



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2013

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 16 May 2013

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House) took the chair at 10.00 am, and read prayers.

SENATE VACANCY — ELECTION OF SUSAN LINES

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Members, I have the honour to inform you that at a joint sitting of the houses of Parliament of the state of Western Australia held in Perth on 15 May 2013, the members of such houses, sitting and voting together in pursuance of section 15 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, did choose Susan Lines of 16A Cargill Street, Victoria Park, Western Australia, to hold the place vacated by Senator Chris Evans.

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — SANDALWOOD

Petition

HON COL HOLT (South West — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.02 am]: I present a petition containing 107 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned residents of Western Australia are opposed to the mismanagement and unsustainability of the sandalwood industry under the management of Forest Products Commission.

Your petitioners therefore respectfully request the Legislative Council to support a royal commission into Forest Products Commission and that all sandalwood operations cease, pending the findings of a royal commission.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 253.]

GREAT SOUTHERN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY — MUSIC AND ART COURSES

Petition

HON COL HOLT (South West — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.03 am]: I present a petition containing 35 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

Current enrolled music and arts students at the Great Southern Institute of TAFE (GSIT) have received notice that the courses will no longer be publicly funded. There will be no more Cert II, III, IV and Diploma music and art courses run at any of the Great Southern Institutes Campuses as of January 2013, with the nearest campus over 450kms away. This will be a great loss to the health and wellbeing of our community and economically and professionally harmful to our region. We the undersigned residents of Western Australia are opposed to this decision. The courses have been running very successfully for the past 12 years. Much feedback has emphasised that they are of a very high standard.

The music and art programs are essential educational components for the whole community and have a significant positive impact on the local economy. Denmark and the Great Southern draw tourists from all over Australia and the world, a large facet of this attraction is the rich and unique concentration of arts and music. These tourists expect to see musicians at the wineries and enjoy artwork at the many galleries of the Great Southern Region.

Your petitioners therefore respectfully request the Legislative Council to recommend to the Government that funding is kept in the GSIT music and art programs, and that the courses be retained in the current format. Please acknowledge the intrinsic values of these music and arts courses and their effects and outcomes on our small but important regional community. And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 254.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — TUESDAY, 21 MAY*Statement by Leader of the House*

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [10.05 am]: I would like to inform the house that it is the intent of the government to change proceedings slightly next Tuesday, 21 May. We will commence as normal at 3.00 pm and have formal business and orders of the day until 3.30 pm, questions without notice from 3.30 until 4.00 pm and then the valedictory speech of Hon Norman Moore, and then the house will rise. There will be drinks and refreshments for all members. Out of respect for retiring members, they can invite guests. This arrangement has the support of both the opposition and the Greens.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [10.06 am]: I seek your indulgence, Mr President; I do not know whether I have the right to respond under standing orders.

The PRESIDENT: I will use my discretion.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you, Mr President. I rise to indicate that the Leader of the House is right; he has discussed these arrangements with me. We understand that Tuesday is a celebration of all that is Hon Norman Moore.

Hon Norman Moore: Don't be so enthusiastic!

Hon SUE ELLERY: There is a big grin on my face. We are looking forward to it!

Hon Norman Moore: Join the crowd!

The PRESIDENT: Members, just to clarify that, we anticipate rising formally at about 6.00 pm. Refreshments will be for all members, but retiring members are invited to bring along their spouses or partners and close friends.

PAPERS TABLED

Papers were tabled and ordered to lie upon the table of the house.

BILLS*Notice of Motion to Introduce*

1. Statutes (Repeals and Minor Amendments) Bill 2013.

Notice of motion given by **Hon Michael Mischin (Attorney General)**.

2. Free Range Eggs Labelling Bill 2013.

Notice of motion given by **Hon Lynn MacLaren**.

LOCAL MANUFACTURING CONTENT — RESOURCE PROJECTS*Motion*

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.08 am] — without notice: I move —

That this Council condemns the Barnett government for failing to ensure that local manufacturing workers and businesses share in Western Australia's economic success and in particular the failure of this government's 10-point plan to increase local manufacturing content in resource projects.

This is a very serious issue. It is an issue that we have canvassed in this chamber on a number of occasions. We are in a period of boom in our resource sector in Western Australia. It is Labor's belief that all Western Australian workers should reap the benefit of working in that boom and get their fair share. That is why I raise this motion today. This motion deals with two particular issues. The first is the failure of the government's 10-point plan, which was released in 2010 with a lot of hoopla and a lot of press. The Premier went to Henderson and Kwinana and looked at workshops, and there was a lot of talk about building the capacity for those businesses to tap into contracts and to sustain their employment. But that has not actually been the case.

I note with interest the "Local Content Report" of November 2012 from the Department of Commerce. At page 2 of that report there is reference to the following comment from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry —

Importantly, according to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in its September 2012 quarterly Business Outlook, there has been resurgence in net local manufacturing employment (13,000) covering the period September 2011 to September 2012, which contrasts with national trends.

I met last week with a group of workers from the Australian Marine Complex at Henderson and they talked to me about their concerns about employment in that area. Over the last 12 to 18 months, I and a number of other members on my side have met on a number of occasions with employers in the Kwinana and Henderson area. On each of those occasions they have talked to us about the problems they are facing in trying to get work in the

resource sector here in Western Australia and in trying to maintain their employment. At each of those meetings, each of those companies listed for us the number of staff that they would have to dismiss from their workplaces over either the next few weeks at that point in time or the next couple of months.

In January of this year, the then Minister for Commerce, Hon Simon O'Brien, was quoted in the *Sound Telegraph* as follows —

Mr O'Brien said thousands of jobs had been created since the framework was introduced in 2011 and the announcement of a Perth-based company winning a multi-million dollar contract for the Chevron-operated Wheatstone Project. Mr O'Brien said he welcomed any initiative to boost local content, but said many contractors already had an impressive record.

I congratulate Hon Simon O'Brien, because I know that he was really keen to make sure that employers and workers, particularly in the South Metropolitan Region, do have work and work into the future. But the advice that I have been given from the meetings that I have had, and the statistics that were provided to me yesterday by the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union about the number of jobs that have been lost and the number of businesses that have closed in recent times in the Henderson-Kwinana strip, are cause for great concern. It also creates some confusion about the stats that are provided in the "Local Content Report" of November 2012. According to the list that I have been given by the union, currently in voluntary administration are the companies West Coast Sheds and ProMet Engineers, and I understand that a few more companies are trying to trade out. Companies that have closed in the financial year 2012-13 are Steelwise, with the loss of 12 jobs; Desert Plains Mobile Accommodation, with the loss of 35 jobs; Ingal EPS Maddington; Orrcon, Bunbury branch, with the loss of four jobs; BTM Kwinana, with the loss of 12 jobs; Tubend Industries, with the loss of 30 jobs; Kadan Engineering, with the loss of 20 jobs; Southern Cross Constructions, with the loss of 39 jobs; Lowrie Constructions, with the loss of 50 jobs; G & S Fabrications, with the loss of 30 jobs; Rinaldi; Starr Structures, with the loss of 15 jobs; Transfield Services, with the loss of 10 jobs; and Cape TCC, which closed its industrial painting shop in Kwinana in April 2013. In the financial year 2011-12, Wastemaster closed, with the loss of 30 jobs; Sabre closed, with the loss of 50 jobs; G & G Steelworks closed, with the loss of 80 jobs; Boundaries WA closed; Weldtronics Henderson closed at the end of 2011; and Profab closed its workshop in 2011. There have been staff cutbacks at a range of companies, including at engineering contractors Fast, Fluor, Hatch, SKM and GHD, and the union estimates that more than 4 000 contractors have lost their jobs in those areas.

That is a serious concern for us. The government was very excited about its 10-point plan. But the number of jobs losses is substantial, and that raises great concerns. So, we put to the government that obviously the 10-point plan has not worked. It has not been effective, and it has not delivered the outcomes for the employers and workers in that area.

When I met with these workers last week, they talked to me about their concerns. This particular group of workers comprises about 600 workers at Henderson. About 200 of those workers had been given their jobs on the basis that they would be trained and sent to Barrow Island. But that has not happened. Those workers are being kept at Henderson, and the companies involved are still employing workers from the eastern states, predominantly Queensland and New South Wales, and flying them in. These workers talked to me about the complicated process they have to go through to get these jobs. The union wrote to Hon Michael Mischin, the Minister for Commerce, on 26 April, outlining their concerns for this group of workers in Henderson. The union has not yet had a response, so it has asked me to raise this matter on behalf of its members who work in Henderson. I have said that I would table today the 150 letters signed by these workers in Henderson outlining their concerns about the decisions that have been made and the difficulty they have in getting the work that they were employed to do. I will table those 150 letters. I also have a set of those letters to give to the minister so that he can read those letters and hopefully respond to those workers and outline to them what this government will do to ensure that people who are working in our industries in Western Australia receive the benefits of the boom and have the capacity to enjoy ongoing employment, and to ensure that employment opportunities are opened up for young people in the area of traineeships and apprenticeships.

I will now read into *Hansard* a letter that was signed by one of these workers so that members in this chamber get a feel for what these people have to deal with, and, hopefully, we will get a response from the government. This letter states —

I —

There is then the name and address of the person who wrote the letter —

wish to inform you of the increasingly uncertain employment situation facing local manufacturing and construction workers on major resource projects within Western Australia.

Over the last 3 months I have seen major construction projects such as Binningup desalination plant and Karara mine site completed. Downer's fabrication facility in Kwinana recently downsized and will close their site completely on the 26th of this month, citing lack of work. Between the closure of this

workshop and the completion of these two major construction projects, we now have hundreds of local workers seeking employment in their respective trades.

At the same time, Western Australia is in the enviable position of having several major resources construction projects underway, with work taking place in Henderson and on Barrow Island right now. It should follow that displaced construction workers should be confident of their ongoing employment in the industry for the next 12–18 months. (Incidentally, Chevron has spent millions of dollars on a media campaign telling the public of their commitment to local content and supporting the local communities).

Unfortunately the reality of the situation is that due to mismanagement by Chevron and its primary contractor CBI Kentz Joint Venture, as well as outsourcing of their recruitment process to a third party (Chandler McLeod), these now unemployed workers have very little chance of gaining employment on the project.

The application and recruiting process employed by CBI (Chandler McLeod) is particularly lengthy and extremely slow in its implementation. It also inadvertently discriminates against people who are not computer literate, people who may have poor literacy skills and those that have limited Oil and Gas experience but only wish to work at the Henderson facility. A typical applicant will have to complete:

- an application with Seek;
- an application with Chandler McLeod;
- an 8 page questionnaire;
- an interview;
- a written exam on trade knowledge;
- a weld test; and
- a full medical with drug and alcohol screen.

This part of the process can be as quick as three weeks, but for some it has taken months. Following the approval from this stage there is also up to six days further training and inductions to get applicants “Island ready”. Some of this process can be justified for people wanting to work on the island, considering it is an Oil and Gas site within an A class reserve, but for those wanting to only work at the fabrication and assembly site in Henderson, it is an extremely long drawn out process with many applicants becoming frustrated and giving up after being lost within the system for several weeks or even months.

As it stands now, around 200 of the 600 strong workforce at Henderson want to be transferred to Barrow Island, which in turn would free up their positions at Henderson to be filled by other now unemployed local workers.

The latest contingent of these workers that were supposed to be mobilized to Barrow Island on the 26th December 2012 had their transfers cancelled for the reason of a lack of accommodation on the Island. However at the same time, Chandler McLeod are still actively recruiting and mobilizing Eastern states personnel to go to Barrow.

I have no problem with eastern states workers gaining employment on the project but this should under no circumstances reduce the opportunities for local workers. Considering the amount of money Chevron have spent on their media campaign about supporting the local community they should have an obligation to exhaust the local labour market and be held accountable to their commitment before recruiting from interstate.

In light of the current situation I would ask the Minister to hold Chevron and its contractors to account in respect to prioritizing employment of local workers. I would ask the Minister also to ensure in legislation that companies must prove appropriate local labour market testing before seeking to employ from interstate and overseas.

The letter then went on to invite the minister to an on-site meeting at Henderson to talk about the Liberal Party’s commitment to local content on future major resource projects in the state. There are 150 of those signed letters that these workers want the minister to respond to. These people are going through a very difficult process. When I looked at the process involved in gaining employment, I thought that it is easier to become a member of Parliament than it is to get a welding job on the strip. We do not have to go through any of those criteria to get our jobs here. We might have to go through other painful processes but they are certainly not as detailed.

Some of the fellows I spoke to last week have been working their trade for 20 or 30 years, they may have left school at a young age, they may not be computer literate and they may find that barriers are being put in their

way to prevent them from accessing those opportunities. They want the government to find a way to ensure that local workers have the opportunity to get these jobs without these artificial barriers being put in their way to prevent them from doing so and giving these companies the excuse to bring in workers from other places, thereby denying our workers those opportunities. I am sure that everyone in this place would want to see Western Australian workers being given the first call, the first opportunity, for employment. We also want to see our young people given that opportunity, particularly in that corridor where we still have fairly high rates of youth unemployment. I think the rate of unemployment across the state is about 5.2 per cent. I imagine the government would want to do everything it possibly could to ensure that Western Australian workers get the first call. For whatever reason, that is not happening.

We go back to that 10-point plan which looks fine on paper but in practice has not delivered the outcomes that the government intended to deliver. I know that Labor had a better plan. We tried to get our skilled jobs legislation through the other place but it was rejected by the government. The government needs to articulate what it is going to do to stem the tide of these businesses going bust and having to terminate the employment of these workers, not because they do not think they are good employees—that is not the case at all—but simply because they do not have the work, they are not getting the contracts and they cannot sustain their companies. We are seeing businesses that have been in place for extended periods finding that they cannot compete in the marketplace and they cannot continue to employ these people. That is a dreadful situation for us to be in. The minister faces a real challenge in telling us what the government can do to ensure that our businesses, particularly in our southern corridor, can be sustained and continue to employ people, and not just during this period. What is the government doing to ensure that young people can be employed through apprenticeships or traineeships? What will the government do to ensure that the working people of this state get their fair share of the resources boom?

It is a very dismal period for the people affected in the companies I mentioned. They now have to look at alternative mechanisms. As we have seen from this employment process, it is extremely difficult. I challenge anyone in this chamber to go through the process that these people have to go through to get a job—a job that some of them have been doing for 20 or 30 years. They have the practical skills, but barriers are being put in their way to get this work. That is the concern. The challenge is for the minister to provide a response to a letter that has been sitting in his office since late April that he has not replied to. I know that he is a very busy man but these people want to know what the government will do to ensure that, with all this resource growth and the opportunities that are occurring in our state, local people get local jobs as a priority. What will the government do to ensure that young people as a priority in our state have those opportunities in the future? The framework document that the government put out in 2010, the 10-point participation plan and the money that has been thrown into some of the organisations that were meant to facilitate these changes have not worked. The fact that these companies have closed in the past couple of years and that there have been significant job losses is evidence of the failure of the 10-point participation plan.

I think the government needs to come up with a better idea. It needs to go back and talk to those industries. It needs to talk to the workers in those areas. I know that the minister is new to this field and he is stepping outside what he is used to, his normal comfort zone, but I encourage him to talk to these people who are in this situation and hear what they have to say. They are experienced, they are committed to the work they do, they have families to raise, they want a future for their children and they want local jobs, but at this point things are looking pretty dismal. I encourage the minister to respond to the correspondence that has been sent to him and to say how the government will try to ensure that no more cutbacks occur in those areas. Hopefully, the government can prevent further companies hitting the wall. We need to know what strategies the minister will put in place to ensure that that happens. It would be really good to hear what the government is going to do to tighten up state agreements. When these large resource companies are able to operate in our state, what will the minister do to ensure that they employ local workers, so that these local companies can get the contracts, hopefully, at the point of origin, the design stage and ongoing? Otherwise, the lights will go out all the way through Henderson and Kwinana and we will see a massive drop in the number of these skilled workers and they will have to resort to other types of employment opportunities. It will get tougher and tougher.

The other challenge is that I hope the minister goes back to these companies and asks why they have given the employment hiring option to a firm that is putting up artificial barriers to these workers. He should ask them why they do not take into account the work experience and life skills of these workers without having to put them through these processes. Not all of these processes are unnecessary; I agree that some things have to be done, but other things seem to make it too difficult for these workers, particularly those who do not have the necessary literacy or computer skills to be able to jump through those hurdles. There are real challenges there. Those people I met with last Friday are very concerned and very disturbed about what is happening in their workplaces. They are being fed misinformation about their employment opportunities. This government has to step up now—it has another four years to try to fix this—and ensure that these local workers have the best opportunities to access employment in our state so they, too, can reap the benefits of the boom.

I seek leave to table the documents I referred to.

Leave granted. [See paper 255.]

HON MICHAEL MISCHIN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Commerce) [10.29 am]: I am grateful to Hon Kate Doust for moving this motion. I will speak against it, of course. But I do appreciate her moving this motion, as it gives me the opportunity to say something about this vexing issue of local content; to outline what the problem actually is and some of its complexities as well as what the government has been doing about it for the last several years; and also to indicate the superficiality and shallowness of the opposition's understanding of this very complicated problem.

There seems to be this idea that money is being spent on resource projects and therefore there is a boom. In a narrow sense that may be right. If an opposition member were to build a house in their suburb, of course money would be spent. It appears that there would be an expectation on the part of that opposition member that all the business, all that is involved in the construction of that particular dwelling, all the parts and all the labour would be drawn from the immediate neighbourhood, and that somehow it is wrong that the builder might come from somewhere else, that the workers might live somewhere else and that the parts and equipment might come from somewhere else and be used on that project.

