

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 25 May 2010]

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Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

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

Declaration as Urgent

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Treasurer) [3.04 pm]: I move —

That in accordance with standing order 168(2), the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 Bill 2010 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 Bill 2010 be considered urgent bills.

It has become a convention of this house that both budget bills, the recurrent and capital bills, be treated as urgent bills. It is also the practice of this house that they be treated as cognate bills. This, of course, allows the house to debate the second reading and then proceed to the estimates hearings next week.

Question put and passed.

Cognate Debate

Leave granted for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 Bill 2010 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2010–11 Bill 2010 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2010–11 Bill 2010 to be the principal bill.

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 20 May.

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [3.05 pm]: In Australian political debate, the very existence of the states is now being called into question. Commentators are starting to ask: What is the purpose of a state government? Why do we need state governments? These are very concerning questions if one happens to be a member of the Western Australian Parliament or, indeed, a Western Australian citizen. We need to think and answer the question: what is the purpose of a state government? A state government is elected to provide services, to develop the state, to build the community and to be a custodian of the land. A state government is also elected to protect the living standards of its citizens. When we measure the budgets of state governments, we should look at the purposes for which state governments exist. A budget reveals the choices a government makes, it reveals the costs of those choices and, on analysis, it should reveal the sustainability of the government's policies and the coherence of the government's programs. If I were asked to give a short summary of this budget, I would say: wrong choices; too costly for families; an unsustainable and incoherent program; and a set of budget papers that cannot be believed.

Before I go into some analysis, I want to talk a little about the way our side of politics approaches the business of government. We believe unashamedly in the power of government and the power of the public sector to make a difference. We believe in the capacity of government and the public sector to do good. We believe that the public interest needs a government prepared to act. We are not half-hearted or ashamed about the role of government. We are not like those conservatives described in a wonderful article by Alan Wolfe entitled, "Why Conservatives Can't Govern". He describes contemporary conservatives as followers of a particular approach. He states —

Contemporary conservatism is a walking contradiction. Unable to shrink government but unwilling to improve it, conservatives attempt to split the difference, expanding government for political gain, but always in ways that validate their disregard for the very thing they are expanding. The end result is not just bigger government, but more incompetent government.

I recommend this article to those on our side but also to those who might think of themselves as conservatives.

We care about the public sector; we care about its capacity to do good in our society, and we know that a budget shows what a government really cares about when it is put to the test. This government did not care enough about family living standards. This budget is cold comfort for Western Australian families: huge increases in electricity costs have been followed by savage increases in the cost of water. Why did the Premier have to do this? Why was it necessary? The government has \$1 billion in extra royalty income in the next financial year alone. The government has a publicly expressed aspiration to extract a further \$500 million a year from iron ore mining companies. The government had \$1 billion in extra tax revenue over four years, and significant increases in money flowing from the federal government. The government did not have to attack family living standards. The Treasurer might say he cares, but he did not care enough when he was sitting in the cabinet Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee and in cabinet to decide, when he had the money, whether to protect family living standards. The Treasurer might say this will not be repeated, but the *Budget Statements* tell a different

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story. They show an increase of more than 22 per cent in the cost of electricity next year and a total increase of 37 per cent over the next three years.

The Premier was dismissive of the forward estimates during question time today. The forward estimates are important because they enable the opposition to understand where the budget is going in all respects, including the protection of family living standards. If that 37 per cent increase in the cost of electricity is not right, what debt figure will the Treasurer own up to? He cannot have it both ways; he cannot say that debt is predicted to reach only \$20 billion, while at the same time say that we should not believe the electricity price assumptions in the budget. Some people have described the budget as a safe budget. It was not safe for Western Australian families, and it will not be safe in the future on the basis of not only those projections, but also some of the other decisions the government has made. For example, the government has increased the dividends that government-owned corporations pay the government. If we are to believe the forward estimates, over the next four years \$400 million will go to government coffers as a result of increased dividends. Let us think about what is happening. We will pay Synergy more and Synergy will pay the government more. We will pay the Water Corporation more and the Water Corporation will pay the government more. That is exactly what will happen. It is not just a case of cost-reflective tariffs; rather, it is a case of the government extracting more from government-owned corporations and, therefore, extracting more from the pockets of Western Australian citizens for purposes other than those for which they pay their bills. Those utilities will be forced to rely more on borrowings for capital investment programs rather than retained earnings, and those borrowings will have to be paid for. That will increase the cost pressures of utilities, and there will be increased pressure for further tariff increases beyond those that the government is currently contemplating.

There is a difference between a Labor government and a Liberal–National government.

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: I am not going to talk to the member for Carine.

That difference is revealed by the figures for household fees and charges published at the back of volume 3 of the *Budget Statements*. At the end of our period in power, the cost of household fees and charges for a representative household was \$3 613 per annum. It is now \$4 427 per annum. Many families will be paying a lot more than that because they consume a lot more electricity and a lot more water and they use a lot more public transport than is the case with the representative family whose expenses are covered in the back of volume 3 of the *Budget Statements*. That calculation does not take into account the lost family support, the missing It Pays to Learn allowance and the missing \$100 subsidy for government school fees. In two budgets and in less than two years, the government has significantly attacked the living standards of Western Australian families. That is the big difference between the opposition's side of politics and the government's side of politics. We believe it is a very important purpose of the state government to look after the living standards of Western Australians. We took great care to do that when we were in government. We made decisions that had political costs in order to keep fees and charges down so that we could look after living standards. The other side of politics has not taken anything like the same level of care to look after the living standards of Western Australian families.

Governments are elected to be service providers. The Liberal–National government does not have faith in its own public sector to deliver services. The government is not, it would seem, seeking to build the capacity of the public sector or to modernise the public sector. Rather, it is reaching for the answer of privatisation. Step by step a privatisation agenda is gaining momentum within this government. It is beginning with schools and hospitals, because it is privatising some services offered in public schools and hospitals. That is not what the community wants. The community wants essential services in health and education to be provided by the government. It wants the people providing those services to work as a team. It wants those services to be provided to a standard, not to a profit. It wants to be able to hold the government accountable for the delivery of those services through democratic processes. It does not want to be told that this is something that the contractor did. It does not want to be told by the contractor that this was not covered by the contract. It wants to hold the government directly accountable for the direct provision of these services. This is what the government is openly proposing for Midland hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital and Albany Regional Hospital. Privatisation is what the government will do in our schools if it gets half a chance. The Labor Party will oppose the privatisation of health and school services.

Dr E. Constable: What school services?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: I refer to cleaning services, for example. I bet the government wants to privatise cleaning services. Do not tell me that the government does not aspire to privatise cleaning.

There is a long-term privatisation threat and that long-term privatisation threat derives from the \$20 billion state debt prediction. The government inherited a debt level of less than \$4 billion, yet it is taking projected debt to

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\$20 billion in the forward estimates. It does not have a plan to pay back that debt. It has a lot of pet projects that have not been put into the budget, and those pet projects will add to that debt. We are heading in an unsustainable direction at current settings. What is going on now is unsustainable. What will the government do when the level of debt threatens our AAA credit rating and it has no plan to pay it back? It will privatise to keep the show going. That is what Richard Court did when he faced a sea of red ink because of uncontrolled expenditure. Who was the chief agent of that privatisation? The current Treasurer was the agent who privatised to keep Richard Court's budget afloat. We are heading in the same direction with the huge rate of expenditure growth, uncontrolled expenditure and the many pet projects that are yet to be included in the budget. Debt is a problem. Privatisation will be the Premier's instinctive answer; it will be the only answer available to him unless he gets a different financial strategy for controlling expenditure into his arrangements. When debt threatens the AAA credit rating and no-one has been able to tame the Treasurer's death or glory spending instinct, privatisation will be the last resort. That is not the only privatisation issue on the agenda. There is a subtle campaign —

Mr C.J. Barnett: What happened to new Labor? This is Labor of the 1970s!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: This is Labor—and we are proud of it! We are proud of the capacity of government in the public sector, properly managed and properly run, to do good in our society. We are not ashamed of the public sector. We do not think it should all go out to the private sector.

There is a subtle agenda to muddy the privatisation waters; that is, the agenda to contract out government services to the not-for-profit sector. Both sides of politics have delivered services through the not-for-profit sector. The growth of the not-for-profit sector in fact was very strong initially during the period of Labor governments in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is true that the not-for-profit sector offers, at its best, more flexibility for government organisations, capacity to innovate, leverage with other community funding sources, a connection with the communities in which it operates, and independent perspectives and different viewpoints that might not be available within the public sector. But, fatally, it also offers a government like this one cheaper workers—30 per cent cheaper workers than equivalent pay levels in the state public sector. This budget does nothing about that. The non-government sector tells us that it needs \$198 million a year—a huge sum of money, I agree—in order to reach salary parity with the public sector. There is nothing in this budget that does anything about that.

As we head into a new boom, non-government organisations will once again face huge difficulties in recruiting and retaining the workers that are needed. The government has a program—not fully realised in this budget, but it has been spoken about publicly—to put lots of public sector services out to the not-for-profit sector. Decisions about whether a service should be offered by the not-for-profit sector or by the public sector should be made on their merits. The government should give up the idea of services on the cheap. The issue of lack of salary parity between the not-for-profit sector and the public service should be addressed before the government decides whether particular services will be contracted out to the not-for-profit sector. Fix the problem of poor salaries in the not-for-profit sector first; then decide whether, on the merits, some particular services might be better offered through that sector. Do not set them up to fail by giving them services when their salary levels are so low and they will face huge recruitment and retention problems as we go into a new boom.

While I am on the subject of services, I want to talk briefly about the position of the education budget. Education is one of the big losers in this budget. Education has just a \$3.6 million increase on a \$3.6 billion budget. The budget in education has hardly any extra money at all but it has to cover additional funding for education assistants, cleaners and gardeners for their enterprise bargaining agreement, currently before the Industrial Relations Commission. It has to cover additional support staff; it has to cover English as a second language support for the children of temporary 457 visa holders; growth in student numbers; increased superannuation contributions; increased transition support for secondary students; salaries' escalation under the new wages policy; and the escalating cost of the government's much trumpeted deal with the teachers shortly after the government came into power. The government has to do all those things with a one-thousandth increase in the budget. It is a \$3.6 billion budget and a \$3.6 million increase. There is a tiny increase in the budget that has to cover all of those things. In the out years, it not only has to meet the three per cent efficiency dividend that was not met last year, but it also has to meet the re-cashflowed money that it should have found last year. The government could not find the three per cent saving last year, and in subsequent years it will have to find the three per cent plus the three per cent that was not found last year. The education budget has to do all of those things with a tiny, tiny increase. All I can say is there must be a huge "hidden cuts" agenda in the education portfolio—there must be. There is no other way to explain the list of initiatives and pressures, acknowledged in the budget papers, together with the very, very low increase in the overall level of expense. That is one of the

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mysteries of the budget that we have to pursue in the estimates process. It has not been examined much by the commentators as yet, but it is obviously a very significant problem.

I want now to turn briefly to the health budget. Last budget we had a very unrealistic rate of predicted expense growth for health—3.8 per cent. People might think that is just a theoretical issue. If we have a rate of expense growth for health that is too low, it means that the health department struggles and struggles to meet that unrealistically low target, and patients suffer. Eventually, staff suffer, and eventually the government caves in. But a lot of damage is done along the way. The government has not come up with the totally unrealistic 3.8 per cent of last year, but what the government has projected for expense growth in this budget and across the forward estimates for health is: 6.7 per cent, 6.3 per cent, six per cent and four per cent.

I want to read to members the rate of expense growth in the last nine years in health so members can see how unrealistic it is to have those figures in the budget. The last nine years for health saw figures of 13.3 per cent; 8.6 per cent; 4.9 per cent; nine per cent; nine per cent; 11 per cent; 7.9 per cent; 11.4 per cent; and 7.2 per cent. The government is dreaming if it thinks it can deliver those four figures that I have read out—6.7 per cent, 6.3 per cent, six per cent and four per cent—across the forward estimates. In only one year in the last nine years has health expense growth been lower than what the government has forecast for this financial year. In every other one of those nine years—in eight of the past nine years—expense growth has been ahead of what the government is forecasting for this budget, and substantially ahead of what the government is forecasting for the forward estimates. I draw the house's attention to the very unrealistically low figure for the last out year, 2013–14—a four per cent rate of expense growth is forecast. No wonder the Premier does not believe in the forward estimates—they are unbelievable! No-one could believe in these forward estimates when a rate of expense growth for health of only four per cent is forecast. The government will clearly have to fix that up.

I now want to turn to the government's role as a state developer; to the government's role in providing basic infrastructure. If we look at this budget, basic core infrastructure required for our economy to develop has been neglected. The government has made poor choices; surprising choices. The government has delayed many of its headline projects. The government has missed opportunities. Let me turn to the question of electricity and the electricity network. The way the system works is that the network operator, Western Power, goes to the Economic Regulation Authority to have the Economic Regulation Authority set the prices for access to the network. When the Economic Regulation Authority makes an assessment about the price of access to the electricity network, the Economic Regulation Authority has to decide what an efficient level of investment in the network is. If the network operator is asking for too much beyond the efficient level of investment, then the prices will be too high because that extra capital will have to be serviced. We now have in our system an independent assessment, outside of government, politicians and managers at Western Power, of how much needs to be spent on the electricity network during the period of the access regime. We can compare the Economic Regulation Authority's judgement on the efficient level of investment with the amount that the government has set aside for Western Power to spend. The comparison is very disturbing. There is a \$650 million gap between the level of investment assessed by the ERA as the efficient level of investment in the network and what the government is proposing to spend over the next three years. The government is starving the electricity network by \$650 million over the next three years. What that will mean eventually—not immediately, and this is where the government thinks it can get away with this—is more blackouts and more fires, but these chickens will take some time to come home to roost. It may very well be that the next government will have to deal with the politics of electricity blackouts and fires. It may very well be that the next government will have to solve the financial issue of a backlog of underinvestment in the network. The Treasurer is at it again. That is what he did in the 1990s. He sweated the network to generate profits—apart from his privatisation plans, which was one way in which he bolstered Richard Court's budget—and then the chickens came home to roost and our government had to spend billions and billions of dollars on the electricity network to get it back up to speed. This government is at it again. There is a \$650 million gap between what an independent analysis says is required to be spent on the electricity network and what the government is actually prepared to spend. I think the member for Geraldton should be very concerned about this because the government has still not resolved the question of the Pinjar to Geraldton transmission line. That will be very bad for the Mid West, very bad for the Mid West iron ore industry and very bad for the Mid West renewable energy issue. I think that is one of the hidden stories of the budget. The Treasurer loves the pet projects and the glossy headlines, but he is not prepared to do the hard grunt, which does not bring much popularity and headlines, of making sure that our electricity network keeps up with the demands that will be placed on it by massive economic growth.

The government has made other poor choices in its infrastructure decision making. I have mentioned this before and we stand by this argument: it is wrong to put public money into the Oakajee port when the private sector will build that of its own accord. That is \$680 million of taxpayers' money—yes, there is federal money involved as

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well—that could be spent on other priorities. The member for Geraldton could have had the Oakajee port and his transmission line if the Premier had not decided arbitrarily and capriciously to put taxpayers' money into Oakajee when the private sector said that it would build it.

There is another project that I think should not be built. The government thinks it should be built, but it is trying to have its cake and eat it too. It has said that it should be built but it has not put it in the budget. I am talking about Roe Highway stage 8—a \$550 million project. We do not think that \$550 million should be spent on what we regard as an unnecessary road through an environmentally sensitive area. In government, we would take that \$550 million and spend it on other priorities. Maybe the government is starting to be convinced by our argument, because when I look in the budget papers, I see that, although \$25 million is being spent on planning for Roe stage 8, the actual construction of the project has been taken out of the forward estimates, and so we see \$5 million, \$5 million, \$6 million, \$8 million, dash, dash and then nothing more. What is the government doing? Is the government still committed to Roe Highway stage 8? There was money there last year; there is no money there this year. The government is having its cake and eating it too. It is spending money on planning, but it has taken the money for construction out of the budget. I say to the government that if it puts the money back in for Roe stage 8 and it is still there when we come to power, we will take that money and spend it on other priorities. It is very interesting that there is not a single cent in the forward estimates for the two years after the next financial year.

There are other curiosities in the announcements. As I listened to the Treasurer's budget speech—I listened to him announce all the projects—I thought to myself that they are all re-announcements, they are all funded by the federal government, and they are all two years late. That seemed to be the summary of where we are going. The rectangular stadium, which was announced with much fanfare, will not start until 2012. The waterfront project, which might be cause for a resignation from the Treasurer, will not start until 2012; he is cutting that fine. Oakajee is very interesting. The draft bankable feasibility study, not the final bankable feasibility study, was received only on 13 March 2010. Where is Oakajee actually going when we have only now got the draft bankable feasibility study? To get that federal money, the business case still has to get through the federal processes. I think there are some question marks over Oakajee. In fact, I rather hope that there are some question marks over the taxpayers' contribution to Oakajee, because I think the taxpayers' contribution to Oakajee should be taken out and spent elsewhere and that we should let the private sector get on with it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Are you a privatisation ghoul, are you?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: When it comes to something like a new port and the private sector is prepared to build it and all the customers are business customers, why would the government not go with the private sector? However, when it comes to a service in a school or in a hospital, why would the government privatise that? The government has to be sensible about this. Our community does not want to see privatised health or school services. I think our community is quite happy to see business suppliers for business customers.

Point of Order

Mr P.B. WATSON: We sat through the Treasurer's budget speech and did not interject. I think it is unparliamentary of members opposite to interject.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): There is no point of order. However, I remind members on my right of the tradition of hearing speeches from the Leader of the Opposition on this topic in silence. Please continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The other issue that I want to discuss in the infrastructure area is the case of missed opportunities. There is a wonderful opportunity to leave a lasting regional legacy in the Pilbara from this period of economic growth. There is a wonderful opportunity for a project of regional, state and, indeed, national importance, and that is to build an integrated electricity grid in the Pilbara. It is not necessarily the case that taxpayers would have to put in huge amounts of money. What the government has to show is leadership. When the previous government was investigating this issue, the companies were prepared to pay, and did put in money, for the feasibility study. It may be that the government needs to mainly show leadership. It may be that the government needs to provide some financial support. This is a great opportunity. If we can leave the Pilbara with a modern integrated electricity grid from this period of growth, we will have done a very good thing for junior miners.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

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Mr E.S. RIPPER: If there is a modern electricity market and a modern electricity grid there, junior miners will not have to build their own power plants. They will be let off some of those capital requirements, so they will be able to get up and running more easily. There are also opportunities to electrify the rail lines. If the power were provided by gas-fired power plants, supplemented by solar thermal plants as were proposed, we would have a significant greenhouse gas abatement outcome. In fact, if gas and solar power, via an integrated electricity grid and electricity market, replace the substantial use of diesel in those mines, such a project could be Australia's greatest greenhouse gas abatement project and greatest climate change project, as well as being a huge project for the future of the Pilbara. It is a missed opportunity for this government to have let that one go by.

That raises the question: what is the process? What is the process by which the government makes its capital works decisions? How does the government choose? Where is the plan? When the former government left office, it was about to release a state infrastructure strategy. That strategy had been worked on by the business community for a long time and it was a program that looked 10 years and 20 years ahead. I do not say that the present government should release that state infrastructure strategy, but I say that a lot of the basic work had been done and the government could impose its own priorities on that state infrastructure strategy and release it. I am not alone in suggesting that the state infrastructure strategy—or a version of it—should be released; the business community regularly talks to me about the need for a state infrastructure strategy. A good reason for that is that capital works projects are all too easily the subject of individual whim, capricious, arbitrary decisions or excessively political decisions. Capital works dollars are scarce even when the economy is going well. Even when we have big surpluses, capital works dollars are scarce. If we want this state to develop to its maximum extent and make the most use of our opportunities, we have to choose wisely what we do with our capital works dollars. There should be a plan, there should be a strategy, and politicians of each side should be held accountable against the strategy when they make their government decisions, or indeed when they make their opposition promises.

Mr C.J. Barnett: March down to the CCI and see how many marks out of 10 we get!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: That is just a silly comment, Premier. I am not saying that politicians have to slavishly adhere to the program, but if they are taking scarce capital works money that is needed for the electricity network and spending it on a project in a marginal electorate for political purposes, then they should have to account for that. The Premier should have to explain to the people of Western Australia why he is letting the electricity system run down while he is putting capital works money into other priorities. If there was a state infrastructure strategy, it would be possible for our debate to encompass such mechanisms. It would be a more mature infrastructure debate than we have at the moment, and I would hope that it would result in better decisions for the long-term interests of the state and that the private sector would have more certainty about where the state is going, and I would hope that, as a result, its investment decisions would also improve.

I want to briefly mention some of the other responsibilities of a government. The government's state development and community-building responsibilities come together in the whole issue of training. A very simple statement needs to be made: the government is not training enough apprentices. If there are not enough tradesmen there will be shortages in skilled labour that will slow down the growth that could otherwise be achieved, costs will rise for everyone else—every business will see huge costs pressures—and Western Australians will miss out on jobs. The government really needs to do more in training than it has been prepared to do so far.

I will take the house through some figures. Last year there was an eight per cent fall in the number of apprentices and a 19 per cent rise in the number of trainees. The government has promised 7 600 new training places, but if, say, one-third of those are apprentices, there will still only be the same number of apprentices in training as the government inherited at the time of the election. At the time of the election the number of apprentices and trainees had doubled over the period of the Labor government, but everyone said there was a labour shortage in Western Australia and not enough people were being trained. Even on optimistic assumptions, there has been a fall in the number of apprentices and, even on optimistic assumptions, the government will struggle to get back to the same number of apprentices as it inherited when it came to power. The government is trying to inflate the training figures by lumping together a lot of the cheaper traineeship places with the apprenticeships figure to get the number up. But the iron ore industry and the construction industry do not really need those trainees; they need more tradespeople and more apprentices in training, and the government is not delivering on that. Again, I ask the government what its plan is. Labour shortage is a major issue confronting this state. I do not know whether the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia is right or not, but if it is right when it estimates that we will be 150 000 workers short by 2017, it is frightening for the public sector and non-government organisations, and it is frightening for every small and medium business in this state. It will mean extreme difficulty in getting labour, extreme rises in the cost of labour, businesses going under, and non-

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government organisations falling over because they cannot recruit and retain their workers. Labour supply—of which training is a subset—is a vital issue. I think the government has been behind the eight ball and tardy on the issue. There has been a lot of talk about the plan, but the plan has not been produced yet, and even when the plan is produced, the government still has to get on and implement it. Meanwhile, the boom is coming, and that is a real issue for the government to tackle.

I mentioned some of those deficiencies because, taken together, they are the reasons why the expense growth figures in the budget overall have to be taken as some sort of a hoax. The government has had two financial years of budget delivery. It delivered expense growth of over 13 per cent in the first financial year and expense growth of over 12 per cent in the second financial year. The government now asks us to believe that it will deliver expense growth of under four per cent next year and under three per cent the following year. One has to ask oneself: if the government presided over those 13 per cent plus and 12 per cent plus figures in its first two budget years, how can it possibly deliver under four per cent and under three per cent in the next two financial years? How can it possibly deliver those figures given all of the deficiencies that I have covered and my colleagues will cover in their contributions to the budget debate?

I will deal with the question of broken promises. I do not want to deal with this at great length, but I remind the government that it has broken its promise on taxation and that it robbed pensioners of \$26 million by completely cancelling the payment of the seniors rebate for one financial year. There is one financial year for which there will be no payment, and so they have missed out on that forever. But the promises that I will deal with are in the budget papers. I urge members to turn to and read the section of budget paper No 3 entitled “Statement of Risks”—the language is careful. The Department of Treasury and Finance has not exactly been explicit in the way in which it has described these two risks, but the position, if members know, is absolutely crystal clear.

Mr T.G. Stephens: Do they list the Premier?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: It should list the Premier in its statement of risks, but because of the way the pages are constructed, that is not normally done.

The description of what is happening with Princess Margaret Hospital for Children is very interesting. This was a major health promise of the Liberal Party during the election campaign. In fact, the Liberal Party said that it would build the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children more quickly than Labor and deliver it a year earlier than Labor would. That was a point of difference between the political parties in the election campaign. The Liberal Party said it could do it because it had a magical public–private partnership way of delivering a public hospital. However, when the Liberal–National government came to power, it said it would abandon the PPP model and would build it in the traditional way.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Who said that?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Minister for Health said that. The government has now gone back to the PPP proposal to build the hospital. The budget papers show that for this major election promise, for a hospital that will surely cost something approaching \$1 billion, the government has set aside \$117 million in the budget papers. How honest is this budget? How dinkum is the government on its election promise when it has set aside only \$117 million for an election promise that will surely cost at least \$1 billion? Equally, we can see reference in the statement of risks to the fact that the government has set aside only \$10 million for Royal Perth Hospital, which was another major health promise.

Members might question these assertions if it were just me trawling through the budget papers and finding these anomalies and coming to the house and talking about them. However, these anomalies have been identified by Treasury. There is a reason that the Department of Treasury and Finance has put them in the statement of risks. They are a red flag to warn people that this is a problem and that a lot more money will have to be spent. The statement of risks warns people to not fully believe the budget because eventually the government will make a decision on Princess Margaret Hospital for Children and Royal Perth Hospital, and \$117 million plus \$10 million will not be nearly enough to meet the solemn election promises that the Liberal Party made during the election campaign. These two key hospital promises have not been properly funded in the budget.

There is an issue of expense growth in health and in government generally, and these hospital promises are two key examples of the fundamental dishonesty of the budget papers. This budget and these budget documents are not an accurate description of the condition of the state’s finances. I do not hold the Department of Treasury and Finance accountable for that because the government has carefully monitored the decisions it has made and advised the Department of Treasury and Finance so that the accounting of those decisions that Treasury has been advised of is correct; it is just that Treasury has not been advised properly of the government’s real agenda. My

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 25 May 2010]

p3271a-3343a

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

colleagues will give the Treasurer many more examples of matters that they regard as misleading or dishonest as we go through the budget debate.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Didn't you say that we would never achieve a surplus?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: I said that the budget was sliding into deficit, and indeed it was, because at that stage the government was forecasting a deficit in this financial year and the next. The government has delivered a surplus. It got its surplus headline, but it has been built on the back of families' budgets. The government has raided the wallets of ordinary Western Australians and destroyed their budgets to get the government a headline. The government has presided over savage increases in families' bills and broken promises. That is what this budget has been built on. The budget has within it an imminent privatisation agenda and there are fundamental examples of dishonesty in it. We cannot support a budget that is so savage on families and that has these broken promises. We cannot support a privatisation agenda and we cannot support an account of the state's finances that is not open and honest. We cannot vote against the budget, but I can tell members very loudly and clearly that on the basis of our faith in the capacity of the government and in the public sector to make a difference in our society, we cannot support this budget.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [3.55 pm]: I too rise to speak to the government's 2010–11 budget. When the Premier was in retirement mode and writing his book, which I think was to be called *Black Swan*, rumour had it that he was spending his time drafting exactly what type of government his government would be should he ever find himself as Premier. There was rumour and speculation that he was looking back on the lost opportunities under Richard Court and that his comments about his former colleagues when he was a senior minister in the Court government were quite vitriolic. This budget is exactly what we would expect from a conservative government. It is the sort of budget that attacks families' budgets, abandons the suburbs and creates nothing but two-tier, second-class citizens in Western Australia. No longer are Western Australians equal and no longer does the budget process consider need and opportunity when decisions are made about where to allocate the money. Premier Barnett is doing what he has done before. I have said before that he is a repeat offender; he hit families last year and he has hit them again this year. He is reverting to form from when he was a senior minister in the 1990s. Earlier, he interjected and asked whether the Labor Party had not changed since the 1970s, yet the Premier still carries on as though the energy sector has not changed one iota from when he was the Minister for Energy. At the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia breakfast on the Friday after the budget, the CCI made it crystal clear that it wanted the state infrastructure strategy to go ahead and supported the former Labor government's creation of competition in the energy sector. Regardless, the Premier refuses to believe that anyone in Australia can know any more about energy than he does. We now know why. The Leader of the Opposition has outlined how Western Power will be the proverbial cash cow for the Premier, just as it was in the 1990s. I will go through some statistics to prove that that will again be the case.

We are seeing in Western Australia two tiers of citizens—one in regional Western Australia and in those marginal electorates which the government wants to protect and which are awash with money. The government has completely abandoned the suburbs. The members for Wanneroo, Ocean Reef and South Perth have been abandoned. I do not want to disclose any private conversations I have had with the Minister for Agriculture and Food, but I am delighted that the National Party is looking at alternative candidates in the North West. I am not surprised either because, regardless of the money the government is spending up there, I know that the Minister for Agriculture and Food is not confident that the current member for North West can hold onto that electorate. Despite all the money that the government is spending up there, I know that the Minister for Agriculture and Food is not confident that my constituent in Victoria Park can hold onto his seat in the North West.

What we see is the suburbs being comprehensively abandoned by this budget. It is a budget of paradox. On the one hand, we are awash with revenue from extra goods and services tax payments, royalties and stamp duty, while on the other hand families face a 17.7 per cent increases in their water bills and another 22 per cent to come in their electricity bill next year. On the one hand, we have huge debt and interest payments and on the other we see the government's capital commitments for Royal Perth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital for Children still not in the budget. Huge amounts of unused, unallocated royalties for regions money is swashing around. On the one hand, spending is completely and utterly out of control, and on the other hand tourism has been absolutely annihilated in this budget. By the end of the 2010–11 financial year, the Western Australian Tourism Commission as a department and an operating organisation will effectively cease to exist. The government has increased the dividend payout ratios, yet Western Power has been comprehensively gutted; it is a shell of an organisation. When the member for Cottesloe became the Premier, I was operating under the assumption that Western Power, as well as a number of other organisations, would be in the firing line to be sold. By the time the Premier has finished with Western Power, we will be lucky to get a buck for it. We have a government without a narrative and a coalition without coordination. As a result, Western Australians are caught

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in the middle of the fracture of the two governments we are seeing operating as one. Western Australians are caught in the middle and are wondering what they have done to deserve a 17 per cent increase in water charges when the government is awash with money.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, seniors across Western Australia, certainly seniors in my electorate and in the electorates of Ocean Reef, South Perth and Mount Lawley, want to know why for a saving of \$26 million they had to lose the cost-of-living rebate for 2009–10, in a year in which stamp duty increased by \$500 million or 45 per cent. They will be asking that question for quite some time. Seniors are wondering why they had to sacrifice their \$26 million cost-of-living rebate to buttress the government's position.

Revenue growth has been extraordinary in the current financial year and is set to continue. It is an extra \$5.3 billion across the forward estimates. Royalties, stamp duty and goods and services tax are all a lot higher than the figures contained in the forecast of the government's last budget. The problem we have, and the problem we have had since the member for Cottesloe became Premier, is expense growth. When the member for Cottesloe became Premier the pre-election financial projections statement predicted, for 2009–10, a 3.9 per cent expense growth. What was delivered was 12.3 per cent, which is not yet the final position. That is on the back of 7.5 per cent converted to 13.5 per cent for 2008–09 and four per cent for 2009–10 converted to 12.3 per cent. Now the Premier wants the people of Western Australia to believe that he is going to now have 3.9 per cent expense growth. It has actually doubled now before the year has even begun. In the 2009–10, the 2010–11 financial year expense growth was forecast at 2.1 per cent. It has nearly doubled before the year has begun. I am not surprised, because Treasury knows and the Premier knows that even 3.9 per cent is simply not deliverable on this government's form.

Last year I had a look at the real spending forecasts for a number of government departments. I predicted then that the tight constraint that they had placed upon themselves would not be met.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Can I make a brief comment?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Come back; I just do not have the time. This is real spending because I have factored in Western Australia's consumer price index. The 2009–10 budget predicted that the education budget would grow by nine per cent in real spending. The actual result was 11.04 per cent. What we have now to contain is the Department of Education effectively being punished with a real cut of 5.14 per cent in the 2010–11 financial year. The Leader of the Opposition is correct: of course there will not be a cut of 5.14 per cent to the education budget, bearing in mind the long list of activities that the Leader of the Opposition has already gone through in respect of education for 2010–11. Real spending on health in the 2009–10 budget was to be cut by three per cent. Of course, that was not met. It looks as though it will be about a 5.5 per cent increase. As a result, instead of what was predicted to be a real cut of two per cent in the health budget, the 2010–11 budget's real growth will be 4.3 per cent. The 2009–10 budget predicted that spending on police would grow on a real basis at one per cent. In the end it actually grew at seven per cent. The police have been protected from a predicted cut of two per cent by real growth of five per cent in the 2010–11 financial year. This is the problem we have with two governments operating within each other and not speaking to each other. The forecasts, which the Premier snidely dismisses and which are an important basis upon which the people of Western Australia hold a government to account on whether it will deliver its promises, cannot be met, so expense growth is out of control. Each year they are trying to find it in other areas of government revenue. What we have at the moment, as I have already mentioned, is revenue returning to incredible growth of \$5.3 billion across the forward estimates.

I will turn to the goods and services tax, because the Premier is a bit sensitive on this issue and the fact that his budget surplus for the 2009–10 financial year is largely being delivered by an unplanned and unbudgeted GST windfall. Historically, Treasury has underestimated the amount of GST returns over the forward estimates. From 2003–04 through to 2007–08, Western Australia received an extra \$350 million in GST, as predicted during those state budgets. From 2010–11 to 2012–13, the Premier's own budget predicts an extra \$750 million in GST returns. However, the commonwealth budget suggests that it is actually going to be an extra \$1.2 billion in GST returns. Somewhere between \$750 million and \$1.2 billion in extra GST returns is where the Premier finds his revenue forecasts. Time and again we hear the Premier carry on about the 68c in the dollar return that we are getting in Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition talked about it at length when he was Treasurer. The one problem is that one person in this chamber had the chance to do something about it and to ensure that the floor that he talks about of 75 per cent of GST returns was actually in place, and that is the Premier. He cannot carry on now by simply saying that no-one could ever have expected it. It is interesting to go back to look at the debate during 2000. I referred to this quote last year during my budget debate contribution. A question from the now Leader of the Opposition was —

Should the grants commission determine our share of GST revenue?

