns directing the Broome Port Authority to comply with the government policy in respect of public sector bargaining.

[See paper No 172.]

Personal Explanation

Ms MacTIERNAN: The document was formed in the first instance in February and formalised in March. Unfortunately, due to an oversight, the direction was not tabled within 14 days of its having been given. I took the reference to the 14 days as referring to 14 parliamentary sitting days rather than calendar days. I apologise for that. I know the Leader of the Opposition will be sympathetic as, in the past, he has failed to table documents for some months.

The SPEAKER: The minister knows that personal explanations should be in respect of specific issues to which she wishes to refer. They should not impugn any other member. I ask the minister to stick to the details of her personal explanation.

Point of Order

Mr BARNETT: I could not hear what the minister was saying. I believe it was something to do with the port of Broome and labour relations. I do not know whether there is an audio problem. The Opposition could not hear a word of what she said.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Leader of the Opposition was chatting to his colleagues when I spoke. I am not sure which part he did not hear. I have tabled a direction that I gave to the Broome Port Authority in late February and which was confirmed in March. The document should have been tabled within 14 days. I thought it meant 14 sitting days but I now realise it is 14 calendar days. I apologise to the House for the delay.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS RADISICH (Swan Hills) [4.08 pm]: I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election to the position in this House. I hope that in your role we will have the opportunity to foster greater efficiency for our work in this place and with your guidance we will eventually embrace a greater use of technology in the Chamber. I would also like to congratulate Premier Gallop and the members of the Cabinet on their new roles. I am privileged to have the opportunity to work with all members. I congratulate all new members on both sides of the House. There are so many of us and I hope that we can make a meaningful contribution to our electorates and to this place.

I extend congratulations to my new colleague in the other place Louise Pratt about whose election I am very pleased. I am sure that, as two young women wandering the corridors of this place, we will find great solace in each other's company. I am pleased to have been so warmly welcomed to Parliament by colleagues in this House and by the staff of Parliament House. I appreciate their unqualified assistance and guidance.

I owe a great deal of thanks to many people who aided my bid to become the member for Swan Hills. The list of people to whom I extend thanks is almost endless - by my count, it is around 262. I extend my sincerest gratitude to everyone who supported me for party preselection and those who spent early mornings walking the streets and gravel roads of Swan Hills to deliver material, especially May Kosovich, Tom Canny, Karen Treanor, Lyn Jager, Steve Howlett and Belinda Clark. I also thank those people who drove me around when my car would not make it up Greenmount hill, those who staffed booths for me on polling day, participated in fundraising activities, prepared refreshments for booth workers and supported me when I needed an ear to listen.

I also extend special thanks to my parliamentary colleagues Hon Michelle Roberts, my neighbour in the electorate of Midland, and Hon Nick Griffiths, the member for the East Metropolitan Region. Their support and encouragement is especially appreciated. I also thank all my other special helpers - they know who they are. My supporters gave me the chance to achieve my dreams and I am a member of the Australian Labor Party because, like other members, I believe in creating a more just and equitable society that will give everyone a chance to achieve their dreams.

I also make special mention of the great support and assistance provided to me by my immediate and extended family. My family members have supported me in my many and varied extracurricular activities over the years. Their support for my participation in the recent general election is no exception. I thank my mum and dad, who are here today, and the rest of my family. I am very lucky to have present in the public gallery today many of my friends, a few of my old student political foes and family members.

It is sad that my father's father, Frank Radisich, is not here with us today. He worked at the Midland abattoir and was a shop steward with the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union. After the closure of the abattoir he worked at the old Midland Workshops. February 10, the date of the recent State election, would have been Frank's birthday. Tragically, his life was lost due to cancer. I hope that wherever he is now, he likes his birthday present.

It is extremely important to me that Zora and Joe Rakich and Ena Radisich were able to share my election to Parliament with me. I cannot imagine the kind of life that they and their parents led. They have told me stories about how their parents could not or would not speak English, that education beyond primary school was simply not a possibility and that not owning a pair of shoes until the age of 12 was perfectly common. I have also heard tales of just how hard it was pruning vines and picking grapes in the hot sun. They were among the many pioneers of the Swan Valley. I have not experienced the hardships that they endured. I owe thanks to their hard work for the better lot in life that my parents, my siblings and I enjoy. As a result of their efforts, we have learned the importance of hard work, the value of a dollar, and how to share with others. They have been valuable lessons. I also understand that I am the first person of Croatian descent to become a member of this House. I doubt that my parents and grandparents would have thought that their daughter and grand-daughter would be a member of Parliament. I hope they think it is as cool as I do.