One thing must be borne in mind in respect of all these projects in the resource industry: they are vast investments, they involve hundreds of millions of dollars and they generate not a cent for the investor until the first tonne of iron ore is removed, processed and sold; so, they are vast forward investments. Sure, there is money being spent by companies, but they must also make sure that the project is viable, and they also have to look around for the best deal. I will come to some figures very shortly about the sorts of investment that these companies are making in Western Australia and the amount that is being devoted to local content. It seems that the shallow, superficial solution to this is to make laws requiring certain content come from certain places and that will solve the problem. All it will do is eventually price the project out of the market and make it unviable, and I will come to some figures on that very shortly.

There is a difficulty, and I understand and appreciate fully that there is an expectation that projects in Western Australia should use to the best extent possible local workers, local expertise and local businesses in the supply chain. But for these major projects it must also be understood that the supply chain is often a well-established and very complicated one, and involves not only a reliance on certain standards for those who are implementing the project at the end of the day, but also a requirement for certain standards along the way. It is difficult to break into those supply chains, and that is one of the things that the Department of Commerce is working on.

I will outline some of the things that have been done, and we have heard mention of the 10-point plan. The local industry participation framework was introduced in July 2011 as the government's response to the changed market circumstances that were having an impact on local suppliers to major resource projects, particularly offshore energy developments. In taking that initiative, the government acknowledged the impact of long-term factors, including gains in Asia's industrial capacity. At one stage Asia did not have the expertise to do much of this work, but it has been smart enough to develop it and is now able to provide the sorts of things that are required for these projects in a way that is far more cost effective than can be done within the state. The industrial capacity of Asia has increased. Advances in construction and transport technology have occurred over the last decade. There has been increasing use of international supply arrangements. We have also had to struggle under a strong Australian dollar, which has made local content far more expensive than it had been in the past. The government had the realism and the understanding to develop a new approach, given the erosion of the previously high levels of natural protection enjoyed by local manufacturing and service companies. It has affected steel fabricators and engineering and design companies in particular, but there have been others who have been affected by it also.

Underpinning the framework approach is the government's commitment to open trade, rather than protectionism, and an investment economy. As such, the government recognises that WA's engagement with the global economy must entail a two-way flow of capital, of goods and of services. This is in contrast with what appears to be the opposition's approach to this issue: a protectionist mentality and the sort of thing that helped, I suppose, the United Kingdom become a basket case economically before the Thatcher government reformed the workplace and industry there. There is a desire, it appears, to embed local content in some kind of legislation, no matter how inefficient that may be, no matter how non-cost effective it may be and no matter how uncompetitive it may be.

The second principle behind the government's framework is that resource developers are required to provide local industry with full, fair and reasonable opportunity to participate. In brief, that means that a local business seeking to supply to a project can expect one of two outcomes: it either gets the contract or it gets some explanation of why their proposal to get into the supply chain was not competitive. Within the 10 points contained in the framework there are three major objectives: firstly, to engage with world-class project proponents operating in our economy to better understand business and procurement trends, and the relative

performance of WA suppliers; secondly, where possible to act to support improvements in this competitive performance; and, thirdly, to push the commonwealth government into a more active role on the issue of participation. The honourable member mentioned the reports that are made on local participation. Six-monthly reports are prepared on the intentions and outcomes of the government's approach and those, if they had been examined, would suggest that the government's approach has been successful overall. It is also important to note that although the opposition seems to focus merely on the Henderson precinct and on steel fabricators in particular, the government's approach is embracing all forms of supply to the resource sector.

At the highest level since the framework was introduced in July 2011, more than \$43 billion in publicly announced contracts have been awarded to local suppliers. That represents the maintenance of or the creation of some 100 000 employment positions in this state. The analyses of those contracts, which are included in the appendices to the local content reports, show a diverse range of supply including construction, service provision, equipment supply and project management. Additionally, since the implementation of the framework, there have been consistent increases in the level of local content in the state agreement acts. For example, in the November 2012 local content report, increases were noted in BHP Billiton's Port Hedland inner harbour development, the Worsley Alumina expansion and the Chevron Gorgon project. In the about-to-be-tabled May 2013 report, notable achievements include an increase in local content on Woodside's North Rankin 2 project from 66 per cent to 88 per cent; and figures provided by Chevron for the Wheatstone project demonstrated a 26 per cent increase in local content and 28 per cent for the value of work carried out overseas compared with previous periods. Roy Hill Holdings for the 2011–12 financial year spent or committed a total of approximately \$1.95 billion; of that, approximately \$1.3 billion was spent or committed to Western Australian companies. For the Gorgon project, which I have already touched on, Chevron reports that \$19.7 billion in contracts has been committed for Australian industry and labour, of which 92 per cent, or \$18.2 billion, is in Western Australia. The total Western Australian local content contract values are \$15 billion to 31 December last year, equalling 49 per cent of the total \$30.8 billion. An awful lot has been achieved and is continuing to be achieved. That can be attributed not to neglect on the part of the government, but to the political will demonstrated by not only the Premier but also the government and my friend and colleague Hon Simon O'Brien, who as previous minister did an awful lot of work in this field. I commend him for the great energy he devoted to this subject.

Through the Department for Commerce regular formal meetings are held with key companies and information is being provided on why WA-based companies fail to qualify or obtain contracts. That has been supported by the government's increased use of industry participation plans and it is a policy that any project requiring an agreement act must provide such a plan for the government's consideration. For example, all future Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton developments are now covered. In initiating that exchange of information, there has been a focus on the prospects of steel fabrication and engineering and design industries. The government has funded independent evaluations of both. In relation to steel fabrication, the findings emphasised price capacity and capability concerns with an overall price disadvantage of 85 per cent being cited against Asian counterparts—85 per cent. A major component of that is labour cost. I digress for just a moment. I am not diminishing the concerns of Australian workers in this regard; we enjoy a high standard of living and high expectations about income, but the reality seems to be that Australian workers are pricing themselves out of the market for the things they manufacture. Hence our clothing industry has disappeared. Australians are happy to be paid to manufacture jeans and expect a large pay packet, but when it comes to buying the jeans that they manufacture, they say they are too expensive and buy them from overseas manufacturers or online. Likewise with just about everything else, yet there is an expectation that our high incomes governed by awards and enterprise agreements and the like are somehow self-sustaining. They are not. The reality is that many of these businesses that are faced with these problems have to find other ways of being profitable. Certainly, the resource industry offers opportunities if businesses can get into the supply chain, but they have to be competitive about it. It may be that some of those businesses that are unable to draw on their local markets need to find other ways of restructuring their businesses. That is another thing that the department is looking at and assisting with, but we are entirely conscious of the expectations that there will be a large amount of local content, and that is being addressed.

The Department of Commerce is also working with the Australian Steel Institute, which has indicated that fabricators should focus on time-sensitive and niche products and switch emphasis from construction to operational demand. That is another matter that businesses need to address. We are going through a construction boom, if you like, at the moment. That will pass. Once these projects get into an operational stage, the entire emphasis on the sorts of skills and work required will change and they will have to adapt to that.

I am running out of time. I note that this is a large topic and I have just scratched the surface. I would not have done it justice if I had not gone into some detail about it. I welcome the motion because it meant I could say something on it and indicate how the government is addressing this. The government understands that complex issues underlie the local content issue. I encourage members opposite to raise similar motions to this in future so that I will have the opportunity to complete my address on the sorts of issues the government is facing and what it is doing.

HON SALLY TALBOT (South West) [10.45 am]: Nothing that the minister has just said by way of response to this motion persuades me to not join the opposition in condemning the Barnett government for failing to ensure that local manufacturing workers and businesses share in Western Australia's economic success, in particular, the failure of this government's 10-point plan to increase local manufacturing content in resource projects.

The minister has just said that in the 15 minutes available to him he was able to only scratch the surface, but thank goodness he did scratch the surface because in doing that we have discovered that only a scratch below the surface is that old-fashioned Tory line that it is the workers' fault. Who is to blame for this situation? It is the workers. It is the workers pricing themselves out of the market. It is the workers having expectations that are unrealistic. That is a load of nineteenth century, old-fashioned rubbish. In the time available to me I will go through some of the fundamental arguments about why the minister is wrong. It amazes me that I have to stand here and say that already in the short number of days during which we have had a new minister in this portfolio, we who represent the manufacturing sector are already missing Hon Simon O'Brien! I did not think that day would ever come. Hon Simon O'Brien would never have stood in this place and blamed the workers for the situation with the government's failure to invest in local content.

There is a sense that the letter that the minister Hon Michael Mischin received from the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union a month ago should have been unqualified good news for this government, because the letter states very clearly that 200 workers are waiting in Henderson to be redeployed to the major resource projects up north. Every day, almost on the hour with the hourly news bulletin, we hear about the skills shortage affecting our resource industry development in Western Australia. Of course, the Premier is highly conflicted about whether we are having a boom. I heard his response to the commonwealth government budget the other day and he wanted to say that the commonwealth government has squandered the benefits of the boom, but then all of a sudden he realised he was going to come out with the B-word—boom—which of course he says we are not having in the first place. So he had to stumble around and say that if we were having a boom, the commonwealth government might have squandered the resources. He got himself into a terrible tangle there. It is no wonder that the whole Liberal Party nationwide is very confused about this stuff.

It should have been unqualified good news for the government that a minimum of 200 workers right here and now today are waiting to be redeployed up north. What is the government doing about this? Absolutely nothing. There was no answer to the letter that the union wrote on behalf of the workers to the minister. There was no response whatsoever and the minister has the gall to come into this place and put on the public record that his belief is that it is the fault of the workers for pricing themselves out of the market.

I ask honourable members to consider: when is a plan not a plan? Hon Kate Doust has already referred to the 2011 10-point plan that the government put out in an attempt to respond to the growing community demand for increased investment in local content. Of course, the government's first reaction when the iceberg broke through the cover was that there is no problem. We just heard Hon Michael Mischin. All the same old, same old "vexed issue", "very complicated", "vast forward investments", "long well-established supply chains", "It is all very, very hard". We have heard this for years. The government's first reaction was that there is no problem; just let the market look after itself and it will all be hunky-dory. The Premier, Colin Barnett, says, "Trust me, I am the Premier." After a few years the government realised it would actually have to do something, because it was not just the workers who were complaining; it was industry and the employee groups. It was not only local steel manufacturers; it was also the engineers and the designers who began to come to government. The government's own constituency started to tell the government it was stuffing it up. What did the government do? It came out with its 10-point plan. What is this 10-point plan for? I will tell members when a plan is not a plan. A plan is not a plan when it is only a plan, and that is all we have, three pages of bits of paper that say one to 10 and that contain empty rhetoric. I am not even convinced the wheels are going around. I am certain that the wheels have no traction to make any concrete difference to the situation. As a result of listening to the minister's response to this motion, I am now not even certain that those wheels are turning. Look more closely at this plan; it is actually not a plan at all of course, and the government betrays itself with its own rhetoric. It is not a plan; it is a framework. Imagine if someone wanted to make some kind of personal change in their life and they came up with a framework for making those changes. That is what the government has done. All this rhetoric is phrased in terms of improving channels of communication. Well, whoopee doo, is that what these 200 guys down at Henderson want? I do not think so. If we read on we see things like the former minister, Hon Simon O'Brien, wanting to "ensure the state has a more complete picture". That is one of the points in this 10-point framework, ensuring the state has more information about the problem. Hello! I know why the minister refuses to meet with these people, because he will not be able sit in that room and use this kind of rubbish, this drivel, this excuse for complete inaction.

I suggest to honourable members on the government benches that there can only be one key performance indicator for measuring the success of the 10-point plan, strategy or framework, or whatever we want to call it. There can only be one KPI and that is more jobs, more apprenticeships and more traineeships, and, minister, that

is not happening. Hundreds and hundreds of skilled workers are sitting down there in the previous minister's own electorate waiting for jobs. The plan is a complete failure. At the heart of this government's failure is that if the minister had not betrayed himself with his own words to this house this morning, he need look no further than what the government did when it wound up the old Industrial Supplies Office. Who do we think the government gave the contract to, the contract that is supposed to facilitate the development of industry capability and to deliver local jobs and local content to local workers? The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia. If the government cannot see what a fundamental conflict of interest that is, it does not even get to first base. Here we have the CCI representing both large businesses and small businesses. There is no problem with that; there may be very many areas of enterprise where it is quite appropriate for those interests to coincide, but on this fundamental question of local content, the government awarded the contract to the people who represent two groups. One group is the large businesses, the large resource companies, whose primary interest is to minimise cost. On the other hand, the CCI is supposed to represent small to medium-sized businesses whose primary interest is in maximising opportunity. Get it? It is a conflict of interest. It cannot work. The minister should take the contract away from the CCI and take it on himself, as every other state government in Australia has done. Every other state government in Australia has taken on responsibility for running their equivalent of the Industry Capability Network. The government does not have to worry about partisan politics going on in this case, because every other state government has recognised there is a fundamental conflict of interest unless the state government handles these matters itself. I put it to honourable members that we know what the Liberal government thinks about this issue. We heard the minister very clearly this morning and I tell him, it does not wash. He has shirked his responsibility and he will be held accountable.

HON PHIL EDMAN (South Metropolitan) [10.55 am]: Firstly, this is like *Groundhog Day*. This is not the first, the second or the third time, I do not even think it is the fourth time, that the opposition has brought this issue up. I think it is the fifth time in the last 18 months. It is probably because the opposition has nothing better to talk about, but it is an important issue and I always welcome when it is raised, because it gives me an opportunity to talk about what is happening in the South Metropolitan Region. I would really like to know how many steel fabricators and factories Hon Kate Doust has actually been to; I would love to hear that. In relation to our new members, Hon Dave Grills and Hon Martin Aldridge —

Hon Kate Doust interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon PHIL EDMAN: Mr President, I cannot hear myself speak.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon PHIL EDMAN: Hon Kate Doust should visit her electorate.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members know that if they feel they have been misquoted or maligned in the speech, there are certain provisions under the standing orders to draw that to the attention of the house, but it cannot be done by constant interjection.

Hon PHIL EDMAN: As I was saying, I welcome our new members Hon Dave Grills and Hon Martin Aldridge, and I thank Hon Martin Aldridge for his wonderful speech last night as well. These new members do not have to worry if they do not get to make a contribution to this debate, because the opposition will probably bring this issue up again next week, or sometime soon. I am sure that this issue would be dear to Hon Dave Grills' heart, he being a tradesperson.

Firstly, I would like to say what a fantastic job Hon Simon O'Brien did when he was Minister for Commerce. At any request I had for him to come to my electorate, which is also his, he very quickly came, and he visited numerous times when there were issues he needed to look at. Hon Simon O'Brien should be commended for his contribution to the "Western Australian Government Local Content Participation Framework" and also the local content committees. Talking about visiting the western trade coast and the steel fabricators, 90 per cent of which reside in Kwinana, our new minister Hon Michael Mischin came down just recently on 8 May, at my request, and spent close to half a day talking to various steel fabricators and businesses in the western trade coast. One thing I can say about the minister is that he gets down and has a look at things. I remember when he was the parliamentary secretary to the Attorney General, and for those members who remember, we had the graffiti implements bill. I remember a shop was selling these graffiti implements to the kids and I found out that Hon Michael Mischin took his suit off and went there to see for himself firsthand whether that was happening. That is the sort gentleman he is. I have total confidence in his capabilities in dealing with this portfolio.

Hon Norman Moore: Did he buy one?

Hon PHIL EDMAN: I do not know whether he bought anything, I hope he did not! However, Hon Michael Mischin is doing, and will do, an excellent job.

It is very hard out there at the moment. I will not say that everyone is holding hands and singing *Kumbaya* down there when it comes to work. It is tough and I know that. I also have a factory I own in the industrial area and it has been doing it tough too, but we have to start to think globally and outside the box. We cannot expect government to fix every single thing. There is a golden answer; sometimes we have to help ourselves. There have been some good news stories just recently. Alltype Engineering in Naval Base won a Gorgon project job with CB&I and Kentz Joint Venture. That is creating another 60 to 80 jobs and that was announced, I think, in the *Weekend Courier* on 26 April. On 17 April Matrix Composite and Engineering announced it was creating 220 jobs from a contract it won in relation to the Wheatstone project. I will not go on about all of them, but those are a couple of recent biggies that have happened in my electorate, so it is not all doom and gloom. I realise that some of these businesses are doing it tough. I am waiting for an opposition member to suggest that we “mandate” local content. As the minister said, that will not work. We would scare off those companies that want to do business in the state. It is not exactly easy for companies to set up businesses of a global scale in Western Australia, and we do not want to make it any harder for them. Hon Gary Gray is on the record as saying that he does not support mandating local content. In my opinion there is a better way. If I were in the business of being a steel fabricator, I tell you what—I would not be waiting around for the government to fix all my problems. I am sorry, but I just would not do that as a business proprietor. Rather, I would be studying very quickly the model that Hon Simon O’Brien introduced some years ago. He took me to meet the owners of Strategic Marine. It started off as a small company based in Geraldton that built crayfish boats, but it is now a lot bigger. It decided to set up some of its componentry in Vietnam. It won the contract through the former state government for the floating dock because it was competitive. It has also set up business in Singapore. The Minister for Commerce visited Strategic Marine on 8 May. It was interesting to learn that that Western Australian company, which has not lost any of its workforce, is winning contracts because it is based in Singapore and Vietnam. The Singaporean government would not have given it a contract had it not set up business in Singapore. It would not have won some Malaysian contracts if it had not set up business in Vietnam. It would not have been awarded those projects if it were based only in the Western Trade Coast and with the Australian Marine Complex. Strategic Marine has thought outside the box. I know that is scary for some business proprietors, but if Strategic Marine can do it, I am sure there are other opportunities. The Australian dollar is high. An Indonesian boilermaker—I was there not so long ago—receives \$200 a month. How do we compete with that? It is difficult. We have to think outside the box. I am being a realist. I want to help businesses stay afloat. Steel fabricators are very important to Western Australia. I do not want to see them fall over. There is a thing called maintenance; indeed, if we do not have steel fabricators, we will be in trouble. We must be able to look after them and keep them here. It is not easy. There will always be something that we should be doing. No government is perfect. I have never stood in this house and said that our government is perfect. There is always room for improvement in any government, some more than others.