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The response from the member for Cottesloe and now Premier was —

It is a good question. I would rather see simple GST revenue sharing on a population or revenue raised basis. It would present some anomalies, as we have national companies and the like. I do not like the grants commission process and I do not think it is particularly effective. It has served Australia's purposes in the earlier period of our development, but I do not think it is appropriate now. That is a bigger issue to which we will come later.

Unfortunately, he has not come to it until now. At the time when he was negotiating with Peter Costello and John Howard it was not an issue to discuss. It was one to come to later when the return is down to 68c in the dollar. The Premier cannot have it both ways. He knew about it then and could have done something about it then when he was a senior minister in the Court government. He cannot come into this place now and bleat about the fact that nobody could have possibly known what the Commonwealth Grants Commission would have done, because it was clear that he knew and that the chamber knew during debate at that time.

I want to turn briefly to Western Power in particular and the government's decision to increase the dividend payout ratios in respect of trading enterprises. The people of Western Australia have heard from the Premier in respect of electricity charge rises to date in the last budget and also the two rises this year, and there has been much talk about the 22 per cent coming in the next financial year. In media comments in *The West Australian* on 8 April 2010 and 15 May 2010, the singular reason that the Premier talked about for these increases, not only in electricity charges but also water charges, was, as the Premier said —

... to make sure that those utilities have the ability to make investment in future supply ...

He talked about the reliability of supply and the importance of cost-reflective tariffs. The problem the Premier has is what he is doing to Western Power at the same time. Comparing the 2009–10 budget with the 2010–11 budget shows \$712 million in extra revenue from dividends and tax equivalent payments, including a massive 38 per cent increase from 2011–12 to 2012–13. The question that is worth looking at is what happens to Western Power during this time. Western Power's dividend ratio increases from 50 to 65 per cent, but between the current financial year of 2009–10 and 2012–13 there is \$110 million less in asset investment, an extra \$92.9 million in borrowings and \$160 million less in internal funds for Western Power. What we are seeing the Premier do with Western Power is to treat it as a cash cow. He cannot stand and say that it is because all the money is going to improve reliability and increase supply, because, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, it will be a debt-ridden shell of an organisation. It will be up to a future government to fix the problems created by the Premier's decisions now. Is there 15 per cent extra capacity in these organisations to actually pay dividends? By and large they are all 15 per cent rises except a 25 per cent rise for Synergy. It is worth considering the fact that electricity prices increased by 7.5 per cent from 1 April this year and will increase by a further 10 per cent from 1 July 2010. The budget papers claim that despite these increases the majority of electricity tariffs will still be below the cost of producing and supplying electricity. Even after the price increases, the government states it will be providing an operating subsidy to Synergy of \$165 million in 2009–10 and \$152 million in 2010–11. The Premier is not even considering whether these organisations have the capacity to pay the extra dividends. What he is actually doing, particularly with Western Power, is ripping out money to buttress his own financial position. Where does this take our debt position? The Premier has been here a long time and he has said many things that the opposition gets to trawl through and throw back at him, to see whether the standards he had when he sat on this side still apply now that he sits over there. Unfortunately, more often than not, he is found wanting.

Let us talk about debt for a minute. The Premier—the Napoleon of Western Australia—has adopted the European style of government, but he is also adopting the European obsession with and love of debt. Greek debt increased by 10 per cent in the past financial year. In the same period, the Western Australian net debt position increased by 60 per cent. Greece is looking upon the Napoleon of Western Australia, wondering what he is doing with his debt levels and wondering whether he has a plan to reduce debt levels and ensure that interest payments do not continue to increase beyond the forward estimates. However, there is no plan. I will quote the Premier as then Leader of the Opposition, the member for Cottesloe —

As every householder understands, what matters is not so much the surplus or deficit year to year but the amount of money owed, the amount of interest to be paid and the total amount that ultimately must be repaid.

...

The coalition enjoyed strong economic growth and paid off Labor's debt burden by \$2 200 for every man, woman and child in Western Australia. What has happened under this Labor Government? In its first year, debt went up by \$891 million. Last year it was estimated that debt in its second year ... would

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increase by a further \$585 million. The forecasts show that by the end of this term of government Labor will have added 40 per cent, or approximately \$2 billion, to state debt.

By the end of this term of government, in one year, we have had a \$5 billion increase in debt; that is 60 per cent. Under the former Labor government, the average interest charge was \$154 million. Under the current coalition arrangement—the National Party is just as guilty as the Liberal Party—the average interest payment is \$357 million a year. More interestingly, from 2010–11 to 2013–14, the average balloons out to \$521 million a year.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The Deputy Premier cannot just wander in. Let us go back.

We are now looking at debt at 10 per cent of GSP. The Premier obsessed about \$2 200 per man, woman and child in Western Australia. Last year I did the same sum, and the amount was \$7 850 per man, woman and child in Western Australia. I did not at the time think it could increase any further; surely it would start to come down. We are now looking at \$8 200 per person by 2013–14. The Premier sat on this side of the house as Leader of the Opposition and carried on about \$2 200 for every Western Australian. The question is: where does this take the state and the public service? We on this side are particularly proud of our public service. There have been out-of-control increases in expenses and a forecast of 3.9 per cent for 2010–11 that simply will not be achieved. We see increased debt in both the general government sector and the total public sector, but also the complete annihilation of tourism in Western Australia.

I will not spend a lot of time on individual government departments, but I want to focus briefly on tourism, simply because the former Treasurer, the member for Vasse, made some interesting comments about tourism when he sat on this side of the house. What have we seen in tourism? There have been 85 jobs lost and regional offices closed. If the government is not going to support regional tourism in Western Australia, where the hell is that taxi going? I do not know where that taxi is going, if there is no regional Tourism Western Australia presence to capitalise on this lost taxidriver wandering around Western Australia!

Mr E.S. Ripper: Where is he now?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Where the bloody hell is he now? Nobody knows!

Mr M. McGowan: He's outside Townsville; he took a bloke over to Townsville!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I dare say his car has been confiscated and he is on his way back!

It is worth noting what has happened with tourism. There has been real growth in tourism over 2010–11 of 5.75 per cent, which actually sounds not too bad, until we realise that it is a spike in money to pay for redundancies. Then the real costs come in. There will be a real cut in 2011–12 of 17.8 per cent, and a further real cut of 10.5 per cent in 2012–13. Compared with real GSP growth—that is, what the department is doing as the state grows—there is a massive cut of 22.52 per cent in 2011–12 and a massive cut of 13.5 per cent in 2012–13. What does this mean over time? The 2009–10 budget for the Western Australian Tourism Commission was \$56.9 million. To stand still, based on the Perth consumer price index, that budget will, by 2013–14, have to be \$64.2 million. In reality, it will be \$49.5 million. That is a real cut of 23 per cent over the forward estimates for tourism in Western Australia. One would have to think, on that basis, that tourism in Western Australia must be a solved problem and no longer an issue for us. Page 397 of volume 2 of the budget papers highlights the importance of tourism to Western Australia. It states —

According to the most recent Tourism Satellite Account (2007–08) the Western Australian tourism industry generates over 82,000 jobs and injects \$7.3 billion into the Western Australian economy.

...

The number of Western Australians travelling within the State is falling, as is intrastate tourism across Australia. Western Australian figures show a decline of 11.3 per cent compared to the national average of 6.4 per cent, however, all States except Queensland and New South Wales are showing similarly high levels of decline faster than the national average.

We often look to Queensland for comparisons with Western Australia in a number of different areas, and one such area is tourism. A real cut to the tourism budget of 23.5 per cent over forward estimates will ensure that tourism under this government will remain very much a second-order issue.

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It is worth noting the comments made by the member for Vasse during my second week in this place as a member of Parliament. The member for Vasse, as then Deputy Leader of the Opposition, made quite an attack on the former Minister for Tourism. He stated —

Tourism is here and now. Tourism will be here in 20 years and in 100 years. It should be the centrepiece of what the government is about. It is not deserving of a reduction of between 20 and 25 per cent in real funding. Those are the facts as contained in the budget. The Treasurer will have to do better than that.

When the member for Vasse was Treasurer, he made the decision to completely emasculate the Western Australian Tourism Commission. We are now in a position where tourism will become a second, third or fourth-order issue in Western Australia, despite the fact that the Premier's own budget documents highlight the fact that it generates more than 82 000 jobs and injects \$7.3 billion into the Western Australian economy.

Mr E.S. Ripper: It used to.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It used to; the taxidriver has a lot more work to do!

I now want to make some comments about the royalties for regions program. The point has been made ad nauseam that extra spending in regional Western Australia on state and regional development and outcomes is certainly greatly desired. However, we are seeing the rapid creation of two classes of Western Australians. In the 2008–09 budget, \$337 million was allocated to royalties for regions. With that is an underspend of \$143 million. In the 2009–10 budget \$644 million was allocated, but there was an underspend of \$287 million. In 2008–09 and 2009–10 there was an underspend of \$430 million—in an environment in which the Treasurer is hitting every Western Australian household in regional and metropolitan Western Australia with a 17 per cent increase in water bills. Next year households will be looking at another 22 per cent increase in electricity bills. This is a time when the National Party cannot afford to have its own little slush fund wandering the state, spending in a knee-jerk reaction on unsustainable projects. Included in that \$430 million underspend is money that should have been spent on worthwhile projects. For example, \$50 million was underspent in housing our workers for 2009–10, which is part of the broader \$180 million cut to that program across the forward estimates. Even more interesting is that \$100 million was allocated in 2009–10 for the country local government fund, of which \$10 million was spent. Of that \$10 million, \$300 000 was used to administer the fund. I do not know who is being paid \$300 000 to administer a \$10 million fund, but there certainly seems to be some interesting dynamics at work. Whatever happened to the other \$90 million in what has been defined as the Minister for Regional Development's pet project is beyond me. More importantly, there is the slush fund otherwise defined as "Regional Strategic Projects".

Mr E.S. Ripper: Watch out Liberal Party!

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is correct. The member for Ocean Reef should be worried about this. This is money that could be spent in his electorate. I know that every time the member for South Perth considers these figures he becomes more and more agitated about the train station in his electorate. Let us look at the slush fund of unallocated money and the last line item at the bottom of each of those funds. Over the forward estimates \$333 million has been allocated to the community services fund; \$219 million to the infrastructure and headworks fund; and, rounding it all up like some sort of accounting error is the title "New Regional and Statewide Initiatives", with an amount of \$70.2 million. There is \$622.2 million of unallocated money that can be spent at the sole discretion of the Minister for Regional Development. If we combine that with the underspend of last two financial years, there is more than \$1 billion of money owned by every Western Australian in a fund that is not being utilised in the best interests of Western Australia. If the Minister for Regional Development came into the chamber and said that the government had spent it all on good projects in regional WA and that those projects would improve the quality of life of people in regional Western Australia and improve regional prospects, the opposition would support it wholeheartedly. When the royalties for region legislation was presented to Parliament, I told the Minister for Regional Development that he had one chance at it and that, as soon as the Western Australian public viewed the royalties for region as a National Party slush fund, the fund itself would rapidly attract a stink. The Minister for Regional Development faces that danger because he has in that fund \$1 billion to allocate at his sole discretion at a time when the Treasurer has hit every single Western Australian family with a 17.7 per cent rise in water fees and charges.

This is a budget that I would have predicted from a conservative government. The priorities contained in budgets define governments. I am very proud to say that our many budgets protected Western Australians from unreasonable rises in essential utility charges. That is one of the greatest benefits from the last economic boom that the former Labor government delivered for people in my electorate and for people all over Western Australia. It is very hard to sell that; it is not a port at which a politician can cut a ribbon. However, it is one of

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the greatest benefits and economic dividends that the former Labor government delivered for every Western Australian. This government has reversed that. It has decided to provide the private sector with a subsidy—I refer to the Oakajee port—instead of protecting Western Australians in an environment of an extra \$5.3 billion in revenue across the forward estimates. This budget is an unfair document. It attacks Western Australian families. It ignores Perth suburbs. It is a document that members on this side of the house will spend many hours analysing and critiquing. We will ensure that when every member on the conservative side of government explains to his or her constituents why it is that their average water and electricity bills are increasing in a way that is beyond their salaries, those members tell them that the reason is the member for Cottesloe's view on electricity and water, for which all Western Australians must pay.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [4.25 pm]: Almost nine years ago to the day I gave my inaugural speech in this house. It ranged across a few topics, as inaugural speeches do, and amongst them was the efficacy of the now defunct Anti-Corruption Commission. With the house's indulgence, and at the risk of being accused of being vain or egotistical, I would like to share a few of the observations that I made in that speech. I think the reason will become abundantly clear shortly. My inaugural speech reads —

There is a well-known Latin phrase “*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*” which loosely translated means “Who will guard the guards?” Questions about the efficacy of the current regime, of the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Ombudsman and police internal affairs, remain. It is my contention that a pall hangs over law enforcement in this State. There is a lack of confidence that significant matters are being professionally pursued; instead focus appears to be on issues of purely historical curiosity. Ostensibly, there also appears to be an obsession with settling scores. Objectively inappropriate standards are being applied and more generally there is a perceived lack of rigour and accountability in how those investigations are being pursued. As someone who has also practised for a number of years in the administrative law field, I am a firm believer in the principles of natural justice. Natural justice comprises two components: First, the right to a fair hearing, which incorporates notions of lack of bias; and secondly, the right to be heard—in other words, to respond to those allegations. Put simply, justice must not only be done but be seen to be done.

...

I am reminded of the phrase, “Leading by example”. If the ACC conducts itself in a slapdash and cavalier manner, it can hardly impose higher standards on others.

...

Also public discourse in recent years suggests, however, that many in our community have serious reservations about whether the ACC is as fully effective as it might be.

...

If we do not have a system which is unimpeachable, two consequences follow: Firstly, the confidence of the community that allegations will be thoroughly canvassed and dealt with is diminished; secondly, it will be open to criminals and malicious individuals to make false allegations about honest police officers, thereby disrupting operational progress. Unless the body charged with investigation of such matters is beyond criticism, any dismissal of these false allegations will not serve as an unqualified endorsement of the probity and integrity of the officers, the subject of the complaint.

Finally, I appreciate that the concept of the separation of powers means that bodies such as the ACC cannot be exposed to indirect political interference through the budgetary process. Nevertheless, I have for some time had concerns about whether we are getting value for money

I made those remarks on 23 May 2001. I think some will see the obvious parallels with the Anti-Corruption Commission's successor, which is what I would like to talk about today.

The most recent case in which three persons were discharged after Justice Murray found they had no case to answer encapsulates some serious deficiencies in the process, and for that reason I will highlight some of the issues in the conduct of that case. In doing so I do not intend to canvass the merits or otherwise of the prosecution. There is always some room for argument and contest about how certain evidence is interpreted. This is not about that. It is about the level of competence and professionalism with which Corruption and Crime Commission and Director of Public Prosecutions officers have acquitted their duties. I should preface my remarks about this high-profile case by saying that I have no brief from either Julian Grill or Brian Burke to raise this issue. I disclose that I have known Nathan Hondros and his young family for more than a decade and that I

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regard him as a friend. I am in awe of the equanimity and composure with which they faced the whole sorry saga that consumed four years of their lives, as well as considerable assets.

The events relating to the charges of corruption and disclosing official secrets were alleged to have occurred in September and October 2006. Mr Hondros first appeared before the Corruption and Crime Commission in February 2007. He advises me that after his appearance before the CCC, he offered to provide supplementary evidence or to participate in a record of interview. The CCC never responded to that offer.

In early November 2008 charges were laid under the Criminal Code against the three men. In December 2008 they made their first appearance in court. The lawyer acting on behalf of the CCC substituted a defective prosecution notice with the correct documentation and conceded that the summons had not been properly served. This was not an auspicious start.

On 22 December 2008 further and better particulars of the charges were requested of the CCC by Mr Hondros' lawyers. The right to such particulars is well established at law. In the case of *Johnson v Miller* 1937 59 Commonwealth Law Reports 467 at 497, Mr Justice Evatt put it thus —

It is of the very essence of the administration of criminal justice that a defendant should, at the very outset of the trial, know what is the specific offence which is being alleged against him.

On 14 January 2009 a response was received from the CCC saying that it was under no obligation to provide particulars, and that they would hear from the Director of Public Prosecutions in due course.

Mr Hondros advises me that almost from the outset his legal advisers communicated with the CCC that it was their belief that the charges were ill-founded. His lawyers suggested the prosecution should take the opportunity to review its case.

It was not until June 2009 that the DPP responded to the request for further and better particulars. It did so by providing a copy of an email it had sent to another accused indicating that it covered the same issues.

In late June the request for further and better particulars was renewed. On 4 July 2009 the DPP replied, saying it would respond by 13 July 2009. On 30 July 2009, when nothing had been received, the request was renewed—as it was when no response was forthcoming on 20 August. On 1 September, particulars were finally received.

In the meantime the indictment was received on 11 August 2009. On 24 March 2010 the defence prepared a consolidated set of particulars, bearing in mind that the trial was set down for 12 April 2010. The defence advised the prosecution on 29 March that it would proceed on the basis of those particulars. On 19 April, which was the day before the new date the case was set down for trial—because of an adjournment on the basis of late disclosure of an additional 10 expanded witness statements containing new material—further particulars were provided. There was some dispute between the parties as to whether these represented a significant change to what had previously been provided. It was also asserted that the particulars provided were not on all fours with the case that was ultimately opened by the prosecution, and that it would shift again once the prosecution case had been heard. Also, some of the witnesses did not come up to proof.

Concurrent with this process was prosecution disclosure. This involves the prosecution disclosing material on which it bases its case and anything else that potentially could be relevant to the case, even though it does not intend to adduce that evidence in court. This of course includes potentially exculpatory material. Relevant legislation provides that disclosure should occur as soon as practicable.

In early 2009 the CCC produced more than 4 500 pages of physical documentation and, I am advised, about 50 000 electronic records. These were not properly sorted or indexed but were in lever arch files and on CD-ROMs. Some guesswork was required to determine what evidence the prosecution intended to lead. This required close scrutiny from the defence. For example, in the case of a principal prosecution witness, not all material was transcribed. It was necessary for the defence—who located this material amongst the volumes produced—to listen to telephone intercept material and have it transcribed at its expense.

Also in terms of telephone intercept material that had been transcribed, only excerpts of particular conversations had been transcribed. This selective transcription tended to exclude material which was potentially exculpatory. Further, the Director General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet also admitted in a witness statement that four months of email material relating to the latter half of 2006 was unavailable. The defence was advised that these computer records were missing. Back-up records could not be retrieved, and IT experts could not access it.

On 29 March 2010 the defence was finally served with the exhibit book, which detailed the evidence that the prosecution intended to lead at trial. Late on Thursday 8 April, and Friday 9 April—bearing in mind that the trial was due to start on 12 April—new and expanded witness statements containing new information were received.

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There were 10 of these statements. The prosecution had also added to its list of witnesses. As a result of the tardiness with which this material was produced, and due to the unfairness that would be caused to the defence in having to address this new material at the eleventh hour, the trial was adjourned until 20 April. This meant that extra legal costs were incurred by the defence in the additional preparation for its case. Writing to the prosecution complaining of this tardy disclosure of material was to no avail. It was met with the response that the defence was provided with these witness statements as a matter of convenience and that it was not entitled to them as a right under any procedural or legal obligation.

The trial started on 20 April and was set down for four weeks. On 5 May the prosecution case closed. On 6 and 7 May “no case to answer” submissions were made by the defence. On 10 May, Mr Justice Murray discharged the accused and reserved his detailed reasons. He said that the evidence led by the prosecution was not capable of proving its case beyond reasonable doubt. In other words, after all this time the case was insufficiently compelling to require the defence to rebut it. Mr Justice Murray’s 69-page reasons for decision was handed down earlier today.

At this stage I need to reiterate that for at least three years the defence had been communicating both with the DPP and the CCC, in conferences between counsel and by telephone, contending that it should closely scrutinise its case. How was it that a flawed case nevertheless inexorably moved ahead?

It appears to an outsider, such as myself, to be a combination of factors—an excess of zeal by investigators; incorrect assumptions on how government and cabinet processes work, which could have easily been dispelled with basic inquiry; legal input at the CCC in the early stages was casual and dilatory; and there was possibly incomplete oversight by the DPP. A question remains as to whether the DPP exercised proper independent judgement in carrying on with the prosecution or whether it simply followed the flawed prosecution commenced by the CCC; or was it under subtle or not-too-subtle pressure by the CCC to carry on with the prosecution?

I note that in court, for the 13 days of hearing, there were between four and six CCC investigators often present. It is apparent from the hearing that the prosecution witnesses were either proofed late, or not at all. This process, if done in a timely fashion, gives the prosecutor a really good opportunity to independently assess the strength or weakness of a case. It also appears that the late production of witness statements was attributed to a lack of time and resources. If so, that leads to obvious questions: Why did the state not devote sufficient resources to the prosecution? If the DPP did not have sufficient in-house capacity to deal with the matter properly, why did it not brief the prosecution to independent counsel at the bar? If resources are so scarce, why was this case, which has been found to have had no foundation, ever prosecuted? I am not sure that the suggestion that the Corruption and Crime Commission not be able to lay charges but must provide evidence to the DPP to make the decision to prosecute would have, of itself, avoided this shambolic saga. In this regard, I refer to a letter written to the editor of *The West Australian* on 18 May this year by Acting Commissioner of the Corruption and Crime Commission Chris Shanahan. In that letter he stated —

There is considerable misinformation and misunderstanding in the public arena about the laying of criminal charges by the Corruption and Crime Commission against Messrs Burke, Grill and Hondros ...

The charges were initially laid by the commission in the Magistrate’s Court on the advice of the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The DPP then took the matter over when it was committed to the Supreme Court and at that point had to decide whether to prosecute the matter or drop it.

It is important to note that as a matter of law, only the DPP can prosecute matters in the District and Supreme courts in WA. The commission has no power in this regard.

The DPP was responsible for the manner in which the case was ultimately framed in the Supreme Court and the conduct of the trial.

There has been speculation but it is not clear what the actual cost was of this investigation and prosecution to the state. The substantial financial and personal cost to the persons charged is readily apparent. I do know, however, that in this year’s budget the CCC will receive more than \$30 million, and I think we are entitled to ask: is this money well spent? I also know that those discharged have no clear entitlement to compensation, even though they made every endeavour at an early stage to advise the CCC of the likely outcome of the case. Given the foregoing, I am hopeful that the unsatisfactory aspects of this case will be more closely scrutinised by the parliamentary inspector.

It is apparent from both proceedings in the CCC and the evidence adduced at trial that significant weight was put on telephone intercept material.

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[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: It is settled law that the affidavit supporting the granting of an intercept warrant is not something that the subject of an intercept can acquire in any disclosure process. Consequently, it is not possible for someone such as the inspector to look behind the warrant to establish whether the evidence that formed the basis of an application for a telephone intercept was well founded or flimsy and tenuous. That, I think, is a real pity.

In defending the CCC after the case concluded, Attorney General Hon Christian Porter, MLA, claimed that the CCC has an 82 per cent success rate. Although it is not clear that that figure relates to contested matters, I say to the Attorney General that he should be mindful of the adage that the end does not justify the means. That is a slippery slope.

That brings me to the broader proposition of whether the CCC should take on greater responsibility for the investigation of organised crime. The government has foreshadowed this by saying that it intends to amend the CCC legislation. I know from personal experience that organised crime investigations are complex and prolonged and inevitably are robustly challenged, with every technical legal point being taken. From the foregoing, it is far from obvious that the CCC is up to the job. I am far from convinced that the CCC should have its powers widened in the short term. The CCC needs to be able to demonstrate a consistent commitment to quality and professionalism in its own work. Organised crime investigations should be a core function of police, and although the use of the CCC's special hearings power is said to assist police in their endeavours, they should be an adjunct, not at the forefront of the fight.

The Western Australia Police organised crime branch has had some outstanding outcomes in recent months. Yesterday we heard of the first seizure by Western Australia Police of the so-called miaow miaow drug—namely, 4-methylmethcathinone or mephedrone. This operation was conducted in conjunction with the Australian Federal Police. In April this year two successful operations resulted in a number of persons being charged. In the first, Operation Kansas, 437 grams of cocaine was seized and one person was charged. Later that same month, under Operation Maplesville, in partnership with the New South Wales Crime Commission, 11 people who participated in a syndicate based in New South Wales that brought 1.2 kilograms of methamphetamine to Western Australia were charged. In February this year, under Operation Baystone, seven persons who allegedly had links to the Comanchero outlaw motorcycle gang were arrested with 7.6 kilograms of methamphetamine. This year alone \$19 million has been seized as the suspected proceeds of crime, and last year it was a staggering \$60 million.

These results are about doing the basics well, but it means that police need the resources and administrative support to assist their endeavours. There is nothing more frustrating than having a quarry in sight but being thwarted by a lack of capacity to secure the available evidence in a timely and lawful fashion. It must be a source of some frustration to operational police that although they are mendicant, the CCC appears to have greater access to resources with less accountability and oversight in how they are used. Ultimately, the debate on the organised crime powers of the CCC being expanded is one for another day. In the context of the current case, I have canvassed the need to ask whether the wide powers conferred on the CCC have been used responsibly and diligently. Before conferring even more extensive powers, we must be mindful of the words of Lord Acton that power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely.

MRS C.A. MARTIN (Kimberley) [4.46 pm]: I rise to add my comments to the Treasurer's budget speech. There are a few things I want to place on the record, especially with regard to my region. There are 419 000 square kilometres in the electorate of the Kimberley and there are nearly 50 000 people there, half of whom are Aboriginal. We have an influx of double that population every year through tourism, which is great; it is one of our major drawcards. Of course, we also have the camels on the beach. We are pretty well known for a lot of the camel stuff and a lot of the stories that are generated around camels.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: And dogs on the beach now!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: They were not our dogs; I am pretty sure they came from Melbourne. Our dogs are really nice. As a matter of fact, our dogs are so sweet —

A government member interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: We have not been eating dogs for a while because they are off the menu. People have to go overseas for that. Cats are okay; they are feral.

Mr M. McGowan: Where were the dogs that attacked the camels from?

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Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I think they were from Melbourne. Everything bad comes from Melbourne. We get the flu from Melbourne. We get the ugly Australian from Melbourne. No; I have met a couple of nice people from Melbourne. I think they went back quickly. They were very nice.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: The member for Albany is from Melbourne.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Yes, but he is not a local.

I am really proud of my electorate. I think the six towns and all these people are pretty specky. I sat next to an elderly lady on the way down to Perth yesterday, and she had just got off one of those tour liners, and I thought that that was pretty specky. She had done this trip down from Wyndham along the coast. All she did was talk about the services that were provided for tourism. When I get home, I am going to ring all the companies that provided her with those services and tell them just how great they are, because she talked nonstop about how great they were. The lady had done the Ibis trip, which starts off in Broome and goes to Mt Hart, from where they do a tour around the Kimberley, then to Cape Leveque, and then back to Broome. All she could talk about was how wonderful the country was and how diverse it was and that sort of thing. With a coastline such as ours, it is really important that a lot of our time and energy is spent conserving that coastline. Hopefully the Camden Sound marine reserve will come into effect soon, if what the Premier said was correct; and it is really important that we have these things. It is really important for our tourism, it is really important for local people, and of course it is really important for the environment. I do not think the whales give a hoot because they do not live there, they just pass through; but it is a nice spot for them to spend a couple of days.

Mr M. McGowan: On their way back from Melbourne!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I hope they do not go to Melbourne because they will probably come back scarred and in need of counselling or something! I do not know whether whale counsellors exist, but there are a lot of greenies and mung beans around, which is okay I suppose. We get the ones from Fremantle and Albany—they run away from the member for Albany and end up in my electorate with their little banners about saving whales and trees that we do not actually have, but that is okay! Of course, we have all sorts up there.

But we need lots of infrastructure—more so than in Perth. I heard somebody say in this house the other day that they knew what it was “really” like to live in the country—well, I actually “really” know what it is like to live in the country, too. I have found that if people do not live in Perth, they do not get education for their kids and they do not get the services that everybody in the metropolitan area takes for granted, such as public transport. I have to say that this budget had some good stuff in it, but we missed out on a lot of things again—one of which was the education hostel in Broome. It started off as a great idea, and it is still a great idea, but do not forget that our community is growing and people are moving up and bringing their kids with them. If we cannot accommodate their needs, they will end up taking off to other places such as Melbourne—Lord forbid!

Mr R.F. Johnson: God forbid!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: We do not want our kids going to Melbourne.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Who would go to Melbourne?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I have been told it is very cold there. I really mean it: whenever I see people sneezing or something, I think they have come from Melbourne; it is so cold. And of course when I sit on a plane next to them, they cough on me—I am not joking! We have to be very careful about cross-contamination. It is not that I have anything against people from Melbourne; it is just that I have noticed certain things. I am sure that former Victorian Premier Joan Kirner will forgive me for making these statements about what happens in Melbourne, but every time I have been there I have caught a cold or it has been very cold, unlike Broome or Kununurra, where it is raining at the moment. I hope we can be forgiven for having unseasonal weather! Yes, all the roads are closed but the tourists still like us because we are very nice to them. No, they cannot go up the Gibb River Road because it is closed and they cannot go up to Cape Leveque because that road is closed, too. If those roads were bituminised—especially Cape Leveque, which is only 96 kilometres long—what a bargain! If we could put 96 kilometres of bituminised road up to Cape Leveque, just imagine the people from Melbourne who could go and stay up there. They could go and check it out and they would really love it and it would be warm. That is not what it is like at the moment; the road is closed. It is only 96 kilometres long and it would cost \$30 million. What is \$30 million when Cape Leveque is such a great place?

Mr J.E. McGrath: Nothing!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: It is nothing really, but it was not included in the budget,

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Have members noticed that I have not complained about the budget—apart from that little thing! Broome will be getting some boating facilities, and I am very, very pleased about that. What I am not pleased about is that we do not know where they will be, what they will look like, or what the design will be. I have been up and down the coast and looked at all sorts of designs. Exmouth has some great stuff, but there was nothing like that in the budget for Broome, such as a coastal road. Have members been out to the national park? People can go from Exmouth to the national park on bitumen!

Mr J.E. McGrath: Yes.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: If we had real roads, we could have more tourists, and we might not be as sensitive about these people from Melbourne because we could spread them out more, could we not? No?

I think if Exmouth is used as the example of how to run a national park, the area around Broome would really benefit by access being available to places such as Manari and Crab Creek. We could do a lot if more funds were provided to bituminise more roads. I accept that the Gibb River Road might not be everybody's priority, which is okay, but the Cape Leveque road would be just speccy.

Real houses would be nice. We have lots of wet-season shelters out in remote Aboriginal communities. How about some houses? That would be nice!

Mr J.E. McGrath: You'll get a road to James Price Point.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler interjected.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Yes, but we cannot take our tourists out there, and then what will we do about all that construction work? Where is it in the budget? It is not there! Anyway, not that I am complaining—am I complaining? No; I am the soul of generosity today. How is that?

Mr D.A. Templeman: That's a change!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Anyway, members can notice that I am not flicking my hair and carrying on or anything; I am just, very gently, changing my style!

Mr J.E. McGrath: You're in a good zone!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I have had counselling. Remember all that aggression? It is not here any more! It all works, truly. I have to say "Om", and it is out with the bad and in with the good. Has the Minister for Police ever heard about that?

Mr R.F. Johnson: Yes.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: The minister should try it; it is good fun!

Mr R.F. Johnson: I do it every day!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Has the Minister for Police noticed how nice I have been today?

Mr R.F. Johnson: Yes; you've been extremely nice!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: That is what I thought.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You're not going to change, are you?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I will raise the subject of Aboriginal housing because it needs to be on the public record.

Mr D.A. Templeman: The Minister for Housing is in this place.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Yes; and he is a very nice man.

Mr J.E. McGrath: He is a nice man.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: They are all very nice people, although they do not know what happens in the country.

Mr W.R. Marmion: I lived in Derby.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: The minister was up in Derby for a little while; was he in preschool there or something?

Mr R.F. Johnson: He's a Derby boy!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I do not know about these young people!

I will put on the record the subject of Aboriginal housing. I do not want to filibuster as I am, as I have said, trying to be nice. I am pacing myself so that I can be nice. We are going to sign off on this bilateral agreement. The Aboriginal housing legislation has been through this place and the other place and all that; however, I

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understand that the government is in possession of a report that states that each of the houses in remote Aboriginal communities will need \$127 000 to fix the houses before they are transferred over. I did not bring my calculator, but I would really like it if somebody would calculate what 1 200 houses at a cost of \$127 000 a house comes to. I think that is a pretty big amount; it might be close to half a billion dollars. I think the bilateral agreement actually stated that for every house that will be transferred, there will be an amount of \$4 000 a house to be paid by the state as a part of the transfer. I have to say that I think it is a dereliction of the federal government's fiduciary duty to try that on with the state. If the state signs off on it, it will be a complete betrayal of Aboriginal people and the status of Aboriginal housing because it will become a state asset. All these houses will be bungered up and in need of repair, and the state has to carry the cost. Are we getting value for our dollar? I do not think so. The federal government is still shafting us, despite the overall package of \$500 million for new housing and future responsibilities, and I am not happy about it. I have been quoted as saying, "If you're going to give me a dirty handkerchief, give me the washing powder"; I do not mind providing the labour, but the washing powder is not being given.

Where is the problem? The problem is not the Aboriginal people, that is for sure; it is the government that has not got it right, and the federal government has mucked it up again. I do not want to see this happen. I do not want to be a part of it because I think it is a disgrace. That is one of the things that I thought needed to be brought up again. It is a hot topic. If communities want housing, they will have to sign over their freehold. It is still state housing. I know that tenure is needed to spend money on it and I understand the rationale behind it. What I am saying is that no-one has ever paid the rent to the Aboriginal people. I know that under future acts, compensation will be paid some time in the future for Aboriginal people's land that was taken many years ago and where extinguishment has taken place. Why does that even have to be considered when no-one has ever paid the rent? Midnight Oil used to sing about that—who will pay the rent; the beds are burning. How about this: instead of paying rent, why does the government not fix the housing and transfer the houses to the Aboriginal people? The Minister for Indigenous Affairs knows that it would work in some communities but not in others.