I may be only 25 years old, but I am proud of what I consider to be an extensive work history. I began my first job a week before I turned 14. I decided that I needed money to buy the things that schoolgirls buy and I had to figure out a way to do that. The logical conclusion was to get a job! I went with my mum on a shopping trip to our fruit and veggie shop and mustered the courage to ask the proprietor whether there were any vacancies. He informed me that there were not. However, I received a phone call a few days later and was offered a Saturday morning job. I went to my first day of work feeling nervous but determined - like Tuesday. I had not discussed wages with my new employer. As a 14-year-old in 1990, I calculated that I should be paid at least \$3 an hour. Members can imagine my glee when I was offered \$6! I quickly accepted the offer and stayed working part time for two and a half years while I was in high school. This was one of the first major opportunities afforded me. It gave me a good grounding and work ethic for the future.

After being paid for the first time I caught the bus to the shops and made an important purchase - I spent \$20 on a clock radio to make sure I got to work on time. I still use that same clock radio to wake me up all these years later, so that I get to my new job on time. As members can tell, I am a great believer in long-term investments.

I moved on to work in many other part-time jobs over the years. I worked at Coles Fosseys in the city for five years. I am among literally thousands of others who worked at that store. It was a sad day when Coles Fosseys closed in 1997. Many people worked at that place their whole working lives. The closure caused the unemployment of about 400 people. Luckily, many people were absorbed into other parts of the retail sector, but not everyone. I thank all those people with whom I worked at Coles. It was a definite community and had an important place in Perth's history.

I was fortunate to be offered work as a cosmetics consultant at Priceline and remained in that position until a week after I was elected to Parliament. In that job I was able to do two of the things I like most - to experiment with make-up and, more importantly, help people. During my very short time in this place, I have figured out that working as a cosmetics consultant is similar to being a politician. Members must know what products are available as tools to solve problems, must listen closely to the customer and identify their needs, provide them with a range of options to solve their problem and, importantly, pass on skills to give them greater confidence in their own problem-solving abilities for the future. However, I assure members that this job is much more than that. As I hope more experienced members will agree, this job is about being a mediator, an advocate, social worker, government liaison officer and more. However, members of Parliament are not given professional development or training. Perhaps I will raise this matter with the Premier!

In short, I have been lucky to meet a range of employers who were willing to give me a chance. I sincerely thank them for that. If I had not been given the opportunity to work, I would not have been able to afford the things that young people need to accompany full-time studies. I will make a brief but important comment about the participation of young people in the retail sector. I do not deny for one moment that age and sex discrimination are rife in this industry and probably in others. The principle of equal pay for equal work is not always employed in the retail sector. Intimidation of young people still occurs. I have experienced - and other young people have also expressed this to me - that I was too old to work and that younger employees were cheaper. Why is there a pay differential when the same work is undertaken and the same productivity is achieved? There is no excuse. This is a mere discrimination of convenience because young people are generally less organised and less able to speak up for their rights. I hope this is one inequity that can be redressed in this new millennium.

I encourage employers to continue giving people a chance. On the flip side, I encourage people looking for work to never give up. In a way, it is like embracing the spirit of the Anzacs, to continue to strive for excellence even in the face of adversity. This is easier said than done; however, no-one should ever give up hope - opportunity does knock! I am grateful to the people of Swan Hills, my newest employers, for giving me this opportunity. I hope that I prove to be a worthy staff member.

Members now know where I came from, but why am I here? I have not come to Parliament with one cause in mind or one special area that I wish to fix. Perhaps I want to fix everything - at least I have never been accused of being under ambitious! While this may sound vague, I believe that being in Parliament should not be about trying to represent a single interest group or issue. Once that issue was resolved, where would that leave the member? I am here to take a balanced, holistic approach to Government and to represent all my constituents to the best of my ability.