In the little time I have left—this is probably the only time I will get such an opportunity—I would like to say farewell to retiring members from all parties.

The PRESIDENT: As much as you may like to do that —

Hon PHIL EDMAN: I cannot do it?

The PRESIDENT: — you have to stick to the question before the house.

Hon PHIL EDMAN: Okay. If that is the vote, thank you and goodbye!

HON ADELE FARINA (South West) [11.04 am]: I am pleased to rise in support of the very important motion put forward by Hon Kate Doust. The issue of skilled Western Australian workers missing out on local jobs in the resources sector and, in many cases, being unable to apply for those jobs; and, the issue of Western Australian businesses missing out on contracts for resource projects are real and pressing issues that impact the state’s economy and economic development. These issues should not be ignored by government and certainly should not be ignored by responsible government. These issues warrant the attention of this house as many times as is necessary until they are addressed.

I was quite horrified to read the letter from the secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union to the Minister for Commerce. It stated that 200 workers at Henderson, who were employed on the basis that they would be skilled up and trained at Henderson and then mobilised to work on one of the big resource projects in the north west—and who were due for mobilisation in late December—were informed that all that had been cancelled at the same time that the recruitment company employed by the resource company was actively recruiting and mobilising workers from the eastern states to fill those jobs. I do not know whether members opposite find that disturbing. Certainly the laughter from members on the other side suggests that they do not. I certainly find it disturbing that 200 Western Australian skilled workers who are ready, willing and able to fill those jobs are being overlooked and that workers are being recruited from the eastern states and overseas ahead of those Western Australian workers. That is not in the best interests of our workforce and it is not in the best interests of our economy and the economic development of the state. I would like an answer to the question

posed in the union's letter and posed by Hon Kate Doust as to why it is that these people, who were employed on the condition that they would be trained and skilled at Henderson and then mobilised and moved into the resources sector jobs in the north west, have been overlooked and told that that is not happening anymore when, in fact, those positions are being filled by workers from the eastern states. I find it extraordinary that this is happening. The union also said that skilled Western Australian workers who had been displaced when certain projects had finished could have easily filled those positions at either Henderson or Barrow Island. But they, too, were overlooked. Unemployed skilled Western Australian workers are missing out on jobs because those jobs are going to workers in the eastern states. That is a serious issue that must be addressed; it should not be ignored by the government. It is very reasonable for the union to write to the minister to ask for an explanation about that and to invite the minister to review the situation and talk to the workers. It is unacceptable that having received the letter over a month ago, the minister has failed to reply to either the letter or the invitation to meet on site with the workers who have raised these concerns. It is also unacceptable that the minister failed to address that issue at all in his response to this motion. I do not believe that that is acceptable.

It is the responsibility of government and ultimately this Parliament to ensure that Western Australians are getting the best benefit from the resources sector and the projects. Clearly, that is not happening. We should not be sitting idly by, watching Western Australian jobs go to eastern states and overseas workers. The government has a responsibility to enhance opportunities for Western Australians, particularly work opportunities, and it is clearly failing in that responsibility. Certainly, we have heard evidence of that today. The government must step up and address why this is happening.

We want to know why these companies are opting for eastern states workers over Western Australian workers. Western Australian workers who have been employed and trained specifically to take on those positions, and unemployed skilled workers who live in WA and who are willing to take up those jobs are being ignored. One of the big issues is the lack of transparency. Hon Jon Ford has risen in this place and talked about his frustration in trying to get information through the freedom of information process and questions in Parliament about why this is happening, about local content and why Western Australian skilled workers are missing out on jobs that are going to eastern states and overseas workers. He has been unable to find out that information. He has been told that the reason why he cannot get that information is that it is commercial-in-confidence. Like Hon Jon Ford, I do not understand why this information is commercial-in-confidence. It is not. There is absolutely no reason why this information should not be made available. If it was made available, perhaps we would get a better understanding of the extent of the problem, and we might have some success in addressing the problem. But while these details remain protected, we have very little chance of addressing the problem. I think greater transparency is required by government. Certainly, the government promised the Western Australian community that it would be transparent. Over the past four and a half years, we have certainly seen a lack of commitment to that undertaking given to the electorate, and it would be good to see that changed in this term of government so that we might be able to start addressing these issues.

The minister needs to respond as a matter of urgency to the issues that were raised in the union's letter and that have been raised by members here today, because, as I said, I and, I am sure, the Western Australian community would really like to know the answers to these questions. Whenever we listen to talkback radio on this issue and whenever we move about the community and talk to members of the community, we hear time and again about skilled workers who cannot get into the resource sector. No matter how skilled they are or how hard they try, unless they know someone in the resource sector, they simply cannot get a job in the sector. It should not be that hard. Western Australian skilled workers should not be overlooked by the resource companies when it comes to jobs. It is an issue that we really need to address, and I think we are failing to.

The government has made a big deal about its 10-point framework, but that addresses only one component of the problem. The problem has a number of components. Part of it is what we call the supply contracts. That 10-point plan or framework tries to address that, but clearly it is not addressing it. I have some real concerns about the reports that have been tabled in that there is no verification of the information that has been provided. If it has been verified, we do not know who verified it and how it was verified, so it is very hard to make any judgement on those local content documents that have been provided because there is no verification of the information in them.

The aspect that has been raised today is quite a separate matter. It is not about the supply to local contractors; it is about skilled Western Australian workers who are unable to access those jobs and fill those positions. It is a very different issue, and the minister has failed to address that in his response today, as have other government members. It needs to be addressed. I think that the 10-point framework completely ignores the issue. I know that the minister, in releasing that, did say that it was open for change and modification. Clearly, it needs that, because it is failing to address this very important issue.

Certainly, I am calling on the minister to investigate this issue and to report back to Parliament on why it is that in circumstances in which we have skilled Western Australian workers who are able to take up these positions, these positions continue to go to workers in the eastern states and overseas, ahead of our Western Australian

workers who are skilled. We are not talking about unskilled workers. They are skilled; they are able to do this job. In the case of those workers at Henderson, they were employed with the intention of moving them on to Barrow Island, yet this has not happened. We are entitled to know why.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [11.14 am]: The motion put forward by Hon Kate Doust is based on a false premise, but that does not seem to be what she intended to argue this morning. In fact, what the mover and subsequent speakers from the opposition have been demanding of the Minister for Commerce is that he respond to a very specific and discrete area of complaint, which is quite different from the wording of the motion, which is the normal, broadbrush wording, "That this Council condemns the Barnett government for failing to" do something. The opposition should have learnt by now that if it wants to get a response from a responsive, responsible and reasonable minister such as Hon Michael Mischin, all it has to do is give suitable notice of what it wishes to debate, ask a question in this house, and he will provide that information. But that does not seem to be the situation that it wants to pursue, and I doubt the sincerity of the agenda that is behind the wording of this motion anyway.

The reports that have been tabled every six months in recent years provide a very different response from the government to the false premise that is contained in the wording of this motion. Members need only to resort to that to find out about the results that this government has obtained when measured against the framework for local industry participation. However, now we have Hon Adele Farina doubting the veracity of that, although I do not think she had made any inquiry at all to establish the veracity of that claim prior to raising it here in the house. But I guess that is the sort of thing that oppositions do.

I want to make some brief comments that might be pertinent at this time. The first is that there has already been a slinging off against the new Minister for Commerce, saying that he probably does not know anything about this area. I think Hon Michael Mischin demonstrated, in fact, that he has a very good handle on this new area of responsibility and a better level of understanding than the mover does of the issue. I know, because I have looked very closely and lived day after day, week after week with tackling the issue, and I know when people are dinkum about doing something and I know when they are talking rubbish. Hon Michael Mischin has a very good grasp of what is happening; the mover does not. She just wants to use it —

Hon Kate Doust: Is that why you got sacked, because you are talking rubbish?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Grow up a little bit, will you? That is a stupid and graceless interjection, and I hope you are now embarrassed by it, as your colleagues would be.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us stick to the substance of the issue.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The substance of the issue concerns the amount of local involvement, in a whole range of ways, in some of the dramatic developments that are taking place—the unprecedented scale of development that is occurring here in Western Australia, particularly in the petroleum and mining sectors at this time. It is right that Western Australia, and Western Australians, should enjoy the benefits of that increased activity, although, admittedly, such impacts are not going to be evenly felt or evenly spread, and governments have a responsibility to make sure that there is as much pie available for all Western Australians to be able to enjoy their share and, indeed, as big a slice as they can. We know that, and we are working hard towards achieving that.

We have already heard that some of the challenges, particularly facing the steel fabrication sector, have a lot to do with a need on the part of some areas of activity to change or improve their basic business model in order to be more competitive and to obtain more work. That has been discussed on other occasions and will be discussed again. Indeed, it is contained in the reports that I have previously tabled in this house. We know all of that. We also know that it mitigates in the favour of our local suppliers when we have jobs such as in the traditional mining sector, where the sites of production are well inland, as opposed to many of the new petroleum sites of production that are, in fact, offshore or for processing immediately onshore. The reason for that is fairly obvious. There is a far greater capacity for modules and other infrastructure from competitor nations in the region to be provided to an offshore site than there is to provide those materials and infrastructure to a site that is hundreds of kilometres inland from the coast. That is why I think we will find it will be a very good thing in due course when Buru Energy Ltd and others develop the shale gas resource in the Canning Basin—another agreement secured by this government. It will all be inland and onshore and is a massive prospect for Western Australia. That is to be applauded; it is a tremendous development.

Conversely, let us look at our critics' performance in all of this. It was they who awarded a floating dock contract, largely to be built offshore—Hon Phil Edman referred to this—in a move that we do not criticise because we understand how and why it happened. But if this government commissioned a floating dock to be largely fabricated offshore, even by a Western Australian company, this lot opposite would be screaming their heads off, because they have a very short memory about the realities that they had to confront when they were in

government. They also forget that, in keeping with what I have just described, this government has tried to make sure that our resources are processed onshore in Western Australia to maximise the benefit to Western Australia and to Western Australians. That is why we decry the failure of the previous Labor government in allowing the Inpex Corporation project to slip through the state's fingers and go to Darwin.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Let's talk about Woodside.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I want to talk about Woodside Petroleum Ltd. Unlike the Canning Basin project that I just referred to, there is another very big project in the offing, and it involves Woodside and Shell. It also involves, we discover, a floating platform in commonwealth waters to process the liquefied natural gas that is the target of the project. This state government wants, and will continue to fight, to see that processing happen onshore for the benefits and the reasons that I have just described. But we have a federal Labor government, with a Western Australian member in Gary Gray, formerly an employee of Woodside—Hon Sally Talbot, before members opposite start talking about potential conflicts—saying that, no, this should be processed on a floating platform offshore. Martin Ferguson, the then minister, made sure that for short-term expediency and to look after, as our opponents would say, the big end of town —

Point of Order

Hon KATE DOUST: I think the member has gone way off tangent, Mr President, and, on a question of relevance, I would ask you to bring him back to the motion.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think the underlying principle of what the member is talking about is offshore versus onshore manufacturing. In that context, I think his comments are in order. But, of course, he would not want to stray from the substance of the issue.

Debate Resumed

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: This is 100 per cent relevant to the debate and central to the issue. When federal Labor ministers engineer it so that the Shell–Woodside consortium can process offshore so that the federal government can get some short-term benefit from revenues flowing in commonwealth waters, and to hell with Western Australia and our interests, that is certainly germane to this debate and it is exactly what the opposition should be talking about. But did the mover of this motion contact Gary Gray or his colleague Martin Ferguson to say that what they are proposing is wrong and that she opposes it? No, she did not, and that shows the blatant hypocrisy contained in all her remarks on this issue.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan) [11.24 am]: I will try to be calm, Mr President. I rise to support the motion. There is an old saying that where there is a will, there is a way. The government's 10-point plan to increase local manufacturing content in resource projects is an absolute sham. There is nothing in this document; all it consists of is a series of motherhood statements. If this government were serious about this issue, it would do something about it. Time does not permit me to go into the detail of the weaknesses in the 10-point plan, but it is a shocking lost opportunity. There is no doubt that the notion of protecting Western Australian jobs on Western Australian resource projects does not accord with the ideology of the Liberal Party and so the Liberal Party does not believe that it should do anything about it. It is very concerning to me that Western Australian jobs are not being secured for Western Australian workers and that it is okay to say that workers can come from interstate or, indeed, from other nations and do work here.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Like media advisers in the Prime Minister's office.

The PRESIDENT: Order, member! You just had your opportunity; now it is somebody else's.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: What needs to be understood is that when workers come from interstate, and they do, or when they come from overseas, and they do, the fact is that the money they earn in large part does not stay in this economy; the money in most part gets transferred back to where their families are, whether that is overseas or interstate, assuming of course that they have not brought their family to Western Australia. At the end of the day, one way in which we can maximise the benefit of a resource project to the Western Australian economy is to ensure that, first and foremost, Western Australians get access to Western Australian jobs. Clearly, that is not happening. I am absolutely shocked that employment agencies are putting in a whole lot of barriers to Western Australian people accessing those jobs, particularly in the area of engineering and steel fabrication. That says to me that there is a reason why local workers are being bypassed. I do not think that the skill set would be different between Western Australian workers and interstate workers. I think that one of the reasons they might be bypassed is that if workers are not taken from the strip and individual workers are taken from the eastern states, chances are that they will not be unionised. So there is a hidden agenda here. This is

really where we have a fundamental problem. If all is equal in a skill set, why is one class of workers being denied the opportunity?

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.

PRISON SYSTEM — GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

Motion

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [11.30 am] — without notice: I move —

That this Council offers its encouragement to government and relevant government agencies to examine and pursue innovative strategies to reduce the number of Western Australians in the prison system.

The first responsibility of any government is to protect its citizens. In pursuit of that, the government that I support has expressed its concern in many practical ways about the current rate of juvenile offending and incarceration in our community, in particular among young Indigenous people. The government has committed to a number of initiatives and is exploring means of deterring future offending, by juveniles in particular, and it remains open to community views with regard to the best methods of achieving this objective.

That is what I want to talk about today. But, in doing so, I do not want to disregard another clear priority for this side of the house. This government has a good record, which we can point to, in making sure that we discharge the responsibility of protecting our citizens first and foremost. We have introduced mandatory sentencing for those who assault public officials in their line of duty. We have committed to mandatory sentencing for aggravated assaults. These are serious steps. We have supported the operations of the Department of Corrective Services by providing the extra resources that it needs, with an extra 673 prison officers over the past four years. We have invested heavily in prisons and in a range of other mechanisms to make our justice system work better for Western Australians, whether they are part of the justice system or depending on it for their protection.

I want to make the point at the outset that it needs to be recognised, and I do recognise, that we do need a prison system. We do need to use incarceration as a means of protecting the community by getting violent offenders off the streets, and to act as a deterrent to those who might seek to commit serious crime by offering the promise of the serious punishment that a prison term brings to those upon whom it is imposed. But sometimes we have to look beyond that. I was, therefore, very, very pleased to hear a debate commencing this week that gives me some hope to address a matter that, let us face it, has been raised many times before.

I recall the following words that have been tabled in this place —

- 1.1 Western Australia has an imprisonment rate which is over twice that of: the State of Victoria; the Netherlands; and Germany.
- 1.2 Imprisonment as a sentencing option is expensive and largely ineffective in rehabilitating offenders. In many cases imprisonment has a negative effect on both the offender and their family. On a daily per offender basis, it costs approximately 14 times more to imprison an adult or juvenile offender than to impose a community based sentence.
- 1.3 Imprisonment should be primarily for violent offenders (who constitute approximately half of all current prisoners). Non-violent offenders and those currently receiving short prison terms are best directed to community based sanctions with strict enforcement of the conditions.
- 1.4 The use of a broader range of more sophisticated alternative sanctions to imprisonment will provide more effective programs for offenders and have less disruptive effects on the families of offenders.

I am quoting from the twenty-ninth report of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations in relation to the financial management of prisons. That report was tabled in this place on 29 June 2000. Both Hon Ljiljana Ravlich and I were members and co-authors of that report, prepared under the chairmanship of Hon Mark Nevill.

I do not know that anyone in this place would seriously disagree with the sentiments that are contained in that report or would particularly wish to take issue with the general thrust of those sentiments. It might be interesting to dust off that report and look at it in the light of current experience. Maybe some committee or other might take up the role, or, indeed, maybe a government agency listening to this debate might want to dust off that report and have a look at it and compare and contrast it with the progress that has been made over the years in this area.