Dr K.D. Hames: Have you been talking with Wayne Bergmann?

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Wayne Bergmann is a wonderful young leader in my community. I have known him since he was 12. He used to live across the road from me.

Dr K.D. Hames: Wayne is working with me to do that.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: It is my job to put it on the public record. The minister actually signed off on the native title agreement up there, which I think was a great thing to do and a lot of people were happy about it. That reverted the bulk of the Aboriginal Lands Trust land to native title—is that correct?

Dr K.D. Hames: The ALT land has always been subject to native title.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: The minister knows how I feel about the ALT. If a trust is to look after people's rights and interests, it should be responsible for making sure, firstly, that it does not lose money on it; secondly, that it is considered to be a commercial venture; and, thirdly, that quasi-government departments are not given peppercorn leases and that the government actually pays the rent. That is another one of my pay-the-rent schemes. It is not that hard. It is absolute rubbish to be fully funded by a government department and to provide government services using Aboriginal assets that are on peppercorn leases. That is another way of ripping off people who should not be ripped off. I know that it has been going on for years and that the precedent has been set, but that does not make it either right or decent. In my view, a trust should, for all intents and purposes, look after the best interests of the people for whom it is looking after the property. The ALT has said that before in how many reports? In how many reports has the ALT said that the land should be given back to the people? The minister has seen all the reports and reviews and I have been reading them for 20 years, but it still exists and still poses a conflict of interest, as does the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee. That mob can check things out, but the minister can overturn its recommendations. That has happened before. The minister knows that and I know that. There is a conflict of interest with regard to that, especially with the minister having the last word. Where is the equity and justice?

[Member's time extended.]

Dr K.D. Hames: The reason is that there are some instances when you have to take into account the overall state responsibilities. The Port Hedland harbour is a good example. The local Aboriginal group opposed it and I overturned it, for good reason.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: The truth is that whenever something has not been fair and it has been brought to the minister's attention, he has dealt with it. I know that to be true. I do not have a problem with the minister; I have

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a problem with the structure that is part of a colonial system that should not exist in this day and age in this state. We are all changing. All of us change yet the ALT and Department of Indigenous Affairs still exist. I suppose that the DIA has a place right now in some ways, but for how long? Do we need it forever? I believe there should be a sunset clause to get rid of it. The government should start dealing with Aboriginal people and should not have a go-between between Aboriginal people and the provision of Aboriginal services. When there is a go-between, it means the Aboriginal people get a second-class service. That is the truth. If a community member wants to have electricity, why should he go to DIA and not directly to the service provider and be treated like every other citizen? If I want the phone turned on and I live in an Aboriginal community —

Dr K.D. Hames: They should do that and when they come to DIA, I tell them to go away and go to the service provider, except sometimes they need help.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: People cannot opt out. There must be a transition period, but not for everyone. The minister knows as well as I do that some of these communities are very advanced. Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation is an Aboriginal organisation in Broome. The minister should check it out. The things that that organisation has done have changed the nature of the world for so many Aboriginal people. Nirrumbuk trained 40 apprentices and used meagre resources to set up business incubators. The businesses still exist today. The skills centre is called Djaringo Training. That organisation has all those things going for it and it has done all the right things. Some organisations do great work. Like it or not, the Kimberley Land Council does a brilliant job. I know that it has a sunset clause because how much native title is left to resolve? What will the council evolve into? It does need to evolve into something, simply because the most senior people and decision makers in our community are a part of that organisation. Will they go back to being part of the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre? That is from where the KLC was created. Will it become something else? All these things need to be taken into consideration.

Normally I would not take up this much time dealing with Aboriginal issues but these are some of the things that we need to look at. They are not issues that we can push away; they are issues that we must start planning for. There is an opportunity to transition and to change the way things are. As far as native title lands that people own is concerned, the exclusive use of native title does not mean much if the people cannot benefit from the means of production and if the state still owns the water and mineral rights. They are really simple issues. Surely there is a way to deal with these things under Indigenous land use agreements. I am glad that the Minister for Indigenous Affairs is in the chamber because he knows of some of the ideas that I am talking about.

Dr K.D. Hames: Aboriginal people, through Wayne, are benefiting from mining developments. For example, a royalty equivalent is paid to Aboriginal people, particularly to those businesses south of Kununurra, such as the nickel mine.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: What has been done for years at the Argyle diamond mine through the participation agreement has set the precedent. The company never negotiated it to the end. It left the gate open so that it could renegotiate it in the future. That is what we need to do as well. We need to make sure that there is not a double standard in the provision of services for Aboriginal people. It is important for Aboriginal people to have the same citizenship rights as everyone else. People argue that they cannot have a free ride. I have never known anyone living in a remote community who does not pay rent. Those myths in the media build up these assumptions about what happens in remote communities. Some people in those communities have a pretty rough time of it. Some are really rough and others struggle but do a great job. We never focus on those communities. The minister has been to Bidyadanga and has seen what is done there. The community has been working on that for the 25 years that I have been involved. How long before that was it doing it? What else has it done and who else has it assisted? They are the communities that we need to support and let them set a precedent for the future, but we do not tend to do that, which is a real problem.

When all is said and done, the housing in our remote communities is a real disgrace. As much as I have read here and there that these people should have done this or that, when governments build and abandon structures, we cannot blame the occupants. They still pay the rent because it has always been a requirement of funding bodies, whether it was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, DIA or whoever. Rent has always been paid but there has been no maintenance of the houses.

We have tried to get programs into the communities. Of course, there is also the issue of training people. Are we going to get them into towns? We are trying to get tradespeople from remote communities into Broome to get them skilled up because it is a major centre with a great TAFE. I went with a group to three houses that they wanted to rent so that they could bring people into town to go to the TAFE. They did not even get a start. We checked the houses out, the owners found out that it was an Aboriginal organisation, we think, and it did not go

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any further. There is no other reason. Those houses are still vacant now. I know because I actually checked with Johari bin Demin. He and I worked together in Nirrumbuk many years ago. We used to do these housing agreements. Now we find in Broome in this day and age no housing available for people who need training and whom we need in those communities to provide services. The best will in the world of government is not going to change anything until we have at least a level playing field.

Dr K.D. Hames: You need hostel accommodation really.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: They need something. As for hostel accommodation, I do not know.

Dr K.D. Hames: A managed hostel. Some of them need a mother figure.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Some of them might, but these are young adults. They do not need a hostel. They are quite capable of living in a house together and looking after each other. They need to be together so that they can all go through TAFE together and come out at the other end with their colleagues. There is no hostel accommodation in Broome. We have checked it all out.

Dr K.D. Hames: I know there is not—it needs one.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: We need it.

Dr K.D. Hames: You need it in all those major centres.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: None of it is in the budget. We have shelters for the homeless for short stays, so we have a budget line for that. I will give the Deputy Premier credit; it is a great idea. Aboriginal Hostels Limited did have a place there in Broome. If I recall, it has a place now. When the member for Pilbara was the Minister for Housing and Works he actually started up a hostel there for those on dialysis. That still exists through Aboriginal Hostels Limited, but we need a mainstream hostel. A backpackers facility is not going to do it because it is just not appropriate. The people who come in as backpackers are tourists—they are not from Melbourne, mostly! What they do is party, which is what they are there for. We do not want to set people up to fail from the communities. They need somewhere where they can have a semblance of a normal lifestyle while they are studying and working. Of course, backpackers do not do that. Maybe that is one of the things that we can do.

Dr K.D. Hames: As you know, “Twiggy” is doing that in Fitzroy. Managed accommodation is like a rental; they look after themselves.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I know a lot of these young people who are coming in. Some are from Looma, some are from Bidjil and from around the west Kimberley. They are from prominent families who have been in community decision-making roles for a long time. A lot of the families are even practising Christians. These people do not want their kids hanging out with a partying, trendy mob. They want them to go in there and get the training that they need, so they can go back to their communities with those skills and make a worthy contribution. That is what they want, that is what the community wants and that is what those young people want. We will not do it if we cannot rent houses for them.

Dr K.D. Hames: There is another way of doing it. I am looking at trying to get fly in, fly out workers from those communities like Kalumburu, Oombulgurri and Balgo.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: For training?

Dr K.D. Hames: Rotating to go off to work at places, and that gives them part of their training. They do 10 days on and five days off, so they are working for a mining company for 10 days doing whatever and learning a trade and then going back into the community for five days.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: We need that in Fitzroy, because our mate Twiggy took 23 skilled labourers out of there. They have got great jobs now but we have not got the labour force there. It is a good thing, but it is not a good thing for the community.

Dr K.D. Hames: If there is a rotating group, you have always got people with those skills.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: That is the solution to that problem, but when is it going to happen and is it funded?

Dr K.D. Hames: I will be talking to Brendon about that.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Okay. Is it going to come from royalties for regions?

Dr K.D. Hames: I am not saying it is definitely happening. I am confident we will get there.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: There is the problem and we need a solution. If we cannot give them proper accommodation, then we should give them at least something for short stays. They have got to have something.

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We have got to get people to where the training is. We are not taking the training out to them. For some reason it has never worked. I do not know why, but just for some reason it has not. If that does not work, we have got to find something that does.

I have to say that the budget has been pretty good for the Kimberley and for some of the issues that have been hanging around for a number of years. There are still a lot of issues, we always know that, especially when it comes to roads. Just for the record, that 96 kilometres would have been pretty special, and not just for tourism—it would also bring down the cost of living for the remote communities. There is a minority out there who do not want it.

Dr K.D. Hames: I do not know what road you are talking about, because I missed it, but I am dead keen on a road to Kalumburu.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: It is a track with two wheel ruts, and that is all it is. Roads for Kalumburu and the peninsula are priorities that we really need.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Ask for an extension.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I have already had an extension. Can I have another extension?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you cannot, unfortunately.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: I still have 10 seconds! As I say, the budget has been kind to the Kimberley. However, where there are gaps, members will hear about them pretty soon. Of course, during estimates members will definitely hear from me where the deficits are.

MR T.G. STEPHENS (Pilbara) [5.16 pm]: This budget has some considerable pluses and some amazing minuses within it. I want to speak first of all about some of the pluses. The budget is much more transparent than I remember the last budget delivered by the current government being. It is certainly easier to read than I had previously observed. It does therefore make it easier to look and see where the funds are coming from in this budget. For instance, it is very clear that the government's bacon was saved in the current financial year by the arrival of unanticipated extra funding from the goods and services tax. This has been able to deliver the budget surplus that was otherwise at risk. What is also clear is that the government's expectations of increased GST for the coming financial year will certainly create the opportunity to protect the government's surplus. What is also contained with great clarity are the figures of the extra income that will come from royalties from the resource sector—some \$2.67 billion alone from iron ore royalties will come into the state coffers for 2010–11, and \$3.27 billion in total from the mining and oil payments that come into the state coffers. This is the highest taxing state budget on record. A budget has never had a tax take of the size that this one is delivering. What we know as well from the budget papers is that state taxation will rise to \$8.5 billion in 2013–14; that is, it will rise 35 per cent between 2009–10 and 2013–14. These figures are by any standards amazing increases. They are built in part as well on increased fees and charges. It is worth mentioning in every contribution that anyone makes in reference to this debate that we are seeing a 10 per cent increase in power costs delivered in the budget, and that is on top of the 7.5 per cent increase from last year. The budget estimates refer to a 22.3 per cent increase for next year just on power costs alone. There has been a 17.7 per cent increase in water and a \$3.60 increase in motor vehicle insurance. These are the extra sources of income that are on display in this budget. Already previous speakers, including the shadow Treasurer, have expressed concern about whether it is possible for the government to contain the growth in expenditure that is predicted and upon which this budget is predicated. For instance, there is an allocation in this budget for more jails, yet the government simultaneously predicts expenditure growth for the Department of Corrective Services in 2010–11 of only 1.5 per cent. If members believe that the government will be able to deliver more jails with only a 1.5 per cent growth in expenditure in the corrective services area, then they believe in fairies. This comes against a backdrop of the knowledge that each new prisoner going into a jail costs \$100 000 per annum.

There is more transparency, but I am afraid that there are also some real difficulties. I welcome the advice that there will be additional funds spent in Jigalong. It is described as a \$6 million allocation for a pilot project within that community. There is also some indication that in the out years there will be a further \$4 million. However, the community would have appreciated it if someone, at some stage, had said what the funds were for. There does not appear to be anyone within the Jigalong community who knows anything about this allocation. I am hoping that the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, sitting opposite, might be able to throw some light on that \$10 million expenditure.

Dr K.D. Hames: It doesn't come under my budget; it is presumably royalties for regions funding for a specific project, I would imagine.

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Mr T.G. STEPHENS: At some stage the community would love to know why it has landed in the budget. It has a very prominent and active CEO and wonderful man in Cedric Wyatt.

Dr K.D. Hames: It's probably something that has been done through the Regional Development Commission.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: It is an essential services pilot project which might, in fact, be a continuation of some old schemes of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, and if it is, I support them. However, if it is the old scheme of trying to —

Dr K.D. Hames: It's nothing to do with the pool.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: No, the pool is done. If it is to regularise the delivery of power, water and sewerage, and other such responses to the needs of that community, more strength to the government's arm, but at some stage, some clarity around that budget line would be welcomed by not only the community CEO but also the community.

Dr K.D. Hames: I'll give him a ring; I've still got his number.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: The local member would also be keen to hear about it.

Dr K.D. Hames: I've got his number from when he ran for the Liberal Party.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I am told that he never actually joined the Liberal Party, but he was the Liberal Party candidate despite that fact!

Mr B.S. Wyatt: I can confirm: he never joined the party.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: He never joined the Liberal Party, but he ran as a Liberal candidate!

Dr K.D. Hames: We're flexible—nothing if not flexible!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I welcome the fact that there is an expenditure allocation on the neighbouring part of my electorate. I refer to the \$5 million that has been allocated to the township of Roebourne for upgrades there. I think it is worth mentioning in this context that during the eight years the Labor Party was last in office, there was an amazing amount of government spending on a range of projects and we now have the opportunity to see some of them being opened by some of the incoming ministers, including the police facilities in Karratha and South Hedland; a school, a swimming pool and a new hospital in Fitzroy Crossing; and hospitals all over the Kimberley region. A new hospital will open in Port Hedland later this year. That represents a multibillion-dollar infrastructure spend over the eight years of Labor in office in a range of areas. That all happened without the narrative spin that is woven into the current budget.

We have now discovered that the royalties for regions program that was sold to the communities of regional Western Australia as money on top of normal government spending on programs is simply a rebadging of what governments have always done—responding to need and opportunity where it is necessary.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: That sometimes required solid advocacy on the part of members of Parliament, but it certainly never required members of Parliament to be dishonest to their party or their electors in order to get attention for their communities, or to corrupt the political outcomes of an election by corruptly changing sides once elected. We are seeing in the electorate of North West a very significant allocation of funds from the royalties for regions program. However, the funds are for hospitals, school upgrades and police facilities. In other parts of the electorate —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Yes, throw him out, Mr Deputy Speaker, because it would be the appropriate thing to do with a member of that sort.

The allocation of royalties for regions funds to the electorate of North West for hospitals, schools, police facilities and early intervention programs for youth are programs that were always part of the normal processes of government. They were always part of the normal process of delivering services to communities across Western Australia. We now find that they can get a new hospital in regional Western Australia only if it comes out of the royalties for regions program. In fact, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs told the house only a few moments ago that the only way he will be able to respond to the employment and training needs of remote Indigenous Western Australians is through the royalties for regions program. In fact, it should be coming out of

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the normal programs of government. The royalties for regions program should have been what it was promised to be—additional funds on top of government expenditure.

There are other things missing from this budget, despite assurances to the contrary by members of the government to people within my electorate. For instance, I note that the Leader of the National Party has told people that there will be funds for the infill sewerage program in Port Hedland. There is \$100 million contained within this budget for infill sewerage, but no indication, assurance or advice that it will include any money for the Port Hedland infill sewerage program. I note that the budget papers contain a reference to \$23 million for the Busselton waste water program, but nothing for the much-needed removal of the waste water sewerage pond around the eastern end of the town of Port Hedland that is blocking land redevelopment around Spinifex Hill, Cooke Point and Pretty Pool. The sewerage pond sits in the middle of much-needed potential residential land, and no funds are in this budget specifically for its removal.

There are two major roads in the Pilbara region that are in desperate need of upgrade. The Tom Price —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for North West!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: The member for North West squeaks from his seat. He has gone on radio saying that it is better to spend money on hospitals rather than roads. I put it to the house that the government's failure to spend money on upgrading those roads will deliver patient after patient to the mortuaries within those hospitals. That is the result of the government's failure to pick up the challenge and deliver on the much-needed road infrastructure of regional Western Australia, including those two specific roads.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: If the Deputy Speaker wants to throw out the member for North West, please do so.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for North West!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Can I move a motion to have the member for North West named three times?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. Member for Pilbara, carry on.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Was that his fourth warning?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It was not his fourth warning. Carry on.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: The central Pilbara is absolutely chock-a-block with pressure from resource companies, such as Hancock, Fortescue Metals and Atlas. A range of companies occupy the space in the central Pilbara alongside local residents and visitors to the region. The road from Newman to Nullagine and on to Marble Bar is now absolutely chock-a-block with traffic. Unfortunately, that traffic includes tourists who have had the misfortune of looking at a map of Western Australia and seeing a way of chopping off between 300 and 400 kilometres—or more—from their journey to the Kimberley. They suddenly find themselves on a road on which they are competing with massive road trains and a massive movement of vehicles from the local community and the resource sector, including caravans that tear up and down the road. It is a deathtrap that will deliver patients to the hospitals that are yet to be built and corpses to the mortuaries that are yet to be built. An absolute tragedy is unfolding in a region that is delivering so much of the goodies for the coffers of the government of Western Australia. That area is being neglected. I begged the Ministers for Regional Development and for Transport to come to a meeting with representatives from the resource sector, which was held last week upstairs at Parliament House. I asked whether they would be prepared to send representatives from their vast portfolios. I received knock-backs from both the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Transport. I had a room full of representatives from Hancock, Fortescue and other operators who were trying to draw to the attention of the government and Parliament the desperate state of the road. Unfortunately, my requests were declined.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Did you mention the super profits tax at that meeting?

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: The Minister for Regional Development should not try to distract me. I am on his case at the moment. I can understand that he wants to distract me because I am on his case. He has been caught telling untruths to the people in regional Western Australia. He said that there was to be money on top of normal government services. However, what we are seeing in this budget is a fund that is an ancillary budget from which everything will come.

I refer to the comments that the Minister for Indigenous Affairs made a few moments ago. He talked about the desperate need to have fly in, fly out —

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Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I do not want to interrupt the house.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Warnbro and the Leader of the National Party to stop having a private conversation while the member for Pilbara is on his feet.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I urge you to chuck them all out!

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the National Party!

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Can I name the Leader of the National Party? Will it help if I name him?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Carry on, member for Pilbara.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: I say to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs that the idea of moving people within remote and regional Western Australia around for employment opportunities is good. However, it comes at a considerable price and it requires considered handling. For instance, there has been movement of key players from the community of Nullagine into the resource sector through fly in, fly out arrangements that are in an embryonic stage. They are very commendable efforts on the parts of industry. However, the deficit within that community as a result of the loss of the carers of families has been huge. A huge loss has been felt because a significant number of women have moved into the resource sector and have left behind unsupported children. There needs to be a response to that particular challenge.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: It does not mean that the minister should not do what he just indicated he would like to do. I say to the minister and to anyone listening that such a situation needs careful handling. The families of the individuals who leave their community to work need support. Sometimes those who leave to work are the only people with sufficient skills to not only look after the families in a community but also do the core jobs in those communities. It is not an insurmountable problem; it is the type of problem that requires skill and focus. Another example of a solution that is yet to be pursued involves BHP Billiton. I was told that 25 years ago it was going to deliver into Jigalong job opportunities that would otherwise be found in Newman. It wanted to create tasks that would result in training and employment opportunities within Jigalong itself. Instead of delivering those job opportunities within the community of Jigalong, they have effectively been delivered around the township of Newman. Newman has attracted increasing numbers of Aboriginal people in both employment and functionality. However, there has been a lot of dysfunction because people have not found their feet as they have faced the circumstances in Newman. If the money that will be spent by this government through the royalty for regions funds—\$6 million for the Jigalong community—is just about essential services, that in itself is not enough. The community needs training, partnership and employment opportunities around a real economy so that the community and its members can build confidence. Motor vehicle maintenance and repairs would lend itself quite easily, because these days vehicles are not moved very far away from the mine sites, which are increasingly within striking distance of Jigalong. One can almost shoot a gun over the hill and land a bullet at one of the mine sites. Jigalong is getting close to the ore bodies. The railway line has now moved in that direction. It seems that it would be a great location from which alternatives to simply picking up a workforce and taking it out could be delivered. Employment opportunities can be created within striking distance of the resource bodies and near to families. Another location is already involved in the drive in, drive out opportunity from the Pilbara. I refer to the Youngaleena community, which is largely the Parker family complex out from Auski roadhouse, not far north of the old township of Wittenoom. It is a functioning community that is delivering to the resource sector members of its community who can drive to the ore bodies, do excellent work in the resource companies and go back to their communities. They are well paid and they have become well connected. They stay in close contact with their families. Missing from this budget are the funds to keep the Auski Munjina airstrip operational. Auski runs the risk of losing the airstrip. The government has told the Shire of Ashburton that it must fund the airstrip if it wants it to operate. The Shire of Ashburton is trying to cope with tasks across its vast shire from Barrow Island to Onslow through to Tom Price and Paraburdoo. There are vast quantities of activity going on without the capacity—financial or human—to respond to the needs of the Youngaleena and Auski communities, which need a basic service like an airstrip. The airstrip runs the risk of being lost unless funds are allocated by the state government.

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Also missing from this budget is the detail about what the government is doing for affordable housing strategies not only in the major towns but also throughout regional Western Australia, including and specifically in the Pilbara. There is a real need to respond to the fact that there are many employees outside government and outside the resource sector who can survive in the Pilbara region only if there is a strategy that tackles affordable housing and the rapid release of land within those communities to help reduce the cost of both land and residences for people outside government and outside the major resource companies. The budget makes passing reference to the fact that there will be increased district allowances for government employees in regional Western Australia. The detail has not been spelt out. It does not indicate whether the National Party will keep its pre-election commitment to eliminate rental arrangements for longer term government employees. I am not sure whether that will be delivered or whether it will be another broken promise. Maybe the Leader of the National Party can say, by way of quick interjection, whether the police get free rental after they have been there for three years?

Mr B.J. Grylls: No.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: So another election promise breached!

Mr B.J. Grylls: No, no; district allowances have taken over as a fairer way to provide support.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: We are seeing the breach of a pre-election commitment. What we are also seeing is the failure, within this budget, to detail what is being done to protect the water supply for Pilbara communities. There is no indication of the capital spend necessary to increase the pipe system that will deliver volumes of water into rapidly growing towns within the Pilbara communities. Developers are struggling now for approvals to complete projects because the Water Corporation's infrastructure is unable to cope with delivering the water supply that is necessary. In fact, over the past two years, this government could have been doing some solid work in this regard; instead, it has simply been intent on prancing around.

By way of interjection, maybe the Leader of the National Party can tell me whether there are funds in the budget to allow the infill sewerage project for the town of Port Hedland?

Mr B.J. Grylls: There is \$25 million across four years.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: But is it going to go to Port Hedland?

Mr B.J. Grylls: Are you a good advocate for that?

Several members interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: There is no evidence in this budget of funds to replace the old Port Hedland police station, which is desperately in need of being replaced. There are no funds available for a new school in Port Hedland that is desperately needed to cater for the expanding needs of that community. There is no indication of stages 2 and 3 of the central business district of South Hedland that is desperately needed within that community. There is no indication of the funds that are desperately needed for the health annex in Port Hedland, now that the hospital is going across to South Hedland. There is an urgent need for funds to deliver a health annex in Port Hedland and the presence of a multidisciplinary health facility in Port Hedland to meet the needs of people on that side of the bridge. There is no evidence of funds to deliver workforce protection. A large workforce is now in work camps on the edges of towns like Port Hedland. Camps have been built, with huge numbers of people within them who are dependent upon the services of the town. Now we see these workers walking along the narrow edges of the busy Great Northern Highway in darkness, at great risk to themselves and to the motorists, as they head towards facilities such as the airport. There has been no foresight delivered by this government since it has been in office to make pathways —

Dr K.D. Hames: Were you this passionate with your own Treasurer?

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: There is no evidence within this budget that we will see an end —

Several members interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Is the Deputy Speaker going to chuck him out, or what?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, if you want to shout, will you please go back to your seat. Leader of the National Party and the Minister for Health, do not put the member for Pilbara off.

Point of Order

Dr K.D. HAMES: I would like to point out that the member for Wanneroo is acting Whip and therefore he is allowed to interject.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Several members interjected.

Debate Resumed

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: There is no evidence —

Several members interjected.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Sorry to interrupt the house, Mr Deputy Speaker!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, and all members, please let the member for Pilbara continue for five minutes.

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: My voice is a gentle voice. It is important for members to be quiet when I am speaking.

There is no evidence within this budget that the government will do what it desperately needs to do; that is, to end the state agreement exemptions for companies operating in regional Western Australia. Resource companies are still exempt from paying rates to local government. We see evidence that the government is preoccupied with increasing its own royalty take, which would also maximise the return to itself if a merger were to take place. The government wants to secure for itself a \$1 billion, or as close as possible to that, stamp duty equivalent payment to the coffers of the Western Australian government, but there is no commensurate concern for the income streams that are needed in regional communities through local authorities by ending the current state agreement exemptions. It is depleting those communities of the capacity to do what they need to do for themselves rather than being mendicants or beggars to the National Party for every piece of expenditure going on within their region.

There is no evidence of expenditure on the much-needed interconnected power grid, which is absolutely essential for a reliable power supply in the Pilbara region. There is no evidence within the budget that that much-needed interconnected power grid will take place. There is no evidence that the government has stayed focused on the many challenges, needs and opportunities of the Pilbara region; instead, it has played narrow politics with the Pilbara.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [5.45 pm]: I would like to begin my presentation on the budget by talking about cost-of-living increases and relating that back to how that will be played out in my electorate of Maylands. I will go over what I am sure members of this place are now becoming intimately familiar with; that is, the extra whack that families across our state have coped from the Barnett government in this budget.

From 1 July, the cost of power will increase by 10 per cent. There will be a further 22.3 per cent increase next year. Families in our state will pay, in total, over the next two years, nearly 30 per cent more for water, which is a basic human need. We will now look at the fees and charges. I remember from my past life as executive director of the Western Australian Council of Social Service that one of the things I could always say about a Labor state government was, “Yet again, the state government has not increased fees and charges.” We cannot say that anymore, can we? This is the second concurrent year that this state government has increased fees and charges. This is how the Premier keeps himself in his \$290 million headline surplus figure. The increase in fees and charges started with the landfill levy that was brought in last year—about \$28 to \$30 extra for every household. Then we have this latest round of increases—\$28 extra a year in the emergency services levy; \$19.50 extra a year for the average person to catch public transport; and \$3.68 extra for vehicle insurance. When we tally up the extra costs that the Barnett government has brought on the families of Western Australia, it is almost \$1 500 extra a year. That is an extraordinary admission for somebody who uses lines like “putting the public first” in the budget speech. The government does not put families first by charging an extra \$1 500 a year in fees and charges. It does not do that by charging for basic needs like water and power.

If I was to talk only about things I like about this budget, it would be a very quick speech. There are a couple of things I quite like in the budget. The first was mentioned in the house earlier; that is, the West Australian Ballet Co is relocating to Maylands. That is a fantastic thing. It is something we have been lobbying very hard for for a very long time. I am delighted to say that the government saw fit to keep \$2 million in the budget to allow that company to move into my electorate. I will be extremely pleased to have them in Maylands, and will continue to support them in any way that I can.

The other thing that I should mention —

Mr D.A. Templeman: The member should dance more. I have not seen her dance!

Ms L.L. BAKER: I just bought a tutu specifically for that purpose; the member for Mandurah will be pleased to know!

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The government has also provided a \$2 million social innovation grants program for the community sector to invest in social enterprise and social entrepreneurial activities. That is a good thing. It is not quite clear what the parameters around that funding are, but we will wait and watch the spot to see what happens. The other thing that the government has agreed to invest in is a \$10 million community development investment fund to support not-for-profit organisations in our community that require money for capital works. That is a low-interest loan; it is not a grant. I applaud the government for those two strategies.

I turn now to the things in the budget that are going to cause the greatest pain in Maylands. I have mentioned the cost of utilities. The Economic Regulation Authority's disconnection rates for residential users in 2008–09 indicate that 4 803 people had their power disconnected for non-payment and 16 800 people had their gas disconnected for non-payment. I am very glad that there is \$6 million for the hardship utility grant scheme, because increased pressure will be brought to bear on families as a result of these new costs and charges. I would be very surprised if the number of disconnections and unpaid bills did not triple. The government is going to need every cent of that \$6 million. I pray that we do not see any families in Western Australia in dire circumstances as a result of disconnections. I refer of course to the dreadful things that have happened when people in dire poverty have been unable to make arrangements to pay their utility costs. Some people have used electricity cords to plug into someone else's power or, worse still, have lit candles to get some light in their home and have ended up burning down the house and, as a result, children have died. Let us pray that that does not happen. The greatest pressure is brought to bear on the poorest and most vulnerable people when a government puts up fees and charges for basic services.

It is important to talk about the other things in Maylands that are impacted upon by the increased cost of living. I have previously talked about the behaviours that are exhibited when people are excluded from participating in their communities because they are too poor or are in a vulnerable state. This could mean that they are suffering from some kind of mental illness or a drug or alcohol addiction. Families may need better mental health services. Of course, the Morley Adult Mental Health Centre in my electorate has closed down in the past month. That is not going to help the situation in any way, shape or form. I want to talk a bit more about the impact of social inclusion in my neighbourhood, because antisocial behaviour is a direct result of people feeling that they cannot participate in their community because they do not have the resources to, for example, send their kids to the local school fete, take part in a netball competition or participate in any way in the normal activities that our standard of living says is the average we should expect. The behaviours that are shown are commonly called antisocial behaviour. Maylands has its share of antisocial behaviour. My electorate is desperately in need of better services to try to combat some of these behaviours. Of course, the services that are needed are not just those that pick people up after they have already fallen at the barrier, as it were. We are not just talking about services that help people who are homeless because they have not had the right mental health treatment or have not been able to find the right emergency relief package. Services need to be in place to give people strength before they get to those dire points in their lives. We need more services in place in my electorate that involve people in the community and strengthen the fabric of our community. This includes better provision of aged-care services. I mention that at four locations across the City of Bayswater there are seven residential aged-care facilities accommodating around 400 residents. The City of Bayswater should be congratulated for taking seriously its responsibilities in catering for the future accommodation needs of the elderly in our community.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Hear, hear! It's good to see some local governments are doing that.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I thank the member.

The government needs to note that the City of Bayswater is currently looking for partnership arrangements with the Department of Housing to develop two further locations—one site is adjacent to Mertome Village in Bayswater and the other is in Whittock Street in Embleton and adjoins the City of Bayswater hostel, which provides residential aged care. Both sites need the Department of Housing to partner with the City of Bayswater in various ways. I urge this government to please come to the table and help the City of Bayswater with long-term leases or acquisition options for these properties. These services are urgently needed in my electorate.

I have already mentioned the crisis around mental health services. I know that this government is generating a great deal of publicity and is speaking about the money it is putting into mental health services. I have sat in this place for 18 months and I still have not seen any services. There is no mental health commissioner and there is no money for the state suicide prevention strategy to be rolled out. Mothers and fathers are still coming into our offices saying that they cannot get the right services for their children who are suffering from some kind of mental illness. We need better services for the homeless, we need better housing services and we need better services to help divert people from being involved in antisocial behaviour. We need support for committees that local governments might want to set up to work on social inclusion strategies. We need the state to be on board, and it is not on board at the moment. In fact, in many respects it could be said that it is working against us,

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because the government has put up the cost of living. People simply cannot afford to come to the table when that is the case. They are doing the best that they can. Some people will put off health checks; they will not go to the doctor because they simply cannot afford it. They would rather spend the money on making sure that their children have the right clothes to go to school in or that there is healthy food on the table. They will not get dental care because of the financial pressures that they are under.

I turn now to the provision of underground power in my electorate. I understand that it was promised that my electorate would be included in the next round of funding that became available for the provision of underground power. I am very pleased to see that there is some money in this year's budget for the provision of underground power, but the delays cannot continue. Further to that, since this was originally put on the table for my electorate, the costs involved have become almost preclusive. I understand that the state government and Western Power have capped at \$125 000 the amount of money that will be committed to the provision of underground power in each area. It has been a long time since the relevancy of that capped amount was assessed. The government probably does not want to look at it, but I suggest that it should look again at the relevance of a \$125 000 cap for the provision of underground power. The government will find that those costs no longer reflect the true cost of providing underground power, the contracting costs and the various infrastructure costs in the Perth metropolitan area. If this government is really dinkum about doing something with underground power, it certainly needs to review the capped amount with a view to increasing it so that it is a more realistic reflection of the true cost of providing underground power in electorates such as Maylands.

After the dinner break I will go on to talk about the Swan River and about the cuts that this government has made to the Swan River Trust's budget. I understand that about \$1 million has been taken off the top of the Swan River Trust's budget. I am also playing a little game of hide-and-seek in trying to find the Burswood Casino levy. I am willing to put money on the fact that I cannot find where the rest of the Burswood Casino levy has vanished to. I am prepared to make a bet on that if anyone is interested.

Dr K.D. Hames: Is the bet that you can't find it?

Ms L.L. BAKER: There was meant to be \$2.7 million per annum for the Burswood Casino levy. That is the projection. The only amount of money that appears to be visible anywhere is \$1 million that the Swan River Trust has diverted to the Riverbank program. I want to know where the other \$1.9 million is.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That's a good question. I want to know as well.

Dr K.D. Hames: What you should do is put a question on notice in the other house, which is where the minister is.