I will now speak about the special aspects of Swan Hills, which is the second largest metropolitan seat in Western Australia. I also refer members to the list of statistics on the enormous size of electorates, which the member for Roleystone mentioned in his maiden speech. I thank him for noting the differentials as it has saved me the job. The seat of Swan Hills ranges from suburban Beechboro, home of the single McDonald's store in my electorate, to the homes of some of the hardest working people in this State. Swan Hills also incorporates areas of great natural beauty, such as Walyunga and John Forrest National Parks, and far more functional areas such as Mundaring Weir and the amphitheatres at Belvoir and Parkerville. I am keen to see new urban areas, such as Ellenbrook, develop further as communities and I will monitor their rapid expansion with great fervour. I am sure all members of this House have visited the Swan Valley and have appreciated its many wineries and restaurants but also acknowledge its value as a growth centre for primary produce and tourism.

Swan Hills is a very special place in Western Australia and I am privileged to represent the people of the 35 suburbs within the seat. I am biased when I talk about the characteristics of the seat of Swan Hills. I guess that it comes as no surprise that the seat can basically be divided into two parts - the Swan and the hills.

I now turn my attention to the Perth hills, which are very special and sensitive and should be treated as such. I am constantly reminded that people move to the hills for the lifestyle, and I accept that commentary as a reality. I see it as my job to protect and enhance that lifestyle. The hills have a lot to offer in respect of commercial, residential and environmental opportunities. We can make much more of what we have in the hills without doing harm to the delicate environment there. I have a vision to make sensitive improvements to the Perth hills, not only to provide a better lifestyle for existing residents but also to welcome interstate, intrastate and international tourists. The hills are close to the city, and they are a great place for corporate retreats, picnics for families and friends, outdoor musical performances and other activities. Although my words may sound like the text of a glossy brochure, I must tell members, it is all true. Hills tourism to date has largely focused on day trippers. That is a really important aspect of what the Perth hills offer, but like many other champions of the hills, I have a few more ideas. It is important to note that I am not of a mind to create so-called tourist towns. I want to see the provision of modest, environmentally appropriate accommodation and foster the establishment of cottage industry and home-grown businesses. I hope that this will provide employment and income earning opportunities which will perfectly complement the hills lifestyle.

I am pleased that we will follow the leadership of The Environmental Tourism Department in Queensland and establish a similar body of our own. Ecotourism and nature-based tourism management should not just be catchwords, they must be meaningful, both to communities and to nature. Furthermore, this brand of commerce should apply to environmentally sensitive areas such as the Perth hills and Swan Valley, but also to other areas in Western Australia such as the south west. I think that is enough of the sales pitch.

A broader issue which draws my attention is the area of education. I firstly make the observation that we must make many improvements in our tertiary education sector. We must liaise with the corporate community to ensure that academic education has a practical application in today's work force. We must not, however, allow university to be a free training ground for companies that may aim to buy courses and produce graduates just for themselves. In addition, we must continue to ascribe value to so-called uneconomic schools of learning, in particular, arts and humanities. The study of such disciplines makes an important contribution to the intellectual development of the community. This is certainly a form of value adding.

I am also committed to the idea of a multi-disciplinary "fresher" year, an area where Murdoch University has arguably led the way. The idea that the first year of university should be a chance to discover the options available, to try a variety of disciplines and to learn about independent study, without the strong contacts and support that exist at the secondary level, is important. I rather like the concept that engineers may take a semester of philosophy and medical students may study some financial accounting. Introducing new students to such a variety of schools will hopefully broaden the minds of future graduates to benefit both themselves and the people around them. I hope that such programs will be introduced at all tertiary institutions in this State. It might just help someone avoid making the same mistakes as I made - some people were never meant to be accountants!

Like others before me, I am particularly concerned about the lack of civics education at the primary and secondary schooling levels in Western Australia. We all know just how sceptical our constituents are about politicians. Maybe that is our fault. The education that we provide to young people about our democracy, our parliamentary system, separation of powers, the Constitution and other civic matters is highly inadequate. I do, however, commend the efforts of the State Parliamentary Education Office and its programs to rectify this situation. The secondary school curriculum identifies various learning outcomes under the heading "active citizenship", but there are no specific requirements.

There is no guarantee that children leave school with a detailed or even basic understanding of how government is formed, how laws are made or the logic of the court system.

While our system is not perfect, it is important for us to explain the intricacies and uniqueness of our democracy, and also to explain the potential for people to become involved. If we want our children to become active and informed members of society, a far higher level of basic education is required. I want young people to feel inspired, rather than apathetic, when learning about their potential to improve and change our society. It is by providing children with these basic facts at an early age that they will grow up to be informed adults, with the potential to participate in policy debate. Perhaps people are so sceptical of politics because of this grave lack of understanding; or maybe because it is just boring. I certainly hope not, or the next four years will not be much fun.