Basically, we know these things. We know that there are people who do need to be locked up for society's simple protection, because they need to be taken out of circulation for a period of time. But we also know, I think intuitively, that we can do things better. I say that particularly in light of the rate of imprisonment in Western Australia. I am advised by the annual report of the Department of Corrective Services that as at 30 June last year, we had just under 5 000 people in our jails. We have to ask, "Hang on. Why is it the case that we are

imprisoning people at such a rate? Is it achieving all that we want it to achieve? Are there people in our prisons who probably should not be there, or in respect of which it is pointless to have them there?"

The report that I have referred to—the twenty-ninth report of that old committee—canvasses questions such as the mental health of people who are in the prison system. It also canvasses the nature of the offences that they are in prison for, such as whether they are in prison for petty offences but could not pay their fines, or whether they are in prison for driving offences and so on. We could realistically ask ourselves whether there is a better alternative for these types of offences than the alternative of imprisonment. Although I know that members are unlikely to dismiss me as some sort of bleeding heart, I hold these views very sincerely. There is no point in the community going to great expense and making things worse for itself in the case of offenders who perhaps are not destined to be lifetime offenders. I am sure there are better things that we in the community can do with our money and our energy. There is also no point in the community making things worse for the families and others who rely on those offenders, and of overlooking the contribution that those people and their families might otherwise be able to make.

I think, again, that members would appreciate the point that I am making and generally would agree that these are fair questions to ask; and, indeed, they are being asked. All sorts of people, both within and outside of government, are doing research into these matters. I have no doubt that there are many officers in the Department of Corrective Services, in the Department of the Attorney General, and in a whole suite of government and non-government organisations, who are similarly exercising their minds and their consciences about these questions and are in search of a better outcome.

The report that Hon Ljiljana Ravlich and I helped co-author back in 2000 states at paragraph 1.10 —

The gap between research and practice needs to be bridged.

I imagine that that was not only true then but it is also true now. It was true five years ago and it will probably be true in another five years as well.

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich: If we co-authored it, it will be true forever.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Absolutely. We also made some recommendations which, in view of my subsequent life experience, we might have finetuned slightly. Nonetheless, these are important —

Hon Sue Ellery: Read those ones out.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Time prohibits me from doing that.

With all of that in mind, I was greatly encouraged when I saw the new Minister for Corrective Services, Hon Joe Francis, make some remarks that show a mindset about bridging that gap and about doing something and making a difference. I want to compliment him on that. One way that I can do that is by encouraging some debate and awareness in this place and by my colleagues here having a look, if they are of a mind to do so, at our prison system.

On 8 May in the other place, a member asked the minister a question which, in part, stated —

Last week the minister said that every dollar spent keeping someone out of jail is better than \$10 spent keeping them in jail.

(1) What is the minister's intention in relation to the prison population in Western Australia—to increase or decrease it, noting all the minister's other commentary on the subject?

In part, Minister Francis replied —

One of the things that has obviously come to my attention is the fact that perhaps in some circumstances it may be better to spend a little bit more to put a few more resources into stopping some juveniles, in particular, from crossing that line that will land them in jail. This government obviously has a very strong record on protecting the community—on locking up people who are a threat to the innocent people of Western Australia—and I will not, and I am sure the government will not, apologise for that stand. But I also think that we can do a little bit more to spend some money in helping to keep some of the at-risk juveniles, in particular, from crossing the line that will land them in jail in the first place. It is not one of those areas in which if we just had millions of dollars and could throw \$1 million at every single person in Western Australia, we would stop people from committing crimes. We are still going to have people in jail. What I am suggesting is that perhaps we should spend a bit more money and put a few more resources into trying to stop people going down that wrong path that will land them in jail, which will just create a waste of human capital by locking them up. If we can keep them from committing crimes in the first place, that will provide a better outcome for them, for the individuals who will not be the victims of the crime and for the taxpayers, because at the moment it costs somewhere around \$630 a day to keep a juvenile in detention in Western Australia.

I was greatly encouraged when I heard these sentiments being publicly expressed because people will take issue with the minister about that and people will be offended. People are easily offended in this town when they see their situation or the established norm being threatened but these are the sorts of things that a minister needs to say. I congratulate him for it.

Others, including myself, on that estimates committee of yesteryear have looked at these things as well. In researching this matter, I was very pleased to see that the Department of Corrective Services already knows about this. An extensive number of programs are conducted by, and largely within, our custodial facilities. I applaud corrective services officers for the very, very difficult job that they have to do. I want to decrease the workload they have. I want to have fewer people in custody and fewer lives disrupted permanently by incarceration when they do not necessarily need to be. That is why I will be pursuing support of alternative programs for early intervention. I make that pledge. I alluded to this when I spoke in this house on Tuesday about some goings-on in Fremantle. I hope that by raising this matter today, it gives members an opportunity to start thinking about it themselves and also to offer some encouragement to a minister who is determined to make a difference.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [11.45 am]: I am absolutely delighted to speak to this motion today. I am really pleased that a change in circumstance has led Hon Simon O'Brien to recognise and acknowledge the work and policies of WA Labor and, in particular, the work done by Paul Papalia, the member for Warnbro, back in 2010 when he released Labor's discussion paper on justice reinvestment. I am happy to support any motion that encourages the government to look at innovative strategies to reduce the number of Western Australians in the prison system. However, two things make me wary and a little sceptical about the likelihood of success but I hope that those things can be turned around. Firstly, and most recently, was the shocking sacking of a senior loyal public servant, the head of the Department of Corrective Services, in unusual circumstances in the past couple of weeks. This is the man who we would think would be best placed to advise the government on how to address this issue based on his years of experience. The second thing that makes me slightly sceptical about the likelihood of success is that those programs that encourage tackling recidivism and, in particular, those programs directed at young people in the juvenile justice system have been cut significantly by this government in recent budgets. A series of programs—I will name them in a minute—have been cut. A really good sign of this government's bona fides is that it has genuinely recognised that we need to do something different and we need to do something to tackle young people, and Indigenous young people, in particular, to turn around the likelihood that they will end up back in corrective services. I really hope that the budget we see in August gives us a sign that funds have been returned to those programs that have been demonstrably successful in keeping young people out of our prisons.

In 2010, Paul Papalia wrote a discussion paper entitled "Justice Reinvestment—An Option for Western Australia?" The reason he chose to tackle those issues, some of which have been touched on already by Hon Simon O'Brien, is that there had been a really significant steep growth in WA's prison muster following, in particular, some changes around parole policies and practices. The Chief Justice had indicated in public debate that it was certainly the case that the prisoners who constituted the recent growth in the WA prison system displayed some general characteristics, such as psychiatric disability, economic disadvantage, evidence of an inability to pay fines, Aboriginality and offending at the lower end of the spectrum. Prisons are also costly. Paul Papalia pointed that out in his paper as well. Back in 2010, he was saying that the operating costs of our prisons already exceed half a billion dollars and that the Chief Justice and the Inspector of Custodial Services both say that this substantial figure is growing at a rate of about \$100 000 a year for each additional prisoner. It is not \$100 000 a year across the system; it is \$100 000 a year for each additional prisoner. The proposition developed in the United States in Texas and taken up elsewhere was: ought not we be able to look at how we spend the money on trying to stop people going into prison in the first place, if they are part of that group that share those characteristics outlined, for example, by the Chief Justice, and certainly on trying to stop those who have been in there once from ever having to go back in there again?

Paul Papalia's discussion paper particularly looked at the sheer weight of numbers of Indigenous people in the WA prison system, and noted that WA has the highest rate of Indigenous imprisonment in the nation. Around 43 per cent of the adult prison population and at times as much as 80 per cent of the juvenile detention population in Western Australia are Aboriginal, which is not a statistic we should be proud of. Aboriginal people are a minority in the demographic of Western Australia. They make up only 3.2 per cent of the state's population but are 20 times more likely to end up being in prison than are non-Aboriginal people.

My colleague Paul Papalia therefore posed questions around the policy that has become known around the world as justice reinvestment. It takes a scientific approach and has four steps, which have been canvassed widely in public debate since Paul put it on the public agenda nearly three years ago now. The first step—this has already been undertaken to a certain extent—is to do a geographic analysis of the state's prison population to identify which communities are generating the intake. The proposition within the justice reinvestment proposal is that the analysis be undertaken in a non-partisan way. However, we know that work has already been done and that there

has been public canvassing of that work. Indeed, I have to say that public servants were flagging that proposition to me about a year ago. The second step is to bring people together. This is not just a problem for the Department of Corrective Services. As in the case of many social issues, this is a problem that needs to be tackled by a range of agencies and a range of organisations in the community. It is not just about corrective services; it is about health, education, child protection, Indigenous affairs, police, local government and regional development agencies. It is about all those agencies working together. The third step is to make sure the costs are done properly and to implement the changes. The fourth step is then about measuring the outcomes.

This is a time-limited debate and I want to just quickly touch on some of the programs that have worked well but from which this government in its wisdom has seen fit to cut money. They include the Killara youth support service, an outreach support program for young people and their families who are having problems that might attract the attention of the police and the law. Its funds were cut in 2012, I think. There is the award-winning crime-fighting initiative, the Family Intensive Team, which targeted juvenile offenders who had committed serious and repeat offences and whose severe antisocial behaviour increased their offence risk. That team's funds were cut in 2010. Then there is the Sycamore Tree Project, a not-for-profit program run under the umbrella of Prison Fellowship WA, which turns around people's lives and has been hailed as a tremendous success by victims of crime, by prison management and by prisoners who participate. The state government will provide no funding to that project either. I hope that these measures, together with encouragement from Hon Simon O'Brien and the rest of us in this chamber who will no doubt support the motion today, will result in some bona fides in the budget and that a genuine attempt will be made to invest funds in those programs that we know work. It is absolutely critical that we continue to invest in the pointy end of corrective services.

There are people who need to be locked up for our safety and sometimes for their own safety as well. There are people who have committed crimes that are so seriously unacceptable to the community that prison is the only solution for them. We have a system of justice that says, "If you commit an offence against the community, you will pay a price for that." But we cannot continue to just lock people up and not seriously continue to invest at a significant rate to ensure people stay out of prison; or if they do go in, they go in only once and do not keep going back. If we do not properly invest at that end of the spectrum, we are setting ourselves up for a gross failure and we are setting up people, particularly those young people in the juvenile justice system, to ruin their lives. I put it to the house that some young people's lives could have been on a much stronger, healthier path if the three programs I just referred to had been properly funded in the last four years. It is up to the government now to put its bona fides on the table and make sure we see in the budget serious funds.

HON DAVE GRILLS (Mining and Pastoral) [11.55 am]: The Chinese have a saying that it does not matter who holds the cow, it is who gets the milk. I have often thought that and it was pleasing to hear Hon Simon O'Brien's comments the other day about Fremantle and the events that took place there. It has been my experience that if we get onto a problem straightaway, then it will not happen. This is how we prevent people from ending up in jail. We need to put the community back into the police community engagement division and start seeing a bit more of a proactive approach to matters like this before they occur, thereby preventing people from coming under the gaze of the law. We should work at it from that end. We do a lot at the other end but we need to put a lot more back in.

It was good to hear the honourable Leader of the Opposition talk about how we should invest in that approach. It has long been my experience that we invest in lots of things and that we have lots of people working in different ways and in different areas trying to achieve the same thing. What we really need is a more coordinated approach and, yes, we do need to invest in that if we want to keep young people out of the corrective services system.

It was also good to hear the Minister for Mental Health say that she had sat in court and listened to the stories and things that happen in courts. That is very good and perhaps we all should take a leaf out of her book. In my experience, some people who sniff and abuse substances are denied mental health services because mental health practitioners say it is not a health issue but an issue that people have caused and brought on by substance abuse. The fact is that those people still commit offences irrespective of whether they have a mental illness or whether they have done something to themselves.

What I have proposed and have spoken to a lot of people about—I proposed it whilst in Kalgoorlie—Boulder—is the need to have a paradigm shift in the way we deal with young people. If governments are going to put money into justice reinvestment, I think we could do worse than look at a purpose-built facility that can take young people who offend, who quite rightly need to be put in a place, and work with those people. Then we could take all the existing government agencies, not-for-profits and good people mentioned today and get them to work with those young people in that facility; and, more importantly, engage their families in that process. I think that is where we need to be. I think we could do a lot worse than look perhaps at a pilot project to actually do that. Because we spend a lot of money doing other things that sometimes do not quite work, I think there is an opportunity there to do that.

Having sat at the other end of the scale, I can see that there is a need for crime prevention. There is an opportunity here for that. The police service has overhauled its community policing division, which now calls itself the community engagement division. That provides an opportunity for police to have a bit more of a look at what happens and to put some more effort towards engagement with the community. Closed-circuit television in some areas is seen as the be-all and end-all, but it is effective only if it is monitored. Local governments are hesitant and say that they cannot afford to monitor it and the police say that they will not monitor it all the time. I have a proposal that can fix that and it does not involve too much, just a bit of commonsense. CCTV needs to be monitored in peak periods. We need to use it to get more bang for our buck. We need to get out there and prevent the crimes. If Fremantle was covered by CCTV and we had someone monitoring that, instead of being reactive after an offence has been committed—for example, when somebody has been assaulted—we could be proactive and allocate limited resources before it becomes something that ties up resources. It has been my experience that to arrest somebody for a minor offence is not a minor event. These days, with red tape and things that happen with police officers, the arresting police officer is off the street for quite some hours by the time all the paperwork has been processed.

Hon Simon O'Brien: That is a very good point.

Hon DAVE GRILLS: Thank you. I can speak on this because it has been my experience; until 12 February, I was a serving police officer. I was the crime prevention and diversity officer in Kalgoorlie–Boulder and people came and talked to me about different things. However, I think we have missed the point. If we listen to what people tell us, we learn that parents who have kids involved in this system with siblings will say, “I cannot afford to deal with this young person because it takes my attention away from these guys, and I do not want these children to end up the same way.” People say to parents, “You should take more responsibility for your child”, but it is pretty hard to take responsibility for someone when the only tool they have in their toolbox is a hammer. Everything they see is a nail and they treat problems with that hammer. People have said to me that they have given their kids, to use their term, a flogging and locked them in their room, but they ran away. They have said to me that they do not know what else to do. That says to me that we have a problem with parents who really do not know what to do. If members go out into the communities in the lands, they will see that the taps are painted blue for cold and red for hot. This is 2013; we should be teaching people that hot is hot and cold is cold. I have limited time to talk on this, but I am quite happy to talk with anyone who cares to listen. It is something that we need to do because it not only costs the community a lot of money, but it will continue to cost the community a lot of money for a long time to come if we do not put a spoke in the wheel and increase the gap. The gap that I speak of is the gap between doing right and wrong. On a sliding scale, if we increase the gap between doing right and wrong, that gap will go somewhere else, such as Indigenous health and education, and we will close that gap.

I thank all the members who have spoken on the motion today and I hope that there is an opportunity for some bipartisan action on this. I will put my money where my mouth is and I would be happy to work with anyone who wants to make a change. As I said in my maiden speech last night, I am not a one-trick pony, but this is one of the things that I think underpins a lot of the ills of society and that we are capable of fixing it. Therefore, I put the challenge to the Council and ask members to address this issue in not only metropolitan WA but also regional WA. Regional kids end up in the metro area in places such as Banksia Hill, which takes them out of the lands and does not fix the problem. I thank Hon Simon O'Brien very much for raising this issue and Hon Sue Ellery for speaking on the motion. I hope that we will be able to come to an agreement and start to work towards better outcomes for young people in our communities.

HON GIZ WATSON (North Metropolitan) [12.04 pm]: I congratulate the honourable member for this motion. I have to say that I was somewhat surprised, to be quite honest. An issue that I have spoken about in this place for 16 years is finally getting some support across the parties. That is excellent. I am not a cynical person, as members know. Some of the comments that I will make on this motion pre-empt some of the things I will say this afternoon in my concluding comments. This is a very important area. We have got it wrong for so long in Western Australia by pursuing a bidding war on law and order. All three other political parties in this state have to remember that it was the Labor Party that introduced mandatory sentencing into Western Australia and saw juveniles imprisoned for a third-strike offence no matter the severity of the preceding offences in home burglaries.

Hon Michael Mischin: They would have been aggravated burglaries of dwellings.

Hon GIZ WATSON: No, it was not. Hon Michael Mischin might like to check the history.

Anyway, we have a situation now in Western Australia in which we have, under successive governments, imprisoned people, particularly Indigenous Western Australians, at an unprecedented rate. I really have noticed the change in mood and I appreciate the comments from the new Minister for Corrective Services. I think that is a beacon of hope in this area. If we look at the evidence, we see that many young offenders, particularly young men, take risks and do foolish things as they are growing up and some of them come in contact with the justice system because of that. The difference in where their lives go after that is determined by whether they end up in

prison, do not get caught or get into in a diversionary program. If we look at exactly the same sort of offending behaviour of young men, those who did not get caught go on to have fulfilling, useful, noncontroversial lives. Often one set of circumstances leads them down a different track and they end up, through a series of further events, ruining their prospects of a good productive life. When young people enter the prison system, they come out more likely to reoffend after having learned a lot of behavioural and other useful information from other people in prison—older offenders. The rate of recidivism is very high for young offenders and particularly for Aboriginal offenders. We desperately need an evidence-based approach in this area.