Ms L.L. BAKER: It is funny that the Deputy Premier should say that because, quite surprisingly, I have put that question on notice and the response has been a stony silence.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Ms L.L. BAKER: I turn now to another item that seems to have been neglected by this government in its budget. I note that the draft state natural resource management strategy has just been released for comment on its website. The strategy is light on. It seems as though it took nine months to produce it and—without any childbirth references—and I am not sure whether it was worth the wait. It seems that when compared with the plan that Labor produced, it is pretty light on the ground. I understand that many people who participated in the workshop are very disappointed that the plan is so light on. At best one could say that things, such as the statement of draft priorities that accompany the strategy do not match the strategy. In fact, the statement of priorities admits that while state investments complement those made by the commonwealth, there might not be the level of partnership that was agreed in past years. It is an indictment on this government for it to admit that it cannot get its act together and partner with the federal government on the NRM strategy.

The NRM's "A draft statement of Program investment priorities for 2010/11 — 2013/14" identifies water assets as one of the four classes of renewable natural assets. It is disappointing that under "water assets" there is nothing that relates in any way to the protection or improvement of the Swan River. The member for Mandurah would be happy to learn that the Peel-Harvey waterway is identified in that strategy as a high priority for investment. However, for some reason, this government does not think that the Swan River should be identified in the strategy as a priority for investment, and that is disastrous. The strategy states —

Reducing the incidence of algal blooms in key waterways by managing and reducing phosphorous and/or nitrogen inputs is a high investment priority. Three key waterways—Vasse-Wonnerup/Geographe, Peel-Harvey, and Swan-Canning—now have Water Quality Improvement Plans Following considerable investment in the Swan-Canning and Vasse-Wonnerup/Geographe waterways, the Peel-Harvey will now be a **high priority** for investment.

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I am sure that the 70 people who attended the Swan River forum I hosted in my electorate on Saturday, 8 May, would be miffed to hear that the Swan River, the icon in the tourism portfolio, is not a priority for investment. One of the top priorities people identified at that forum was the immediate need for increased funding for the Swan River to ensure better protection and management of the river. Those people would be horrified to learn that this government has slashed \$1 million from the Swan River Trust in its 2010–11 budget. The forum expressed great interest in and support for the environmental auditing program that was created by the Perth region Natural Resource Management group. That program was awarded the Outstanding Sustainability Partnership Award at last year's Australian Environmental Sustainability Awards. However, it did not even rate funding by this government in its budget. That is not okay. It is an outstanding program that works to audit small businesses and potential industry polluters, such as garages, panel beaters and chemical storage facilities. The program originally conducted 6 000 audits and moved from a 30 per cent to about a two per cent pollution rate. It is an impressive program by any outcome measure.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: Given the success of this program, why did the government see fit not to allocate any more funding to it?

I would like to talk briefly about another budget cut that I am sure some of my parliamentary colleagues would have received emails about. Within the Department of Local Government there is the animal welfare branch. Until this government cut the number of full-time equivalents in that branch it had six positions in it. The job of that branch is to be the lead agency in investigating and enforcing the Western Australian Animal Welfare Act. The government has cut its funding, because now there is only one FTE in that branch. That is not acceptable by community standards. The community expects the government to take responsibility to enforce all legislation equally seriously. Therefore, I ask this government to consider restoring the funding and reinstating the six FTEs to this branch.

I will quote from a letter that Animals' Angels, a group I referred to in 90-second statements last week, wrote to the Minister for Local Government asking why the funding to those positions was cut. The minister's reply is incredible and it states —

That Animal Welfare Branch has a small number of General Inspectors —

Yes, it has one —

who work closely with other agencies, such as Department of Agriculture and Food WA and the RSPCA (WA).

It gets better. The minister then states —

These partnerships assist in achieving good animal welfare outcomes, including within the live export industry and at other locations, such as the Midland and Mundijong Saleyards.

It gets even better. I do not believe that the minister had the audacity to write this next sentence to these people. The letter states —

The Branch's function is evolving to meet the needs of the legislation and its stakeholders, including industry and the West Australian community.

For goodness sake, how can the minister profess that the branch's function is evolving when he shrunk the number of FTEs from six to one? How can that in any way, shape or form be liaising effectively? On *Stateline* a couple of weeks ago Minister Castrilli made the comment that it will be all right, because the local government rangers will pick up the responsibility. I would like to quote from a letter the rangers' association sent me in answer to my query to them about how they felt about this new job they had been given. If the minister is implying that 160 general inspectors can replace the animal welfare branch, he is misinformed about the capacity in which general inspectors operate. The 160 general inspectors are not only local government rangers, apparently some are members of community groups and members of the public who perform functions involving animal rescue. The fact is that certain rangers at some local government councils might have volunteered to be authorised under the Animal Welfare Act as general inspectors, but they enforce only part 3, section 19 of that act—one tiny section of the Animal Welfare Act. The only training they get in enforcing the Animal Welfare Act is provided by members of that branch when six FTEs worked there; now there is one. That training is in how to interpret the act and fill out forms correctly. No training is provided on how to assess the welfare of animals—none whatsoever. The Minister for Local Government is completely incorrect in his claim that this is the sort of job that local government will be able to pick up as a matter of course. I will read to members another comment from a ranger who works for the City of Joondalup. The ranger states —

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I cannot comment on how many Rangers are gazetted as animal welfare inspectors however it should be made very clear that this role is purely voluntary and relates to the individual and not to the Local Government they work for. It should also be clear that where they can the gazetted Rangers will be responding to situations that come to their attention and will not normally be initiating investigative or enforcement action they do not have any responsibility for activities between farm gate to export harbour except in the case of a vehicle crash ... As a consequence their availability may be limited ...

There is no way that anyone in local government will pick up the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act or the work that these six people were doing. According to LiveCorp statistics, since July last year 1 804 000 sheep have been exported from Western Australia. If my understanding of what the minister implied is correct, these animals will not be monitored or inspected for any breaches of welfare because the government has cut the funding. One of the goals of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy is to achieve —

sustainable improvements in animal welfare based on national and international benchmarks, scientific evaluation and research, taking into account changes in whole of community standards ...

There is no way that we have the capacity to comply with the national standards any more. I ask the government to please restore funding for these six full-time equivalent positions as a matter of priority, and, indeed, a matter of urgency.

I ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation to comment on the final topic I will speak to on what is not in this budget. I would like him clarify the reason for what I am sure must be a complete oversight of mine in not being able to see any commitment from this government to the Back on Track strategy. Members have heard me and members on the other side of the house refer to this strategy several times as the trail bike strategy. In this state, 50 000 unlicensed trail bike riders have nowhere to ride, and they waited to see what the government committed to achieving in the budget on their behalf. It is great that a netball stadium was funded—I am all for that; fantastic—but where are 50 000 trail bike riders going to ride their bikes and engage in their sport? They are certainly not going to be able to go into the netball stadium to do that! They will continue to ride in natural forest—in conservation areas. The government has a responsibility to pick up the Back on Track strategy and implement the licensing of these bikes to fund recreational areas and an education program so that people understand their responsibilities when riding trail bikes, and so that they are not ridden illegally anywhere in our state.

I have covered a number of topics that are of interest to the Maylands community. One of the reasons for my interest in trail bike riding is that Motorcycles WA is based in my electorate, not to mention that there are a number of recreational trail bike riders who live in my electorate. This is an important matter to people who live in Maylands and who want to be able to recreate safely without the high injury rate that occurs from this sport because of inappropriate and inadequate facilities.

The state government has done a remarkable job of foisting the cost of the Premier's \$290 million surplus on families, and still managed to avoid any funding support for the Swan River, which is an icon and the centre of our tourist trade. It has also managed to avoid funding anything of any importance that is desperately needed in the electorate of Maylands, including the election commitments it made around commuter parking at the train stations and additional services across my electorate. This is a shameful budget that holds nothing for the people of Maylands.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Nollamara) [7.14 pm]: I rise to reply to the budget speech, and I am concerned also about the savage impact on family living standards that will be caused by this budget. I concur with the member for Maylands and the Leader of the Opposition that Colin Barnett's budget slugs the working people of Western Australia. Under Premier Barnett, families will now pay an extra \$368 a year in higher household bills, including 18 per cent more for electricity and a record 17.7 per cent more for water. As we know, there will be more rises to come in following years. As *The West Australian* so aptly put it, Premier Barnett has put his hand into the pockets of Western Australians to pay for his reputation, but he has delivered nothing of any import to the people of Western Australia.

As the Leader of the Opposition outlined so clearly today, the revenue raised through the increases in utilities' costs will go back into government coffers. He stated that families pay Synergy more, and then they pay the government more. This should not be happening in a community as rich as ours. It is an indirect tax, and an indirect taxation that Western Australians continually face, and one that I am familiar with through my membership of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation. As outlined clearly in the thirty-second report of the delegated legislation committee, and as the former leader of the Legislative Council, Hon Kim Chance, acknowledged, the thirty-second report provides the guide to ensuring government agencies are not over-cost recovering for providing a service, and thereby charging an unauthorised tax. The thirty-second report

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of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation is very important, and it builds on previous delegated legislation committee reports on this whole aspect of how insidious government charges and fees have become in our community. Members appreciate that it was somewhat surprising to me that the fortieth report of the delegated legislation committee was rejected by government members in the other house, some of whom are members of the committee and had agreed to the report. This matter relates to the budget speech because I am increasingly of the view that government departments are being directed to meet some or all of their costs through fees and charges. Effectively, without the capacity for this place to scrutinise increases in fees and charges by government departments, Western Australian households will face even greater imposts than the current \$368 increase this year.

Dr K.D. Hames: Take a picture!

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Sorry, what did the minister say?

Dr K.D. Hames: Nothing; I was just having a discussion with the member for Maylands about people who read and people who do not.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I thank the minister.

Last year, the Department of Transport increased the Perth Parking Management Act parking levy by 20 per cent. That money was not to be spent on parking and transport in the area in accordance with the act, but it was to be stockpiled. The question is: stockpiled for what? What was the 20 per cent increase in the Perth Parking Management Act levy for? Will it now be allocated to the Perth city link? Will the parkers of Perth pay for a government project so that the government can maintain its budget bottom line? We do not know; we are not told. It is not clear; it is just stockpiled.

This year we are witnessing a new front in revenue raising through regulations, being the amendments to the State Trading Concerns Act regulations that will enable the Department for Communities, which includes the child protection agency, the Office of Seniors Interests, women's interests, and the Office of Multicultural Interests, to name a few —

Mr D.A. Templeman: Seniors.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I have said seniors.

The Department for Communities will undergo a regulation change that will enable it, under the State Trading Concerns Act, to sell goods, information or intellectual property relating to community development. It will raise money for what it does. Is that revenue for the Department for Communities? No; it is another slug on the community. This amendment to the regulation will also enable the Department for Transport, the Department for Communities and the Swan River Trust to provide or sell advertising opportunities, or opportunities with a purpose similar to advertising relating to community development and transport activities. This will mean that our Seniors Cards will have advertising on them, one would think. Every time we get a letter from the Department of Transport about our licence, the department will be able to put advertising on it. That is an insidious way of raising money. We should be able to question that in this place. It is being done through regulation, which means that it is removed from the scrutiny of Parliament. We need to be cautious. I continue to say that we do not want every bend on the river to have a billboard on it and every bill to be a revenue raiser. We need to be very cautious about how we apply and scrutinise regulations. We must make sure that that is done effectively and that the comments that are made by members are taken into consideration by this place.

I will move on to education and the community. I am concerned that this budget increases funding for education only marginally while the government professes its commitment to education in the community. We are all aware of the lack of funding for the Ethnic Community Council of Western Australia through community funding, which was a blow to many of those whom I represent in the electorate of Nollamara. Nollamara is a rich and diverse electorate that represents many different community organisations. I was lucky enough this evening to meet with members of the African community to discuss the very pressing issue of their inclusion in the community. The African community suffered a big blow recently with the death of a young man and the injury of another when those men were minding their own business one evening walking home in Mirrabooka. That was a very sad and tragic incident. The African community has come together because it wants to solve those types of problems by working with the police and other agencies to find a resolution that builds the African community and makes it an integral part of the broader community. The African community faces many challenges, including education, ongoing employment and dealing with the day-to-day issue of getting the respect that it needs from the broader community. One of the people who attended the meeting this evening said something to me that was very challenging. He asked me when do they stop being refugees and stop being

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stigmatised because they are considered refugees. That is a very important question. We must acknowledge that people come here for refuge and to become Australian citizens. They work in and are a part of our community. We must ensure that they are included in our community. When they walk into a library or work in the shops and go into Parliament, they must see people who represent them and who are a part of their community. He also asked how we can counteract and address the demonisation of the African community. That was one of the issues that this community faced after the death of the young boy. They did not see the same sort of outcry from the general public that we would have seen if it were a boy from the white community. They have legitimate concerns about that.

We must make sure that we can provide support through multicultural interest funding for not only Harmony Day, but also everything that we do to make sure that the people from that community are consulted and included. They must be asked and also listened to. Perhaps an education campaign is needed on a broader basis than just Harmony Day, which is the one day in which we acknowledge multiculturalism, to establish that every day is about working together in our community to make Australia a better and more vibrant community. As I have said before in this place, it is one of my great wishes for Mirrabooka to be known for its vibrancy and to become a place that people want to visit because it has a rich diversity of cultures and communities.

When I work in the Nollamara electorate, I am heartened by the demonstration of many of the newly arrived communities who seek to advance the prospects of their children. This is no different from what the Greek, Italian, Macedonian and Vietnamese communities have done in the past. In turn, they have faced barriers regarding how they were treated because of their race rather than being treated on the basis of their abilities. Those communities placed importance on education for their children, and so have the newly arrived African community and other communities. They have taken the opportunity to increase their children's education by establishing weekend classes, which are often run by volunteers. They need a very small amount of funding to run those classes and facilities. It is important to ensure that those communities are properly integrated and that they also maintain their heritage and language. The weekend classes often provide them with the ability to do that. The classes ensure that the new Australians and migrants are given access to adequate English education and that the older generations have access to people who speak the language of their heritage. A contemporary example is the reintroduction of speaking Gaelic in Wales. A chief executive officer with whom I worked during my short time as a government employee was from Wales and he told me about working in the public sector in Wales when Gaelic was reintroduced. I stand corrected if it was not Gaelic. I understand that Gaelic is the national language of Wales.

Mr M.P. Whitely: It is Welsh.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It is Welsh. Is Gaelic Irish?

Mr M.P. Whitely: Gaelic is Irish.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I stand corrected. In any event —

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Pardon?

Dr K.D. Hames: I just told him to stop interrupting you because you are focused.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The minister will notice that I am not reading from my notes.

The CEO said that there was a very important change in the public sector when people had to speak Welsh and English when dealing with the public. They had to be bilingual. He said that there was a lot of resistance to it at first but that it became part of people's desire to understand and acknowledge their heritage, and that they got a certain amount of pride from doing that.

A newly arrived community in Western Australia and in the electorate of Nollamara is the Madi community, which is one of the many Sudanese communities. That community was desperately seeking funding to maintain its Saturday education classes. The class had to shift from the original accommodation and pay for more expensive accommodation. I sought from the Department of Education and Training information about funding and was told that funding from the community languages fund was available but not to that community. I was told that the community could not even apply for that funding because it had been under review and that it had been under review for the past 12 months. I have spent the past six or seven months ringing the office and writing to the minister on a regular basis to ask how the review was going, whether it was finished and whether the Madi community could apply for it. At first, I was told that the review was ongoing and then I was told that it had finished but that the government would release the review's findings shortly. The warning bells were ringing loudly when I saw on page 357 of the *Budget Statements* that the English as a second language program

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is under review. Given my experience with the community languages program, this looks like a case of redefinition. That means that it will be shut down and there will be no more funding because the government is not doing that any longer. That is a very serious and problematic issue. I would like to contrast this with what occurs in New South Wales. Currently New South Wales provides a community language grants program for organisations that provide language education to school-aged students. This program focuses on ensuring that community groups can maintain their languages by teaching them to the younger generations. New South Wales currently provides 454 programs teaching 47 languages to about 30 000 students. I am unable to find the information on what the WA fund provides, despite asking. Even accounting for the size difference between our states, the New South Wales program is vastly more comprehensive than any program in Western Australia, and has a far greater scope for funding and greater funding for individual organisations. There is also a far greater enthusiasm for this program. Western Australia needs to see that same enthusiasm to provide such a program from this government. We must ensure that the migrant communities in our state are given as much opportunity as possible to gain the language skills necessary to enter the workforce, but also to maintain their heritage.

We are currently not properly achieving either outcome, and the failure of the budget to work towards such goals is disappointing. While raising the issue of maintaining language and culture, I want to emphasise that maintaining language is integral to identity for the Aboriginal community in this country. The rediscovery of language has been an important step in reclaiming their rightful place as the first people of this nation. Between 1988 and 1994 researchers from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies undertook an intensive mapmaking exercise of Aboriginal language and regions within Australia. The researchers identified 19 separate language regions within Australia that were broadly congruent with natural environment regions or drainage basins. Within those 19 regions are many hundreds of distinct language groups and languages. The researchers identified 99 traditional language groups within five language regions in the state of Western Australia. Those five regions are the South West region, the north west region, the Kimberley region and part of each of the desert and the Fitzmaurice regions.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I raise with the government, in its posturing over Western Australia's rights in the current mining debate, that we could respect those traditional owners and their ownership of the land with signposts on every highway at the boundaries between Indigenous language groups to signify that people are now entering, for example, Martuthunira country, in the Dampier area; Jaburrara country, in the Karratha and Dampier Archipelago area; Yindjibarndi country, in the Fortescue River area; and Ngarluma country in the Roebourne and Whim Creek area. Indeed, we could do that here and identify that we are entering Nyoongah country and recognise each of the language groups in the Nyoongah country. I know this sounds like tokenism in the face of many issues in the Indigenous community, but I raise this because I want to address the parochial lows that we seem to be reaching over the debate on the super mining tax. It has descended into a particularly horrible parochial debate over national assets versus state assets. Arguments of constitutional rights in the contemporary running of our country where we work together as a nation is the argument put by the member for Alfred Cove last week and rejected by the overwhelming majority of Parliament in passing the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Bill. It is what we are seeing with a national curriculum for education. We could say there are constitutional barriers to both of those things, but we do not because it is 2010 and we live in the nation of Australia. For the government's argument that these are Western Australian assets and no one else's to have any validity, and to be consistent with this argument of ownership, the government would need to respect and recognise that the mineral wealth would belong to the residents of the area and the traditional owners of the land. While this has some appeal, and I am not arguing they should not get financial resources from those assets, it needs to reflect the contributions of these communities. The reality is that these are national resources and the wealth from those resources should be shared by the entire nation, including those fly in, fly out workers who are waiting upon the Reid Highway overpass to be built on Mirrabooka Avenue.

This leads me to the important issue of transport. The budget has also proven to be a letdown for many people in the north eastern corridor of the Perth metropolitan region. The budget failed to provide any funding to the much-needed north eastern corridor public transport overhaul. Currently, the central north eastern corridor is the most poorly serviced area for public transport in the Perth region, by far. The lack of a rapid transit network for the north eastern suburbs is causing an over-reliance on private vehicles and excessive congestion on arterial roads servicing the area. The Public Transport Authority last year conducted a study into the potential strategies for enhancing public transport servicing of the region. The study found that some form of rapid transport system was definitely warranted for the north eastern suburbs, and that such a change would additionally alleviate the strain on the Joondalup train line. The study recommended that the most viable solution would involve a bus rapid transit system running primarily along Alexander Drive. Such a system has the advantage that it would be

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simpler and cheaper to establish and more flexible than the frequently suggested light rail alternative, but giving an opportunity in the future to have an infrastructure for light rail. It is very disappointing to see that no funding has been set aside to develop the recommendations from the government's study. A better public transport system is desperately needed to facilitate the growing population of Perth's north eastern suburbs, especially suburbs in the electorate of Nollamara where there is an increasing number of housing subdivisions and so an increasing population accessing the same infrastructure—roads and public transport. Delaying the upgrade of our north eastern metropolitan network only ensures that when the upgrade is inevitably undertaken the cost and invasiveness of the process will be higher.

Dr K.D. Hames: What exactly are you proposing?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The Alexander Drive rapid transport system.

Dr K.D. Hames: No, you are talking about better access.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I am also talking about the rapid transit bus line that Transperth has been talking about for Alexander Drive so that people can feed into it, and also the provision of parking areas. Having looked at the report that came from the department last year, the idea with a rapid transit tram/bus line is that they have controls over traffic lights so they go through them much quicker.

Dr K.D. Hames: The trouble is that Alexander Drive, particularly in the morning, is dreadful when you come down Morley Drive to Grand Prom.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The government has to start looking at that green median strip. There is no doubt the government would look at a dedicated lane.

Dr K.D. Hames: It is green all the way from the Strand to Morley Drive; it is chock-a-block every morning.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I do know, because last week I moved into my electorate.

Dr K.D. Hames: Well done! I did not know you were not living there.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: We have been renovating the house for a long time. We discovered what it was like to renovate a house while still running for office.

Dr K.D. Hames: That road has always been tough and very busy. You have to take away the median strip to do something.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: There must be a way. Maybe there are other options to feed into the rail line, but I do not think we can feed any more people into the rail line. There needs to be some solution to the traffic congestion along Alexander Drive. It needs a rapid transit line to attract people onto public transport.

Dr K.D. Hames: It is all the way through.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: People will catch public transport when it is fast and efficient and it gets them to where they need to go. That is why people love the train.

Dr K.D. Hames: What do they do once they get to Fitzgerald Street?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The minister should read the report and how it proposes to deal with that. The report came out with recommendations on how to deal with Fitzgerald Street. Unfortunately, no further money has been allocated into the feasibility of doing this.

Dr K.D. Hames: There is no median strip in Fitzgerald.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: No, but the report deals with that and talks about defined lanes. I could get the report for the minister.

Dr K.D. Hames: I would not mind seeing that.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I will get it for the minister.

To get back on track, and whilst I am having a mighty big whinge, it is my view that the government has failed people who have been waiting for the Mirrabooka Avenue overpass. While I welcome the start of the works this weekend on the Alexander Drive intersection, those works have been started many times, and I will be glad to see them finished. I am disappointed that the Mirrabooka Avenue intersection has taken a back seat yet again, and there is no funding allocation over the next three years for such a dangerous intersection. Locals have been waiting patiently for works to start on the Alexander Drive – Reid Highway intersection on the understanding that planning would then begin for this local overpass at Mirrabooka. The state government has put more

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pressure on Reid Highway by extending it at the West Swan end without making provision for the increased traffic and resulting safety issues that will arise in Mirrabooka. It is not sustainable to increase the pressure on this important road and not have a plan to manage road safety. It is not enough to wait for statistics on accidents and then think about road safety. It is obvious that this is a busy road and that the potential for fatalities increases when there is increased traffic. This is an important infrastructure need in Mirrabooka, and the government must make budgeted plans for the construction of this overpass.

In the time remaining to me, I would like to talk about some of the fantastic community work that is taking place in Mirrabooka. This is a great opportunity to recognise some of the organisations that are doing this important work. These organisations receive funding from the state government, and have done for a long time, from governments of both persuasions. I have yet to scrutinise the budget to the degree it needs to ensure that this funding will continue. One of the organisations that I want to congratulate is the Edmund Rice Centre Lions. That is a community Australian Rules football team of newly-arrived young people, mostly from Africa. The team was formed in March 2010, and they have been training together ever since. The team is coached and captained by the sports team of the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka youth leadership group, and it is supported by the West Australian Football Commission and other sponsors. The Edmund Rice Centre uses this tool to encourage and support young people, and also to develop young leaders and natural leaders in the community. The Edmund Rice Centre Lions are dedicated to serving their community through focusing on improving the leadership qualities of young people through footy training and the leadership development program.

In talking about the Edmund Rice Centre, I am often inspired by the people I meet in the electorate of Nollamara. I would like to share a few words from a particular inspiring youth worker at the centre. He is an individual at the coalface who faces the challenges of community and disadvantage with the knowledge that with respect, trust and opportunities, born of resources, young people can change and grow into citizens that we value in our community. I want to quote Jo's words at a recent function that I went to. That was a talent show that was organised by a young man in our community called Jeremiah, who is also particularly inspiring. One of the things that Jo said at that function was —

Our duty to these young people, as community servants, is to place before them people who are strong and confident about their lives, who have mechanisms to deal effectively with all of their issues, who are pillars which others can lean on; the stronger the pillar, the more people that can lean on it. But to be strong we must open our lives up to their questioning. As people become older they tend to harden their views, and as their views harden, their hearts harden also.

What he was trying to say is that we need to understand young people's perspective on things. We need to understand their contemporary society. We need to understand when we are in this place and we are making laws that those things are part of how we need to analyse the work that we do as governments.

Another demonstration of developing young people and developing the capacity for all our agencies to work in a cross-government organisational partnership is the Real Connections program. I raise this because unfortunately it looks as though the Real Connections program, which has been funded by the federal government Office of Crime Prevention, is no longer going to be funded. This is an award-winning City of Stirling partnership initiative that targets Indigenous and migrant young people through arts-based training initiatives. The funding is due to cease at the end of June 2010. I have been lobbying very hard to see whether any additional funding can be made available. I am not sure whether the group has put in for proceeds of crime money —

Mr C.C. Porter: It sounds as though it is within the bailiwick.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes. I am going to encourage them to do that. If the Attorney General ever gets the opportunity to speak to the superintendent at Mirrabooka Police Station, he can attest to the important work that this group does in that cross partnership between the City of Stirling, the City of Wanneroo, WA Police, Community Arts Network, Balga Detached Youth Work Project, Mirrabooka High School, and a whole bunch of primary schools. They ran Harmony Day, together with a bunch of other organisations, including Centrelink and Homeswest. They really do bring together all these sorts of things.

Mr C.C. Porter: They should also contact the department, because it can put them in touch with people who can advise and assist them in writing their application.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I will do that. It is the City of Stirling, and I know that it is trying to get further funding, but I will make them aware of that as well.

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In the last minute that remains to me for this speech, I would like to concur with the member for Maylands and say that we do need funding for the Back on Track strategy. I say that because, believe it or not, trail bikes are a problem in the electorate of Nollamara. We have a lot of Bush Forever sites.

MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [7.44 pm]: I also want to discuss the budget that was presented to us last week. I do so in the context of events that I conducted last weekend. Over the weekend, I took the time to travel through my electorate and set up a mobile office in a number of different locations. This is a practice that I am sure many members of this place carry out, whereby I set myself up in a park somewhere, or in a shopping centre, and make myself available to members of my community. I also took some time to do a bit of doorknocking. I did that because I wanted to get some sense from the people in my community about how they feel about this budget. I was very careful to not present a negative view when I knocked on people's doors. I wanted to see how ordinary people were receiving the budget. I have to say that I can characterise the way that they answered my doorknocking on this budget as very similar to the way they have answered most of my doorknocks. They were a little stunned to find a member of Parliament on their doorstep. They were a little confused when I asked them how they feel about the state budget, but, after about 30 seconds of consideration, they all said, as one, "Well, there is not much in it for us, is there? In fact, it is actually going to cost us a lot of money." I heard this over and over again throughout the day.

That made me think: what is the purpose of this budget? What is the government trying to achieve with this budget? What exactly is the government's vision with this budget? I am having some difficulty in trying to find that out. I have listened to the debate and I have listen to individuals. Although there are some very talented individuals in this place, and some people with a very clear and crisp vision, I do not see any of that vision in this budget. All I can see in this budget is that this government is about penalising ordinary working Western Australians. This budget has not delivered anything for ordinary working Western Australians. It has also not delivered anything for non-working Western Australians. In a lot of respects, some of the biggest losers from this budget will be people on fixed incomes, pensioners, seniors and self-funded retirees. Those people will be hit massively by this budget. Students will be hit massively by this budget. I remember as an undergraduate student how by the end of the week we had to count the cents and buy the Black and Gold two-minute noodles to make ends meet. The number of meals I had of grated cheese on two-minute noodles I cannot even begin to count. But I wonder whether many of these people can even afford to buy two-minute noodles now.

This budget represents a massive hit on people's budgets. Let us look at how regressive this budget is. We have modelled this on an average family with minimal consumption needs. On that basis, we have come up with an extra cost per family from this budget of \$300 to \$400 a year. That may not be a great deal of money in the context of a \$60 000 income or a \$100 000 income, or the kind of income that people in this place earn. But for people on a fixed income, such as student whose maximum income is \$377—that is a fortnight, not a week—an increase of \$15.30 represents a minimum of four per cent of their income. They cannot compromise on a lot of these things. It is not as though they can cut back on electricity. They are probably using the minimum amount of electricity right now. I doubt that they are over-consuming water. They are using the minimum amount now. These other charges are going to flow through to all the other aspects of their lives.

We will see small businesses hit heavily by these sorts of charges. What will be their response to that? I can tell the house that as a former small business person my initial response would be: try to absorb it. I never liked putting my prices up because I always felt that it gave me slightly less of a competitive edge, so I tended to absorb it. However, over time that begins to hurt, particularly when businesspeople have to balance their own family's bills and look after their own family; businesspeople face these kinds of price increases within their own family context. Therefore, prices slowly creep up and it costs a little more for a loaf of bread at the corner deli and it costs a bit more for a litre of milk. Bit by bit we are robbing these low income people of their ability to make ends meet. Really, that is about the only vision that I can extract from this budget. That is the goal. I think that quite clearly and quite loudly the government has said to Western Australians, "Elect a Liberal-National government and we will show you a complete and utter lack of compassion. We don't care about the little guy. We do not care about those least able to fend for themselves. We care about the big projects. We care about Oakajee. We care about the mining companies." The Premier is quite happy to sidle up to the billionaire miners and say, "We need to protect you. God help us if you don't have a \$4 billion profit!" That would be an absolute tragedy. But the government is quite happy not to pay allowances to pensioners. It is quite happy to increase the price of every aspect of their basic survival.

That is the general approach. Let us look more specifically at how the budget actually affects constituents within my electorate. Prior to the budget I sat and thought, "Gee, what if this government does the right thing? What would they do? Where would I be?" Because I would be in deep trouble with my seat's margin. I wondered what

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the government could deliver to the people of Forreestfield that would be good. First on my list was funding some community services. We have a number of tirelessly working community organisations that have had their funding stripped away over the past 12 to 18 months. They are forced to do less. They are told that they have to have their three per cent cuts as well. These are the groups that deal with individuals whom the mental health system cannot deal with. They deal with people who are dealing with personal bankruptcies. These groups have dealt with a lot of the damage done within our community by the global financial crisis. These are the community groups that are helping people pick up the pieces when their lives have fallen apart. What did this government do? It reduced their funding. Compassion, yes.

What else would I like? How about some early childhood education? Early childhood education is incredibly important. The start in life that we get really sets the trajectory of our lives. I would not be in this place today if not for the sacrifices my parents made in ensuring that I had a good education. I went to the high school in my electorate, which was then known as Forreestfield Senior High School. I remember working my way up through the years and by the time I graduated year 12, there were only 15 of us left. Of that 15, only four of us went to university and of those I think that only two of us actually graduated. I am lucky that I am one of those people and that I have been able to live a very prosperous life as a result. There is no doubt in my mind that many of those people whom I went to school with would have had the same capacity and ability to reach the same heights that I have; it was opportunity that they lacked. That is what we are about. We are about providing the opportunities for those people and ensuring that children are not left behind simply because their parents do not have the necessary resources to give them everything. Parents will try as hard as they can, but when they are struggling to balance the basic household bills, it becomes very difficult, sacrifices are made and often children are the victim of that. Early childhood education is one way that we as a state can correct those problems. If we ensure that early childhood education programs are in place, we can give children the best start. Looking at this budget, how much has been put in for early childhood education? From memory I think it is about \$1.5 million for the early childhood education project. Others have spoken about the lacklustre increases in the education budget generally. In fact, I note that although we are spending an entirely generous \$1.5 million on the new early childhood program, within the education budget we are actually spending \$1.6 million on new toilet replacements. Therefore, I think that once again we see this government's priorities coming out. It is quite happy to put toilets in and not so happy to spend money on early childhood education. What is the vision? We are flushing our children's futures away. We could almost say that this government is a little obsessed with toilets, from its singing toilets in Bunbury, its toilet blocks throughout the regions —

Dr K.D. Hames: Can I just say that the education budget increase percentage is a little misleading because last year's budget contained all the commonwealth funding for its Building the Education Revolution program. All that money has to be counted as recurrent —

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Absolutely, minister. I think we were in this place many times and heard the government say that last year's budget was basically stuffed full of Kevin Rudd's money, and it clearly was.

Mr I.C. Blayney: Our money!

Mr A.J. WADDELL: There was an awful lot of Kevin Rudd's money in there.

Mr I.C. Blayney: It is not Kevin Rudd's money; it is taxpayers' money!

Dr K.D. Hames: Where did he get it from? He got it from us.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: It is our money, members opposite are dead right. I would say that people in Forreestfield are not getting value for theirs.

On the question of education, within my area there are some pretty poor schools. There are a number of wonderful community organisations that do breakfast programs and a number of other self-start programs within those schools. They have to do that to deal with some of the social displacement that occurs in those schools. I have had schools come to me and say that they are desperate to simply get a fence put around their school to stop the constant vandalism and keep out the roaming gangs of youths who are out at night and who cause all sorts of problems. However, again, there is nothing in the budget that will assist them in that respect. I had one parent from a parents and citizens association who suggested that maybe we should be out there trying to find some sort of benefactor to build the school a fence. In fact, it is not the first time that a constituent has suggested to me that we need a benefactor to supplement what this government is incapable of delivering. At the rate we are going we will have schoolbooks sponsored by McDonald's and Coca-Cola will supply the whiteboards in the classrooms.