There is also a distinct gap in the level of services and opportunities afforded to young people who leave school at year 10 and go straight into the work force. It is important that young people in the work force are exposed to new ideas and opportunities. It is the responsibility of employers to pay special attention to the needs of younger employees. It is the role of unions to make sure that members are offered choices and chances. It may also be the domain of police and citizens youth groups, church or other youth groups, to seek out young people who could benefit from the programs and activities that they offer.

I was disappointed to learn recently that in a *Business Review Weekly* survey the Australian Government was rated almost last, compared with other countries, in the support it gave to new enterprises. The same article in BRW suggested that entrepreneurial programs should be developed at primary and secondary education levels and that older entrepreneurs should be encouraged to mentor and be available as role models. I believe that knowledge creation and business creation should go hand in hand. We must encourage all people to educate themselves to the level where they feel comfortable and to use that education when engaging in commercial activities to make progressive and responsible business decisions. There is no doubt that big businesses are important, but small ones provide the largest proportion of all employment, and they also have the ability to provide a better quality of life, greater flexibility and even more family-friendly sources of income. Small businesses are an important part of my electorate, and an area which I will not ignore.

I am constantly amazed and awe-inspired by the many small business operators. Running a small business is not an easy thing to do. The proprietors have to be bookkeeper, consultant, administrator, human resource manager, project planner, marketer, innovator and distributor all rolled in one. If they do not succeed, they do not get paid. It is a scary business. It is my hope that I can influence the Government to encourage, foster and develop small business in this State, especially those which put so much back into the local communities, like many businesses in Swan Hills.

So far I have discussed a range of measures which together have the capacity to help build communities, but I am disturbed by the forces at play that destroy them. I have studied a unit at law school called alternative dispute resolution, and this course was the most valuable of my university studies. There is an increasing volume of litigation in our society and I believe that much of it is unnecessary. People are becoming used to the idea of simply threatening to sue if something does not go their way. This thought pattern must stop. We must learn to think about resolving conflicts peacefully and proactively, not to mention cheaply. This applies not only to local issues but to national and international issues as well. I encourage members of all communities to avoid aggressive and antagonistic approaches to conflict resolution, and thereby avoid the destruction of communities and neighbourhoods.

Following on from the theme of conflict resolution, it is appropriate to turn to prisons. First, I state my personal opposition to the privatisation of prisons. My electorate is home to the new Acacia Prison, due to open this Saturday. There are many illustrations worldwide where the privatisation of prisons has failed. At a more fundamental level, I do not believe it is appropriate for the State to relieve itself of its duty to incarcerated persons. We live in a free society in which it is accepted that the State is the only entity able to withdraw that freedom. Therefore, I do not find it acceptable to pass on the responsibilities of punishment and rehabilitation to private organisations. I do not associate these initiatives with profit making. My electorate is home to not only Acacia Prison but also Wooroloo Prison Farm and Bandyup Women's Prison. It is fitting that I comment on the standards in our prisons. Jail should not be like a hotel, but conditions must be humane. I have heard stories of seven inmates being housed in rooms built for two people. These conditions fall short of not only international standards, but also the standards that I expect in this State.

Prisons are not the only places in which proper standards are not always met and overcrowding is common. I draw the attention of the House to aged care facilities - or lack thereof - in this State. Aged care is another policy area of particular interest to me. It is common knowledge that Australia has an ageing population, and the aged demographic in Swan Hills is higher than average. I am concerned with ensuring that all people have access to quality aged care facilities. Aged care facilities should be built to support existing communities. Retirement villages, nursing homes and hostels are ideally located in areas with ageing communities so that people can move into local accommodation with the friends and neighbours they have lived with for years. I make these comments with a particular community in mind; it would please me no end to see the construction of quality retirement accommodation in the Swan Valley. Many older people have lived and worked on the land for a long time and they deserve, when they retire, to continue living in their neighbourhood. I intend to do what I can to make that a reality.