Over many years, I have worked with many academics in Western Australia who have the research and the information. I encourage all members, particularly the Minister for Corrective Services and the Minister for Police, to pay heed to some of that research. I am thinking of people such as Professor Neil Morgan, the current Inspector of Custodial Services; Professor Richard Harding, the former Inspector of Custodial Services; and Associate Professor David Indermaur to name a few. They are well-regarded academics in this area. Also, members should listen to some of the comments that come from the judiciary, who have a significant role in the justice system and who have said some very important things about a different approach that we can take in this state. I was absolutely delighted when the Labor Party undertook to look seriously at justice reinvestment. Again, that is an issue that I have been pursuing for many, many years. It is an evidence-based approach that argues that the money spent in preventing people going to prison will ultimately save the whole economy a significant amount of money. That is not the only motivation, of course, but it is a significant one. Conservative states in the United States such as Texas and Florida have proven that this is a way of taking off the extraordinary pressure on the budget from continued incarceration.

I particularly note one area in which a lot of work is needed and that is women in prison in Western Australia. We have a gross overcrowding in Bandyup Women's Prison that continues. The majority of women in prison in Western Australia are in fact there for crimes of poverty such as social security fraud, which are basically non-violent crimes. We desperately need systems to ensure that people do not commit these crimes in the first place and that they get better assistance, whether that is financial counselling or life skills training, to prevent them making that fatal mistake that will lead them down the track, ultimately, to prison.

There are some excellent examples of diversionary programs in Western Australia that have been working and need greater funding and support. I am thinking in particular of the initiative through the Drug Court, which has done an excellent job in steering drug affected people out of the prison system and into turning their lives around and getting off their addictions. Juvenile justice teams have done great work in this state as have a number of initiatives from the Aboriginal communities to deal with their own young offenders within their communities. Often that is what is needed. In this area we have to think what factors will appeal to young people in particular, and again I mention young men because they are overrepresented in this contact with the justice system. Who do they listen to; who do they actually respect? Some of the senior elders within their community are the people they might listen to to make different choices.

If we are going to really tackle this issue, and I would be delighted to be part of continuing to do so from outside of the Parliament as I have from within, we also have to tackle the role that the interaction between the Parliament, the politicians and the media plays in this area. There are a few excellent journalists, and I know Amanda Banks in particular will write a good thoughtful piece about how justice operates. She challenges us to think outside the very simplistic model. In the climate of people saying that we need to be safe and that we need to keep people locked up, we know that most people will have been responding to this bidding war on law and order. It is the responsibility of us all to say that that has to end now, because it is not achieving the outcome that it claims it will achieve—that is, reducing offending and ensuring that there are fewer victims of crime. We have to really turn this whole argument around.

A final comment I make about our community and why I think there is a high rate of resorting to violent behaviour, which often leads to imprisonment, is that we are awash with violence. We cannot turn on the television at night without seeing about 10 different police shows, scenes of violence that children are exposed to from as soon as they can watch television, which is probably about three years old. We do not have a culture that says that this violence is not entertainment. It just gets inculcated into everybody's view of the world and it is a really profound problem. It also goes to the fact that within our schools we do not teach enough young people how to resolve conflicts in a way that is respectful and non-violent. Until we do that, children and young people will continue to ape what they see in all the materials that they absorb. With violent police shows and all sorts of examples like that, it is inevitable that young people act that violence out.

HON PHIL EDMAN (South Metropolitan) [12.15 pm]: I will talk a bit about some intervention programs. It will not be the first time I have spoken about them in this house. They are the Right to Write and the Weld to Life programs, which are held at my local police and community youth centre.

Before I get into that, I was very interested to read an opinion piece by the Commissioner of Police on page 20 of *The West Australian* on 13 May entitled "Why more police does not mean less crime". It was very interesting to read. It states —

For my sins I occasionally have to read Hansard when there are matters pertaining to police in parliamentary debate.

Everyone who talks today please remember that the Commissioner of Police will read it, which is very good to know!

I would like to quote the piece further and talk about it. It continues —

As a community we can “vaccinate” to reduce the circumstances which drive the risks and vulnerabilities leading to juvenile offending or we can continue to believe that chasing and prosecuting juvenile offenders is the best strategy for change.

What follows is simply fact and not a value judgment. Areas of Perth which have the greatest concentrations of all these factors together include Balga (and immediately surrounding suburbs), Armadale, Maddington, Thornlie, Kwinana and Rockingham.

So we do have some problems down there, but we are getting better at fixing them. I will quickly go over again how the how the Right to Write program started. We had a massive problem in that area with graffiti, and the graffiti was all about tagging. There were certain gangs and the graffiti was about tagging. They would tag a certain area and that would also be the area where, most of the time, day burglaries occurred. There was the issue of graffiti, but also the issue of burglaries. The Right to Write program was started to deal with the youths who had been charged for offences of creating graffiti. The Weld to Life was started to give these youths, mainly prolific priority offenders and youth at risk, the opportunity to have a skill and learn how to weld. Hopefully, they would then go on to get an apprenticeship or get on with their lives and get a job, which is a lot better than continuing in the way they were, either ending up in a detention facility, continuing to break the law and not getting caught or in some cases suicide. These programs still run today, even though I have been speaking about them since 2009. They are still supported by the government. The juvenile justice team does a fantastic job as well and it is doing quite well. It was very pleasing to also read in *The West Australian* an article entitled “State to lift crime prevention spending”. Our new Minister for Corrective Services, Joe Francis, is actually considering increasing the amount of money going to these intervention programs. I look forward to hearing about that when he decides what he will do. I was also surprised to learn recently that it costs some \$660 a day to keep a juvenile in detention. That is a lot of money. I do not know if anyone has a calculator so they can work out how much that is a year.

Hon Simon O’Brien: A quarter of a million.

Hon PHIL EDMAN: Good on you, Hon Simon O’Brien, thank you.

One thing I have said constantly during debate in this house is that I spoke to the police commissioner when he went to the PCYC to have a look at the programs. He is often quoted in the paper as having something to say about the way forward in relation to crime. I want to be on record saying—I hope the police commissioner reads *Hansard* again—that he needs to support and replicate these programs in other trouble spots in Western Australia. Why? Both the Right to Write program and the Weld to Life program have an 85 per cent success rate. If anyone on either side of the house has any better statistics on a program for rehabilitating prolific priority offenders or youth at risk, I would love to hear about it. I am very proud of those programs because they occur just in my backyard and I believe they actually work and they provide the opportunity to teach these youths skills. In my opinion all these problems start at home with parents who do not seem to give their kids any love. Some of the kids grow up with huge problems with domestic violence with mum and dad.

There are parents who abuse substances such as drugs and alcohol. We can imagine what it is like for people who are trying to bring up children in that environment and what the replications can be. I am not trying to make an excuse for why we have prolific and priority offenders or youth at risk, but in my opinion, that is where it comes from. The wheel just keeps spinning. When those kids grow up into adults they commit crime, then all of a sudden they meet a lovely partner and have a child, and the process just repeats itself. These programs are like putting a spoke in the wheel to stop that. They are working. I commend our government for considering increasing money to these intervention programs, but I also again ask the police commissioner to seriously think about replicating these programs. When I spoke to him he said that the first one should perhaps be in the Pilbara, because we have some problems up there with Aboriginal youth. Once again, I am more than happy to help with and facilitate anything that is needed. If anybody in this house would like to come down to the PCYC in Rockingham to have a look at these fabulous rehabilitation programs, it would be my pleasure to facilitate and look after that.

HON ALYSSA HAYDEN (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.21 pm]: First of all I would like to congratulate Hon Simon O’Brien for bringing this motion to the house. Also, hooray and congratulations to our minister for taking a fresh look at ways to reduce the number of juveniles going into our prison system. It is all very easy to say that our prisons are getting busier and that we should build another one, but we all know how costly they are and how much it costs to run facilities such as these. Instead of just asking the government to

build more prisons and to put more people away, maybe tackling the problem at the beginning, especially with our youth, is far more important. Hon Phil Edman last year raised a similar issue during private members' business. I think this motion has a great connection with that previous debate. The minister is obviously simply looking at ways in which we can assist the resources that are already out there to protect our juveniles and to help our young people, in order to help prevent them from going into a life of crime.

All members of this house are very lucky. I assume that we all had a fantastic upbringing and strong families. My dad was a work-at-home dad. He was involved in my life 99 per cent. I was very lucky to have him coach my netball and softball teams. At the time as a child I did not think I was lucky because I had my dad everywhere I went, but he actually gave me guidance, strength and support as I grew up. There were obviously other females in my netball team. They did not have the same family support that I had, but lucky for them, my dad was prepared to share his support. Quite often he would go around and pick up kids on the way to netball training or netball games. Those children did not have parents who came along and supported them by watching them play their sport, or by providing a uniform or a simple bottle of water. I often think that if those children did not have my father to support them, would they have been included in sport on the weekend? Sport gives people a connection to community and encourages them to be a team player. It also gives people a chance to be part of something outside of their home. Those children would have been far worse off if they had not had that opportunity. I believe that is what we are lacking in our community.

It is not just the state government or local government that needs to step up and help our youth at risk; it has to be our community at large. It needs to start in places like our police and community youth centres. Last time we spoke about PCYCs in this house I said how fantastic it is, and how proud I am, of our Midland PCYC. It has a fantastic initiative called the Northbridge diversion program, which is designed for youth at risk. Instead of them hopping on a train from Midland into Northbridge and bringing down our nightlife, these children, who are generally aged between 10 and 18, are now being diverted to the PCYC, where they are actually given a nice hot, healthy meal, which most of these children do not get at home, and also they can undertake sporting, arts and craft and leadership activities. It is giving them somewhere dry and safe to go at night-time, as opposed to hopping on a train and heading into Northbridge and getting into trouble. I believe there is a fine line between whether our youth will go and commit crime or would rather be somewhere that is safer. I honestly believe that most of our juveniles would rather be in a safe environment. We need to give them the opportunity to go to that safe environment. If they have somewhere to go, they are not led on their merry way by other juveniles, who may have already entered our criminal system and have come back out. As we all know, young people are open to peer pressure. If they have somewhere else to go, they are not open to that same old rhetoric, night in and night out, of not wanting to be at home because they do not have a safe home environment and prefer to be out on the streets because they think it is safer. It is sad that we, as a community, are not there to help them. As other colleagues have said, and as our new member mentioned today, our PCYCs play a huge part in helping our youth at risk. I hope that our minister, when he looks at the data to work out where our resources can be best put, actually takes on board the PCYCs and their activities, and increases them. Things like the Northbridge diversion program can be and should be reproduced in all other areas throughout our metropolitan region.

Another program that works really well is midnight basketball, which is run very successfully in Midland and also out at Mirrabooka. Thursday nights at Mirrabooka Square Shopping Centre are normally known as fight night, because that is where the young people all go and cause a bit of trouble. When the midnight basketball program was introduced, fight night turned into basketball night and it was a huge success. All the shopkeepers at the shopping centre enjoyed increased business, because for once customers were able to shop in a safer environment. The minute the midnight basketball finished in Mirrabooka, fight night started up again. That proved right there and then that if young people are given a choice to do something fun, they would rather do that than something that is causing trouble. I know that midnight basketball is continuing in Midland and I hope that it will continue in Mirrabooka. I will work closely with our east metropolitan police to make sure that happens. I am a big fan and a huge supporter of their activities.

In closing, as I said, not all our youth have been able to have the fantastic upbringing that most of us have enjoyed. I commend the minister for wanting to look at this and to invest money into an area that we, as a state government, local governments and all portfolios across government, including mental health and sport and recreation, need to be involved in, because we owe it to our community and our young people to make sure that they stay safe and have an option.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [12.28 pm] — in reply: I would like to thank members for their very positive and thoughtful contributions. Already we are teasing out some worthwhile ways ahead. Hon Dave Grills reminded me that one of the impediments to police getting out and doing community policing is that we saddle them with all the paperwork requirements, which takes them away from doing the things that they need to do. There is a lot more, too, that we need to explore. Hopefully, we are now approaching a point in time when we will once again have a real and genuine exploration of the opportunities that we have.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

Resumed from 15 May on the following motion moved by Hon Liz Behjat —

That the following address be presented to His Excellency —

To His Excellency Malcolm McCusker, Companion of the Order of Australia, Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Queen's Counsel, Governor in and over the state of Western Australia and its dependencies in the commonwealth of Australia.

May it please Your Excellency: We, the Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our most gracious sovereign and thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health) [12.30 pm]: I was just about to wrap up the comments I had made across two or three different sessions of Parliament. The government is incredibly proud of the level of commitment that has been made across the areas of my portfolios in mental health and drug and alcohol services, disability services and child protection and family support. I thank the Governor for opening the Parliament.

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan) [12.31 pm]: I am more than pleased to agree to the motion. I also compliment His Excellency the Governor, Malcolm McCusker, for his speech to Parliament. I will make some comments about aspects of his speech that are of particular interest to me. I will refer to certain paragraphs within the speech and make some comments before moving on to what is a very important issue—namely, the government's program of economic reform. Specifically, I will refer to the directions as set out by the Economic Audit Committee.

One of the significant challenges identified for the new government in the Governor's speech was the need to cope with the demands of the state's unparalleled growth. Many thousands of workers are flocking here from the eastern states and overseas. I understand from the Governor's speech that some 1 000 people come to Western Australia each week. Obviously that is putting a strain on infrastructure of all kinds, especially in the areas of transport, health facilities, schooling and housing. This morning we had a discussion about this, and although I will not reflect on a debate that has already been had in this house, there is no doubt that these pressures exist and they are very real. What is particularly concerning is the fact that the government has done so little over the last four years to deal with these very real pressures. I know from my work in training and workforce development that the "Training WA: Planning for the future 2009–2018" plan clearly articulated that it expected the number of people coming to WA would increase. In response to some of the questions I have asked in this place, the Minister for Training and Workforce Development has put on the public record time and time again that an additional 67 000 workers will come to WA by 2015. Even though it knew about these pressures, the government sat on its hands and did very little, if anything, about them and now, all of a sudden, it has found itself in a pickle. Had accommodation been made in the area of transport, we would not have ended up with people sitting in their cars for hours on the freeways north and south as they try to get from point A to point B across the metropolitan area during peak hour and other times. There is an old saying that time is money. When I travel on the main arterial roads to get from Morley to Perth via Alexander Drive, for example, it can sometimes take 45 minutes. I am a member of Parliament but there are plenty of small and large business people who need to get from point A to point B and for whom time is of the essence. These wait times come at an enormous expense to them with opportunities lost.

Our health facilities are absolutely stretched. People are waiting longer to get access to hospital services and other health facilities. There is pressure on our schools, and the waiting time for housing continues to extend outwards. Certainly the economic circumstances in which some people now find themselves as a direct result of the government's policy to increase fees and charges and its application of a cost-recovery model for utilities has put greater pressure on households. There is no doubt that some people who previously could have sent their children to a private school can no longer do so. Those people have started to move back into the public school system. The point I am trying to make is that many of these pressures were foreseen but the government did nothing about them; hence, it now has a major problem on its hands.

I refer to the area of mental health. I listened with some interest to the minister's comment about mental health. Hon Helen Morton gave us an overview of the mental health agenda. If one had listened to Hon Helen Morton, one would have thought that there is a rosy picture out there, that everyone in mental health is very happy and that the mental health sector is operating beautifully, so to speak. The minister clearly has not taken any notice of the findings of Professor Bryant Stokes, which were delivered last year in his very damning report. If I were the Minister for Mental Health, I would be very concerned about the deficiencies in that sector. I would be working through recommendation after recommendation to make sure that all the concerns identified are indeed addressed.

I would have thought that being the Minister for Mental Health is a fairly big job. Obviously this minister is more interested in creating the perception that she is much better than she is. Not only has she not allocated a priority towards mental health, but also she now has other human services portfolio areas of responsibility, which will make it even harder for her to focus on this very important area.

I compliment Professor Bryant Stokes for the work he did. An honourable member opposite is smiling. I put on the public record that originally when I was advised in this place that Professor Stokes would undertake the review, I expressed some concern because I thought at the very least he may have a conflict of interest given he was a senior figure in the public health system. Certainly I was wrong; I am the first to admit it. He did an absolutely wonderful job on behalf of the mental health sector, its clients and their families. He set out a clear blueprint for the future. There is no doubt that this is an area of grave importance and that the minister must act on the recommendations as soon as possible. I look forward with great interest to see how we progress with those recommendations. Although I am not directly responsible for the area of mental health any longer, it certainly will not stop me from being a key participant in further debates on mental health.

I now want to quickly speak about safer communities and law and order. The Governor, in his speech, said —

The Government will focus on ensuring community safety.

Western Australians are entitled to feel safe in their community and, in particular, in their own home. The Government intends to introduce legislation to impose stringent new penalties for home invasions and serial burglars.

That is all well and good, and no doubt we will have that debate at the appropriate time when the relevant legislation comes to this place. But, having said that, we seem to have a bit of a problem with this government, because every time there is an issue with law and order, there is another piece of legislation, and most of the time it is about, “If you break the law, we’re going to put you into prison.” Of course, we are creating a problem at the prison end—we know that—and it is becoming an increasingly complex and increasingly bigger problem. It is not a way in which we can continue, sustainably, to deal with law and order issues.