A constituent spoke to me about the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education program. My seat is a metropolitan seat, so members would not think that it is necessarily a big user of this program. I suspect that

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although it is probably not a great user of the program, it does use the program because occasionally the school has students who for one reason or another are required to take a number of subjects that clash with each other in terms of what the local school can provide. Therefore, they are on the SIDE program so that they can take a different subject that is not offered by the high school—some of the high schools within my electorate tend to be a little smaller and do not have the resources to run multiple programs—or simply because of a timetable clash. I recently had one constituent come to me and say that the school had said that students will no longer participate in SIDE next year because this government has decided to charge \$1 000 for every student enrolled in SIDE. The government took the money from the school's budget this year without the school really having any say in it. The school principal, quite rightly, says that the school cannot afford that. In this case there were 10 students enrolled in SIDE, so \$10 000 was ripped out from the school's budget and that impacts on its ability to deliver services to other students. Therefore, the constituent was told, "I'm terribly sorry; your daughter can no longer enrol in SIDE. I'm sorry your daughter who has dreams of becoming a veterinarian can forget that because she cannot do the prerequisite subjects she needs to get into university." What are the parents faced with? They will either come up with \$1 000 to pay for the SIDE themselves or they will have to tell their daughter, "I am sorry; forget about everything you have worked for over the past 11 years of your school life. It's not going to happen." Or they can do what they suggested: perhaps they can find a wealthy benefactor somewhere in the community who will sponsor them. Are we going to outsource government to the extent that we ask corporations to do what we as government have a responsibility to do—provide the very basic things that people want us to deliver? It is not a big ask for our children to have that opportunity. It is not a big ask to be safe in our homes, to get to our jobs, to educate our children and to have decent access to health. That is pretty much what the people in my electorate ask for; and we have failed them on virtually every score in this budget.

Another issue that the member for Nollamara went into was public transport. Public transport in my electorate is absolutely woeful. It is worse than woeful. There are periods when people cannot catch a bus for several hours. They certainly cannot catch buses out to some of the critical services that are offered. For instance, if people need to access a hospital, the local hospital service is the Swan District Hospital. There is no direct bus link from a lot of my electorate out to that hospital campus. In reality it is easier to catch a bus into Perth and another back out to the Swan District Hospital campus. I made a grievance in this place about that in the past and was told, "Well, that's tough really. There are compromises and someone has to miss out and as usual it's that lot who happen to live in the eastern suburbs who have to miss out."

Dr K.D. Hames: Lucky we're keeping Royal Perth Hospital then.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: It would be nice if the government actually funded it in this budget, which is another thing the government did not do in this budget.

Dr K.D. Hames: You forget what our election commitment was. It was to retain Royal Perth as a tertiary hospital.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: But not to fund it.

Dr K.D. Hames: You don't need funding because it already operates as a tertiary hospital.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: So Royal Perth requires no funding?

Dr K.D. Hames: It doesn't, to meet our election commitment.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: That is interesting. What about Midland health campus? That requires funding.

Dr K.D. Hames: We said in our next term of government we would look at ways to reconfigure the hospital.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Next term, yes.

Dr K.D. Hames: Not this term.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Not this term; next term.

Dr K.D. Hames: That's what we said.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I understand the Liberal Party is big on that—not necessarily keeping its word.

Dr K.D. Hames: I will do.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Let us look at Midland health campus. Again that has been promised and promised and I understand it is now due to be finished in 2015. Yet when we look at the budget, again there are some funny things happening in there. There is a lack of funding in there.

Dr K.D. Hames: No, there isn't.

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Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, there is. We will go through that in estimates.

Dr K.D. Hames: There is \$180 million state and \$180 million federal funding.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: We will go through it in estimates with the minister. I do not have the time now.

Dr K.D. Hames: You keep talking.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Another thing we would have liked from the budget is money for public housing. Not a day goes by without a constituent of mine coming to me seeking some form of emergency housing.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr A.J. WADDELL: There was the recent notice of the closure of a caravan park where many long-stay residents live in transportable homes. The closure has not been completed yet and a lot of these people are now on the Homeswest emergency waiting list. The waiting list in my electorate for emergency relief from Homeswest is approximately 12 to 18 months. Some of these people could technically be homeless by the time a place comes up for them. Remarkably another constituent came to me who had recently separated from his wife and found himself homeless. He is a person who has considerable mental health issues. When we contacted Homeswest to seek some emergency accommodation for him, it was suggested that he move into that very caravan park so that he could jump the queue by going on the emergency waiting list. It is quite clear that there is inadequate public housing to deal with the demand for it. We are not seeing a lot being done for public housing in this budget; are we?

Dr K.D. Hames: Can I tell you the answer to Midland hospital?

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes.

Dr K.D. Hames: There is, over the forward estimates for 2013–14, about \$240 million out of the \$354 million required; so that is \$110 million left.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: So, where is the \$110 million?

Dr K.D. Hames: It is in next year.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: The forward estimates that the Treasurer said do not count?

Dr K.D. Hames: No. The forward estimates only go for four years, so the remainder of the funding —

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Yes, but how can it be opened in 2015 if the money will not be there by 2015?

Dr K.D. Hames: Because your government did the same.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: The government is going to pay for it afterwards?

Dr K.D. Hames: When you do the budget, you make a significant payment on the last year when it's completed.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: So we will get Midland health campus on lay-by?

Dr K.D. Hames: No. If you built a house, you wouldn't pay for it until it was built; would you?

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I do not get the keys until I have paid for it.

Dr K.D. Hames: Exactly. So that final payment comes on the final year of construction when you open it.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Right; so that will be 2016.

Dr K.D. Hames: No; 2015.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: It will be 2015–16.

Dr K.D. Hames: No. It is opening in 2015. There is usually a minor payment left. When you look at how your government funded Fiona Stanley Hospital, there was about \$5 million left to pay the year after it was completed. You don't actually pay the final payment when you get the handover because there's a contingency amount that covers work that they've got to do if there are repairs or something like that. So that's how it works.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I will take the minister at his word on that and we will probably explore it through the estimates process.

Dr K.D. Hames: Have a look back at Fiona and how you funded Fiona.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: All right. I thank the minister for that.

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Other things were on my wish list for Forrestfield; for instance, for the parents and citizens associations in my electorate. There are wonderful P&Cs throughout my electorate. The people on these P&Cs are the salt of the earth. They are in schools virtually every week running the canteens, and they run them voluntarily. They work their fingers to the bone to buy things, such as electronic whiteboards for the classrooms. In the past they have paid for air conditioning, because Forrestfield is on the wrong side of the line that says that certain classrooms cannot be air-conditioned and so forth. I was recently approached by one of the P&Cs and asked what was happening with the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations and why WACSSO is being defunded. That, again, is another cut. These are people who are trying to add something to their own local communities; yet we are kicking them again in the teeth by removing funding from them.

The picture I am trying to draw here is that we seem to be taking money away and not providing for the very basics. What are we getting instead? What is the great edifice that the government has built that justifies all of this train and attack that is going on over there on the government side? What is the government's grand vision? Is it the linkage between Northbridge and Perth? Frankly, people in my area do not really care about that. They would much prefer to have basic services. They would much prefer to have their kids educated than be able to walk from a nightclub across to the dead part of the city. It is irrelevant to them. It is an extravagance that we cannot afford if we cannot afford the basics.

Is it about Oakajee? We have heard many times about how Oakajee could have been funded by the private sector. Why did the government fund it? Why did the government take money away from the basics? Is it about the government's royalties for regions plans? Royalties for regions is a fine idea in concept—delivering services to the regions where those services are needed. That is fine; I do not have a problem with that as an idea. What I have a problem with is when we squander it; when we squander it on singing toilets, when we squander it on plastic cows; when we squander it on remote-controlled radio controls —

Dr K.D. Hames: You know the proposal came from one of your Labor ministers. Former Labor ministers put up that proposal.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: Is that the minister's standard? I hear this all the time from members on his side of the house. Is that really what his standard is? Is his standard that he does not have to do any better than the last government?

Dr K.D. Hames: I'll pass on to David your views.

Mr A.J. WADDELL: If that is the minister's view, he is welcome to it, because I think he needs to hold himself to a higher standard. We all need to hold ourselves to the highest standard we can possible achieve.

I think the problem with this budget is not only the lack of vision, but also the lack of willingness to do brave things. It is about addressing the underlying issues within our state budget. Why is the government spending \$640 million on increasing the size of our prison system? It costs \$100 000 a year to keep somebody in prison. Here is a fact for the minister: the illiteracy rate in prisons is 70 per cent. Therefore, 70 per cent of the people we lock in prisons at the cost of \$100 000 each a year cannot read or write. Are we surprised that they fall foul of our rules? Are we surprised that they lash out sometimes at society and ultimately fall foul of the law? Why are we investing money in keeping these people locked away and not investing the money in preventing these people ever needing to be in prison? Why do we never question the basic assumptions? Why is it that this year's budget—if members track it from last year—is very much similar to last year's?

I have listened to the member for Riverton and a number of other members talk about the ideal of small government as the way to go. That sat uncomfortably with me for a long time because I actually believe that government has a role. One day I realised why it was sitting so uncomfortably with me. It is because the Premier talks the talk, but he does not walk the walk. If he wants to deliver small government, he should deliver small government, but he is not delivering small government; he is delivering bloated, inefficient government and then reallocating resources to the government's pet projects and hurting people along the way. Where is the analysis that says here is the wastage in the system? The Premier cannot simply say, "We'll cut three per cent." That is ridiculous; it is a one-size-fits-all approach. Where is the analysis that says that we no longer need to perform that function? Even better, where is the bravery that is shown when the government actually comes out and says, "We can't afford that process any more; we would like to do that but can't afford to do it. We have to shut down this arm of government because we can't do it." If the Premier believes in small government, why is he not out there creating that? We do not see that; we see continual creep. We see increased growth in government; we see the number of FTEs going up all over the place; we see some remarkable statistics. I refer to Main Roads' key performance indicators. In 2008–09 only 36 per cent of its projects were finished on time. It has a grand plan that in 2010–11 its performance will be so much better. It will complete 90 per cent of its projects, but what will it achieve in 2009–10? It will achieve 30 per cent. In 2008–09, 36 per cent of projects were finished on time and in

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2009–10, the current year, fewer projects finished on time. That is not more efficient government. In 2008–09 the Department of Transport employed 828 FTEs. In 2009–10, as part of its efficiency cuts it budgeted for 803 FTEs. What did the department actually achieve? It achieved 872 FTEs. What is it projecting for 2010–11? It is projecting 889. In 2008–09 the number was 828; in 2010–11 it is projecting 889 FTEs.

The Office of Energy is an interesting department. It is increasing its cost of services from \$50.603 million to \$71.281 million. It has some interesting projects, but the FTEs will increase from 73 to 90. Why? Because people are being recruited to deal with hardship. The government has increased the amount of money it is putting away for hardship from \$2.9 million to \$7.4 million. Why? Because the government knows that what it is doing will negatively impact on a large number of families. There is smoke and mirrors here also. The increased charges being imposed will be nowhere near met by the hardship clauses. In fact, the hardship funding itself will not be available all the time; it will be available for only a small amount of time. I have it here somewhere.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Do you want an extension?

Mr A.J. WADDELL: I have already sought an extension. I will come back to that at a later time. The hardship funds are not available across the board; they are available for only certain people, for 85 per cent of a bill, for one bill in every 12 months—that might be great for the first bill—and, in some instances, the money must be paid back. All it will do is defer the pain to a later time.

I come back to the point that the only vision I think anyone can take away from this budget is that we have a callous government that does not care about ordinary working people, low income people, or people on fixed incomes. It does not have a vision and does not have the courage to stand by its own convictions. It does not have the courage to get out there and do the things it keeps saying it will do. The Premier might like to stand up in here and say it is a 10 out of 10 budget and it is perfect because we have a surplus. But people in my electorate will ask: what is the price of that surplus; are we prepared to pay that price? I think the answer is a big fat no, and I will be pleased when they send that no in the form of their votes at the next election.

MR M.P. WHITELEY (Bassendean) [8.13 pm]: I will talk on a number of issues in this speech. I will talk about the impact of the budget on my constituents. Its impact on my constituents will be similar to that on the member for Forrestfield's constituents. I will talk also about some of the sleight of hand that has been committed within this budget. I will highlight one thing that I will deliver praise for; that is, funding of some initiatives that were identified by the Education and Health Standing Committee of which I and the Deputy Premier were members of in the last Parliament. I will also talk briefly about my concerns for mental health and how resources may be disappearing from that area. I will also spend time talking about a very sensitive and difficult issue; namely, pockets of Indigenous disadvantage and dysfunction in my electorate and some of the challenges that face the government in dealing with them. I will make a plea that some of the attention being paid to remote and regional Aboriginal communities be applied with equal vigour to some of the issues prevalent in my electorate.

I also want to spend some time giving an update on my favourite issue, particularly the drug Strattera, on which I have been giving six monthly to annual updates since it came on the market. I will again highlight its ever-increasing record of misery and appeal for the federal government to do something about it by not subsidising child suicidality and child misery, and spend the money on things that will help children. I have a range of issues I wish to cover today.

The first thing I will talk about is nothing new. It has been spoken about by the member for Forrestfield and many other members in this place, and that is the major impact of this budget on my constituents, particularly those who are doing it a little harder than others. I am referring to the impact of the 9.6 per cent increase in tariffs, fees and charges that has been imposed by this government. For someone like me and every member of this chamber, a \$367.86 average increase is something we will not miss, but for many of my constituents it is a huge impost. They are already struggling. Nothing displays better the lack of this government's commitment to those people who are on struggle street—those people who will really struggle to pay their bills with this massive increase. It is way above the inflation rate and the Premier is fobbing it off by saying “Well, there won't be anything like a significant increase next year.” That is simply not good enough. He is imposing the pain now. The fact that he is promising that the increase will not be as great next year does not give anyone solace. In fact, they will be paying for this year's increase next year as well. That is a huge problem.

The other thing I want to talk about is how, through sleight of hand, the government managed to very successfully spin, with creative accounting, an increased take from state government-owned corporations such as Gold Corporation, LandCorp and Western Power. Last Friday's *The West Australian* headed an article “State to rake in bigger profits from corporations”, which was written by Peter Kerr. He is usually a good journalist—I think he is one of my constituents so I had better be a bit kind to him. I would not say it was one of his finest pieces of work; he bought the government line on this issue. His article highlights the fact that the financial take

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from profits of utilities such as Gold Corporation, LandCorp and Western Power will increase from 50 to 85 per cent. It reads —

The move will see the State-owned corporations boost Government coffers by more than \$1 billion next financial year.

I think that is a mistake because that is an extraordinary amount. I think it is a boost of about \$400 million over four years.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is \$36 million this year and about \$100 million next year.

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: In a full year I think it is about \$100 million, so I think *The West* got it wrong. The amount of \$1 billion over one year is a huge impost. Nonetheless, the government has access to \$100 million annualised to fudge the figures, basically. The article goes on to state —

While in the long run the measure means the Government will have to provide an offsetting amount for the infrastructure needs of the corporations, it will be able to exercise more control over the money that is spent.

Surely the purpose of corporatisation is to make organisations such as Western Power, Gold Corporation and LandCorp put aside provisions from profit for future infrastructure needs. Surely that is the whole aim of corporatisation; we demand them to act like responsible separate organisations. That spin of saying that they will be better able to direct this expenditure is an extraordinary line. It is even more extraordinary that *The West* swallowed it hook, line and sinker. I congratulate the Premier for getting away with that one. He has at least managed to fool *The West*, but perhaps not the rest of us. The net effect is that it is a bookkeeping entry. It is a shift from government coffers, from wholly owned government corporations to general funding. It does not do anything in real terms to improve the financial position of the government; it simply helps the government make the books look better this year. In the out years, it creates an impost on government. That was a sleight of hand. I thought it was pretty blatant and pretty straightforward. As I said, *The West* swallowed it hook, line and sinker. The article went on to say that this will ensure financial discipline for Western Power but it is actually removing financial discipline from the government. By increasing the profit take from 50 to 85 per cent, they have thereby reduced the ability of these corporations to be self-funding for infrastructure purposes into the future. The government has conducted a sleight of hand and got away with it because our illustrious daily newspaper has bought it hook, line and sinker.

I will be interested in the budget estimates process to find out the details of the expenditure on the Perth bicycle network. I notice the line item is “Perth Bicycle Network/Country Pathways”. There seems to be a healthy amount of money in there. There is a modest increase, perhaps a consumer price index increase, from just under \$2.5 million to just under \$2.7 million. I need to check this out but I am concerned about whether that line item previously related to only the Perth bicycle network or whether it took in country pathways as well. I am a bit concerned that my constituents might be losing out on funding projects in the regions. I am particularly concerned because I know for certainty that had we retained government, the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure had identified the extension of the principal shared pathway from Bayswater to Bassendean as a first priority of the government, so much so that she managed to get the City of Bayswater to build the early section from Bayswater train station to the Tonkin flyover at considerably reduced expenditure. She had a track record there. I know that the Perth bicycle network Bassendean extension would have been the next project to be rolled out. I will be interested to see whether we can get some further detail in the budget estimates on where that expenditure is going. I am hopeful but fear my hopes are likely to be dashed.

The other issue I want to talk about is the provision of education services. My electorate has done relatively well in recent years, even since the change in government, because of the massive amount of capital expenditure undertaken by the Rudd government and also by the commitment to local schools of the Carpenter government. All of my schools have benefited from enormous infrastructure spends. We have also seen the massive commitment of about \$13 million or \$14 million spent on developing the new Lockridge Primary School, which the Minister for Education had the pleasure of opening. In truth, all credit for that belongs to the current Leader of the Opposition when he was Treasurer and also the current manager of opposition business, the member for Rockingham, who both heard my impassioned plea at a caucus meeting in Mandurah a couple of years ago. I was asking why children in my electorate miss out simply because it is regarded as a safe Labor seat. Both of them heard my impassioned plea and said it was not right that kids in my electorate got second-class facilities. They visited Lockridge Primary School and dedicated that money towards its construction. I am particularly happy with that. I am concerned that as the money from the federal stimulus program dries up and as we now have a Liberal government, kids in my electorate might not get such a good deal in education.

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Having said all that and made all those criticisms, I did say that I would give praise and credit where it is due. I want to highlight my pleasure at the announcement of \$49.7 million over four years. The Treasurer's speech stated —

A further \$49.7 million over four years has been provided to improve access to Community Child Health services, with a focus on speech pathology, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy. This initiative follows recommendations by the Education and Health Standing Committee's report *Healthy Child-Healthy State* in May 2009 ...

I congratulate the government for taking that initiative. I understand that in 2010–11, there is just under \$7 million, \$11 million in 2011–12, nearly \$15 million in 2012–13 and about \$16.7 million in the 2013–14 budget year. On the basis of a conversation I had with the Deputy Premier, this is all new money for the provision of extra speech therapy, occupational therapy and allied services.

Dr K.D. Hames: And about 50 extra staff in the first year, building to about 120 extra staff by the fourth year, which is about double.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: I give the government credit for funding that initiative, although I will take a bit of credit myself.

Dr K.D. Hames: You were the one in the committee who started us on that review.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: I thank the minister for that. It is good to see an outcome achieved in a bipartisan manner. My pet desire was to carry out an inquiry into the need for generalised health screening of pre-primary aged kids. I had a feeling that kids with significant language and occupational therapy type deficits were being missed. The minister was an Education and Health Standing Committee member at that stage. He was the opposition health spokesperson. We were building towards unanimous recommendations along the lines of those that were finally made by the Education and Health Standing Committee, chaired by the member for Alfred Cove. When we lost government, I think I went to the Deputy Premier and asked whether we could work cooperatively on this and reinstitute the inquiry. All the good work had been done but because the Parliament had been prorogued, it was all lost. The minister agreed with my suggestion that we pick up that good work and finish that inquiry. That was a good thing to do. The member for Alfred Cove allowed the work of the then member for Peel, the member for Pilbara and me to be incorporated into that committee's work. We were co-opted members for a period. That was excellent work. I am reminded of the old saying "a stitch in time saves nine". I think that the investment of just under \$50 million will be returned many fold to the state of Western Australia in the long term. That was a good example of the Parliament working for children's issues and it was a good example of cooperation being extended across the chamber. I give the minister credit where credit is due. That is enough good stuff.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You have wasted 15 minutes lavishing praise!

Mr M.P. WHITELY: It was 50 million bucks!

At the commencement of my speech, I touched briefly on the biggest issue confronting my electorate. I have infrastructure and education issues in my electorate, but the issue that takes up much of my time is the one I find the most difficult to talk about; that is, the pockets of Indigenous disadvantage and Indigenous dysfunction that exist in my electorate. I must look again at the statistics in this regard, but the last time I looked at them I think I had the highest or second highest proportion of Indigenous population of any electorate in the Perth metropolitan area. From memory, it was about seven per cent. The vast majority of Aboriginal people who live in my community live entirely functional and happy lives; there are no issues with them. However, there are pockets of dysfunction and despair that are similar to the sorts of reports that emerge out of isolated communities.

I worked in the early 1990s as a lecturer in financial management at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M.P. WHITELY: It was at the time of the emergence of the stolen generation reports and the resulting sea change that happened in Indigenous issues. I remember running a workshop with Aboriginal students who were senior or middle-level managers from inside Aboriginal organisations from all over Western Australia and the Northern Territory. One lady from Darwin did a lot of work out of Port Keats. I have never been to Port Keats. The despair that she described she witnessed was incredible. She was going to Port Keats as both a community and a social worker. As I said, it was just after the emergence of the report on concerns about the stolen generation. She told stories of toddlers being raped and left in Indigenous communities. Her explanation was that there was a fear on behalf of the authorities to intervene, given the background of a previous intervention that had been completely unjustified and race based. She was saying that racism was being played out in completely

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the opposite direction; in other words, the unwillingness to intervene because of the fear of being called racist was leaving kids in situations of misery.

I am not suggesting that that sort of extreme behaviour is common in my electorate, but my area does have isolated pockets of Indigenous dysfunction. Last week I had a visit from a group of long-term residents of a suburb in my electorate. I will not mention the suburb or detail their concerns to this house, but I will write to the Premier and the Minister for Health and Indigenous Affairs and provide them with the specific details of this issue. I am composing the letter now.

I will take this opportunity to broadly outline the concerns of this group of long-term residents from a suburb in my electorate. Their concern involves a three-bedroom Homeswest house that has an extended family living in it comprising three family groups. The estimates from neighbours—and they seemed to be able to name the individual children who live there—was that six adults and 14 children were living in this house. They tell stories of extreme neglect and abuse. I have also had discussions with local police about this issue, and they have told me some alarming stories that I will detail—not in this house, but to the Premier and Minister for Health and Indigenous Affairs in later correspondence. There seems to have been a complete lack of intervention by the Department for Child Protection in this matter.

The stories I have heard from multiple sources are consistent. They are of school buses arriving at the house to take the majority of these 14 children to school on a daily basis. The population of this house varies intermittently. However, the vast majority of these kids are not getting on the bus. The school bus arrives to take the kids to school and the kids do not go to school. Maybe two out of 10, or whatever number there is on any given day, get on the bus but the rest of them do not go to school. The next day the bus arrives and none of the children get on the bus.

I see school-aged children in shopping centres in my electorate on schooldays. The reality is that many of these children come from Indigenous families. I am nervous about talking about this issue so frankly. However, the reality is that, in my electorate, I continually see a large number of Indigenous families with school-aged children out and about on schooldays. It concerns me that these kids are not going to school. The anecdotal evidence shows that. I probably should have spoken up about this more vigorously if I had had more courage earlier, but, frankly, if I do not speak up about it now, I would not be doing my job. A number of these kids are supposed to be attending schools that are specifically designed to cater for Indigenous children, but they are not attending school. I do not think their non-attendance at school is picked up in the system. These kids are being left in extreme disadvantage. This issue is getting attention in isolated communities throughout the state, but it is being ignored in the metropolitan area.

It might not be the public policy, but it is at least the implementation of public policy that results in agencies being scared to intervene when they need to do so. Children should be going to school and children should be in a safe environment. I will not detail the more horrific aspects of the stories that I have heard. Firstly, while they are consistent, they are nonetheless hearsay; and, secondly, it is not fair to relate them in this place. I am just alerting the Premier and the Minister for Health and Indigenous Affairs to the letter that I am about to send them.

A process should be in place to ensure that all children, regardless of race, are actually attending school on a regular basis. The evidence I see with my own eyes is that there is a significant minority of particularly Indigenous children in my electorate who do not attend school, which, for their parents, is not a priority. I am glad that the Premier and the Minister for Health and Indigenous Affairs are in the house to hear my comments, and I will provide them with the graphic details privately.

I will use the time I have remaining to give a report card on the drug called Strattera. The last time I gave a report card on Strattera was on 24 September last year—nine months ago. Strattera is a non-stimulant drug. It is not an amphetamine-based drug; therefore, it is different from the other attention deficit hyperactivity disorder drugs. It came onto the market in November 2004, and within two years it carried a black-box warning, which is the highest possible warning, for suicide ideation. In other words, it makes people who take it, mostly children, want to kill themselves. From when that drug came onto the market until when I reported on the drug in September last year, there had been 61 voluntary reports of severe adverse events, including 25 incidences of suicide ideation. At the time of my report, I repeated my appeal to take this drug off the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. I can report today that the statistics I have with me, which are about a month old, indicate that there have been 87 severe adverse reports, including 39 of suicide ideation, homicidal ideation or self-injury. These reports, as I highlighted when I spoke about it before, are only the tip of the iceberg. The reporting system of adverse drug reactions to the Therapeutic Goods Administration is an entirely voluntary system. A study was done in 2007 that indicated between two per cent and 10 per cent is the typical range of adverse events that actually get reported. If it is at the high end of that range—10 per cent—it would be 890 adverse reports with

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390 cases of suicide ideation, homicide ideation or self-injury across Australia. I do not know whether a fair proportion of cases are reported. Perhaps it is a higher proportion because it is a new drug and it carries a black-box warning. However, I have no logic for assuming it is a higher proportion. However, the 87 adverse reports, and the 39 involving suicide ideation or homicide ideation or self-injurious behaviour are just the tip of the iceberg. We know that.

I will read the latest reports of adverse reactions—ones that I have not read previously to the chamber; I will paraphrase them. An 11-year-old boy became increasingly agitated and talked about wanting to die. A 13-year-old boy experienced suicide ideation, physical and verbal aggression with his family and became angry, withdrawn, socially isolated, compulsive and moody. A 15-year-old boy expressed suicidal thoughts. An 11-year-old boy took Strattera for the treatment of ADHD to complement Ritalin, under the influence of which he became suicidal and depressed. A 12-year-old girl ripped out her fingernails and toenails. That is the second report of a girl ripping out her fingernails and toenails. A nine-year-old girl experienced self-harming; a nine-year-old boy experienced suicide ideation, aggression and self-harm, and made drawings of himself hanging upside down from a tree in the ocean. A 10-year-old boy was psychotic and experienced auditory hallucinations, including voices in his head to kill his sister. An eight-year-old boy lost his appetite and experienced homicide ideation and lost weight and was angry and confused; a 15-year-old girl experienced suicide ideation and started cutting herself to an extent that was life threatening. Another 15-year-old girl experienced suicide ideation and started cutting herself with razors, scissors and knives; a 10-year-old boy experienced suicide ideation; another 10-year-old boy had abnormal thoughts about others jumping off buildings; and an eight-year-old boy talked in a boastful manner about killing himself. I have only gone through 14 new reports since September last year that involved suicide ideation, homicide ideation or self-injuries. These are horrific reports of a drug that is subsidised by our taxes and used to treat a condition for which all the diagnostic criteria are entirely behavioural—behaviours like avoiding homework and losing toys, pencils and things children need for daily activities. Strattera, a drug that makes 12-year-old girls rip out their fingernails and toenails, is being subsidised by our taxes!

I highlighted the danger of this before it went on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme to Tony Abbot, who was the then federal health minister. There were only 23 adverse event reports at that stage and there were eight incidents of suicide ideation. Here we are, with another 60-odd reports, and we are up to nearly 40 definite reports of suicide ideation or self-harm—and the misery roles on! As I said, that is the tip of the iceberg. Federal governments of both persuasions have done absolutely bugger-all to protect the rights and the welfare of Australian children.

I have only two minutes left but I briefly want to talk about a freedom of information request that I put into the Department of Health and Ageing requesting information on the basis of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee's recommendation that Strattera be placed on the PBS. This process took me 19 months. Initially 11 documents were recognised as being valid, however, the few I got were so heavily censored that they were incomprehensible. I appealed, and eventually took them to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal at a cost of about \$1 000 to me to see whether I could get this information. In the end, I was refused access to the information because, in effect, the commonwealth government argued on behalf of Eli Lilly Australia, the manufacturer of this drug, that the 1953 National Health Act prevented disclosure to a third party of any information affecting a third person. In this case, the third person was Eli Lilly—the manufacturer of the drug that makes people want to kill themselves. The net effect was that a precedent was created in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal that stopped me or anybody from getting FOI access to information on the safety and efficacy of drugs that are used to treat Australian children.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [8.44 pm]: I rise to make my contribution to this budget debate, and I have a couple of things to talk about. The first issue concerns fees and charges and their impact on families, and particularly how those fees and charges have arisen and how they relate to the income of governments, specifically the income they receive. We need to drill down to see exactly how much these corporations are paying to the government in dividends and relate that back to the increases in water charges to customers across Western Australia. This is because there seems to be a divergence between the size of the dividends received by the government and the tariffs that we pay as water consumers in Western Australia. The second issue I would like to raise is far closer to my electorate; that is, the issue of Cockburn Cement. I would like to put on record, Minister for Health, some of the issues about Cockburn Cement. Unfortunately, the minister did not have to deal with the question without notice that I asked the other day, but I need to put the issue on the record for the minister because it is of very serious concern not only to me but also to residents in the area. By the time I am finished, I am sure it will be of serious concern to the minister.

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Firstly, back to fees and charges and the increases in tariffs, particularly as they relate to the portfolio of the Minister for Water that I am shadowing. It is quite disturbing to look at the headlines about water tariff increases. One sees a screaming headline that water tariffs have gone up by 17.7 per cent. If members refer to budget paper No 3, *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, they will probably see all the other charges that all of us will be paying later on this year for the delivery of water, and the cost we will pay for sewerage, drainage and other services charged by the Water Corporation. They make interesting reading. Members should look at the cost of water alone. These figures are based on an average family of two with two children with a consumption of 300 kilolitres a year. The Premier referred to this standard formula in answering a question on notice: it is the standard that is used for publishing the impact of water charges on consumers in Western Australia. It is nothing new in this budget or last year's budget, as it has been the standard formula for trying to express how much water charges are increasing. For a standard family of two adults and two children who consume 300 kilolitres of water, charges for water will jump from \$441.30 in the 2009–10 budget to \$519.45 in the 2010–11 budget, which is a 17.71 per cent increase. The cost of sewerage will jump from \$531 in the 2009–10 budget to \$552.24 in the 2010–11 budget, which is an increase of \$21.24 or four per cent. Drainage charges will jump from \$67.30 in the 2009–10 budget to \$90.40 in the 2010–11 budget, which is a 34.32 per cent increase. The media did not pick up on that, and in my view it should have picked up on what we will all be paying for sewerage. If members go back to the 2008–09 budget, they will see that the overall cost to the family of those three services from the Water Corporation was \$973.85. As of 1 July this year, that family will pay \$1 162.09, which is a jump of \$65.75 to \$122.49 between last year and this year, which is an 86 per cent increase in water charges. It is a 17.7 per cent increase in water consumption charges compared with the charges in the first budget of the incoming Liberal government. We have seen an 86 per cent increase in Water Corporation charges to the average household in Western Australia. That is absolutely disgraceful.

On 14 August 2009, the then Treasurer tabled in this house the final report by the Economic Regulation Authority of its inquiry into the tariffs of the Water Corporation, Aqwest and Busselton Water. That large tome from the Economic Regulation Authority outlined the recommended increases for water, sewerage and drainage tariffs in Western Australia. Those recommended increases do not line up with the tariff increases in the budget papers for this year. The tariffs for last year did line up, but the tariffs for this year do not line up. That report was tabled in this house, and it was accepted by the then Treasurer as a legitimate series of recommendations that should be followed by the government. In fact, the Premier indicated in his budget speech that the water charges in the budget were in line with the recommendations in this report from the Economic Regulation Authority. That is just not true. The Economic Regulation Authority recommended that household water bills should increase at 10 per cent per annum to 2012–13. The Water Corporation actually argued that water charges should be a bit less than that—they should be around eight per cent per annum across the board. In order to smooth out the charges so that very large consumers would be paying an appropriate rate and not a lesser rate, the Economic Regulation Authority chose, on an economic basis, a figure of 10 per cent to 2012–13. The response from the government in the 2009–10 budget was a 10.01 per cent increase in water tariffs. This year, there is an increase of 17.7 per cent. How does that line up with these recommendations from the Economic Regulation Authority? Where is the justification for a 77 per cent hike above the Economic Regulation Authority's recommendation, which is at the higher level of the options available to it, to smooth out the real cost of water by 2012–13? There does not seem to be any justification for it at all.

I turn now to household waste water bills. As I indicated previously, sewerage costs have increased by four per cent, and drainage costs have increased by 34.32 per cent. The recommendation from the Economic Regulation Authority for smoothing out these costs to 2012–13 was a two per cent increase per year. I am hopefully going to find out, during the estimates session, the justification for these massive increases in household fees and charges. The Premier does not seem to have provided any explanation or justification so far for the increases he has announced. Quite rightly, the media have picked up on the increases, indicating that they are appalling for low income families.

I have been talking about the income of the Water Corporation. I turn now to the other end of the Water Corporation's balance sheet. That is the profit that it makes and the return that it delivers to government. This does not take into account taxation, because although these government trading enterprises do not pay tax, in order to meet competition regulations and requirements, they effectively pay the equivalent of tax to Treasury; so that is a freebie for government anyway. In addition to the tax equivalent payments, they also pay a dividend to government. The Water Corporation's dividend for 2008–09 was \$408.812 million. The Water Corporation estimated that, to 30 June this year, it would make a dividend return to government of \$410.478 million. The budget papers actually indicate that the Water Corporation has done much better than that and will make a dividend return to government of \$431.587 million, or \$21.1 million more than what it estimated as of 1 July last year.