When I sat down to write my speech, I did not know where to begin; now I do not know where to stop. I would love to have raised many more issues, such as the quality of the electricity supply in my electorate, the lack of taxis with wheelchair lifts that are prepared to travel into the hills, the constant traffic problems on Brockmill Avenue, the North-Eastern Hills Settlement Pattern Plan, toilets at Upper Swan Primary School, logging at the Wellbucket water catchment area, the Swan Valley Planning Act, police services in Bullsbrook, road safety at Red Hill, water flow through Cooke's brook and the redevelopment of Mundaring Weir. The list goes on. I have a full four years ahead of me. I am here to advocate for and represent the people of Swan Hills and I am also here to serve the people of Western Australia. I am humbled by the position and privilege that I now hold and will be an adamant and perhaps on occasion loud voice in this place. I am here to work hard and I will do my best to keep it real.

[Applause.]

MR TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [4.32 pm]: I congratulate you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr McRae) on your election to the position of Acting Speaker. I also congratulate the member for Wanneroo on her appointment as Deputy Speaker and, of course, the Speaker of this House, the member for Burrup, on his appointment. I also extend to all members of the House my congratulations on their election to their respective seats. I pass on my sincere congratulations to the member for Kimberley, the first Aboriginal woman elected to this Parliament, and to the previous speaker, who is the youngest member in this place. I am grateful to the electors of Mandurah for their support during the 10 February election. It became clear during the campaign that many people in my electorate are hurting. The goods and services tax continues to have a devastating effect on many small businesses in my community, businesses that form the cornerstone of our city's local economy. Local, decent, hardworking people who have been caught up in the finance brokers scandal continue to suffer from the previous Government's inaction. Self-funded retirees, pensioners, unemployed people, seniors, families and many of our young people felt that the Government of the day was not listening to their concerns. They want a better health system and a safer community, which includes more police on the beat. They want more resources and support for our schools and a Government that governs for all Western Australians. They wanted a better Government and I remain grateful to them for electing me to be their representative in this House for the next four years as a member of the Gallop Labor Government.

I am proud of my origins. I was born in Northam and educated in a state primary school, Avonvale Primary School in Northam. I went to the state senior high school in Northam and trained as a teacher at the Claremont Teachers Training College. I am proud that I have taught in three state primary schools - Three Springs, Warnbro and, of course, Mandurah. I am fiercely proud to be a product of a state school system and I applaud the new Minister for Education for his commitment to ensuring that we have the best possible state school system. My former colleagues in the state school system look forward to the minister's reforms and his endeavours in the portfolio.

I am particularly proud of my family origins. My grandparents on my mother's side were hardworking and successful farmers in the Narrogin district. They would have been supporters of the other side of the House. However, I am pleased that my grandmother Win Bates is here this evening. I know that if my grandfather Jack Bates were here tonight he would be very proud that his grandson is speaking in this House. My father's parents were working-class people in Northam. Unfortunately, I never met my grandfather. He died when my father was a boy, but my grandmother Maud Templeman, who sadly is no longer with us, is smiling down on me this evening. She was very proud that I joined the party she supported her whole life. My dad, John, is also here tonight. He was a strong supporter of the late Ken McIver, the well-respected Labor member for Northam and later for Avon. I was thrilled to receive a letter of congratulations from Ken's widow, Joan, after my election to this Parliament. I will treasure that throughout my parliamentary career.

I am grateful to my parents: My mum, Ann, and my dad, John. They sacrificed much for me, my brother, John Templeman, and my sister, Karen Jones. Like many parents of their generation, they wanted us to be well educated. They worked very hard and gave us every opportunity they could. They instilled in me important values, which I cherish and aspire to uphold. There is no substitute for growing up in a loving family.

The electorate of Mandurah is very dear to me. Many members of this Chamber would have memories of Mandurah. The name might conjure up visions of a fishing village, a retirement town where they holidayed as children or visited during the peak holiday period. Many still think it is a place predominantly populated by retirees. In reality, Mandurah is very different. It has changed dramatically. The population growth over the past 20 years has been phenomenal. Mandurah has grown from a town with a population of just short of 14 000 people in 1981 to a city of nearly 50 000 in 2001. The city's population, with an estimated annual increase of 4.7 per cent over the next 15 years, is expected to reach 85 000 residents by 2016. However, these figures need to be framed in the context of the whole Peel region, which encompasses the local government areas of the Shires of Boddington, Murray, Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Waroona. The strong population growth in the Peel region will see it emerge as the second largest region in Western Australia by 2006, and it is clearly the fastest growing region in the State. We need to understand the demographics behind this huge increase in population. People aged 65 and over represent 14.4 per cent of the population compared with the State average of 10.5 per cent. However, it is in the younger sector that the huge growth in population has taken place. To give an example, people aged under 15 now represent 23.3 per cent of the city's population. That reflects the movement of younger families into the city and region.