In regard to this promise, unless the government has a secret plan about putting hundreds of millions of dollars into building new prisons, I do not know where those people who will be caught under this new legislation as a result of the new penalties for home invasions and serial burglaries can be accommodated. We already know that the prison system is overflowing; we already know that the government is strapped for funds; we know that the money simply is not there. The other day I was shocked. The Attorney General went on the television because there was a problem with the court system. There was a story on the television—I think it has been reported in other media—about the televising of court proceedings. The Attorney General had to go before the cameras and explain why he could not secure the \$50 000 that was required for this camera. I just thought to myself, “Well, if the poor old Attorney General is being dragged out in front of the Western Australian public because this state can’t afford \$50 000 for a camera to be used in court proceedings in WA courts, we really are in a very, very dire position indeed”, which begs the question, of course: where are these people going to go once the imposition of stringent new penalties for home invasions and serial burglaries become law, if indeed they do? We all recognise that we need to have safer communities—there is no question about that—and I think we all agree with that. It is about how we in fact get there.

The whole question of community safety has come into greater focus in recent times. Different people have laid the blame for why communities are not as safe as they used to be on different reasons. Certainly, the use of drugs and alcohol, and the consequential effect on the behaviour of individuals, is one of those areas in which people have acknowledged that since we have seen more of this behaviour in the community, we are seeing a corresponding increase in violence and other types of crime. It is also of some interest to note that alcohol and drugs have also been identified as a key cost driver for Western Australia Police, as was evidenced in its 2012 annual report, and also highlighted by the WA Commissioner of Police, Karl O’Callaghan, who stated in that report —

Many of the tasks undertaken by police are alcohol-related. Research indicates that between 60–75 per cent of all requests for police assistance can be linked to alcohol, rising to approximately 90 per cent between the hours of 10pm and 2am. Police are reporting a very significant culture of determined drunkenness, particularly among those in the 18–25 age group. The underlying cause and effects are highly complex and will require initiatives to be implemented across a wide range of stakeholders.

The commissioner was also reported in the media on 6 September last year, saying —

Do not be fooled into thinking that illicit drugs are key drivers in assault and anti-social behaviour. We are only deceiving ourselves if we fail to recognise that alcohol is, by far, the most prevalent intoxicant associated with these types of offences. Drug Use Monitoring Australia ... has identified that 60 per cent of all detainees admitted to the Perth Watch House have consumed alcohol in the 24 hours leading

up to their arrest. Nationally, half of all those arrested on weekends for assault had very recently ingested alcohol and unsurprisingly, most of these are males between 18 and 25.

In Western Australia, many end up in prisons, where there is a huge pressure on beds, with double-bunking now almost the norm. Then there is the lack of staff and the lack of appropriate treatment for those with drug and alcohol problems. Most leave with virtually no rehabilitation, meaning that they are at high risk of reoffending post-release, and many of them do. A challenge for the government is to address this whole question of alcohol and to recognise that although much of the policy focus is on illicit drugs, the government needs to shift its thinking and recognise once and for all that alcohol is the primary cause of so much misery within our community.

There is no doubt that our prison system is at crisis point. The riots at the Banksia Hill Detention Centre are a case in point. Certainly, people within the community, commentators and people within the sector foresaw that there was a high risk of those riots occurring; in other words, certain markers indicated that the risk of a riot in that facility was pretty high on the cards, and that is exactly what happened.

I want to quickly move on to this question about the prison population, because, as we have seen, the Commissioner of Corrective Services—I do not know whether he was sacked or whether he walked—is no longer with us. He was a highly regarded gentleman. There is no doubt that there were increasing pressures on him in performing his duties. We need only look at what has happened across the whole public sector; efficiency dividend after efficiency dividend has been applied to government agencies and they have been continually asked to do more with less, while at the same time the number of people who have to be accommodated continues to grow.

There has been a significant increase in the number of people incarcerated in the prison system. It goes back to safer communities and law and order. How do we deal with this issue? If the government just says that it will legislate to impose more stringent and new penalties for certain crimes, be they home invasions, serious burglaries or any other crime, it simply means that people will be put through the court process and may end up in the prison system. Consequently, a whole set of other issues arise.

I will give a snapshot of a comparison of the adult prison populations as at 30 June 2011 and 30 June 2012; this is a new comparison as opposed to the average for the year. The number of sentenced prisoners in the state's prisons was up by 4.7 per cent; that is an increase of 180 prisoners. Did we hear that any new facilities would be built to accommodate these prisoners? No, we did not; no-one heard that there would be any new facilities to accommodate these prisoners. This was to happen on top of the number of people who are already crammed into the prison system. The number of unsentenced prisoners in the prison system was up by 16.3 per cent, or an extra 136 people. The number of male prisoners was up by 5.2 per cent; in other words, that is an increase of 222 male prisoners from 30 June 2011 to 30 June 2012. The number of female prisoners was up by 26.7 per cent, or an additional 94 prisoners. The number of Aboriginal prisoners was up by 10.8 per cent, or an additional 192 people. The number of non-Aboriginal prisoners was up by 4.3 per cent, or an additional 124 people in the state's prisons. When all those numbers are added up, the net total of the increase in the prison population from 30 June 2011 to 30 June 2012 was 948. Is this government for real in thinking that it can increase the prison population by that much and it will have no material effect? It allegedly continues to legislate for further penalties for certain classes of offences. Truly? We have serious issues with juvenile offenders. It is no surprise that there is a major problem within the prison population. There is no doubt that the Commissioner of Corrective Services has been made a scapegoat. The new minister for prisons or justice, Mr Joe Francis —

Hon Liz Behjat: He is the Minister for Corrective Services.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The Minister for Corrective Services; okay. It is a technical problem; do not worry.

Hon Peter Collier: Keep up!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Beam me up, Scotty!

I do not know how or why the new minister sacked the commissioner —

Hon Liz Behjat: He did not; he resigned.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: He resigned! Let us face it; he would not have resigned unless there was pressure on him to resign. I know he is a man who was totally committed to the cause, and he would not have gone of his own accord. He was pushed; there is nothing surer than that. The worst in all of this is that this minister has not even put up any proposal, sound or otherwise, about what he intends to do that is different to deal with the crisis of our growing prison population. I have not heard from Joe Francis. He was on the block for a matter of only two weeks before he pushed the commissioner. He needs to be called to account. What are his bright ideas to deal with this issue? How does he intend to deal with this issue? I think that what has happened is absolutely wrong. It is a poor reflection on the minister; it is a poor reflection on the government. It is an

absolute disgrace that the prison population has increased by 948 people in one year. Not only have there been no increases in funding, but also the Department of Corrective Services has been subject to efficiency dividends and has had to harvest saving after saving after saving. The minister needs to hang his head in shame; the government needs to hang its head in shame on this issue.

There is no doubt that there are many challenges facing this government, but I have not finished what I want to say on all the things that I am concerned about, because there is much to be concerned about.

I will quickly comment on health. My experience is that many people who have had an interface with the health system are often disappointed with the quality of service that they get through the public health system. They are concerned at the waiting times and they are concerned at the speed at which doctors have to work because of the volume of patients they see. Consequently, the risk of error is considerably heightened. For example, I know a woman who suffered a complication after an operation; a doctor made a mistake about something. She has been in and out of hospital over the last couple of years to try to get this matter rectified. It was an adverse incident that should never have happened.

I note that I am running out of time. The next time I rise to speak, I want to get on to the matter of economic development, which should be of great interest to everybody, even though it will be delivered by me!

Hon Liz Behjat: Whatever you say is always of great interest to us!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I will leave the best till last. In view of the time, I will defer my comments on economic development. Some very important issues need to be canvassed about the direction of Western Australia. I know there is massive investment in the resource sector, with some \$5 billion worth of resource projects either approved or under consideration. That is all good, but I feel that the good outcomes are not being spread throughout the community and I think some matters need to be canvassed in relation to that.

[Leave granted for the member's speech to be continued at a later sitting.]

Debate thus interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[See below.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS — COOK ISLANDS PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Members, it is my great pleasure to welcome into the President's gallery two guests from the Cook Islands, Helen Maunga, the Deputy Clerk, and Sarah Takairangi, who is a Chamber Clerk from the Cook Islands Parliament. Members may know that the Western Australian Parliament has a twinning relationship with the Cook Islands Parliament. This visit is part of a regular exchange between personnel from both Parliaments. Helen and Sarah have been guests of the Western Australian Parliament this week. We have had great pleasure hosting you. We hope your contact with this Parliament has been positive and constructive. We have certainly enjoyed your company.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON ED DERMER (North Metropolitan) [2.01 pm]: I must say that I am very pleased to speak in support of the motion moved by Hon Liz Behjat, by way of which we express our loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and I would also like to thank His Excellency the Governor for his speech. His Excellency represents Her Majesty in Western Australia. I think they both do a very fine job in their allotted roles. In my assessment, the roles of the sovereign and of the Governor of Western Australia are both integral to our Westminster system. When I look around the world, although I am aware of the imperfections in the Westminster system I do not believe that there is a better system on offer. We are very blessed to have inherited it. Entailed in our system is government by peaceful persuasion. Traditions such as the distance of two sword lengths between the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House is a reminder of the importance of peaceful persuasion, and, most importantly of all through the democratic system, our system of government is one that occurs with public consent. Without public consent in government terrible trouble will follow, and people do not actually live as free people without public consent in their government.

I enjoy the official opening of Parliament; I enjoy the rituals associated with it. They may appear quaint but those rituals have a very important role in acting as historical reminders. Remembering the mistakes of previous generations makes us less likely to repeat them. Each of these rituals in the official opening of Parliament, and in many of the rituals that we observe daily, are based on past problems. It is interesting to look at the evolution of the Westminster system whereby past problems often—eventually always, I think—led to an adaptation, and over the centuries that circumstance or problem arising for which an adaptation has been found led to the quality of the Westminster system that we enjoy. Rituals that remind us of past problems help us avoid future problems.

I am particularly fascinated by the role of the Usher of the Black Rod, and I think our incumbent performs with a particular style and appropriate gravitas in what she does. I am hoping that, with the President's assessment of my behaviour, I will be invited to the official opening of Parliament in four years' time. If that happens, I will be on the horns of a dilemma because I really enjoy watching the procedure here in the senior chamber where the Governor comes in and delivers his speech, but I would be fascinated to watch the activities of the Usher of the Black Rod outside the Legislative Assembly chamber. I think that is a very important ritual. It reminds us of a time when the Crown in government and the Parliament were not getting on well and Charles I endeavoured to arrest members of the House of Commons. A terrible civil war followed and a period of military dictatorship followed the execution of Charles I. It is very important that we remember this, but actually watching our Usher go through the process of bashing at the door of the Assembly and of the Assembly's reluctant loyalty, or reluctant obedience to the instructions, would be a fascinating ritual to watch. Not knowing how to be in two places at once, if the President is kind enough to invite me in four years' time, I do not know whether I would rather be watching in here or probably—because I have not seen it before—hanging around outside the Assembly. I do not like being associated with hanging outside the junior chamber, but I will make the effort on a special occasion because I want to see the Usher of the Black Rod from the senior chamber in action with that ritual.

I expect this to be my last extended contribution to debate in this place. I expect to hear the call during question time this afternoon and next Tuesday —

The PRESIDENT: I might notice it!

Hon ED DERMER: I would be disappointed if the President said, "No, Ed, you've had your last say and you're not going to get a question". I will seek the President's attention then, but other than that, my plan is for this to be my last extended contribution. I always try to observe the short questions requirement, Mr President, so this will be my last extended contribution.

I think it is an appropriate time for me to thank the people of the North Metropolitan Region for the privilege that it has been for me to serve them. Our electoral system is complex. Members have been elected to this chamber previously as Independents, with this current proportional representation system, which I think is a fine one; but by and large we are all elected—certainly everyone in the chamber today—as team members. The team that I am very proud to be a part of is the Australian Labor Party. I would like to thank the Australian Labor Party for endorsing me on a number of occasions. I would also like to thank the Australian Labor Party for being such a great team to campaign with and to promote people's needs with. I have really enjoyed that privilege as well. I would like to thank all the party members. I worked very closely with three particular WA Labor Party branches. I would like to thank each of the members of those branches as they are today and each of the members who have been members in the past and contributed to that strength. I would like to mention the branches of Marangaroo–Darch, Kingsway and Ballajura. There are others as well but I have promised Hon Giz Watson that I will not go beyond three o'clock, so I will be a little constrained in that.

I would also very much like to thank the members, officers and staff of the trade unions who are affiliated with the Australian Labor Party. Those trade unions got together in 1891 and reached the view that an important way to promote the interests of their members was to seek to have representatives elected in Parliament. We have been hard at work since 1891 with that purpose. I thank the members, officers and staff of each of the trade unions affiliated with the Australian Labor Party and also note how much I have enjoyed working with the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association of Western Australia, which is the affiliated union that I have worked most closely with over my time as a member of the Labor Party.

I talked a little before about the Westminster system and democracy, which I think is best guaranteed by the Westminster system. I have had discussions with constituents to say that my job is to come in here and vote according to their views. That is interesting when one has 300 000-odd constituents who have variations in their views! I think that is not quite right. I think we are here to deliberate and actively consider, but I will get onto that later.

If you asked me what I thought democracy was, Mr President, I would say that it was about the public will being able to achieve a peaceable change in government and Parliament. As an individual member of Parliament, I regard my role as an employee of 300 000-odd employers. I have occasionally woken up in the middle of the night concerned that they may all want my attention on the same day, but that has not happened and there are three or four more days to go, so it is unlikely. I consider myself as an employee of the 300 000-odd electors of the North Metropolitan Region in Western Australia. I believe I have a four-year reviewable contract. I have been lucky enough to have my contract reviewed successfully four times, and I have decided to not put myself forward for a fifth time, so I will never know whether I would have been re-elected. I like to think I would have been, but that is one of those historical things one can never be sure of.

I think I am engaged to think and to consider proposals to change the laws that every Western Australian must live by, and to take responsibility for those decisions. I do not believe that a member of Parliament's job is to be

some sort of automatic reflector of popular opinion. The best example I can think of is the possible majority of opinion in support of capital punishment in Western Australia. I believe that the role of our state and our system is to protect people, not to kill them, so I am totally opposed to it. I would not care if the whole 300 000 told me I should do their will and support capital punishment; I would not do it, because I am not engaged to simply reflect majority opinion in my constituency. I am engaged to consider and make decisions on their behalf. I am still accountable to my electorate because if I were to put myself forward for election four years hence, they would assess my contract as their employee. It is very important. I am not impressed by arguments to say that this opinion poll says whatever, therefore I am bound to vote as my electors say, because I do not think people who are canvassed in opinion polls have the opportunity to sit in the Legislative Council, the senior chamber of the Western Australian Parliament, and deliberate and thoroughly study the proposals before us. I am not here as an automatic voting machine to be guided by popular opinion; I am here to think, consider, make decisions and be a responsible representative, rather than simply a reflective representative. I think this is very important to remember and, ultimately, we are accountable, as we should be, to the public will by way of each election. It is very important to think about our work in that way. I think that considering myself as an employee of 300 000-odd people engaged in the job to the best of my judgement and the best of my ability is a helpful way to think about my role as a member of this chamber and a helpful way to think about representative democracy in general.

I was recently with some people who saw a union demonstration march by Parliament House. The people I was with were lovely people, but they did not respond positively to the demonstration. Sometimes union demonstrations can be quite colourful and sometimes they tend to appear quite revolutionary as part of the theatre of it, as far as I am concerned. The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, which I work most closely with, does not normally present itself as revolutionary. It is probably one of the reasons I feel most comfortable working with it. It has had its moments, I am sure. In fact, I think it is very important that, as much as the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association understands the importance of employers and private enterprise and working responsibly with them in the interests of their members—I think I will call them the "Shopees", otherwise I might run out of my hour before three o'clock—there are times when they exercise industrial action, but it is not their habit. I think even the unions that like to present as being very ferocious, revolutionary and militant are probably too smart to unnecessarily take industrial action. When I listened to those people the other day I thought I should have been more forthright in saying what I felt, but it was one of those events in which we have a conversation and think more about it afterwards. I honestly believe that trade unions are essential to a civilised community. One of the things that concerns me about my colleagues opposite is the dangerous radicalism we often see in the Liberal Party when they try to stop trade unions doing their work. I think we are blessed to live in Western Australia and Australia. I have a predilection to demand proof of the benefit of a change before I support it. I think that is quite logical when we live in a good place. I know those trade unions are very important to our community being a civilised one, so I am very concerned by radical proposals to undermine the work of unions.

Why do I think trade unions are essential to a civilised community? They bring a balance to the relationship between the employer and the employee. I suppose, ultimately, elections bring a balance between me as an employee and my 300 000-odd employers. But for more people, trade unions form a vital role in providing balance to that relationship. That balanced relationship results in incomes being higher than they would otherwise be, conditions being better than they would otherwise be and, most importantly, occupational health and safety conditions being better than they would otherwise be. People may say to me that I am overemphasising the importance of trade unions, because a minority of employees in our state are trade union members, and that is true. I also believe that even the employees in our state who are not trade union members benefit enormously from the work of the trade unions that represent other employees. The negotiations for pay and conditions conducted by trade unions on behalf of their members benefit not only their members but also other people employed in the workforce. For these reasons I think trade unions are essential to a civilised community.