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If we then go to the out years, next year, the Water Corporation estimates that the dividend return to government will increase to \$412.954 million. In 2011–12, it estimates that that will drop to \$392.662 million. In 2012–13, that will come back up to \$423.839 million. In this year's budget papers, the Water Corporation estimates that in 2013–14 it will deliver a dividend to government of \$562.168 million. That is an increase over each of the out years of \$21 million. That is a real return to government. It is an increase over and above what it estimated. Next year, there will be an estimated increase of \$3 million over and above what it estimated. In 2011–12, there will be an estimated increase in the dividend return of \$25 million. In 2012–13, there will be an estimated increase of \$56 million. The total dividend return to government then jumps to over half a billion dollars. It is not surprising that the Water Corporation has upped the estimated dividend returns to government when it has increased charges by 17.7 per cent, but the Economic Regulation Authority has recommended increases of 10 per cent. It is not surprising. Basically, I believe that we are being overcharged for water. I believe that what the government has done in that 17.7 per cent increase is clearly in breach of the recommendations of the Economic Regulation Authority. In fact, it is above the real cost of water as of now. The Water Corporation is actually scalping us. We are being charged more than what it will cost to deliver water for the next financial year. On the Economic Regulation Authority's basis it should be a 10 per cent increase, and as long as that 10 per cent increase is maintained in each financial year, we will get to the point of the real cost of water. If the government jumps to 17 per cent just on water alone—as opposed to when we were talking about sewerage at 34 per cent—it is way above that and therefore above the cost of delivery, which possibly will be a breach of the Financial Management Act. I think that needs to be examined and, certainly, I will ensure that the Minister for Water explains that. I also believe that this matter should be referred back to the Economic Regulation Authority to see whether the government is charging beyond the cost of delivery of water to the people of Western Australia and unduly profiteering out of these increases. Profiteering at the expense of probably the poorest families in our society—large families, low incomes, and this is what they are being hit with. That is why I wanted to drill down and show the comparison between the increases in fees and charges and the dividends that are being returned to government. The government is getting a significant dividend; these are not loss-making corporations. These are very, very profitable corporations. Why then are the lowest income earners in Western Australia being hit so hard? Why is it that they have to go cap in hand? The real fact of the matter is that there will be working families out there who will not be able to afford —

[Member's time extended.]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: — these increases and, as I say, they are unnecessary increases. They are increases over and above the recommended increases, so why should these families have to go cap in hand to seek a subsidy from the government simply to pay their water bills? Why should they do it? This is disgraceful. Why should they do it when the company that is charging them is a government-owned company making massive, massive profits? These are not minimal profits; these are massive profits. It is overcharging even on the recommendations that had been put down by the Economic Regulation Authority. Those are the sorts of questions that I will raise in estimates and before estimates as well.

I will now turn to Cockburn Cement, something a little closer to home.

Mr D.A. Templeman: And Mt Brown!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: And Mt Brown. The member for Mandurah insists that I refer to Mt Brown in my contribution. Mt Brown is in my electorate and it is a haunt that the member for Mandurah knows very well indeed and he likes it a lot. Mt Brown is very near Alcoa. Given the money that was spent on Mt Brown and the upgrade of Mt Brown when we were in government, it is a beautiful place. I suggest, Mr Speaker, you visit Mt Brown; you will be highly impressed. Climb Mt Brown if it is the last thing you do in life!

Dr K.D. Hames: Where is it?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is right above Alcoa.

I come back to Cockburn Cement, a more serious matter. Cockburn Cement is a massive lime and cement operation that operates on Russell Road in Munster. Minister for Health, Cockburn Cement has had a long history in terms of odour and pollution. The pollution it puts out is, clearly, lime dust and cement dust. I have a jar of lime dust downstairs that the minister can look at. If we mixed it with a bit of water, we could lay a brick with it. The manner in which Cockburn Cement tries to control the dust is through a process called electrostatic precipitation, which simply uses electrified magnets because there are iron particles in all the elements, both the cement and lime. As the lime goes through the kiln, it is heated and turned into powdered lime or cement. There is a flue that comes off the kiln and, obviously, some particles pass into the flue. They are caught by the magnets and every now and again a hammer hits the magnets and the dust drops to the ground. It is pretty old technology. It is pre-war technology that can and should be updated with some other technology, which I will refer to.

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Because the magnets are related to the heat of the kiln, if the heat of the kiln changes, the power goes off to those electrostatic precipitators and whatever is coming out of the kiln goes straight up the chimney. Therefore, we get these big bursts of lime dust that come out of the kilns. There are six kilns and one is big enough that we can see it from here; literally, we could go to Kings Park and see it very clearly from the scarp.

Dr K.D. Hames: How far is it to the nearest houses?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Some of the houses are within the Kwinana buffer zone. They have always been within the Kwinana buffer zone; they were there even before Cockburn Cement was located there, so they are within maybe 300 metres of the kilns and they are literally across the other side of the road from the fence. However, what has happened is that land outside the buffer, as is very much allowed, has been subdivided and the nearest primary school, South Coogee Primary School, is less than one kilometre away from the kilns. The odour comes about because Cockburn Cement thought that one way of trying to control the dust would be to have injection processes in the stacks themselves in order to try to weigh the dust down and to bring the dust down with water. What happens is that the flue gets so hot the water evaporates, so now there is an odour issue as well. Cockburn Cement has compounded the problem. Over the past 16 months, it has completely got out of control. Until 16 months ago, the number of houses outside the buffer zone that would be affected on a regular basis was not that many. It would go maybe two streets beyond the buffer zone. Places in the buffer zone have been affected relatively regularly, but residents understand that they are in the buffer zone, although they do not like what happens to them. Until 16 months ago, there would never be dust and odour anywhere near that school. Now on a regular basis—two, three, four times a week—the lime dust and the cement go beyond the school, beyond Beeliar Drive to Yangebup, which is about four kilometres away. It goes over the hill into Beeliar itself and into the new parts of Beeliar, which have never ever been affected but they can smell the odour. It is going as far as Barrington Street where my electorate officer lives. He had his air conditioning unit looked at because it was starting to break down. The air conditioning man asked him whether he had seen how much dust was in the air conditioner and he picked it up in scoops.

Dr K.D. Hames: Have you been to the company yourself?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I spoke to the company. I put it to the company back in 2002 that it needs to do exactly what Alcoa did. The minister might remember this from Wagerup with the kiln and the liquor burner there because it is a very similar process. Eventually in order to control the issue of chemical compounds coming out of the liquor burner, it had to put in a baghouse filter, which is a building, basically, with a filtration unit in it. I put it to Cockburn Cement that that is what it needed to do. That baghouse filter would get rid of the dust and the odour. Cockburn Cement said it could not be done; its engineers said that it does not work with lime. I said that is rubbish because if it works with chemical molecules at Alcoa, it will work with particles of lime, which are much bigger.

Dr K.D. Hames: The point is they have a buffer zone so it should not be affecting people outside.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Absolutely. It is illegal what the company is doing. The Department of Environment and Conservation not only does not do anything about it, but also when I had a meeting with the department—it took six months and the intervention of the minister to get a meeting with the department—it acknowledged that it had not even seen the data from —

Dr K.D. Hames: Where I lived in Mandurah there was a housing development just across the other side of the street and while they were developing it was just sand. As soon as the southerly would blow, it would be all over my house and that was just ordinary dust. It was an absolute pain in the neck because it covers your house and you have the barbecue outside.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It gets into every corner of the house and through every chink we can possibly think of. Remember, those particles are smaller than that. The concern I have—this is where it comes to a health issue—is that it is continuing; the company has not stopped. The company's view of the world is, "Hey, we're acting within world health guidelines; so what?"

K.D. Hames: You can see I have a briefing note here that says there have been no reported complaints from doctors or a reported increase in medical conditions to the health department.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That may well be the case, but I think the minister will find that will change. As I said, it is only in the past 16 months that it has been getting progressively worse. I know why. It is because the company is running this plant as hard as it possibly can—I know that from people working inside the plant who have told me—and not fixing things that it should be fixing. The company is certainly not investing in a baghouse filter. The minister may remember I asked the company in 2002 about putting in a baghouse filter and it said it could not be done. When I was the Minister for Resources in 2006, the company came to me and asked for permission

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for an expansion. It said, "We'll fix all the problems because we'll put a baghouse filter in." I said, "Is that the same baghouse filter you told me four years ago couldn't be done?" The reply was, "Oh, come on, Fran, get over it—you know; move on." The company therefore knows the problem can be fixed.

Dr K.D. Hames: Did you approve the expansion?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No, I did not. The company did not apply for it in the end. It wanted to build a similar-sized kiln as the number six that is there now; the one that people can see from here—a giant kiln. But the company said it would address all seven kiln stacks by building the baghouse filter. The matter therefore can be fixed; it is just that the company does not want to put its hand in its pocket and fix it. That is the reality. The health effects are really quite dire. There is an issue of continuous nosebleeds. This is in not only one or two families, but also a lot of families who are telling me their children are suffering from nosebleeds.

Dr K.D. Hames: The doctors have to report those things.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I know and we are trying to get that done now.

Dr K.D. Hames: Nosebleeds are a common thing.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is not nosebleeds; it is bleeding from the nose, and continuous scabs up the nose.

Dr K.D. Hames: I know it may be caused by that, but it is a common thing in kids anyway, so you need to document it.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Honestly, the regularity of it is across a wide range of Beeliar, which is directly affected. The Minister for Health could come there with me.

Dr K.D. Hames: You've got to get your doctors to write to them.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will, minister, and that is exactly what I am trying to do. I am trying to get the families to correlate those symptoms through their doctors to the Department of Health.

Dr K.D. Hames: It is not impossible. We had it in Esperance with the lead dust.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Yes.

Dr K.D. Hames: It was an increased incidence of blood nose, skin rashes and the like.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: These are skin rashes, allergies, blood noses and, of course, for asthmatics, the odour. The odour is just disgraceful. There is one lady there who has only one lung and who has said, "I'm going to have to sell my house."

Dr K.D. Hames: Yes, but odour doesn't normally cause an increase in asthma. It is a chemical irritant.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is right, and that is the point: it will be a chemical irritant because of the nature of the materials that are coming up the chimney. As the minister knows, lime is terrible stuff. We do not want lime or cement. If we look at a bag of cement, we can see that it states, "Don't handle it with your hands." If people are breathing it in —

Dr K.D. Hames: You've seen the hands of bricklayers.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Absolutely! It tells people on the bag, "Don't use cement with your bare hands." Lime is a burning substance which, if inhaled, causes all sorts of damage. If the minister could see—I will table photographs—how much lime is going over people's houses, over solar panels, over cars and over people, he would be unbelievably surprised. He should take a walk down there and see it for himself. He would be able basically to scrape up the lime and hold it in his hand. He would see that it is lime or cement. Sometimes it is lime and sometimes it is cement—depending on what is blowing that day.

It is a serious issue, therefore, and on that health audit we are seeking, I will bring further evidence to the minister, hopefully from medical practitioners in the area, that will give him some support to justify a health audit.

Dr K.D. Hames: And photographic evidence of the dust.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Yes.

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [9.13 pm]: The inner city seat of Perth and city business district electorate needs to be a budget priority zone for the Barnett government in this budget. My electorate in many senses is the real engine room of the economy of this state. It is the state's biggest employer zone; therefore, it needs continued infrastructure and project investment. My fear is that this government is merely about lip-service to the inner city. We are getting the Northbridge Link light. Without undergrounding the bus station, the only link we are

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really getting is a postage stamp-sized park at the Horseshoe Bridge, if it ever reopens, and another road joining up King Street.

We need firm starting dates and costings for the waterfront project. I am happy to join the Premier on 12 October next year, the day after the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting finishes in 2011, so that we can start digging up the foreshore and return the Derbarl Yerrigan—the Indigenous name for the Swan River—back to its original shoreline, as in the current Barnett government plan. Premier Barnett said that he would resign if the waterfront project was not started by 2012. He cannot use CHOGM as an excuse. I have offered to be there with my shovel on 12 October, and I am sure I could encourage my many friends on the City of Perth—that socialist bastion—to speed up the planning approvals and everything else. It would be embarrassing if the planning approvals were held up until 1 January 2012 so that the Premier could not meet his commitment.

Other funding that needs to be overseen to ensure that it is activated in this budget includes \$8 million for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra's new rehearsal building. That should be built underground at the front of the Concert Hall. This government needs to deliver on its promise. It won government for only one reason; that is, the promise that it would urgently fix the problem of the WASO not having a home. It won government and that was its one big promise. Here we are two years later and it has not activated that promise. The government has half of this \$8 million commitment in the capital section of the budget. This year it has added in another \$3.5 million as a grant. It has therefore some commitment to WASO, but half of it is capital and half of it is in another section of the budget. I am sure the government can understand why there is some concern in the arts community and in the people of my electorate to see that the government fulfils its one election promise for the arts.

The government cut \$500 million from the last Labor budget for a new state museum. We still do not have the government's commitment. It is going to plan, it is going to look, it is going to talk and it is going to consult. People in the arts industry are sick of consulting. People in the inner city have talked, they have consulted and they have said, "Yes, we need a new museum." That poor old stuffed bison in the foyer —

Mr D.A. Templeman: Is it still there?

Mr J.N. HYDE: It is still there.

Mr D.A. Templeman: How is its rump? That was looking terribly worn!

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: It will be really stuffed by now!

Mr J.N. HYDE: It is severely stuffed, member for Armadale!

Hundreds of schoolchildren from the great electorate of Wagin—from wonderful schools like Dumbleyung and Kukerin—have visited the Western Australian Museum. When the government finally builds a primary school and a hospital at Dongolocking at the head waters of the mighty Dongo Creek, all the kids from primary schools around there who come to Perth will be able to experience the wonderful treasures we have in our state in a proper setting.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They have very discreet lighting in—was it "Dumblelocking"?

Mr J.N. HYDE: No, Dongolocking.

Mr D.A. Templeman: In Dongolocking—they have very discreet lighting there.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Dongolocking, unfortunately, is still not connected to the State Energy Commission grid.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Is it gas they are still using?

Mr J.N. HYDE: No, it is a two-kilovolt generator that the member for Wagin and I occasionally put on the back of a ute for the Christmas shindig in the hall, which is the remaining building left in Dongolocking, unfortunately.

The government also needs to consider funding for a full heritage fit-out to convert the decaying old Treasury buildings in St Georges Terrace. Here we are talking about there being a housing crisis and an accommodation crisis, and we have got a prime piece of real estate in Perth absolutely empty. We have a marvellous heritage restorer across the chamber from me in the member for Swan Hills just aching to get into those four-by-twos and other heritage jarrah and do something with them with his bare hands. All we need is for his government to make a decision and to allocate some funds. It can be anything. It should be offices, something cultural, youth or whatever. We need a decision. What about decisions, not delays from this government? We need to find out what the full funding will be for the Horseshoe Bridge if it ever reopens. We need full funding allocated to

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convert the empty East Perth power station buildings into something sensible. The government has made its decision; it will not build the state museum there, as the Labor Party would, and this government is not going to spend \$500 million, as we did. The government needs to make a decision. What about Scitech? What about looking at, for instance, a Kerry Stokes or Janet Homes à Court art gallery and doing some sort of deal to get those incredible world-leading art collections in a suitable location? The government needs to make a decision on that building. It is costing money to keep a pristine heritage building empty. The government needs to act.

The government needs to reverse its decision against the promise made by the Deputy Premier that the Ethnic Community Council of Western Australia will have a seat at the multicultural table. The amount of \$100 000 lousy dollars is needed to ensure we have an ethnic communities advocate.

Dr K.D. Hames: Can you say that again? I missed it.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The Deputy Premier wants me to repeat it so that I can lobby for him because he has not lobbied the Premier hard enough on the ECC. It is \$100 000 worth of lousy money for the Ethnic Communities Council. The council gave us a hard time and gave members opposite a hard time when they were in government previously. We need to empower marginalised groups to have a voice. They represent those who are most marginalised in the Western Australian community. We need to get some movement on the \$27.1 million Perth parking levy, which the government has loaded into the budget. That should be totally devoted to inner city traffic alleviation or to the CAT buses. We need to ensure that money is being spent there. We need to make sure that the commitment for \$2.5 million in the heritage Beatty Park Commonwealth Games pool redevelopment occurs in a timely fashion. We need full costing for a multimillion dollar Indigenous museum, which the Premier promised us. But there is nothing in the budget for that as part of the foreshore development. We need to see some real money and that the consultation—it is at a very low level at the moment—about an Indigenous museum on the waterfront is backed up with real dollars.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No-one quite knows what it is yet.

Mr J.N. HYDE: You are the government.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I am being quite genuine. The concept is there. I think there needs to be a fair amount of thought given to it. I am open to ideas.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The Premier floated this thought bubble, which was a well-intentioned thought bubble.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It was genuine

Mr J.N. HYDE: It was very genuine. We need to get a wriggle on because, if we are doing any sort of design for the waterfront, and this will be a major part of it, we need to know what it is.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The first point will be to preserve the site and make sure that it is appropriate.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I will keep waiting and the community will keep waiting as well.

Let us deal with the one piece of arts infrastructure that the Liberal government has built since 1993 and has total ownership of; namely, the belltower. We revealed last year during the estimates hearings that it was making a \$300 000 a year loss, which was covered by the government. Now we discover, although the minister is too canny to have admitted it publicly, that the \$300 000 a year deficit has grown to \$400 000. The minister knows that is right. Even if I have to keep waiting until the estimates hearing to get the minister to admit it, there has been a 33 per cent blow-out in the cost of the belltower.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Do you not like the belltower?

Mr J.N. HYDE: I will foreshadow an amendment to this budget. Depending on negotiations with the Whip I will move it at 1.00 am today. This amendment to the budget will read —

That the 2010–11 budget be amended to provide that, as in any surplus in the operation of the Swan Bells Foundation, where 30 per cent must be diverted to the financing of regional activities, any deficit of the operation of the Swan Bells Foundation must be financed from the royalties for regions program.

I foreshadow this amendment because the Swan Bells Foundation was the genesis of royalties for regions. It proposed that 30 per cent of the surplus and profits of the belltower would go out to regional people, in particular, regional youth for artistic activities. The good people in Dongolocking, Dumbleyung, Kukerin and Wagin are yet to see a cent. But the city arts community is continuing to have to subsidise the deficit. It is therefore only fair that if royalties for regions is giving so much money out to the regions that a royalties for regions commitment must take its very tiny share of a loss. I foreshadow that amendment for about 1.00 am today.

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Mr C.J. Barnett: Tomorrow.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Tomorrow; my apologies; I have missed the bus for today. We need to have a reasonable discussion about the belltower because an incredible number of committed people are doing an amazing job at the belltower, as there are in a number of other minority arts activities. I wish they could all be given a \$30 million building and the freedom to rack up a \$400 000 loss each year.

Mr D.A. Templeman: We need a resident like Quasimodo in it, don't we?

Mr J.H.D. Day: Would you say that the art gallery, the museum and the State Library make losses in the same way?

Mr J.N. HYDE: They are incredible audience, tourism and education drivers. We cannot compare the attendances in the hundreds of thousands or millions who visit the library, the museum and the art gallery with the 23 000 people who have gone up the belltower. No fees or allowances are paid to any member of the Swan Bells Foundation. They are an incredible group of volunteers who work to keep it operating. It is a wonderful activity. I want to try to politely put it into some sort of context because when the Barnett–Court government set up the belltower, they set it up with a requirement to be managed in a commercially and functionally successful manner. The annual report states —

The Foundation structure has allowed The Bell Tower to operate on a commercial basis. Costs have been rigorously controlled whilst every effort has been made to maximise income and minimise the requirement for additional funding.

In each of the 10 annual reports there is always a “however”. I will take out the 2004–05 annual report out of the ether, and the “however” was —

However due to the tourism crisis combined with the business downturn in Barrack Square, visitor numbers have been too low to provide sufficient income ...

Every year there is a valid economic explanation for why this attraction, which was supposed to guarantee a surplus, with 30 per cent going to the regions, has not created a brass razoo. In many ways the belltower is like a dear old great aunt that our somewhat selfish cousin dropped off 10 years ago for a short stay, while he took a three-month yacht trip. But unfortunately he kept sailing and 10 years later she still sits on a rocking chair in the corner passing wind. The Liberal Party dropped her off. Labor did not have the heart to put her in a more economically responsible home, and she is a financial embarrassment still to this government. Well the Liberal Party has had its hedonistic sojourn sailing around and whistling in the wilderness and the wind. Now it must deal with its creation.

We also need to look at new building additions needed in the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art and the cultural centre. We need a \$30 million commitment to begin a new third floor addition to the Art Gallery of WA. We need a \$90 million commitment somewhere to the digital records initiative and full compliance with the state's archives and official records. We need to monitor the expenditure overruns on the \$25.9 million budgeted cost of repairs and maintenance on the Northbridge tunnel city northern bypass. We need to look at Governor Stirling Tower, our one inner city residential Department of Housing tower. It has leaking pipes, rusting infrastructure and lifts that need a lot of work. We need to spend money on it. The Northbridge police complex has been delayed from mid-2011 to late 2012. We need to monitor how that will impact on its \$113 million allocation. In a Per Cent for Arts state, where we should have had a commitment of at least \$1 million to public art in a \$113 million building, as questions on notice discovered this week, the Minister for Police has allocated only \$500 000 for public art at the Northbridge police station. That is an issue I will be pursuing.

People working in mental health have been duded. They had a wonderful community transfer centre in Mt Hawthorn. That is now closed and is sitting there empty. Instead they have \$47 000 for relocation to an office in St Georges Terrace. We need action there.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr J.N. HYDE: During the previous state election campaign, the government campaigned and probably just snuck over the line in the seat of Mount Lawley because it said it opposed a rapid transit gigantic torn-up bus lane coming along Alexander Drive and Fitzgerald Street. There were front page stories quoting the now member for Mount Lawley saying that this would be the end of the earth and that every tree in Mt Lawley would be razed because of this monstrosity.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I am taking some friendly fire here.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: I am just saying that the Liberals are totally opposed to public transport.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I say to the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure that we have discovered that the government has put out a tender for the project. There was an amendment to the project yesterday. The tender now says that it wants tenderers to address the issue of light rail. What will it do for 100 metres either side of Fitzgerald Street and Alexander Drive to incorporate the new light rail that will be going in there, too? This has been done without any consultation with local residents in my electorate. We have seen the sheer hypocrisy of the Liberal Party going to the election opposing something, and here it is advocating it without the tremendous community forums and consultation that the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure was renowned for in making communities own these important projects.

There are some good things in this budget. Many of them come from my good friend the member for Wagin. The Department of Sport and Recreation is doing some wonderful things, including some great initiatives in overseas aid that benefit us here in Western Australia. We have some amazing tours and transfers, including basketballers in our sister state of East Java in Indonesia. A number of kids in schools in east Indonesia are being exposed to discipline, camaraderie and all the benefits of organised sport through the involvement of the Department of Sport and Recreation. Whilst the previous government may have started it, the government has been canny enough to access AusAID and other funding. Every kid in Singapore is now able to swim safely in a public swimming pool because Western Australia's Department of Sport and Recreation is involved in training lifeguards and swimming instructors to ensure their safety. Children were dying in unprotected public swimming pools in Singapore all the time.

The arts do not get enough kudos, when our artists and people committed to museums, galleries and the performing arts lead the world. For example, Dr Ross Anderson from the Department of Maritime Archaeology, who looks after the Shipwreck Galleries in the Western Australian Museum, is also the president of the Australian Institute of Maritime Archaeology. He is doing some amazing work in the Asian region, particularly in the Gulf of Thailand, enabling and encouraging developing countries to look after and treasure their maritime wrecks and galleries. That has a huge benefit to us here in WA.

The Minister for Sport and Recreation put in \$83 million for the development of Perth Oval, except the rider is that it is expected to start in 2012. Why wait until the end of that year? The Town of Vincent has done the consultation. All this money will get us is an eastern grandstand. We know where it is going to go. The Town of Vincent has done all the consultation and all the stakeholders are on side. Why has the money not been given to the Town of Vincent to get on with the project now? I think there is some budget skulduggery happening there.

The Premier announced that the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting would be held in Perth next year, with 3 000 delegates and visitors, and that this would expose Western Australia to the world. Our Tourism WA is closing down its international offices and other activities. We are going back to silos. We should be using CHOGM as a chance to show WA to the world. Where is the money in the budget for the arts activities and cultural engagement that will send the message about the vibrancy and the wonders of Western Australia?

Our data system in WA is in a mess. The Department of Health is paying private data companies \$814 000 in just the first 10 months of this financial year to store patient records, as I discovered in questions on notice. In 10 months, WA Police has spent \$376 million. The poor old Minister for Local Government has been forced to admit that his department could not access its own electronic files, which are less than five years old, so it has had to pay private contractors to drag out the original paper records, which have been privatised offsite. The government's own budget states on page 569 of the *Budget Statements* that there is a lack of adequate storage space at the State Records Office; it outlines that this —

... has an impact on the ability of Government agencies to transfer, care for and access State archives.

The government needs to fix the problem. The problem needs a minute amount of money to fix it so that we do not have this problem year after year. Why are our state records important? Why is our heritage important? I just want to briefly refer to something written by Michael Sinclair-Jones, a journalist, on the Wadjemup blog spot, which is devoted to a group that runs Indigenous tours on Rottnest Island. He said that if we had access to all our archives and history, we would realise that we have turned part of Rottnest Island, the original Indigenous prisons, into tourist accommodation. People are sleeping in rooms where there were seven Indigenous prisoners. They were abused. Many died and many were assaulted. At least 370 Aboriginal prisoners are buried in the grounds nearby, each of them wrapped in the filthy blankets in which they died and are seated according to Indigenous custom—facing east to greet the rising sun. On the top of where these people are buried are tourists, empty alcohol bottles are lying around and people are riding on bicycles. We seem to have this incredible dichotomy between the heritage values of Rottnest Island and a misguided approach to tourism. We need to get

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away from the silos and work as a government in unison. A volunteer guide at the settlement on Rotto was asked why there are not more markers and more reminders and knowledge of what has happened there. Her response was that some people think there are too many heritage plaques already, so that is why they are not going up. One of the plaques reads —

The Aboriginal Burial Ground is Under Repair. Rottnest Island was a native prison from 1838 to 1931. Thousands of Aboriginal leaders and warriors were imprisoned on the island during this period and more than 370 remain in the Burial Ground in the largest unmarked Burial Ground in Australia. PLEASE RESPECT THIS SACRED PLACE AT ALL TIMES.

I fear this is actually lip-service, because we do not follow it up with the respect this area really deserves.

In 1992, when the Liberal Party was in government, the then state Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority budgeted \$400 000 to help build a commemorative centre and memorial near the burial ground. In June 1994 WA Premier Richard Court acknowledged to yet another talkfest, a statewide gathering of Indigenous representatives on Rottnest Island, that the site was the largest deaths in custody burial ground in WA. However, nothing has been done. Neville Green speculated —

... very few societies in the world would convert to tourist accommodation prison cells in which an estimated 287 people died in miserable conditions thousands of kilometres from their homelands and families. It is comparable to transforming (Nazi Germany's) Auschwitz concentration camp into holiday cottages. Tourists and well as the general public should be made aware of the fact that many men died in the holiday units of the Quod.

The 2008–09 annual report for Rottnest Island showed that \$450 000 had been earmarked for Aboriginal reconciliation and economic development. However, in the “Rottnest Island Management Plan 2009–2014: Revitalised and Moving Forward”, Western Australia's Minister for Tourism, Liz Constable, said that the island must pay for itself. She said that WA holidays cannot be subsidised by the government. We must understand that heritage, museums and tourism can co-exist in a respectful manner. This is Australia's biggest unmarked burial ground. With the enlightenment that we have in 2010 we need to address the issue of Rottnest in a mature, caring and supportive fashion.

One of the other problems in the arts area is the lack of exhibition space, which is part of my reason for saying that this government should embrace the third floor, \$30 million extension of the gallery. One of the greatest Western Australian paintings, Sally Morgan's *Welcome to Rottnest*, which shows a group of happy people laughing and singing in the top one-third of the painting and underneath them is coffin after coffin of Indigenous persons. It is one of our great works. It is lying in storage at the Art Gallery of Western Australia because the gallery can only afford to display less than eight per cent of our artworks. We need a commitment to bigger exhibition space in this state.

The final issue that I will address is changes that the government is proposing to enable the Swan River Trust to offer advertising in its areas, which means really tall billboards on the Swan River. We must have some respect for Derbarl Yerrigan. We must have some respect for not only the history of the Swan but also modern uses. This government is not funding the Department of Transport enough to police the maddies on speedboats who are obliterating the shores by going underneath the bridge at more than their recommended speed limit and who are destroying the sedges and important ecosystem of the Swan River. It is almost as though the government is giving up by saying to the Swan River Trust, “We will not give you enough money in the budget, but we will let you go out and flog giant, dirty billboards.” We need to do government better and in 2010 we actually need to do government in a sensitive way that befits the richest society in the world today.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [9.44 pm]: I would like to add my perspective on this budget and bring it to the attention of the house in a range of ways. This budget is founded on economic pain for Western Australians. In considering the Treasurer's words, I would say that, far from ensuring that the benefits and opportunities of a strong economy are shared throughout Western Australia, we see evidence of the Barnett government's unrelenting attack on the household budget—rising electricity, gas and water costs are hitting the hip pocket of the entire public system of families and communities. We are yet to see the effect of those increases trickle down. In a forward estimates sense there is a yoke of financial impediment placed around Western Australian families that has, in my view, a second and third-order effect.

The budget slugs the average family a further \$368 per year. This, on top of last year's massive increases to household bills, has also taken it to what we estimate is nearly \$1 400. Every family will have to find \$1 400 from the discretionary spend end of its budget; that is, the end of the family budget that would ordinarily go to

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other activities, such as a family outing on a weekend or allowing one of their children to go on a school excursion that is required.

In Willagee, which is in the south metropolitan area, unemployment rose last year. That has created a level of constituents in my patch who are hardest hit by these increases. The yet to be felt and second-order effect, I suppose, would be: what is the effect of the increases to utilities, for example, on council rates? What we are seeing now is that the increased costs on councils are particularly burdensome. I will quote a couple of people, who seem to be watching out for this, from *The Sunday Times* of 22 May, which states —

Homeowners will suffer a painful double jolt as soaring electricity prices also force up council rates.

That is, the second-order effect. The article continues —

They will spend an average \$316 a year more for electricity and water at home—then be slugged up to 10 per cent extra on their rates this July.

Many metropolitan councils are preparing to lift charges way beyond the local government cost index (LGCI), calculated on construction costs and the consumer price index of 1.9 per cent.

They say rises above the bench-mark are needed to cover higher charges for water and electricity for street lights and council-owned buildings.

In addition, ratepayers will fork out an extra \$28 a year for the emergency services levy, collected on behalf of the State Government.

Wanneroo Mayor Jon Kelly said the power rises would mean his council would pay an additional \$1.2 million for electricity this year.

He said rates were subsequently expected to rise by up to 7 per cent, on average. “The street-light tariff is passed on to the ratepayer”, Mr Kelly said.

That is quite obvious. To continue —

“When the State Government increases its charges, it has a huge impact on council rates, which we are now seeing.”

Families face the prospect of a further 22 per cent increase in power bills next year, further squeezing domestic budgets. That, too, will have a knock-on effect on rates.

In wanting to ensure that there is no perceived bias in quoting only the mayor of Wanneroo, I will quote the newly elected president for Western Australian Local Government Association, Mr Troy Pickard, who is reported in the same article as follows —

... utility price rises were the main reason for councils increasing rates so far ahead of the cost index.

“The index is historical, so it doesn't include the impact of (recent) electricity, water and gas increases,” Mr Pickard said.

(Increased utility costs) are the key driver of rate increases and then the anticipated increases in construction costs have also added to budgets.

The LGCI was so low this year because the global economic downturn of the past two years had lowered construction costs.

As Mayor of Joondalup, Mr Pickard said he expected rates in his own council area to increase “potentially on the higher side” of 5 to 10 per cent.

I cite that as some evidence of the impact this government's rapid increase in utility charges is having on local government councils as they try to deliver local services. One can imagine what the power bill will be for the average sports club that has to fire up those massive lights, which go on all over my electorate on just about every night of the week. Budgets are not just about cold, hard figures and forward estimates whether real, perceived or imagined; they are about people. They are about what individuals can do and certainly what families can do to improve their quality of life. People in my electorate are coming to me in increasing numbers giving me key examples of things they cannot do that they used to do. They are worried, and far from feeling secure in the knowledge of an impending mining boom, they are concerned that they are going to be left behind. They are scared that they cannot absorb any more of this government's hits on their hip pockets. They are telling me that they have no room to move. They are telling me that the increases in their electricity and gas prices and water bills are really, really hurting. Take, for example, the so-called optional extracurricular activities or school excursions. As a father of three boys, I am often dipping into my wallet to ensure that they can go to these so-

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called optional extracurricular activities; but as we all know, when my child is looking at me telling me with some excitement about some excursion down south to a local museum or to some other cultural activity that requires an extra \$20, \$30, \$50 or \$100 to participate, he sees it is a *fait accompli* that he is going to go.

I will give members an illustration of how this impacts on local community groups. I was privileged to be released for a pair, through the indulgence of the Whip and the government, to attend Fremantle Police and Community Youth Centre's annual general meeting in Hilton in my electorate. At that meeting the usual financial reports were tabled by the treasurer of the centre, which tend to be glossed over in these meetings before they move onto the next agenda item, because they have some good things to talk about in the Hilton precinct—\$4.4 million of federal government money to extend a fantastic institution giving great support to the community. When I looked at this financial statement in the treasurer's report through to March 2010, I scanned down and looked at what the costs would be in the area for council rates, electricity, water rates and water consumption. I will quote those figures. Last year this humble little community group paid \$5 700 for electricity alone. With a 22 per cent increase, there will be an additional \$1 200-odd, taking its total power bill next year to somewhere in the vicinity of \$7 000. Council rates will be an extra \$50 or \$60 on top of that, not to mention a couple of specialist services provided by the council—but I will not go into those. Then we move down to water rates; they paid \$2 300 a year for its water consumption to the end of March. With a 17 per cent increase, which is another \$400, that will take the total bill to \$2 700 for water. That is \$9 700, give or take a few extra dollars—or nearly \$10 000 in additional charges. Hilton police and citizens youth club receives money in the form of grants and support. It also does its own charity work. It had 39 000 visits at the PCYC in Hilton last year. That is 39 000 young people who would otherwise be doing *lord knows what* in the streets of Hilton, Coolbellup, Hammy Hill and Willagee, being well engaged in a range of physical activities that improve their self-confidence which is, at its base, the most important thing a community group can deliver. One of the things that Hilton PCYC is striving to achieve is the much-needed replacement of the bus that moves around the suburbs to pick up and drop off these kids late at night; that fundraising is nearly complete. The PCYC reckons it is about \$15 000 short of replacing it. Everybody in the community is working very hard to get that bus. What do members think was the profit from the PCYC last year, from which it was hoping to draw down those funds? It was \$19 000. Next year it will lose nearly \$10 000 off that bottom line to fees and charges. The yoke of the Barnett government is not just placed on families, it is placed on the community. The community must bear the brunt of this rapid rise in rates. The Hilton PCYC would like to get a bus. I do not think it will happen this year, but we are going to work hard at it. It illustrates this second-order effect that I am talking about.