This rapid population growth has placed an increased demand on services and infrastructure in Mandurah and the Peel region. The need to ensure that the provision of services and infrastructure catches up and is maintained for this booming population is a major challenge for all levels of government. Provision of, and access to, quality health services remains a great need for my constituents, along with an increase in police numbers. Some members in the House may say that Mandurah is not special - however, I know it is - and that other areas in the State have also experienced rapid growth and have a demand for more services and infrastructure to support their populations. Mandurah has further complexities, as I hope this House will understand. Mandurah has a large number of people on fixed and low incomes. It also has one of the highest unemployment rates across all sectors in the State, and for a number of years the youth unemployment rate has been well above the State average.

People like my good friends Lynn and Albert Rodgers from WestAus Crisis and Welfare Service could tell members in no uncertain terms how each week they see and help many disadvantaged and marginalised people who are stretched to the limit on the meagre resources at their disposal. They see every day the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. While local and State Governments and local businesses do a significant amount to try to address the unemployment issue, an urgent need is access to jobs and job opportunities, and to further training outside the city. In order for this to occur, it is essential to improve transport routes to Mandurah. I am pleased that the Gallop Government is committed to ensuring that the railway network is extended to Mandurah by 2005. The Labor Party in government has a proud record in rail transport. That record speaks for itself and is unmatched by the Opposition. I am very pleased, as are the residents of Mandurah, that the Gallop Labor Government will finally bring the rail line to Mandurah.

Due to the lack of adequate transport links to the metropolitan area, and until now a less than efficient internal bus service, many of my constituents have found themselves isolated from their community. This isolation is very real, and if people are single parents, elderly citizens, unemployed or taking on a carer's role in the community and do not have transport at their disposal, or if their access to effective public transport is limited, this isolation and its effects are compounded. I am pleased that the transport system within Mandurah will improve later this year when the new bus terminal is opened, but one of my goals will continue to be to ensure that those people who live in the more marginalised areas of Mandurah feel that they are part of the community.

I believe more should be done to assist those people in our community who find themselves in the role of carer. The people in our community who care for their loved ones face tremendous financial, emotional, social and physical pressures. As our population ages, the role of carers will not diminish, and it is the responsibility of government to seek ways to restore the dignity and understand the real needs of these dedicated people in our community.

I commend the former Government for a number of projects that it helped fund in the Mandurah electorate. Mandurah now has a magnificent performing arts centre, which is supported by the local council. The Mandurah marina project is now under way, and the joint senior campus-TAFE facility opened this year. Some of the other projects that are important to the future of Mandurah, apart from the transport issue that I have mentioned already, are the need to continue to foster tourism opportunities within the region, to ensure that the Peel deviation is recognised as a road of national importance, and to establish education as a key industry within our region.

I want to let members know about some of the people who live in my community. The group of people who make up the Mandurah electorate are tremendously resilient and committed. Much has been said by members in their maiden speeches about volunteers. It is clear that in all of our communities, volunteers have played and will continue to play an integral role in how our communities function. Mandurah is no exception. My electorate has a huge number of community organisations, both large and small, comprising people from all walks of life whose main objective is to help. Like many members, I could give numerous examples of volunteering that take place every day within my electorate. Volunteering takes place in the form of sport - of which I am sure the member for Dawesville is well aware - the arts, emergency services, support agencies and advocacy groups, financial support, disability support services, church organisations, crisis support, youth organisations and those organisations that support our valuable seniors. The hundreds of people involved in ensuring that those people in our community who are disadvantaged or in need receive assistance deserve our acknowledgment and recognition.

I am very pleased that Pat McGovern is present in the public gallery. He and his wife, Gail, have worked tirelessly to ensure that the local Neighbourhood Watch program runs effectively and is one of the most successful in the State. Another example is a group known as the May Day Club, which was started by a small core of women in the 1970s. Over the years that group has worked quietly, efficiently and with prudent financial management to secure its own freehold premises in Mandurah, and it continues to recycle and trade in second-hand goods, particularly clothing. Last year, that group raised nearly \$200 000 and distributed it to worthy causes in the community. The members of that group, like many groups, continue to volunteer their time and energy and do not seek any recognition or acknowledgment; they simply see a need and support it.