I hope that the advocates of business recognise a few fundamental points. Employees are customers. Without an effective trade union movement and people's wages correspondingly being much reduced, there would be fewer customers for the businesses that operate in Western Australia. I believe that one of the reasons there is enormous trade imbalance in our world is the absence of independent trade unions in countries such as China. Independent trade unions are not allowed in China; therefore, the wages of most workers are very low; therefore, how do we compete with very low paid non-trade union supported workers working very hard in very unfair conditions in other countries? It is not possible. I would like to see an independent trade union movement active in every country so that the wages of workers throughout the world can be similarly beneficial, as they are here where there is an active trade union movement. That would have the added benefit of making manufactured goods of countries such as Australia competitive with manufactured goods in countries that today do not have independent trade unions. They would be much better countries if they did. The absence of independent trade unions in other nations contributes to the international trade imbalance. When I consider the economic and

strategic consequences of that international trade imbalance, I become very anxious. I think the economic and strategic consequences of the international trade imbalance are very grave. Being an amateur student of history, I am well aware of terrible and bloody consequences that follow international trade imbalances and other causes of anxiety and instability at an international level. Of course, trade unions, like the Westminster system, are human institutions and therefore imperfect. They may be imperfect, but they are nevertheless essential for maintaining peace and wellbeing in our community.

I would like to talk about some other essentials for a civilised community. One is quality public education, and the hope that entails for everyone who receives it, to build a better life for themselves and to see that developed in their children and people close to them, including, I might say, older people who are in a position to take up educational improvement. I am looking at my colleague Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich and remembering the work done when she was education minister to encourage Western Australians of whatever age or circumstance to realise that it is never too late to take up education.

Adequate social security is also linked to hope; in fact, if there were no adequate social security, what would follow is the opposite of hope, which is fear.

In respect of quality public health, one of the proudest achievements for me as a member of the Australian Labor Party is the establishment of Medicare. Can members imagine being in a situation in which their child needs urgent medical attention, so they have to decide between buying food for the week or paying the doctor's bill? My very wise wife, Sylvia, brought this one to my attention, either at a meeting or privately, and it really crystallised for me how important Medicare and public health care is if we want to have a civilised community. Obviously, it is essential to have that kind of backup to provide people with medical aid when they need it, rather than when they can afford it or have saved up money for it. Obviously, if one is saving up for their child's medical attention and it is urgent, it is going to be a pathway to disaster. Medicare, as a Labor Party achievement, is an institution that is part of our community and provides hope for Western Australians. I see quality public education, adequate social security, quality public health care with Medicare as a key part and the essential role of independent trade unions, as all the different aspects that make our society a civilised one.

Mr President, hope was the theme of my first contribution in this place; I was standing roughly about here, and my delivery was even more nervous than it is today, under the careful gaze of your predecessor, Hon Clive Griffiths! The idea of hope was the theme of my first contribution to the debate here, and after 16-plus years, you might think, "Well, Ed's stuck in the same rut because he's going back to exactly the same theme", but there have been a few diversions in the 16 years in between.

I am not talking about false hope; we need to provide Western Australians with realistic hope for a better future. We want a realistic expectation for a better future for ourselves, our children and all the people who we share our lives with and have come to know and love and have affection for. Hope is essential to the wellbeing of Western Australians; hope is equally essential for keeping the peace in Western Australia. The violence and other forms of disrespect that we see from time to time are very closely linked to a lack of hope in the perpetrators, as displayed in their unfortunate behaviour. Providing realistic hope is a key to providing a peaceful existence for us. The idea of hope is a common thread for each of the aspects of a civilised society that I have been talking about: independent trade unions, public education, public health and social security. All of those have the common thread of hope, and they are four reasons why I am a member of the Australian Labor Party; there are others, but by and large they are the main ones. They are the four reasons why I think we provide hope, civilisation and a peaceful way of doing things in our community.

I am attracted to an old slogan that I saw on a badge once, which said, "Unity of Labor is the hope of the world", and I think that is true, otherwise I would not be here. I have done my best today to explain it, and I hope that my colleagues across the chamber will give due consideration to my thoughts. I imagine that my colleagues on this side of the chamber are here for largely the same reasons that I am. Often, though, the Labor Party is unfairly criticised by the suggestion that our unity is somehow uniformity. They are two very, very different concepts. We are united, but very different. Anyone in this chamber who has eyes to see and ears to hear could look over here and see that we are far from uniform; the same eyes and ears will also tell you that we are united. They are very different concepts, and it is very important to understand the difference.

This is my last week of more than 16 years in Parliament. I was mildly terrified when someone told me that I was the third longest-serving member in the house; I thought about the records set by my esteemed colleagues Hon Norman Moore and Hon Barry House and I thought, "No, no, no; I won't be inclined to try to match them", particularly when Hon Norman Moore responded to being congratulated by the then Leader of the House on 25 years in Parliament by making reference to entering the second half of his parliamentary career! I was looking forward to coming back as a former member to watch you in your fiftieth year, Hon Norman Moore, but unless you decide to make a comeback, that is probably unlikely to happen!

This is my last week of 16 years and five months, roughly. I think it was Christmas Eve of 1996 when I had the pleasure of meeting Malcolm Peacock and his colleagues and being sworn in in the Clerk's chamber. I think that

making an objective self-assessment of my own work in the last week of 16 and a half years would be a bit silly; I probably should have made those assessments a bit earlier on! That is just as well, because for me to make an objective self-assessment of my own work would be not only silly but also impossible. What can I say about the work that I have tried to do? The most obvious thing that I can say is that I hope that my work has contributed to the wellbeing and hopefulness of a number of Western Australians. I hope that is the case; I cannot be certain, but I hope it is the case. What I can be certain of is saying that whatever I have been able to achieve would not have been possible without the support of my family and my colleagues who work with me in my electorate office in Balcatta.

Meeting my wife, Sylvia, is the great good fortune of my life. Sylvia has been untiring in her support, her advice and, probably above all, patience over decades of my political activity, including earlier times as a volunteer and, for the last 26 or 27 years, in a professional capacity. I am blessed to have an elder son in Alex; we very carefully called him Alexander, but he prefers Alex, so he gets the last say on these things! Alex is very thoughtful in his consideration of public matters. He sharpens my wit, if that is possible, with challenging debates around the dining room table, and that is really good. I am not saying it is impossible because I am already so sharp—I am saying, how much can you sharpen the blunt, Hon Linda Savage! I appreciate Alex's support with how-to-vote cards and his attendance at many, many, many Labor Party meetings. Pride is not the type of instinct that I look for, but I could not help it the day that I listened to Alexander stand up at the Marangaroo–Darch branch meeting and put the case of his opposition to general retail trading on Sundays. That was easy for me to listen to, because I entirely agreed with him, and I think I am allowed to say that now! If I had my way, I would also abolish Saturday afternoon trading and encourage people to go to WAFL matches, but that is me! Alexander may have had an element of self-interest, because he is a member of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association of WA and a happy employee at Camera House. When I heard him put that case so well at that most excellent of Labor Party branches, I was very pleased and proud of him.

I am blessed with two sons. My other son, Cameron, is my enthusiastic and constant companion through so much of my life, and not least my political work. I reckon I am very, very lucky, because that very patient lady in my life, Sylvia, is probably more understanding of me wanting to spend the time when I am not involved professionally at football and even cricket matches because our son Cameron and her father, Manfred, similarly enjoy those activities, so that is probably to my advantage. Cameron is the most energetic of campaigners. Any honest person involved in politics professionally would have to stop and think before they answered the question: are you looking forward to that election coming up very soon? Cameron is. Cameron loves elections; he loves campaigning, he loves handing out how-to-vote cards, and he loves dropping letters and pamphlets in letterboxes. Between elections he has to satisfy his political appetite in other fields. When we have branch meetings or other party forums, Cameron enjoys making a contribution. I recollect giving my state parliamentary report to a meeting of the Marangaroo–Darch branch some years ago and Cameron, quite out of the blue, said that it was time for his report. Cameron then gave a detailed precis of Robert Ray's examination of Labor's structure and electoral prospects. We all learnt from it. Listening to Cameron's precis was more time-efficient than reading the whole of the Robert Ray report. I must say that I have enormous respect for Robert Ray. If I believed in reincarnation, I would believe that Robert Ray was a reincarnation of Louis XIV in terms of him being a consummate and capable politician, but that is an argument for a different day. He wrote this report and Cameron analysed it and gave a precis of it to a meeting of the Marangaroo–Darch branch. The sort of pride I felt when Alexander argued the case for people doing things other than shopping on their weekends, I similarly felt when Cameron gave the precis of Robert Ray's report. I think Robert Ray would have been pleased to have received the precis, but he was not there. He might have been a bit jealous of someone being able to more concisely put his main points, as Cameron had done.

The other important role for Cameron politically is as my personal media monitor. Members who have been here awhile might remember that in early 2005 I had a brush with cancer, which I am very lucky to have survived, and not only survived, but managed to survive with only surgery being required and without needing chemo and all that type of thing. I had a day in August 2008 when I was driving and I very safely used an excellent hands-free mobile telephone to take the opportunity to contact home to say that the most recent blood tests were very good. Cameron answered the phone. Cameron did not want to talk about blood tests; I think he knew I was pretty okay without hearing about the blood tests. He told me that the Premier, Hon Alan Carpenter, had been to visit His Excellency the Governor to call an election. This was August. I think it was unprecedented, or there had not been an election at that time of the year since 1913 or something, so I made a mistake and ventured to suggest that Cameron may have misunderstood what he had heard. This was a mistake. I said to Cameron on this excellent hands-free and very safe mobile phone while I was driving, "Cameron, I think what you heard was some journalist—and we all know what they are like—speculating about the Premier going to visit the Governor." Cameron said, "No, dad. The Premier has been to the Governor to call the election." I said no. Anyway, I looked at the clock in the car and saw that it was getting close to the hour, so I told Cam that I would hang up and ring him back in a minute. I got the ABC news a few minutes later. I am glad Cameron could not see my red face, because I was alone in the car. I rang him and said, "Cameron, you were absolutely correct; I

was absolutely incorrect.” I promised Cameron that I would never again doubt his political advice. That is one incident, but there have been many when the first time I have heard of something has been through Cameron monitoring the media. His favourite media institution is the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and he has a bit of an aspiration to one day be something of a Kerry O’Brien. I hope it comes true. He is my media monitoring service, so I am very lucky.

I am going to keep talking about my family because I like talking about my family. The other very important member of our family is our little Maltese–Silky cross, Peppa. He has been a member of our family for the last 13 years. We are hoping that he will set some record similar to Hon Norman Moore’s by being in our family for the next 13 years as well, if we are lucky. Peppa is a good friend. I had a day when I had a draft report of the Standing Committee on Public Administration of some depth. I think the public administration committee is terrific. I enjoyed being on the committee with you when you were the chairman, Mr President. I think I was your deputy chairman for a fair bit of that. The whole idea of the public admin committee is to find the imperfections in the public administration in Western Australia and see where we can improve it. I had a very good draft report and I was going through it, reading it and annotating it. I thought, “What is the best way of doing this?” I think I had the house to myself so I stayed home in a rocking chair with a pen, Post-it notes, which my colleagues here like to refer to, for tagging the annotations, and I had my companion, Peppa, on my knee. If he was taking a sly look at this privileged document, I apologise for that! I think the probability of Peppa leaking the information he acquired by his sly looks at the draft report were probably minimal, so it was probably okay in terms of a security risk! When I read about the failings of certain officers in the public service of Western Australia, I must say I was seething. When you are seething, it is bad for your blood pressure, so it is very important when you are seething to be soothed. The best way of soothing me while reading this report was for me to pat Peppa. He thought that was the only sensible thing I was doing all day. That brings me to a very important point about the enormous value of companion animals. As they bring us great joy, they deserve great respect. If anyone wants advice about a companion animal, I have become a keen advocate of Maltese–Silky crosses, but I am sure others have a similar view. Particularly when one has a small backyard, a dog the size of the average cat is probably of the right order. We recently acquired a fish. I think Sylvia has waited for a few more girls in the family, but the fish is a boy, so his name is Lance. I have not come to the point, you will be pleased, Mr President, of consulting the fish on parliamentary matters, but if I had decided to seek a further four years in this place and Lance lived long enough with us, as I hope he will, you never know what might have been possible!

I referred to my family as being an essential component in making my work possible. The other essential component in making my work possible has been my colleagues in my electorate office—that is, my electoral officers and research officers. My constituents and I have been very fortunate with the quality and dedication of the staff I have had in my Balcatta electorate office both in the past and the present. I was lucky to have work for me when I first started Maurene Palmer, who had many years of experience with Hon Graham Edwards, who had a very distinguished career in this place. Maurene was always efficient and encouraging. For me, as a brand-new member, to have an electorate officer with that experience with a very accomplished long-term member of this place such as Graham Edwards, was a great advantage. We had a young fellow called Darren Klarich around that time. Darren was always good to be with, enthusiastic and full of ideas. Earlier on, and since 1998, I had two very close and good friends in my electorate office, Dr John Crouch and Mrs Jane Saunders. I will not talk at length about John Crouch because, sadly, last year I had an occasion to talk in some detail about John’s life, our friendship and the contribution of his work both in our electorate office and more broadly in policy and campaign work for the Australian Labor Party, because sadly we lost John to cancer in March last year. I am aware of the impending three o’clock, Hon Giz Watson, so I have said what I have to say about John, other than to say that more than a year since John passed away, we still miss him enormously. He leaves a great gap in my life and the life of many others who had the good fortune to share their life with John. We miss his wisdom and friendship.

I am very fortunate to have still working with me Jane Saunders and Margaret Pearce. Jane started off doing relief work with me. I had the good fortune to work with Jane and John together when they were volunteering for Kim Beazley’s campaigns when he was the member for Swan, and I was fortunate to be working in his office. I now have Jane Saunders and Margaret Pearce working for me. Jane comes into work at Balcatta every day from Roleystone and Margaret comes in from Lesmurdie. We get traffic reports regularly and I have had reports from Jane and Margaret that have led me to ask questions in the house about different points related to traffic. If members wondered where some of those questions came from, I have now given it away. Jane, efficiently and effectively, manages our office. Most extraordinarily, Jane also efficiently and effectively manages me. I would have to be the most difficult member of Parliament to manage in Western Australia, Australia, the world, and every jurisdiction, and Jane achieves this herculean feat. Furthermore, Jane is also very skilled in translating the script of one of the least legible members of Parliament in the world, and she regularly provides this member of Parliament—I commented earlier about having the ears to hear and the eyes to see—with very honest advice and she makes sure that I have those ears working.

More importantly than all of that, Jane's care and commonsense has been of enormous importance to many who have visited our electorate office. That sentence does not do justice to the amount, the quality or the effectiveness of work that Jane has performed in our office to make the lives of many people tremendously better than they would otherwise have been. I cannot really talk about that sort of thing without giving away personal details, but it is just extraordinary what she is able to do and how much she has transformed and improved people's lives; she has given them more hope and a better future through the work she has done.

Margaret Pearce is always a joy to share time with but I put one caveat on that comment. Margaret has one flaw—her devotion to the Perth Demons Football Club. The only time I have not really enjoyed sharing time with Margaret is when Perth have had the temerity to beat Claremont, because Margaret does tend to rub it in. Other than that, Margaret is always uplifting and a joy to share time with. Margaret's advice and managerial work are vital to our office team, and I have seen people in very challenging and distressing circumstances benefit from Margaret's care and commonsense.

I have been lucky enough to make some terrific friends among the Parliament House staff. I will not even start with that because it is getting close to three o'clock but I just want to say to all of them, thank you. I like to consider people in here my friends as well—thank you. I was hoping to say a little word to everyone before I finished but I am starting to be concerned that that may not be possible. I hope you all achieve what you want in life and enjoy your experience here as much as I have, and I fully intend to enjoy the next three days.

I want to talk about a handbook for political success and a handbook for anyone—it should be compulsory reading—who ever hopes to lead anyone else, William Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It is an excellent read and I am tempted to start on page 1 and read right through the book. However, Hon Giz Watson might lose patience and her guests might get cross at me if I were to do that, so I will try to provide a synopsis. Perhaps I will try to do for *King Lear* what Cameron did for Robert Ray's report on the internals of the Australian Labor Party.

King Lear was a legendary figure. When Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote *The History of The Kings of Britain*, he had a collection of legends about kings for which there is very little historical record, and one of them was King Lear. King Lear, as he got on in years, decided that he liked people to tell him how good he was and how much they loved him—a very vulnerable quality. I am reminded of Simon and Garfunkel's wise words in *The Boxer* when they said —

All lies and jests
Still a man hears what he wants to hear
And disregards the rest

It is comforting to hear a proposition that resonates with our preconceived ideas. Our preconceived ideas are, no doubt, the accumulation of thoughts we have heard, shared and considered in the years of our life up to today. So when we hear something that resonates with what we already think, it is comforting. Our skill in this place is the art of persuasion, which can mean drawing people to have the confidence to leave behind a preconceived idea and to move on to a different point of view. I am talking about the merit of doing such; I am not claiming to be good at it.

I remember and greatly admire the day when Hon Norman Moore—the war horse of the Liberal Party—fought against the electoral reform legislation, which I thought was appalling because as a democrat I was enthusiastic to support the electoral reform legislation. However, I remember seeing him find the last clause and last constitutional variation about the Legislative Council not initiating an expense to the people of the state, and he thought he had a winner. I thought, “Norman Moore does not give up”, and I admire that, Norman. I have enjoyed our exchanges. Norman, I have a suspicion that after another four years Mrs Moore, Lee, will bring you to the front door and say, “Norman, in you go. Stop getting under my feet in the kitchen. Go and play with your friends in the Legislative Council.” That is why he will come back and finish another 15 years to make it 50 years, but that is another theory.