The other effect is on junior sports clubs. Junior sports club in my area have reported declines in registrations this year. There are several examples. Clubs have always fundraised, but they are now turning to charities to sponsor children. Parents have come to me, amongst others, saying that they cannot afford the fees. It is about \$120 a year to register one's child to play a sport. If that sport is footy, that is just the beginning. Then there are mouthguards, shorts, boots, socks and—dare I say it?—petrol to cart them all over the metro area when they play in one club or the other. This is a very great tradition for all Australians and certainly sports-mad Western Australians. However, the slug on power bills and utility charges for those sports clubs means those prices have to go up. We have the double-ended attack: one at the kitchen table, where families are trying to sort through the bills to see what they can and cannot afford; and one at the other end of the family budget, which is the discretionary spend which says who will do what, for example, extracurricular activities like junior sport.

I take as an example Willagee Bears Rugby League Club. It is a lovely little club and is open every night of the week, not just because there is training and sports activities, but also because it recognises its role in the community to provide an alternative location for kids other than the street. It costs the club money to open it every single day and night, starting at three o'clock in the afternoon. Darryl Hansson, the president, along with Brenda Pittman and the committee, do a fantastic job. Last year they had nearly 300 registered junior players in the club and they are very proud of that. It is not an insignificant number for a small suburban club. Just last week Darryl informed me that this year the club is expecting a 10 per cent decline, given the season is well underway. What is the problem? Why is that happening? When we investigated it, we worked out that, in fact, it is the lowest income families, those who are the most marginal, who are most affected in Willagee. It is those families who are trying to get by on \$40 000 a year income. As a family they have enough problems without the dysfunction that will come from the financial stress of having their household budgets attacked by this government. I will pick one particular case. Why do I focus on junior sport as being one of the most important things in our communities? It is because it gives young people the self-confidence to go out and improve themselves. It provides alternative male and female role models, particularly for young people who are hitting the age of 13—puberty—when they are starting to move away from mum and dad and are looking for some other reference point. One case in point is a young fellow by the name of Declan Smith. I have deliberately chosen Willagee Bears Rugby League Club, because it is a bit different from the average Australian Football

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League club, which is the majority sport in this state. I want to underscore the fact that we need a multitude of sports to allow for a multitude of body shapes, mental attitudes, and emotional and physical capacities. Declan Smith is a case in point. He was what we would call a bookend. He was a little hard rock of a fellow. He was falling behind in the successive grades in his little footy club. He was not suited to that sport. It was suggested by me that he might be more suited to rugby union. So he joined his local rugby union club and found himself a niche. Before that, Declan had been losing a whole lot of self-confidence. He was moody at home, he was disruptive at school and it was clear that his self-confidence was a problem.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You would want an extension, would you not?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Only at the member's urging! Mr Speaker, will you indulge me with an extension, please?

The SPEAKER: Indeed. Extension granted.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Thank you. Mr Speaker.

Declan went off to that club, and within two weeks he was a changed young man. At 14 years of age, he had discovered the wonders of rugby and the wonders of a diversified range of sports. The cost of that is not insignificant. Declan comes from a large family. The family could see the worth of it, but did not have the money. We found some extra money to enable him to play that sport, and there he was, a couple of weeks after starting it, and he had found his niche, and he physically felt at home. Declan is being lauded by his team mates, and he is producing outstanding results for himself personally, and certainly his family is proud of him.

I also want to talk about Fremantle Junior Hawks Football Club. That is one of my favourites. It has nearly 500 registered players. It is going fantastically well. But the coach comes to me routinely and says, "We have got this kid, this kid and this kid. They come from dysfunctional families and single-parent families. Money is really tight at home. These kids are really good. They are a really important part of my team. I can see them coming on." Some of these kids are superstars for the team, and others are just travellers, as I was in most of the teams that I played in. But they nonetheless deserve a fair go. The club has done all it can to reduce the fees and ensure that they have an opportunity to explore what life has to offer in the suburb. Right now, we are sponsoring nearly seven kids through the Fremantle Junior Hawks. The local shop owners are probably sick of seeing me turning up for a hand-out, trying to find the extra bits and pieces that they need. It is a very good example of what happens.

What is the third-order effect? The yoke of financial burden on the family budget creates a problem with the discretionary spend and what the family can do with the kids. That means that the kids may not get to do the things that they want to do. They feel dispossessed. They feel concerned that they cannot participate in all that society has to offer. They hear about this fantastic boom that is going on and about how the streets are paved with gold. But in reality, the third-order effect is that they cannot participate and they have to find other ways to entertain themselves, so off they go into the night, roaming the streets. I see them in Hilton, Coolbellup and Hamilton Hill roaming the streets, losing their self-confidence and becoming more and more embittered in a community that does not allow them access. This is what it is all about. This government has imposed on these young people a complete inability to participate. It is an equity issue. It is an issue of equity of access to everything that all of us enjoy. That equity is being assaulted. Who picks up the pieces? These kids cannot participate in the community. They turn to crime and antisocial behaviour. There are more kids on the streets. The people who pick up the pieces are all the little community groups that are toiling away in the electorate. Do not forget that 33 per cent of the population of the seat of Willagee lives in public housing. This has its own unique flavour and problems. These people are no less deserving of all the fruits and benefits of our community.

These people are picked up by groups like Willagee Alive. That group of people are working tirelessly. They are not just coming together as a local community group and drafting letters to various ministers and mayors talking about how hard it is and the troubles they are having with antisocial behaviour and the lack of footpaths and this, that or the other. This is a very positive group of people. They actually get out there and try to create community activities that will bring their local community together and build it. Building communities is also a very important role. Kathy Heath at Willagee Alive and the committee are doing some fantastic work in a range of areas. For example, with Men's Health Week coming up, they have been very active, and we have been assisting them in trying to get some staff from the Fremantle Docks—I have noticed lately that there are many staff at the Docks—to be their guest speakers. They are really active in trying to get the things done that they need to get done. A corresponding group is the Hilton Precinct group. That group has been chaired for many years by Mary Barton. She has been an absolute force of nature in Hilton. She was one of the key movers of a range of

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initiatives within the Hilton suburb, particularly the annual Hilton harvest growers market, which operates from one of the green commons in Hilton, and she does a fantastic job.

Another group that is very interesting is the Fremantle Police and Community Youth Centre. That is a unique organisation of people, as we would all agree. As I said, I went to their annual general meeting tonight, and I was very interested to see the sorts of things that they have done. They have had 39 000 visits. Senior Constable Ian Abercrombie, who is in charge, and Senior Constable Ian Hill, his assistant, and the committee, have been absolutely fantastic. That is a real success story that has been built on cobbled-together funding that comes from a range of sources, not the least of which is the charity donations that they glean from the public and businesses. Tonight at their annual general meeting they honoured a lady in their outstanding senior awards. Her name is Lynette Garlett, and I would like to record the gratitude that I have for the work that she does so quietly. She is an Indigenous lady, and she works with Indigenous kids to make sure they stay connected.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: What is her name?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Her name is Lynette Garlett.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: I know another Lynette Garlett. That is obviously not the one you know.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: This group is very impressive, because it actually took on a state ward—a young Aboriginal boy by the name of Raymond Campbell. At the age of 12 he was a classic example of someone who was just wandering the streets and creating mayhem. Now they cannot keep that kid away from the joint. He won the award for the most outstanding junior, because he turns up every day to assist in setting up, pulling down and participating in a range of activities. These are the sorts of community groups that are going to be slugged by this budget. I have already outlined the PCYC's problem and how it is being slugged. This is a really important point. There is a second and third-order effect.

I want to spend my final few minutes to draw back on a theme that I started on when I first came to this place, when I talked about vision, leadership and opportunity. The clock has ticked over once more on this government—another budget, another year. Where in the budget papers—there is a tonne of them—is the vision? One of the things that I would always advocate is that there needs to be a whole-of-government strategy about where this business called Western Australia is heading.

All we have seen in this budget is just a lot of linear, obvious activity. Build a port in Oakajee—it is pretty obvious. Doing the things that are, in my view, the minimal requirement is not delivering a vision. An example of course is renewable energy. I did that classic thing when we look at the budget, I searched the budget papers electronically. How many times did renewable energy turn up in the budget? Three times. What area of the budget did renewable energy fall under? Not power, not economics, but environment. For some reason this government thinks renewable energy is just about the environment as opposed to the vision of possibility that this renewable energy sector can actually be part of a vision about creating a more industrious, innovative and growing state. There was an opportunity to lighten the burden on household budgets and families and give them an opportunity to look at what they could and could not do and what they could participate in. This government's lack of commitment to the renewable energy sector is a broken promise, a backdown and a backflip, but it will call it a residential feed-in tariff. The previous Labor government had committed to a gross feed-in tariff. According to my notes, it stated that a gross residential photovoltaic feed-in tariff of 60c per kilowatt hour will be payable for systems of one to 10 kilowatts until the cost of installing the panels is paid back. A gross tariff ensures that the household is paid for each unit of energy generated by that photovoltaic panel. This would dramatically shorten the payback time for the average family who wanted to do its bit for the environment and its own electricity bills.

What is the effect of a micro reform? This is part of the vision. It is not simply the panels that we put on individuals' roofs to make them feel good; it is the fact that the people who live under those roofs go out of those houses every morning and go into the businesses and all the institutions of this state and take with them that mindset that says, "Any small change is a good change." Those middle managers who come out of those houses and go into Woodside, BHP and Coles take that thinking with them so that when they are coming up with their own policies and having their own input into their own committees, they will come from the concept of renewable energy. Therefore, the effect of micro action is actually quite important. However, what did the Liberal Party give us? The Liberal Party agreed in its policy document to a plan to introduce a feed-in tariff to provide a genuine incentive for homeowners to install renewable energy systems and examine options for extending the scheme to small businesses and commercial premises. The Minister for Energy confirmed on 1 April 2009 that he intended to introduce a gross feed-in tariff. He stated —

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In Western Australia, we have committed to a 60c gross feed-in tariff. I understand that that is the same as the situation under the previous government.

This set many people in the renewable energy industry at ease and everybody rejoiced; they breathed out. But it is a backflip. What do we see in this budget? We see a net feed-in tariff. Do we see any study on the small to medium enterprises? Those with the largest roofs and the largest plots of land to absorb renewable energy such as wind and solar have not been investigated, despite the promise of this government. The counter has ticked over again; one more budget down and no vision and no opportunity for the people of Western Australia to participate in a grand vision for a grand state.

In my final comment I acknowledge a person from the suburb of Hilton, the principal of Hilton Primary School, Aaron Thomas. He is newly appointed—he has been there for only eight months—and is doing fantastic work. He will get every ounce of support I can give because of his innovative approach and his vision for his school to take it from one of the lowest performing schools. In fact, the school was so low performing that the department wanted to send in a range of specialists to assist. Enrolments fell to about 140; he has now already got that up to 190. He has a strong, vibrant and active parents and citizens association that is well attended by in the order of 30 people every time it meets, which is fantastic to see. Aaron has brought the Hilton harvest group in on a permanent lease basis. He has new classrooms going up and deserves accolades from me and certainly this house for being one of those really good important people who produce community for us.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Those sorts of people are absolutely worth their weight in gold.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: They are.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [10.14 pm]: I am pleased to contribute to this debate. I always comment to people that there are not often times for members of Parliament to talk about their electorates, but this is one of those occasions. It is also an opportunity to talk about the broken promises of the Liberal government, and I will do that as well.

However, I will start by congratulating the Cannington police for arresting two men today for the attack on the Queens Park mosque. This is an excellent outcome. A couple of months ago some bullets were fired at the Queens Park mosque's dome. That was an attack on all religions in this state and it was an attack on all Western Australians. I am very pleased to see that the police have arrested two men today for that offence and have arrested another man in relation to unlicensed firearm offences. These three men apparently, according to police comments in the media, are members of a Perth-based national extremist group called Combat 18. Clearly, these are the sorts of groups that we do not want to have in our community. They do not represent people born in Australia; they represent narrow-minded ignorance and they are to be condemned. I do not know whether these men are guilty of any crime, but I am very pleased that the police have made an arrest in this matter.

I also congratulate Tammy Borsi, the president of the Queens Park Primary School parents and citizens association, and Alannah Sturch, the outgoing president, for obtaining a \$1 500 grant from Peet and Co, who are the developers of the Quattro Queens Park development, which is an innovative program from the former government to put a new type of housing into Queens Park. The former government bulldozed the Maniana Homeswest estate and redeveloped it with some public housing and some private housing. Peet and Co are doing that development. I thank it for making that donation to the parents and citizens association at Queens Park. I also acknowledge Lesley Ghent, the principal, and the work that she does.

This budget has been called dull and it is said to be a no-frills budget. Really, for residents of Cannington, that is not a proper characterisation of this budget. This is a budget of slugs and broken promises. I will give some examples. The government has not given any funding for the Canning River Eco Education Centre's education officer. This \$2 million investment in the eastern suburbs by the former Labor government will be left diminished because the state government, in a massive budget with massive revenues—the highest levels of revenue ever in the history of the state—cannot find \$80 000 for the eco education centre's education officer.

The government has cut Redress WA payments to people who live in Cannington and other areas of the state. I keep saying that I do not understand why the government does not fix this problem. The last time I was talking about this, the Minister for Health interjected on me to say that that problem was being solved. Unfortunately, the interjection was wrong and it has not been solved.

I suppose that we can say that this budget is really typical for a Liberal Party budget.

Mr J.H.D. Day: You mean good!

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, I mean that it ignores ordinary people. I draw the house's attention to a contribution made by the member for Riverton on 9 March 2010 in reference to this government's passion for increasing the costs of living of ordinary folk in this state. The member for Riverton stated —

The real issue is not whether we are increasing the cost to householders, but basically how it is to be funded.

I can tell the member for Riverton and the Liberal government how it will be funded. It will be funded out of pensioners in the electorate of Cannington not using their air conditioners in summer. It will be funded by pensioners in the electorate of Cannington using blankets and turning off the heater. That is how it will be funded. It will be funded by pensioners not using the radio during the day. That is the sort of thing that pensioners in my electorate have been telling me that they will have to do to deal with this constant increase in costs. Increasing costs on local pensioners, local workers and local people is the agenda of this government—\$1 500 so far in its two budgets. It is interesting to note that the Premier is proud of his \$290 million-odd surplus that he is promising for next year. Of course, the amount of additional slugs on the living costs of Western Australians is actually more than that surplus. It is therefore the families and retirees of this state and in the electorate of Cannington who will pay for this surplus in the current financial year and in the following financial year.

This is a government with more money than has ever been seen in the state. It has all that money, but it does not have money to build a slip road at the end of Manning Road to join it onto the southern path of Kwinana Freeway. That is a decision that would be welcomed by the member for South Perth—I am happy to advocate on that matter, even though he is not present in the chamber—and by the people of Cannington, who also use Manning Road.

This is a government that continues to break promises. It breaks promises to the constituents of Cannington, as it does to everybody else in the state. For example, the government promised to employ 500 additional police officers over the five financial years starting from 2009–10, yet it will employ only 350; that is, 150 fewer than it promised. It promised to cut tax rates, but it has not done so. It is important that every member of the chamber understands that the government has not reduced any of the tax levels that it used to constantly criticise the former government for maintaining. We just heard from the member for Willagee about the gross feed-in tariff—another broken promise.

I also want to refer to a particular broken promise; that is, one that I actually welcome, which is the decision of the government to cancel funding for the construction of Roe Highway stage 8. I draw the attention of the house to the member for Riverton's contribution to the debate on 25 February. Quoting from *Hansard*, he said —

Another issue raised during the election campaign in Riverton, which is probably one of the most significant issues the government has addressed in my electorate, was the extension of Roe Highway. It is the reason I won the seat.

That is how high the member for Riverton put this matter. He said that this was the reason he won his seat. I go on to again quote the member for Riverton on 18 May 2010 —

Roe Highway stage 8 is a bottom line capital expenditure and, more importantly, it is an essential piece of capital investment.

He went on —

It will go somewhere.

That was a very interesting comment. However, what we see in this budget is the cancellation of funds for the construction of Roe Highway stage 8. I draw the attention of the house now to the *Canning Times* of today, 25 May, which states —

Transport Minister Simon O'Brien said the Budget reaffirmed the Government's election commitment to provide \$20 million to commence construction of the highway extension.

That is very different from what the member for Riverton said. The member for Riverton said that the government did not promise \$20 million to begin construction, but promised to construct it. I go on now to quote from the newspaper, which states that the minister said —

“Once the project scope is defined, a further allocation for the construction phase of the project will be sought.”

There are a couple of things to think about there. The first is that on page 83 of the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement* of 2008–09, there was an allocation of \$20 million to Roe Highway stage 8 for

Extract from Hansard

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Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

the 2011–12 financial year. That is consistent with what the minister said in that quote in the media. However, we need to also look at the budget papers for the 2009–10 financial year. The amounts across the forward estimates in the budget on page 430 of those documents are \$8.881 million for 2009–10; \$65.9 million for 2010–11; \$49.4 million for 2011–12; and \$41.68 million for 2012–13. Those are therefore very significant amounts of money that the government said it would spend on that road construction project.

When we turn to page 431 of this year's budget papers, it can be seen that \$6 million will be spent in the 2010–11 financial year and \$8.745 million in the 2011–12 financial year. That is very different from what appeared last year. The government has taken \$145.878 million out of funding for this project. There is no longer any allocation for the construction of this road project. This is a con. It is a con by the Liberal Party on the people of Riverton, and indeed on the people of my electorate, particularly in the suburb of Wilson. The Liberal Party told people in Wilson that they would benefit from building this road to somewhere. The government has made no commitment to build the road. There is absolutely not one dollar allocated to the construction of that road program. The minister may say, "Oh, well; we'll come back at a later date to make that decision." Maybe it will, maybe it will not; but we know that the government had an allocation for the construction of the road and that allocation has been cancelled. Not only that; the amount that the government said it would spend in the 2009–10 financial year will be underspent by \$3.5 million. It is not even spending little dribs and drabs that it has allocated to the project. That is clearly a trick or a con job that the Liberal Party is playing on electors, not only in the electorate of Riverton, but also in my electorate, particularly in the suburb of Wilson. The only effective way to deal with the issue of traffic noise on Leach Highway is to ban large trucks using it. Remember, even if Roe Highway stage 8 was ever to be built—not that the Liberal Party is going to build it, but if it ever did—it still would not solve the problem of Leach Highway being the shortest route from Kewdale to Fremantle. The only way this problem will be solved is if the government does what the Labor Party said should be done—ban large trucks on Leach Highway. We need this government to enforce that truck ban.

I mentioned forward estimates. I know the Premier likes to stand in Parliament and say that forward estimates do not matter; that forward estimates are not what they say they are when Treasury says, "This is what the intention of the government is in the out years." The Premier says that that is not right. I want to draw the house's attention to a wonderful document entitled "Uniform Presentation Framework" of March 1997. It can be found on the website of the federal Treasury. I quote page v —

This publication outlines the revised uniform presentation framework agreed to by the Australian Loan Council in March 1997.

It goes on to explain how budget papers are to be presented. I know the Deputy Speaker is very interested in technical matters of budget presentation. Interestingly, this was agreed between the former state Liberal government and the former federal Liberal government. These presentation guidelines were not invented by the Labor Party; these were the invention of Liberal Party governments in this state and nationally with the former Howard government. I will read from page 6 of the document. It explains why Richard Court's Liberal government, when he was the Treasurer, and the current Premier was the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party—John Howard and Peter Costello were in their former roles as Prime Minister and Treasurer in the commonwealth government—agreed to these procedures to have forward estimates in the budget papers. I quote from page 6 —

The revised uniform reporting framework enhances the current reporting arrangements through two particular changes: the inclusion of forward estimates for the general government sector and the inclusion of information on the public financial enterprise sector.

These changes have the potential to significantly improve the usefulness of the reports. In particular, the inclusion of three-year forward estimates for the general government sector presents a more forward-looking set of reports.

Forward estimates provide important information and significantly increase the ability of users of government reports to assess fiscal trends.

The important thing here is that the reason we do forward estimates is so that governments cannot con constituents. Back in the 1970s, if a project was to last more than one year, the government would only allocate money for that project for one year and then leave the next year in some sort of fiscal mess that had to be climbed out of. Forward estimates force governments to be honest. They cannot just go to a media conference and announce a project and then not fund it in the forward estimates. By projecting in the forward estimates, everybody who looks at how the government spends its money can see whether it fits into the fiscal framework going forward so that there are no big shocks or holes in the budget.

Dr K.D. Hames: So what's your problem with the forward estimates?

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I thank the Minister for Health for interjecting. I will give him an example. The government has allocated only \$10 million to Royal Perth Hospital. The minister has interjected on me to say that that is not right, yet that is clearly what is in the budget papers.

Dr K.D. Hames: Why do I need to do more?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The minister needs to do that because he is not being honest. The government has delayed the children's hospital because it cannot afford it. It is not prepared to 'fess up. It has delayed Roe stage 8 because it is not able to fund it. The Labor Party said that \$550 million for Roe Highway stage 8 is a waste of money, and the government agrees with us. There is a cabinet decision to de-fund Roe stage 8. Where is the media release? Where is the honesty? Why hide behind a media release instead of taking action? Forward estimates are designed to protect us from the Liberal lies that we got during the election campaign and that have been continued in the media releases of this government in which it announces projects that it does not fund. A number of members of Parliament will go over this matter —

Dr K.D. Hames: Raise it in estimates and then I can show you where you're wrong.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Roe stage 8 has not been funded. That is a disgrace. The government should fund the Manning Road slip-road, because that is an important project that would cost very little. It should stop being dishonest with the people of Riverton and the people of my electorate.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I turn now to another topic—goods and services tax revenue. We have heard lots of commentary and discussion by the current Treasurer about how GST revenue is declining. When the Labor Party was in government, it campaigned very strongly for a recasting of the agreement that the Western Australian Liberal government entered into with John Howard that set out the formula that delivers GST revenue to this state. We said at the time it was struck that that formula was not appropriate and that the system that the Liberal Party locked Western Australia into for the future was wrong; we continue to say that. When GST revenue estimates in the 2009–10 budget, which can be found at page 50 of budget paper No 3, are compared with the same estimates in the 2010–11 budget, which can be found at page 61 of budget paper No 3, there is \$1 857 million in extra revenue from GST. Over those two years, \$1 857 million more is now expected to be delivered in the out years than was expected last year. That means that in the current financial year, the government expects an additional \$253 million in GST revenue than it did at the time of the budget. The surplus is \$290 million. The surplus figures are on page 5 of budget paper No 3. The government expects an additional \$313 million in revenue next year, which actually exceeds the expected surplus by \$27 million. In 2011–12, the additional GST revenue will be \$688 million, which again exceeds the budgeted surplus of only \$652 million. In 2012–13, the government expects an extra \$603 million compared with a \$807 million expected surplus, with only \$200 million from other sources. Basically, that final \$200 million is much less than the amount of additional charges on ordinary families in this state. It is interesting that when we look at the budget papers, we find that GST revenue is delivering the surplus to this government that it is prepared to crow about.

There is no doubt that the formula that we have been locked into by the Liberal Party is not advantageous to Western Australia, and I believe it is appropriate to recast that. But it is also appropriate for the government to 'fess up and be honest about the fact that it has this river of gold and this incredible level of income. There has never been a government with higher taxes that has taxed more; there has never been a government that spends more than this government; and there has never been a government that gets more benefits from the commonwealth than this government. Indeed, the federal stimulus spending all around this state—in schools and hospitals such as the Midland hospital—has made a big impact on the financial performance of this government. That the federal government is funding the construction of public housing in Western Australia, not the state government, is a credit to the Labor Party and the federal government. The member for Southern River says he is opposed to federal stimulus money spending in Western Australia, and I was present at the Christmas dinner for the City of Gosnells last year when he said that the federal stimulus money was causing inflation in Western Australia and it was the cause of interest rates going up, which is a very interesting analysis. I would love to see what he says when he goes to the schools in his electorate and says, "I don't want this school expansion; I don't want this new library; I don't want these new classrooms." It would be very interesting to hear those speeches when he cuts the ribbon. The member for Southern River says all the time that he is an honest man and I have no reason to doubt that, so I am sure he will get up at those school openings and say, "I opposed these projects and I am proud to have opposed them." It will be interesting to see him take that honest approach to those federal stimulus projects. Also, I note that there is absolutely not one cent in this budget for the delivery of any rail line to the electorate of Southern River, once again.

Mr P. Abetz interjected.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member keeps saying that—it is a load of rubbish! But, anyway, that is okay.

Mr P. Abetz: It's true!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is not true—the member does not know what he is talking about. It is better to quit when the member is behind.

Mr C.C. Porter: Is that how you ended up here?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I turn now to the question of the state government's tax effort. Page 36 of budget paper No 3 has two tables of tax competitiveness. The first one is "Tax as a share of GSP", and the second is "Tax per Capita". This year, again, the budget papers state that the appropriate measure of tax competitiveness is tax as a share of GSP. When the Liberal Party was in opposition it said that was not the appropriate measure; it said that tax per capita was the appropriate measure. It is funny how things change when the former opposition gets into government, is it not?

On the same point, page 18 of last year's budget paper No 3 contained a third table of tax competitiveness measures, which was headed "Tax Effort". That showed the relative tax effort of each of the states and territories, and of course Western Australia had the highest tax effort. It is interesting that the most negative of the graphs in last year's budget papers has been deleted from this year's budget papers. It will be interesting to know why the government decided to delete the most embarrassing of its tables. I am saying that the government is trying to cook the presentation of the budget. There is simply no doubt that it has looked at that tax table and thought that it is no good and it does not want to be exposed for the real situation.

Page 64 of this year's budget paper No 3 contains a very useful table about taxation revenue in Western Australia and how it will grow and grow and grow over the out years. The government is expecting a five per cent growth in tax take this year, having come off a 10 per cent growth in the financial year 2009–10, and there will be a further 10 per cent growth in tax revenues for 2011–12; a nine per cent growth in 2012–13; and then going out to a 7.9 per cent growth in 2013–14. This is not a low-taxing government. It has not adjusted any of the tax rates it inherited—the tax rates that it so criticised in opposition—and it is now very, very happy to accept all those benefits.

I will turn now to two other matters before I conclude my contribution. The first is that as the Deputy Chair of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee, I was very pleased that the government tabled its response to the committee's report on caravans and camping grounds. I am not talking on behalf of the committee; this is my personal view.

I am pleased that the government has allocated \$20 million out of royalties for regions, which was one of the committee's recommendations, and that it has agreed to the 100 per cent land tax concession. In the government's response it did not accept recommendation 52, which states —

Tourism Western Australia target caravanning and camping as part of its strategic priorities, with a budget allocation to carry this out.

The government provides an explanation of why it did that. I asked the chief executive officer of Tourism WA what percentage of Tourism WA's promotion budget is spent specifically promoting caravanning and camping tourism in WA. The answer was that there would be no specific allocation. Again, I am not speaking on behalf of the committee. The point is that the reason I am pleased by that recommendation is that if Tourism WA does not actually have a specific action on caravan tourism, it will continue to be ignored. I know that there are nice words in there from the government about this and I am not specifically criticising it, but, rather, the bureaucracy. The users say they do not get any help from Tourism WA, and I would prefer to listen to the users rather than to the bureaucrats. That is the reason I believe that the government should respond differently to that.

My next point is that recommendation 33 states —

The Minister for Planning provides for 'lifestyle villages' to be developed on rural zone land.

That recommendation was also not accepted by the government. The reason that I support that recommendation is that it would allow for lifestyle villages to be developed at a lower cost than if they are developed on urban land. That is an important issue if we are to use lifestyle villages to keep relative costs down. I reiterate that I am not talking on behalf of the committee; it is my own commentary.

I will conclude on one other issue. On 25 February 2010 the Premier said —

The mining companies are aware of it —

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

That is, the Premier's intention to increase royalty rates —

and some of them have expressed their views. I have to say that a few people who work around the mining industry came up to me over summer and said, "By the way, Colin, the mining companies are getting away with murder; they're not paying enough." A number of people working in the mining industry have said that.

This is obviously in the context of the current debate on the resource super profits tax on mining companies. I do not know all the details of the resource super profits tax and I am not intending to go into all those arguments. However, I draw members' attention to page 70 of budget paper No 3 and to the chart that shows the difference in the population share of funding for Western Australia. There is no question that it is collapsing and needs to be addressed. For 85 years of Federation, WA was receiving a greater share of funding than its population share of funding. If we go back to the start of that chart—that is, 1980–81—WA was getting over 22 per cent more than our population share of funding. Let us not get hysterical about this issue. The idea that somehow or other WA would be better off separating from the rest of the country is rubbish. People should not be presenting a case in that way.

For 85 years we were a mendicant state. Nobody will go to the families of *HMAS Sydney* sailors who died defending our coast and say, "They didn't come from WA." We owe a debt to every Australian. It was the rest of the country that funded the trans-national railway, which of course was John Forrest's price for entering the Federation. We cannot simply ignore 100 years of history. Of course Western Australia is not getting a fair share of revenues from the commonwealth. A deal was done by the Liberal Party—a deal opposed by the Labor Party and a deal that it tried to get changed when it was in government and which was opposed by those members opposite who are now in government. There are inevitable consequences of the deal done by the Court government with the Howard government. It is penalising Western Australians and we need to change that. Let us not be hysterical about these arguments.

MR A.P. O'GORMAN (Joondalup) [10.45 pm]: I rise to make a short contribution to this budget debate. I note that once again this government has delivered a mean-spirited budget that attacks families right across our state. It has done that for the past two budgets, which is outrageous considering it came to power promising the sun, the moon and the stars and does not even have a bucket of soil to hand away. We have seen that approach from the Liberal–National government since it formed government. One of the very first actions of the government was to cancel the Craigie community house project in my electorate. I had been fighting for that project since I came to Parliament. Under our government, it was funded and the land was allocated. We were about to go to tender when the early election was called. One of the first actions of this government was to cancel that project. The Craigie community house did not come about by accident. It took many years of negotiation. We looked at the figures and at what was needed and it was decided that of all the suburbs, Craigie needed that community service most. This government callously ripped that away from the Craigie community and left it without a similar facility. That was the first mean-spirited thing that this government did in my electorate.

When we lost government, the development of the former Craigie High School site was out for public consultation. It has now been nearly two years—18 months—since this government came to power, and we have seen hardly any movement on that project at all. The only movement we have seen is that bulldozers have bulldozed the old basketball courts where there was a serious problem with graffiti.

Mr A.P. Jacob interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The member for Ocean Reef will get his chance to speak. I know that the member is grumpy because he got nothing in the budget for Ocean Reef and nor did the members for Wanneroo and Kingsley. The member for Ocean Reef was on the council when the council asked the government for money to keep the walls of the basketball court as a graffiti wall. The member for Ocean Reef sponsored the graffiti wall.

Mr A.P. Jacob: Are you sure?

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Yes, I am sure.

Mr A.P. Jacob: It wasn't a council decision.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: It was a council decision.

Mr A.P. Jacob: Not while I was on it.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: It was, and the member knows it. The government removed that. I have thanked the government for that in this place previously. However, the government has not removed all of it, and not an inch of dirt has been moved to turn that high school site into housing. The Minister for Housing is trying hard to get blocks on the market. I am aware that that responsibility for that particular block belongs not with the Minister

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for Housing but with LandCorp. The Minister for Housing has been trying hard to release more blocks so that we can drive down the median house price. However, we have not seen anything from this government about that site, and the people of Craigie are getting fed up with nothing happening to the site. When we left government, it was out for consultation but that has stopped. There has been just one consultation meeting. Unfortunately, that happened on the morning that Hon Jock Ferguson passed away and so I could not make it because I was doing other things. That site is still sitting there.

Since the Liberal–National government was formed, the former Camberwarra Primary School has closed and merged with Craigie Primary School to become Craigie Heights Primary School. We put \$13 million in the budget to build the school and, yes, it has been built. It has not been officially opened yet but it has been built. I spoke to the teachers and the principal of the school and they are very proud of that facility.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Do they like you?

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: My name is in the front foyer.

Mr A.P. Jacob interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The government had not put anything in the budget. If the member had been in government, that school would not have been built. It would not have been built under a Liberal–National government. It is only because we had the contract let and we had the project moving. The member should not start, or I will start picking on all the things that this government has not funded and that the member has not even worked in his electorate to get.

Mr C.C. Porter interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Listen, Mr Tin Man, over there. We will talk about him as well, the man with no heart, the man who gets up in this place and talks about breastfeeding as though it is dot points on a piece of paper in a piece of legislation. He does not understand it. He stood up and made a speech about it, offending about every woman in this state, apart from the member for Scarborough because I know that she supports attacking breastfeeding mothers as well. That is the way he was.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Do not bully me!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Let me go back to Camberwarra Primary School.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I do not know. They are a bit touchy when the truth comes back out. Let me go back to the Camberwarra Primary School site. That school closed at the start of this year with the opening of Craigie Heights Primary School. Absolutely nothing has been done; not even a decision has been made about that site. The buildings out there are open to vandalism. They have had their windows broken. There is little or no security. People living all around it are in fear of what might happen when people such as vandals and hoons start moving in there and start taking the place apart. Craigie Heights Primary School is a fantastic new school, which was built and funded under our government and completed during this government's time. It would never have been funded if the member for Ocean Reef had been in government—never ever. Just outside it we are looking for a 40 kilometre an hour zone. The school cannot get a 40 kilometre an hour zone for 100 metres along that road. A street called Beltana Road is quite a snaky street with a bit of rise and fall. The residents of that street have contacted my office. They are fearful that there will be an accident with children because of the number of cars that are speeding through there. But we cannot get a 40 kilometre an hour zone on Beltana Road in Craigie. The member for Churchlands could get such a speed limit because she is a member of the government. She can get what she wants. The government does not care about Labor electorates.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: We understood it and we actually did it.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Keep on going, member for Joondalup; you are inciting them.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: They have come in to listen to me because they are upset. That is my suburb of Craigie.