The environment continues to be of great concern to the people of Mandurah. Indeed, over the years Mandurah's unique environment, relaxed lifestyle, waterways, wetlands, beaches, fishing and recreational opportunities have attracted people to visit, holiday and eventually live in the city. However, this environment is very fragile. The Peel-Harvey estuary and the rivers that feed it are under stress. The spread of development from the metropolitan area and

the demands that are placed upon our natural environment remain of deep concern to the residents. This is one of the reasons that the people of Mandurah - I stress this point - regard themselves as part of a regional city and not part of the Perth metropolitan area. We are keen to have key areas of the environment protected, and I therefore look forward to this Government declaring as soon as possible the Peel regional park.

Before I was elected to this place, I was an elected member and deputy mayor of the City of Mandurah. This council has, particularly over the past six years, established itself as a leader in this State and a quality council. I am pleased that also present in the public gallery is the Mayor of the City of Mandurah, Keith Holmes. I was pleased to be part of a council that saw the need to view our particular challenges with a strategic plan that encompassed a sustainable approach using the local agenda 21 principles as a guide. I was privileged to have served alongside Mayor Keith Holmes, Deputy Mayor Paddi Creevey and my friends and former colleagues, Councillors John Hughes, Coral Richards, Blanche Kyneur, Aileen Mitchell, James Trembath and an amazing lady, an 80-year-old councillor, who has fought tenaciously for the environment for many years, Councillor Kathleen Malta. I also pay tribute to the chief executive officer, Stephen Goode, the directors, and the hard-working and dedicated staff at the City of Mandurah for their continued efforts in making sure that Mandurah is a better place for all of us to live. I thank them for assisting me in my seven years as a member of that council.

As a councillor for the past seven years, I have watched as an increasing number of responsibilities have been shifted from the state and federal governments to local government. This has placed more financial pressures on local government and, ultimately, on the ratepayers of the municipalities. Although local government is well placed to deliver certain services and programs to its residents, they should not be expected to take on responsibilities without additional resources. Those of us who come to this place with a local government background would do well to remember this point over the next four years.

I come to this place with a great passion for the arts. It is through the arts in all of its forms that we can truly reflect our culture and its diversity. Many people, for example, Mandurah residents Stan and Rosalie Richards and John and Barbara Pannell, have advocated fiercely for the arts in the district for many years. My links to and involvement in the performing arts is well known in my electorate and I remain a strong supporter of adequate funding for that portfolio. Over the past few years before I entered this place I was employed in the entertainment industry. However, members would not recognise me if I dressed the way I used to dress. I believe that people involved in the arts deserve our support and encouragement, particularly the young people who seek to broaden their experience in that area.

I acknowledge the contribution of the former member for Mandurah. I also acknowledge the contribution of the former Labor members for Mandurah and Murray, John and Keith Read. I hope to represent the people of my constituency with the same dedication and compassion that these members showed during their terms of office. I sincerely thank those people who helped me make it to this place. I thank the wonderful members, supporters and volunteers of the Australian Labor Party in Mandurah. We are part of the oldest political party in Australia. Without their support and commitment I would not be here. I thank my friends Fran Bremner, Lia Comben, and Carol and Steve Evans who continue to give their efforts tirelessly to the cause. I also thank my family who are here tonight for being part of this journey. I thank the wonderful members of the arts community in Mandurah, particularly my friends Les and Lesley Couzens and Dave and Gail Pearson for their unswerving loyalty and support. I thank also Donna Doust for keeping my feet on the ground and keeping me sane over the past year of the campaign. I wish to thank my doorknocking partner who is here, Andrea Evans. I am pleased that she is here tonight. She slogged the streets with me for many long hours. I thank Hon Wendy Fatin and Sally Talbot for their timely advice and support.

I thank Hon John Cowdell, who I am pleased is in the Chamber, for his guidance and wisdom, strategic insight and for his total commitment to the Australian Labor Party. John, this is not a maiden speech; it is, indeed, a brazen hussy of a speech. I thank Beverley Weir and Fran Harmen for guiding me through these first few months and for making them acceptable. Finally, I thank a woman who sadly is not able to join us here tonight; she keeps the light on the hill always in sight. She has been like a mentor to me over the past seven years. Margaret Duff, we finally made it here.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Marshall.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

On motion by Mr Kobelke (Leader of the House), resolved -

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 22 May, at 2.00 pm.

House adjourned at 4.55 pm