Mr A.P. Jacob: Is there a 40 kilometre an hour limit on Camberwarra?

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: No.

Mr A.P. Jacob: If on Camberwarra there is no 40 kilometre an hour limit, why are you arguing for Beltana then, because Camberwarra is the main street?

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Camberwarra Drive is fine. The issue is the number of cars coming up Beltana Road to get onto Spinaway Street to get to Craigie Heights Primary School. Residents have complained about Beltana Road, and that is what the school has complained about. When they wrote to the Department of Transport they were told no, because it was not immediately outside the school. It does not matter about the risk factor and that 100 metres up the road is the highest risk; it is the fact that it is not the road that the school is on. We are not going to get it on Beltana, we are not going to get it on Camberwarra, which is an extra 100 metres up the road. The member must go there to know the issue and not just throw in silly comments.

If I may move on to public transport, the upgrading of the facilities at Edgewater train station was another project funded by the Carpenter and Gallop governments. That is one of the things that I had been pushing for, probably for the whole eight years that we were in government, and finally I got a breakthrough. The reason that we are looking for an upgrade is that, yes, there are some shelters there, but where that particular spot is —

Mr P.T. Miles: Why did you say there is not any funding?

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: It is not new funding. It has been there for years. The member should read the paper properly. I did not say that we did not get any funding. I said that we did not get any new funding.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Members opposite should get back in their box! There is no extra funding for that.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I feel a speech coming on, Mr Deputy Speaker! I feel a speech coming on!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Not one new bolt has been put into Edgewater station in the past two years. That project would have been finished had we stayed in government. An extra 120 or 140 bays were added to Edgewater station. Again, that was commenced under our government and was completed under the current government. We have just seen the opening of an extra 160 bays at Whitfords station. The bays at Greenwood are not open yet. But I would lay London to a brick that as soon as those bays are opened, within a week or two weeks all those bays will be taken up. There is no forward planning in this budget for adding any extra car bays.

Mr A.P. Jacob interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I am talking about my electorate. There is nothing extra. They do not look! They do not think! All they want to do is have a budget that is in surplus. All they want to do is prop up their own organisations and slug everyone else!

There is no money in the budget for the Joondalup Health Campus construction to compensate people in the surrounding suburbs for the dust. The people in Upney Mews are talking to me at the moment about how their houses are being covered in dust because of the construction work. When I have gone to John Holland, which is the construction company out there, I have been told that nothing was given to it in the budget to remedy that problem.

Dr K.D. Hames: They have got the contract. It comes under the contract. We gave your electorate an extra \$100 million for Joondalup hospital.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The minister knows about this, because he told me that he had a developer developing across the road from him who did the same thing. That was a promise that was made last year. That is a promise that had to be fulfilled.

Dr K.D. Hames: It was spread over four years.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: There is no new money in this budget for that.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr P. PAPALIA: Mr Deputy Speaker, I really am having trouble hearing the member for Joondalup. I know that he has invited interjections, but there are so many going on that I am incapable of hearing the member.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, will you settle down, please!

Debate Resumed

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O’Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Yes, Deputy Premier, settle down! He should be calm, and then no-one will have to give him a Bex and get him to lie down! Take it easy!

I turn now to public transport. The only train carriages that are on order are the ones that were ordered by Hon Alannah MacTiernan when she was Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. No new train carriages have been ordered. There is a three to five year lead-in to get those carriages built. What can we assume from that? The government is not going to build many more rail lines. It may build the Butler station. It is a Butler station. It is not a Brighton station, because that is a furphy, and I am sure the member for Mindarie will talk about that when he gets up. The government was shamed into that by the member for Mindarie when he did his protest on the day the freeway was opened. There is also no new money for new buses. There is money to replace some existing buses, but there is no money for expansion. Not one extra bus will we get on the roads out of this budget, or even in the forward estimates, for that matter. So how are we going to get people out of their cars and to the train stations? How are we going to get some sustainability and some environmental benefits out of public transport when there is no money in the budget for that? It is outrageous that this government is quite happy to keep pushing cars onto the roads.

That brings me to the freeway. The freeway between Hepburn Avenue and Hodges Drive is only two lanes. I have been driving up and down that freeway for the best part of 30 years. When I started, it used to stop at Hutton Street. When we got into government, we committed to building a freeway and we built the freeway north from Hodges Drive through to Burns Beach Road with three lanes. The only bit of freeway that the Court government built—which was not actually funded by the state government; it was funded by the federal government—was the two-lane bit from Ocean Reef Road to Hodges Drive. Yes, the Court government expanded it to three lanes as far as Hepburn Avenue, which relieved some of the traffic pressures and congestion that we had, but now we have a bigger problem. From about six o’clock—I do not wake up much earlier than that—or five o’clock or even 5.30 am, for all I know—I like my sleep so I do not wake up until 6.00 am—we have congestion on Ocean Reef Road. It is the new buzzword; mention Ocean Reef Road, and the first thing one hears is that traffic has stopped, because that is all that happens. The traffic stops at Ocean Reef Road between 6.00 and 9.00 every morning. A bit further along, around Hutton Street, it chokes up. We have to do something about that.

There are ways of doing something; the Minister for Commerce has mentioned one or two things, such as pushing government departments out of the CBD and into the suburbs, but he has gone only as far as Stirling, in the member for Scarborough’s electorate. It does not help transport congestion on the freeway. We still have thousands upon thousands of cars coming down the freeway every day. People cannot get on trains, because they are full.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: We need extra money in the budget so that we can relieve some of that congestion, because it is taking more than an hour to get from Joondalup to the city in the morning. In fact, the last time I did it during peak traffic, it took nearly an hour and a half. I am talking only about expanding it to three lanes between Hepburn Avenue and Hodges Drive at the moment.

Dr K.D. Hames: Isn’t it as bad going the other way in the evening as well?

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Yes; both ways. Does the minister agree? Will he lobby on my behalf?

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Does the minister mean the office of Hon Michael Mischin, on which has been spent an extra \$95 000? He had one office done up, then he moved to the next one. Is that the one the minister is talking about?

We need money for that, because the people in the northern suburbs need to come into the city sometimes to work. I would much rather see them on public transport; I would much rather see more trains, but the government has put no money into trains or buses, either.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: That is not the centre of the universe; Joondalup is!

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: It might be for the member.

I turn to the government’s attack on small non-government organisations. I raised a grievance last Thursday about this and the “Tin Man”—sorry, the Attorney General—attacked me because I gave some misleading

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information. I agree that the way I said it was probably misleading. I should have said that in this particular community sector, it is seldom, if ever, that they have to go dollar for dollar. I have gone back and checked through the small NGOs, and not one of them has to provide dollar-for-dollar funding in the community sector. The Attorney General quoted a range of arts NGOs and other NGOs that probably do. We are making them find dollar for dollar to try to get some money out of proceeds of crime, even recognising that some of these groups are doing excellent work out in the suburbs.

Mr C.C. Porter interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Say, 25 per cent; it is still a large amount. Most of my organisations out there tell me that they cannot do it. It is just not possible. Yes, he says that they can apply for all the grants, but now they have to write two grant applications. Where does he think that these people are getting the opportunity and the money to write these applications? Already this sector is seeking \$198 million just to provide adequate funding to pay its staff reasonable wages. The sector is not asking for too much, but \$198 million is what it comes out at. That is just to give people in the sector a reasonable wage so that they do not get dragged away from the sector all the time and we lose all that good corporate knowledge that goes out to the different areas. Those organisations provide the services that the government is pushing more and more people into, such as emergency relief and financial counselling. With the increases that this Barnett government has brought in over the past two budgets, there is nearly \$1 500 extra in family bills going directly onto the families who can least afford it. It has been said in this place time and again tonight that the people this will affect are not the people who are earning \$150 000 at the mines or the people with \$450 000 government jobs down the Terrace; they are the people who work in our schools, the cleaners, the gardeners—the people who are in the lower end of the economic sphere, if we like. What we hear from the government is that it has put more into hardship utility grant scheme funding; it has for this year, but there is nothing for HUGS funding in the out years. What will the government do? Will it cut out HUGS in the out years? Are we saying that next year people will not need the utility grants, despite the fact that we forced them to go cap in hand to a non-government agency to be able to pay their electricity bills, water bills —

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Professor Peter Newman says that electricity is too cheap.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Does the member think electricity is too cheap?

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Professor Peter Newman says that electricity is too cheap.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The member thinks it is too cheap.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I can tell members that there are people in my electorate who do not have power on at their houses at the moment because they cannot afford to pay the utilities.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: There is funding available for them; there are grants that they can get.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Yes, but when the government puts it on them every month, they cannot get the grants every month. There are criteria and people cannot just keep cycling through getting the hardship utility grant scheme funding every month to pay their utilities. There are people out there—maybe not in the member for Scarborough's electorate—in my electorate who are sitting in the dark tonight because they have not paid their bills because they cannot afford to pay them. If the member wants to say that electricity is too cheap, stand and say it and I will quote the member all the time!

Mrs L.M. Harvey: The environmentalists are saying that it is too cheap.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: This is what the Barnett government has done: it has driven people and pushed them to the edge. We are still talking about affordability of housing. Joondalup has lot 9000 McLarty Avenue—about eight hectares of land. It belongs to the Department of Housing and, again, it is another project that was well and truly underway but has now stalled under this government.

Several members interjected.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr D.A. Templeman: I wanted to give you an audience, member for Joondalup; you sounded so very passionate.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I thank the member for Mandurah.

I was talking about the project on lot 9000 McLarty Avenue, Joondalup, which is about eight hectares, if I recall rightly. When we lost government, we were talking about putting 895 —

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O’Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: I will stand corrected. We had done the consultation out there in the community. We were getting a lot of obstruction from LandCorp about it, but we were dealing with LandCorp and we were actually working towards getting some affordable housing in there. About 10 per cent of those 895 housing units—89 apartments—would have been affordable housing for people in Joondalup. Where have they gone? They have died a death completely. There has not been a word of that project in 18 months. I do not know whether the former Treasurer buried it because he was not that interested in it, but that piece of land is there in Joondalup pleading to be developed. We could develop it in a very nice and modern fashion. We were even having negotiations for a development in a sustainable fashion so that we could have good environmental outcomes—if the member for Scarborough is concerned about those outcomes—from the development that we wanted to put in there. There would have been 85 or 89 social housing units, which would have resulted in the names of some people coming off the Department of Housing waiting list, but we have seen nothing.

Dr K.D. Hames: Is that seen nothing or saying nothing?

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: We have seen nothing from this government, and we are hearing nothing from it, either. It just buried the project. I will be interested to see, when the Minister for Housing releases that land, whether he actually releases it to a properly planned development there so that we can get the maximum number of housing units, or whether he will just give it to a developer who will pitch it to the highest price.

It is interesting to note the number of people who have said to me, “Things have stalled in the last two years. We’re not seeing anything much happening in Joondalup anymore.”

Dr K.D. Hames: Apart from Joondalup hospital.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Apart from Joondalup hospital—I will concede that to the minister.

Mr P.T. Miles: I thought it was becoming a tourist precinct.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: The member for Wanneroo is still behind the times. The terminology has changed. The former Treasurer changed it. It is a special trading precinct. The member for Wanneroo should get with it!

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: What has the government done? It got that legislation into the upper house. It was rushed through this place and this government buried it in the upper house. It has not even been debated there. I do not believe it has even been properly read in.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: There was a big push to get it into the upper house.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: The last time I checked, it was not blooming anywhere; the government had buried it. We have now convinced small retailers in Joondalup that it is probably a good way to go. They are coming to me saying, “Can you push it through; can you push it through?” I say, “Hang on! We don’t have the numbers up there. The government has and it’s buried it.”

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: What this government is doing is just crazy.

Dr K.D. Hames: Change your policy on weekend trading.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: The government should change its policy. The government is actually changing its policy; it is now coming around to our policy at the last election. It now wants to push through projects in Midland and Armadale. That was our policy.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Is that the reason the government has held up the Joondalup project, because it wants to do Midland and Armadale as well?

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Come on, members! Be reasonable!

What it ultimately comes down to is that this Barnett government has been more focused on maintaining a budget surplus. It does not care for families and it does not care that it is pushing people right beyond the poverty

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line. It is pushing people into seeking emergency relief funding so that they can pay their usual monthly bills. This government does not seem to care too much about that. It does not seem to care too much about trying to keep kids in school. It removed the It Pays to Learn scheme in the last budget and has not replaced it with any other scheme. There is very little help for families who are struggling to keep their kids at school. Government members talk about how proud they are of state schooling. I cannot see that they can say that when, out of a \$3.6 billion budget, the government gave state schooling a \$3.6 million increase. I do not think that would even give the gardeners and cleaners an increase of 40c an hour. I have not done the maths on that so I stand corrected, but \$3.6 million is not going to give the teachers their extra money. When they come back at the end of this enterprise bargaining agreement, what will this government do? It has given them an expectation —

Mr P. Papalia: They will all be independent schools.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Yes; they will all be independent schools and they will all have different rates. That is what this government is trying to do—push them into all these different things. We have heard from teachers in our schools that they are quite concerned. They are quite concerned that the government is not focusing on education the way it should. On the recommendation of the Education and Health Standing Committee and on the recommendation of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, which I am a member of, the government has put some money into early childhood learning. I commend it for that, but it needs a lot more.

We also have to start thinking about putting extra money into child health clinics and areas like that—community health nurses and those sorts of things. The Joondalup Family Centre is in my electorate. A child health nurse operates out of that centre. For the past few years a mothers' group has been running out of one of the rooms in the family centre. The family centre is another small non-government organisation. When the family centre said that it needed payment for that, what happened? There is no money in the budget, and so the mothers' group will fall over. The mothers' group now cannot meet anymore because there is no funding.

Dr K.D. Hames: The commonwealth has said that that is its space and it intends to fund it. It is supposed to fund primary health care. It will take over those areas.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: This is the mothers' group. The community health nurse organises it and uses the room.

Dr K.D. Hames: We are supposed to fund hospitals. The commonwealth is supposed to fund primary health care.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: It was funded for a period of time. Local governments, as members have mentioned, are going to increase rates. I think the Mayor of Joondalup has said that there will be, on the high side, between five per cent and 10 per cent increases in rates because of increased electricity charges.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Another slug!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Another slug.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [11.16 pm]: I would like to preface my contribution this evening by extending my thanks to the opposition Whip for his magnanimous and generous act in allowing me to have the very last speech of the evening, knowing full well that tomorrow morning I have been invited to the Western Australian Local Government Association breakfast and am obliged to attend, which I will do with pleasure.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They have all apologised, apparently! They have all put their apologies in—weak government, weak members, that's what they are! They all apologised!

Mr M.J. Cowper: You're not going, too, are you?

Mr D.A. Templeman: No, I am not going. I have been invited!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think it will just be me and the Minister for Local Government. He is probably home in bed.

Mr J.M. Francis: The member for Scarborough is going.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Good on her.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: You're not the only hero, member for Warnbro!

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thank you very much.

I will continue this evening with a theme of generosity. Firstly, I must say that I would dearly have loved to have stood here at the outset and thanked the government for its generosity to my electorate. Sadly, that is not possible. Local members who cover the City of Rockingham—the member for Rockingham and me—tried to help the government prior to the budget by compiling a wish list on behalf of our electorates. It was a good wish

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list. Top of the priorities was the Secret Harbour police station. Sadly, that was not anywhere to be seen in the budget. Knowing that we had gone through our wish list and had not seen anything in the budget announcements regarding our wish list —

Dr K.D. Hames: What was in it?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The second one was infill sewerage; the third one was Lark Hill stage 2. There were a number of others.

Dr K.D. Hames: The marina was not there?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, it was not on our community wish list.

None of the points on the wish list were there. I chose to source some information from the local media knowing, having spent a very short time in government as a backbencher, that the local media get advance warning of the announcements for their electorates so they can make their deadlines. That was the case in this situation in which the *Weekend Courier* was given advance notice so that it had a story about what the citizens of Rockingham had received. I found it very interesting because I went through it to get the goss, as distributed by the Treasurer's office—what could be a better source? The first thing it said was that there was affordable housing in Golden Bay. I checked that out and found that that was actually being paid for by the federal government. Interestingly, it was something that the state government was claiming but was not contributing to.

The second one on the list that the state government was taking credit for was continuing with the extension of Comet Bay College to years 11 and 12. I am pretty familiar with that project because when I was first elected in 2007, the first thing that the community groups, residents' associations, local government representatives, teachers and parents came to see me about was extending Comet Bay College to years 11 and 12. There was a community campaign to pressure the then government via me, local governments and other representatives in the community to get the minister of the day to agree to extend Comet Bay College to years 11 and 12, and he did. He announced it that Christmas. The money was allocated and the project commenced. The state government is now taking credit for continuing the project that was halfway complete anyway. I am glad and thankful. The minister should not get me wrong; I do not want her to shut things down and send the workmen home. It is reassuring that the government is taking credit for continuing the extension of Comet Bay College to years 11 and 12; nevertheless, it does not really count as a major announcement.

The next one on the list was the state government taking credit for the Rockingham General Hospital upgrade. I know the Minister for Health has opened it three times, and he is going to continue to open it and take credit for it. Continuing with the theme of generosity, the Minister for Health is, unlike many ministers, a very generous minister who acknowledges that a lot of work was done by the previous government, despite what the Nationals say.

Several members interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That project undeniably was and continues to be the previous government's project. I am glad that it is not being terminated at the very last gasp before it is completed; nevertheless, it hardly counts as an announcement. That was a little disappointing. What did my electorate get? It has been repeated many times this evening. The electorate of Warnbro got what many electorates around the metropolitan area got—nothing except bigger bills. Electricity costs will increase by 18 per cent and water costs will increase by 17.7 per cent. Household costs will increase by \$368 per household—that does not take into account the cuts in other subsidies that households would have received—to effectively take the household costs for a family with children in high school to something in the order of \$1 100 a year.

That is what my electorate got, but it is not very generous of me to keep harping on about it so I am going to let that go. I am going to abandon the course of complaining and whingeing and pursue a more generous-spirited approach of talking to the Minister for Corrective Services about the nature of not only where we are at with overcrowding within the prison system and the challenges that the minister and the state are facing within the prison system —

Mr M.J. Cowper: There are no prisons in your electorate.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. I am the shadow Minister for Corrective Services; that is why I am focusing on that particular subject. I do not want to just talk about that. I also want to offer a solution, because I know that the minister has on occasion resorted to deriding me for my *Kumbaya* attitude or something of that nature; I think that was the word he used.

Mr C.C. Porter: That does sound like me.

Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister has on occasion called me latte light on law and order and suggested that somehow I am soft on crime. He also suggested that I am flaky because I have said consistently that we—I am talking not about the minister and his government, but about the state generally—need to shift our focus from a punitive focus towards a concentration on reducing offending, but very much reducing recidivism, the reoffending of people who have been into our prison system. When I say that, it sounds as though there is no substance to it and it sounds as though it is an easy thing to say, as the Minister for Corrective Services said. Fair enough; I understand why the minister responded in that fashion, because he is confronted with a significant challenge.

Mr C.C. Porter: But my difficulty with what you suggest there is that you and others cast it in terms of mutual exclusivity—that is, that you cannot, at once, be “tough on crime”, but also look at —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can I just pursue this?

Mr C.C. Porter: Of course.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I want to address what the minister said. I will take the opportunity to cheat a little and go through a kind of ideas paper; I would not call it a policy discussion paper—it is before that stage. It is something that I hope to work on to develop policy from, and I hope it will become the basis for policy. But it is very much, I hope, a tool for engaging in public debate, and it covers and focuses on the particular points the minister just made. He and I have a philosophical difference whereby he says that it is okay to adopt this tough on crime rhetoric and still pursue other outcomes that are focused on reducing recidivism, to which I say that that sounds fair in theory. It was the sort of thing that was articulated by the Blair government when it first came to power many years ago.

Mr C.C. Porter: Tough on crime—tough on the causes of it!

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is right: tough on crime—tough on the causes of it. The Minister for Corrective Services is aware that jurisdictions around the western world adopted the same stance, and invariably they got the first bit right but they missed the second bit. I would suggest that we have succumbed to the same fault in Western Australia. What invariably happened was that the easy bit in many respects—that is, the legislation, the toughening up of penalties, and the running out for a Sunday afternoon grab on the television about how cars will be crushed or how someone will be grabbed and given a bigger sentence—was taken up, and has been with gusto, by both sides of politics.

Mr C.C. Porter: Indeed. But if I might just say, that is not just rhetoric, though, is it? You would not complain about it were it mere rhetoric; it is actually fixed.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister understands that in this place he is allowed to be a bit more sensible than sometimes he chooses to be when on the television or on the radio, for instance. It is easy to get at the opposition by plucking at a component of a contribution and suggesting somehow that that suggests that I want people released from prison. I want to have people who do bad things—the bad criminals—in jail. The Minister for Corrective Services agrees with that; I agree with that; everyone agrees with that. That is undeniable.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will get into that, member; it is early days.

People do not want individuals who pose a high threat released onto the streets. That is not what I am advocating, and I have never advocated that. I do say, however, that many, many people in our prison systems—as in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and as is the case elsewhere around this country—are not necessarily threatening to the public and may be suffering mental illness, may be minor drug offenders or users, are addicts, and would be better off being dealt with in appropriate, robust community programs designed to reduce their recidivism. The response articulated in the budget states that the minister knows that, and that is why he has toughened up the implementation of community-based orders. I agree that that is a component of what we need to do, but I suggest that we are a long way short of what I advocate.

Mr C.C. Porter: I disagree with you about the composition of those in prison, but I am interested to hear how you say there are undeserved prisoners.

Mr P. PAPALIA: How about I get through this without interjections; the minister can interject, but just do not delay me too much or I will not get through it.

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I have written this paper, and my objective was to try to make some sort of analysis of how we came to be where we are. As I have said before, and as the minister knows, most jurisdictions around the western world had the same thing. For the past decade or so—in fact, several decades—the prison populations in a number of jurisdictions have exploded. In the United Kingdom, the prison population doubled between 1992 and 2009; in the USA, it increased sevenfold in the four decades from 1970. It is a paradox, but in both those jurisdictions crime rates were dropping consistently throughout those periods.

Mr C.C. Porter: Indeed.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I know the Attorney General will have a crack at me. At the time he suggested that I was too lazy to look up statistics. He realised afterwards that those statistics he was quoting were not on the website and were not available to the public.

That aside, I was suggesting that it was a manipulation of the statistics to suggest that the Attorney General could take credit for that drop. It was a consistent drop. In Western Australia the same thing has occurred. Crime has been dropping consistently —

Mr C.C. Porter: As prison populations have been escalating.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member should not make the simplistic connection there. Overall reported crime has dropped 10 per cent from 2002 to 2008. The Chief Justice provided those figures.

Mr C.C. Porter: And 10 per cent in one year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Why did we have this increase in the prison muster at the same time as crime was reducing? It is not connected. It is not a case of the crime rate is increasing so we will need to throw more people into prison. It is counterintuitive. If we throw more and more people into prison and crime is going down, and the Attorney General's argument is that the punitive nature —

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We are talking over four decades in the United States and a decade in Western Australia's case. The question is that if it is assumed that it is because we are not tough enough—they are not being punished enough and learning the lesson—we would assume that the crime rate would go up. They would continue to re-offend at those massive rates. Actually the crime rates are diminishing at the same time as punishment is going up. It undermines the Attorney General's argument. I know that he could turn it around and say the same thing. I will pursue this a little bit more to tease it out. I want to focus on Western Australia.

Mr C.C. Porter: The answer is incapacitation.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will deal with that. I think that is an overblown suggestion on the Attorney General's part. The Attorney General did not give the name of the specific study in New South Wales to which he was referring. I have statistics from the United Kingdom. A very comprehensive study was done there in 2001. That study suggested that the prison population would have to be increased by 15 per cent to achieve a questionable reduction in crime of one per cent, and it would not be permanent. The Attorney General should think about the consequences of utilising those ratios by using that argument. I do not think it carries any water. I understand where he is coming from and, perhaps, he disagrees with me about that.

My assessment of what was going on is political populism with regard to the increasing of sentences. It is not my wonderful idea, but an accepted idea around the world in western jurisdictions. The United States Attorney General Eric Holder said that he believes that jurisdictions in his country need to get smart on crime. He acknowledged the superficial nature of the public debate. This is where the US is coming from. Members must understand that it was George Bush who actually introduced legislation to diminish recidivism rates and work on focusing on reducing the number of people returning to the prison system. The current administration has said that the superficial nature of who is toughest in debate means that Americans must get smart on crime and do so without worrying about being labelled as too soft or too hard on crime. It said getting smart on crime means moving beyond useless labels and catchphrases and, instead, relying on science and data to shape policy.

In the UK the House of Commons Justice Committee delivered a report in January this year that focused on justice reinvestment. That committee said that all arguments for reform of the prison system should be based on getting the best use of taxpayers' dollars.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: When members consider the use of taxpayers' dollars as the priority as the driving argument, they should consider that that committee said the political argument could be shifted away from notions about

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which party is harder or softer on crime and criminals to questions about the most effective use of scarce resources to reduce offending and re-offending. That is in the United Kingdom. In a speech in November last year, the Chief Justice of Western Australia identified popular punitivism as a contributor to the increasingly harsher penalties and consequent increase in the prison population over the past decade, despite a general reduction in most crime statistics. My view is that both sides of politics have engaged in cheap political shots, the consequence of which is invariably more harsh legislation combined with more impositions on people who are on parole. Right now there is another contributor that the Chief Justice has identified and that the government has identified in the budget, and that is the change in the practices of the Prisoners Review Board of Western Australia due to the appointment of the new chair in April last year. The Chief Justice has attributed to those changes in practices as much as 60 per cent of the recent increase in the prison muster. I will not focus too much on the recent increase in the prison muster other than to use it as an economic argument for considering doing things differently. For well over a decade we have had consistently increasing numbers in our prison system beyond what I think we should accept as reasonable.

Mr C.C. Porter: Why do you say that, though? Do you have a view that there are people in jail who should not be there?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will finish. The Chief Justice said that there was a 49 per cent increase in the prison muster between June 2001 and November 2009. The Attorney General knows that since taking office, the prison muster has effectively —

Mr J.M. Francis: Between 2001 and 2009?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes. I am not saying that it is the fault of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party; I am saying that during the course of this government the prison muster has increased by 900 people, which is a 27 per cent increase in 18 months. My argument is that when we were in government, the increase in the prison muster was not sustainable or acceptable. Obviously, I would contend that under this government, it is definitely not acceptable or sustainable. If the government's argument is that increasing the prison muster works and that somehow we can imprison people out of committing crimes, we must consider what I said before about the Home Office modelling in the UK that identified that a 15 per cent increase in the prison population is required to achieve a short-term reduction in crime of only one per cent. That is the sort of figure that we have to worry about.

Mr C.C. Porter interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will take some interjections at the end but I am getting short of time.

Over the past 18 months, the prison muster has increased by an additional 900 people. The Attorney General knows that each individual costs \$100 000 a year. As a consequence, recurrent costs to the taxpayers of Western Australia have increased by \$90 million over the course of this government due to the increased number of prisoners in the prison system. Those numbers, which are reflected in the budget, should be reason for giving consideration to whether what we are doing works and is the most effective thing that we can do with taxpayers' dollars and whether it is the most effective thing for the safety of the community. My contention is that it is not.

Mr C.C. Porter: What do you suggest then?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am getting there. I will try to get there before I run out of time. I have produced a paper that will be available to everyone. The Attorney General should not be concerned that I will not expose myself to his rigorous scrutiny; I will. I notify the Attorney General before he eventually comes across it that I have said in this paper that if nothing changes by the next election, recurrent expenditure on corrective services will reach \$800 million. The figure in this year's budget is \$750 million. My paper was written before this budget was handed down and is based on previous projections that were based on growth that could have continued. My figures are not far removed from the government's projections.

Mr C.C. Porter: You will notice that the growth has well and truly stabilised.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I concede that it has plateaued. However, I also contend, and the Attorney General will probably agree, that it is not because the department can say specifically what has caused the plateau. The department cannot say whether it will go up or down. My argument is that the growth has plateaued, but we will see what happens in a little while once the prisoners' sentences come to an end and whether they reoffend. Whether it will continue to plateau is unpredictable. My contention is that we have just had a jump in the prison muster and even if it returned to historic levels, I do not believe it is sustainable. We need to do something about it.

Mr C.C. Porter: I think it will return to the normal trend line of growth.

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Mr P. PAPALIA: If the anticipated capital expenditure is thrown in for the year of the next election, it is in here as \$140 million, but that figure again was formed before the budget, and it was \$110 million. In that year, I suggest that the expenditure will be delayed and it will be more likely to be closer to \$140 million than \$110 million. In any way it is looked at, expenditure on corrective services is close to \$1 billion that year. In theory, we could say that if we keep building prisons and keep locking people up, we will eventually incarcerate crime out of existence. It is theoretically possible. That is undeniable.

Mr C.C. Porter: That is nonsense.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is in reality. Fiscal sanity will kick in way before then, because no sane individual who pays taxes in Western Australia will prioritise unlimited expenditure on prisons over schools, hospitals, the police and myriad other demands on taxpayer dollars. I do not believe it is sustainable.

Mr C.C. Porter: No policy will rid us of crime.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister is contending sometimes that he will, from listening to the rhetoric.

Mr C.C. Porter: I never contended it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Also, the efficacy of that contention needs to be assessed, because there is one really pertinent fact that is often overlooked in the argument that we are not tough enough on crime and that is why we have this problem. The vast majority of prisoners will eventually leave prison. That is a fact. Their incarceration in prison will have a significant impact on them, which will be either positive or negative. If they come out less likely to reoffend, then the experience will have benefited all of us. Unfortunately, the figures prove that our prisons are not working in Western Australia. Our recidivism rates indicate that prisoners come out and go back in at, in my view, an unacceptable rate. The budget shows that we are going to have this growth into the future. The budget has not forecast a plateau: it will go on into the future; it happened with us in the past.

Mr C.C. Porter: What is the solution? You have six minutes in which to give us the solution.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, that is right. I am running out of time. The male adult non-Aboriginal prisoner recidivism rate is 40 per cent. Again, the figures in this paper are from the Chief Justice and are before the minister's most recent figures. For Aboriginal prisoners, it is just under 70 per cent. I think it is a bit lower in the budget for Aboriginal prisoners.

Mr C.C. Porter: It is 68 per cent, which is a decrease.

Mr P. PAPALIA: For women prisoners, it is 30 per cent for non-Aboriginal and 55 per cent for Aboriginal women; that was at November last year, and the figures probably have changed a little. My argument is that reincarcerating people—partly because 60 per cent of them in recent times have breached parole or for whatever reason are removed from parole—who have offended before into a system that has already failed them does not make sense. The system has demonstrably failed to affect them in a positive fashion. These types of people that I am talking about are not those in the headlines who kill people, who offend us all, who deeply aggrieve us and who we want to see stay in prison for a long, long time. I often agree with the minister when he is denying their release. They are clearly not the people we are talking about.

Mr C.C. Porter: One brief interjection and we can go. Is it therefore not incumbent upon you to identify which cohort of prisoners you say should either not go to prison as they presently do or should go to prison for less time? You have never done that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have in discussions with the minister. He does not agree with me but I have. The whole premise of this paper is assessing why we have come to where we are and proposing a potential solution. Who knows what the solution is? I think this leads us to a solution. Justice reinvestment has been attempted in the United States in, I think, over 10 jurisdictions. I understand that Michigan is probably one of the most successful. I do not have the statistics on Michigan. I have fleshed out the paper I did for *The West Australian*, and I used Texas because I had statistics available for that state. They clearly took a scientific approach. They made a geographical analysis of where the costs were being generated to the prison system—this was where the people were coming from basically. That was done independently. I would contend that it needs to be done independently for us to succeed. In their case they had a joint bipartisan committee. It would possibly be difficult for us. I have suggested that we could tackle it through an interagency steering committee chaired by somebody like the Under Treasurer, with as many as possible directors general of relevant departments.

Mr C.C. Porter: Do you know how they decreased the prison population in Texas?

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 25 May 2010]

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Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Tom Stephens; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Fran Logan; Mr John Hyde; Mr Peter Tinley; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Paul Papalia

Mr P. PAPALIA: I know of one way in which they do it. I chose Texas intentionally, because it is notorious for having killed more individuals than any other state since 1972. I understand that. But Texas is also well known for having achieved \$200 million worth of savings over two years by reducing the prison population.

Mr C.C. Porter: How did they reduce the prison population?

Mr P. PAPALIA: By introducing in many cases a lot of initiatives that we already have. So we will not get a substantial change necessarily. But Texas has things like halfway houses and intermediate detention-type facilities. I am searching for the words, and I am trying to rush, because I have only two minutes left. The minister can attack the paper, as I am sure he will, but the minister should consider this: ultimately, I do not even think the minister would contend that it is acceptable that we ignore any other possibility that may exist around the world and focus just on punitive measures because that is easy publicity on the Channel Seven news in the evening. I actually suspect that the minister also wants to achieve a good outcome, and that he is torn, because not only is he challenged by the easy publicity, but also he knows what his department wants to do. The department wants to do what I am saying, and the department—and the minister—knows that that is what works. All I would ask the minister to do is consider the framework of justice reinvestment. Do not just do it itsy-bitsy, in bits and pieces here and there, and then say it has failed. Do not under-resource it. Do it properly. Do an independent analysis of where the costs come from. Possibly seek independent suggestions as to how we can tackle all the different options for reducing crime for each individual community, because they are all different. Do not just roll out a blanket approach. Assess it. Have a think about it. I think that there are many people in this place who would contend that this is worth considering. Even if it is not what I am advocating, we should be able to come up with something that is more mature and more grown up than what Western Australian politicians have been delivering to the people of Western Australia over the past decade.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Dr K.D. Hames (Deputy Premier)**.