Let me get back to King Lear. Someone is distracting me; I have no idea who it might be. I normally look this way and that way when I say that, but I think it might be me. King Lear had three daughters. When I look down the list of characters in the play, the villain in the play is called Edmund. I am sure that has absolutely no significance whatsoever. The other interesting thing is that the wisest person in the play is described as the fool, and that is fairly poignant in itself. When members read the play, they can see how wise that particular fool was in the court of King Lear. King Lear decided, probably self-indulgently, that he wanted the comfort of hearing what he wanted to hear so that he could disregard the rest and feel comfort in that. He asked his three daughters—Cordelia the good one, and Regan and Goneril—to tell him how much they loved him. Regan and Goneril laid it on with a trowel about how magnificent he was, what a fine father he was, how much they loved them, and their devotion to him for ever and ever and the loyalty that goes with that. Cordelia, without me quoting extensively—to the tribulation of Hon Giz Watson—basically said to her father, “You are okay.” King Lear was not smart enough to understand these things as he should have. He decided to divide his realm into two and to allow the daughters who told him how much they loved him to govern half each. Before long they were

treating him with total disrespect and war and violence prevailed throughout Britain. The good news was that the honest daughter, Cordelia, was able to prevail in the end and bring peace to the realm.

My thesis is that if we are to bring peace to the realm—that peace or civilised community that I talked about earlier—it would be far more likely to occur if we spent more time listening to Cordelias who are brave enough to give honest, true and often critical advice, rather than the Gonerils and Regans who are prepared to lie and claim the love and affection that they do not really hold in their heart. I think I have been blessed with many Cordelias in my life; foremost who come to mind are Sylvia and Jane, whom I referred to earlier, and I would like to thank them both for all their services, but most particularly for being my Cordelias and not allowing me to be a silly old fool like King Lear.

I want to raise two more issues. I talked about the staff in Parliament House, and I did not want to be specific; but I will be a bit specific and talk about the ladies who operate the switchboard. I strongly suspect they might be quietly running the state, with some of the extra roles they take on. I am about to venture into something mathematically challenging, so I might get some help from the more mathematically astute people around the chamber. I have estimated that when I needed to find a member to bring them into the chamber or for some other reason to satisfy the requirements of the Whip—the reason I sit behind my fearless leader, Hon Sue Ellery, is that I hear her instructions and I relay them to others—the ladies who make that possible for me are the switchboard ladies. One day I had rung for the fifth time to ask where Hon John Cowdell was—I am sure I said “the honourable” and not some other form of description—the switchboard lady said to me, “Ed, have a look in the Chair.” As the Chairman of Committees, he was over there and therefore not in his place over here! But I got very exasperated at the time. Without doubt, the switchboard ladies provide that support. They do at least half of my work as the Labor Party Whip. The other person who does at least half of my work as the Labor Party Whip is Jane Saunders. Jane manages the pairs. On a Monday she would give me the program of pairs that have been allocated at that date, and I would take over. Jane had done this for weeks and weeks and weeks, and I, in a very princely fashion, decided to do the work for the most recent week. That is basically how we do it. This is where the mathematical challenge comes in: the switchboard ladies are doing at least half my work as the Labor Party Whip and Jane is doing at least half of my work as Labor Party Whip; and if I was very clever, I would not have had to do any work at all as the Labor Party Whip! But I did manage to find some, which may suggest three halves. Mr President, if you can resolve the mathematical quandary of finding three halves in a whole, I understand why we have been electing you as President! That would be quite an achievement. I would particularly like to thank the switchboard ladies for their role, amongst all the other staff who make working in Parliament House such a delight, but I particularly wanted to thank them.

I listened with interest to our new chums in the chamber last night—Hon Dave Grills and Hon Martin Aldridge. I think the National Party is an interesting outfit. It certainly brings along candidates who are very different, one from the other. Listening to Hon Martin Aldridge, I was delighted to hear his references to Bremer Bay and Gingin. He took me back to the days when I was doing my botany degree at the University of Western Australia, when I used to run around chasing slow-moving wildflowers—the kangaroo paws, *Anigozanthos manglesii* and *humilis*, at Gingin Cemetery, and others around Bremer Bay; they were great days. It was terrific listening to that speech. I remember both of those gentlemen, and others—Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm and I think Hon Linda Savage—making a similar point. They spoke about how often political parties—I am not going to be silly enough to pretend the Labor Party is pure in this way, but we have had a recent example from the other side of the chamber—go into an election and promise the sun and the moon and the stars and are reluctant to make any reference to where they might raise the tax revenue to pay for either the sun or moon or stars, let alone all three! And then, when they get in, they say “Oops!”—or when they get re-elected, they say, “Oops! There’s even less money than we realised when we were last in government”, which was before the election. It is pretty extraordinary to be in government and to make a whole set of promises, and then when they are re-elected to try to say they did not realise how bad the books were so they could not keep their promises. All sides of politics have done this. If our colleagues in the Greens ever get large enough to get close to a treasury bench, I suspect they might do it as well. Political parties promise the sun, the moon and the stars; they avoid reference to how they will pay for that and they make excuses after the election. I am very pleased that we have a system of government as excellent as the Westminster system, because the Westminster system is going to need all of its inherent strengths to deal with the public disillusionment that will follow from people putting themselves forward for election with promises that cannot be paid for. I think all of us here, particularly our colleagues in the junior chamber, need to examine our souls on that question. If we promise less and deliver more, we will be held in higher respect in the community, and this excellent system of government will be less sorely tested. Testing even the best systems of government is something that we should not do. Honesty is the best way of avoiding that testing.

I have never studied political science, and the more I go along to talk to school students who are doing politics, the more I say, “I don’t know why I am up here and you are down there, because you are more educated in politics than I am; I have never studied it at all.” That is true, but I will propose a political science experiment for whichever party in this chamber is brave enough to try it first. We are four years out from an election, so

members can plan it; in fact, I would like to see all the parties do it. They can go into the next election and say: we have problems with traffic congestion and transport. We would like to have a health system that is more readily able to meet people's needs and an education system that delivers a better system so our young people would benefit. We are going to do our very best to improve each of these essential services; and, by the way, unless we are going to go down the path of Greece or Cyprus or one of those other unfortunate places I am happy I do not live in, we will need to find the revenue to pay for it. It would be fascinating to see what electoral support a party would receive from the electors if it was that frank and honest in putting itself forward to govern the state. I have raised this before with people who have had leadership experience. They have said, "But, Ed, you have to be strident and confident." Can someone be strident, confident and honest at the same time? I like to think it is possible.

Hon Ken Travers: And your opponents do not mislead about your admission.

Hon ED DERMER: It would work best, if everyone adopted this. It is interesting, Hon Ken Travers, because we cannot control anyone else's behaviour, and trying to persuade them is often a waste of time. The best chance of someone listening is if they ask for advice in the first place—no-one has asked me, but I am offering it anyway! I would like to see Australia's political parties go to future elections with realistic assessments of what can be done to improve things and not promise the sun, moon and stars and to have a realistic discussion about how we pay for that. If a party that was brave and honest enough to approach an election in that way did badly in the election, I suppose the adage about democracy that people get the government they deserve might be true. But I think Western Australians deserve to have an honest engagement with all of the political competitors who put themselves forward to govern this great state. There should be a little bit of examination and a little bit of determination, hopefully, on all sides of politics, for people to be honest with the electors in the next vote. I think the electors in Western Australia are people of wisdom and commonsense, by and large. I think the party that was brave enough and honest enough to engage with the electors to talk honestly about the limitations on what they can achieve, but can indicate the incremental achievements they are able to achieve and the need to pay for those incremental improvements, would receive their respect and support. I am putting forward a political science experiment. I am hoping everyone in this place will think about it and, hopefully, decide to put that political science experiment to the test at the next opportunity.

Colleagues, thank you for putting up with me. Thank you for sharing the last 16 and a half years with me, and that extends to people who are not in this place anymore; sadly, that includes Hon Max Trenorden, who I think was a marvellous Chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Administration. Now I am distracting myself, and it is just about 3.00 pm. I am going to try to be the politician who leads by example and keep to my promise of sitting at down at three o'clock. All the very best, and thank you.

[Applause.]

HON GIZ WATSON (North Metropolitan) [3.00 pm]: I thank Hon Ed Dermer for being an excellent Whip right to the very last, and thank him for also having been, in effect, the Whip for the Greens (WA) over many years. Thank you, Ed, for your consideration and your words.

I have a few things I would like to say this afternoon and I hope I manage to get through them without cracking up or losing my voice. I wanted to talk a little about the good bits, the bits that still need some work done, make some observations, and there will, of course, be numerous thankyou's.

My reflections on the activities that have been part of this place have a business bittersweet quality, as despite achieving some progressive change, it is clear that much more needs to be done before we have a society and environment that receive the respect they deserve and need. Thus, for every milestone there is a further millstone to be removed. Firstly, the good bits: foremost in my list of positive outcomes is my role in the passing of legislation to provide equality to my fellow lesbians and gays. After decades of discrimination and criminalisation and many previous attempts at legislation by the Australian Labor Party, plus one attempt by the Australian Democrats, in December 2001 the Acts Amendment (Lesbian and Gay Law Reform) Bill was introduced. In 2002 and 2003, the Western Australian Parliament passed laws that gave same sex-attracted individuals and all long-term couples legal recognition in a number of areas, the main ones being: antidiscrimination protection; inheritance rights; stamp duty exemption; a system for property division after a split; accident and workers' compensation if a partner dies; partner state superannuation; recognition as next of kin; protection from discrimination on the basis of marital status; access to adoption; access to reproductive technology; and recognition as a parent of a non-biological child in some cases. My memory is that, in all, several hundred laws needed amending. These laws did not create new rights specific to gay men, lesbians and bisexuals; rather, they removed previous discrimination. The law now recognises de facto partnerships regardless of the gender or sexuality of the people involved. In the area of lesbian and gay rights, Western Australia went from the most discriminatory to the most progressive state, despite the most personal and bigoted debate I experienced in my 16 years in this place. It was an excellent community campaign, and I salute the work of Gay and Lesbian Equality (WA), Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the parliamentary working group that I

enjoyed working with, the unwavering support of the then Attorney General, Jim McGinty, and the vital role of my comrade Senator Louise Pratt, who did an enormous amount of work within her own party; I acknowledge, of course, the love and support of my partner, June Lowe. I also salute the hardy souls who sat through day after day of vilification in the public gallery. If just one young lesbian or gay grows up knowing they cannot be discriminated against in law and will not be treated as second-class citizens, then my work here was worthwhile. I have a cold; I am not really cracking up quite yet!

Of course, there is much more work to be done to break down prejudice, particularly within the Department of Education, which remains intransigent in failing to provide young gay and lesbian students with a safe learning environment by refusing to deal adequately with homophobic bullying or provide a curriculum that includes gays and lesbians.

The next good bit: it is 12 years since the unprecedented WA community campaign to protect WA old-growth forest led the Gallop government, with the critical support of the Greens in this place, to increase the forests and woodlands and conservation reserves from 265 000 hectares to 800 000 hectares, and to create around 30 new national parks and conservation reserves, plus a substantial reduction in the amount of logging in our forests. It was a fantastic victory to be part of, and I notice some people who were very much central to that are here today. However, due to the shortcomings in the definition of “high conservation forest”, beautiful forest blocks such as Chester, Warrup, Helms, Arcadia and Yabberup have been or are being destroyed or are planned for destruction. Of course, along with the destruction comes the destruction of the habitat of endangered species such as the numbat and black cockatoos.

To add insult to injury, very little of the timber extracted is converted into high-value product. For example, only 20 per cent of the total volume of jarrah logs taken from our forests and sold to industry actually ends up as high-value timber products such as furniture and flooring. The majority is squandered as railway sleepers, charcoal and firewood. Further, after decades of clearing, overcutting and general mismanagement, many of our native forests and woodland ecosystems are left fragmented, degraded and in need of protection or restoration. The already serious impacts on our forests and woodlands have reduced rainfall, and diseases like dieback, armillaria and marri canker are compounded by logging, mining and inappropriate burning.

Also, there is strong evidence that the timber industry is in decline for other reasons. Relevant external factors are a global oversupply of woodchips, changing consumer trends and the development of substitute products. On top of that, recent commonwealth legislation to introduce a carbon price and firm up a carbon credit regime has the potential to create exciting opportunities for economic development in the south west, through managing forests for carbon credits. Western Australia could potentially earn far more money from carbon credits than it could from logging. This must be explored. I note that an Australian National University study conducted by Andrew Macintosh reports that if logging stopped, the south west forests could be worth between \$600 million and \$1 544 million in carbon credits in the time frame of 2014 to 2023. What is desperately needed now is a forest conservation plan, not another so-called forest management plan that will see an increase in the allowable cut of karri.

I am also delighted to have played a role—along with the vocal and effective conservation sector—in protecting many other precious places in WA, particularly during the campaign for Ningaloo Reef and other significant marine ecosystems, as well as the great western woodlands. I acknowledge and congratulate the Barnett government for its commitment to the establishment and management of five marine parks under the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy, and look forward to their early gazettal.

Another significant change in WA law was the passing of the Acts Amendment (Abortion) Act in 1998. The bill was eventually passed after much active public debate, days of parliamentary debate, and numerous amendments to the original proposal. The act amended the Health Act 1911 and the Criminal Code to make it lawful for medical practitioners to perform abortions as long as the women concerned had given informed consent. The Association for the Legal Right to Abortion played a vital role in the law reform process. ALRA was established in 1967, and I pay tribute to the many women, and some men, who over many decades kept the struggle going to ensure that women have reproductive rights in WA. Those I know and have worked closely with include Robyn Murphy, Margot Boetcher, Dorothy Anderson, the extraordinary Ruth Greble, who I acknowledge is here today, and former member Diana Warnock, who many members will know—I enjoy seeing her most mornings as we plunge ourselves into the ocean as City Beach—and Judy Straton and Cait Calcutt. I particularly pay tribute to former Legislative Council member Cheryl Davenport for leading the difficult job of carrying that reform through the Parliament. I thank Cheryl for her very nice card inviting me for a holiday to Norfolk Island anytime I am looking for somewhere to go!

I am also delighted to have played a role in enacting some of the strongest laws protecting the community from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke through carriage in this house of the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill. Through that role it was a pleasure to work with organisations such as the Cancer Council of WA, the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, the Heart Foundation and the Australian Medical

Association. I am also pleased to have been able to use our numbers in this place, back in 2006, to block moves to dissolve the WA Alcohol and Drug Authority.

I have long championed, and, hopefully, demonstrated, the importance of cycling for health and environmental benefits, and hope that we may at last be reaching a tipping point in planning where cycling is given suitable priority. It is essential that we not only invest more in dedicated cyclepaths, but that we also make key commuting roads bicycle-friendly. Also, more needs to be invested in cycling infrastructure in regional Western Australia. I wanted to particularly acknowledge the good work done with the Department of Transport to organise the annual ride that involves members of Parliament and local government members, which I think has played a significant role in raising the profile of cycling among members of Parliament. I note that these days, several members of Parliament are committed cyclists.

Another area that I have pursued is recognition of the condition of multiple chemical sensitivity, or MCS. A surprising number of people suffer from this condition in Western Australia. They are constantly vulnerable to even small exposures of a frightening array of chemicals; chemicals that indeed most people do not react to at all. A significant number of MCS sufferers have developed this condition after exposure to the cocktail of 261 chemicals emitted by Alcoa's liquor burner at the Wagerup refinery. These people deserve to be relocated from places such as Hamel and Yarloop to create a proper buffer from the industrial area there. As a condition, MCS continues to be poorly understood and sufferers are not supported. There is a need at the very least for laws to recognise the condition as a disease.

Uranium mining: funny I might mention that! Many Western Australians continue to recognise that uranium is not just another mineral to be exploited. They understand that mining uranium starts a nuclear fuel chain that inextricably leads to highly toxic waste and potential weapons of proliferation. Western Australians recognise that there are environmental and health problems at each stage of that fuel chain, whether it be in the mining and processing of uranium and the resultant waste dumps, its use in nuclear reactors and resultant highly radioactive spent fuel rods, nuclear weapons, or the requirement to keep toxic waste isolated from the environment indefinitely. I am proud to have introduced legislation to prohibit the mining of uranium in Western Australia three times—in June 2000, August 2002 and in 2008. Surprisingly, and to me disappointingly, the first bill was defeated in 2003 by the only other political party to have an anti-uranium policy, the Australian Labor Party. In 2007, I introduced a third, much more limited, bill, requiring the Labor government to implement its own stated commitment to prohibit the mining of uranium on mining leases granted since 22 June 2002. Again the ALP defeated the bill, choosing instead to rely on a non-statutory policy position of the then Premier, Alan Carpenter.

As we long predicted, the ban was lifted swiftly at the stroke of a pen by the incoming Liberal-National government in 2008. Despite the state now being open to the mining of this highly toxic mineral and all the exaggerated claims of uranium miners, not one mine has yet transpired. In fact, a number of major players have abandoned uranium mining. In 2012, BHP Billiton cancelled the planned expansion of Olympic Dam, disbanded its uranium division and sold the Yeelirrie uranium project in Western Australia for around 11 per cent of the nominal value of the uranium resource. Also indicative of the state of the industry was Cameco's February 2013 announcement of a \$162.5 million writedown on the Kintyre project in WA, as a result of a weakening uranium market. Far from there being a renaissance in the nuclear industry, the world uranium price has dived from almost \$US140 a pound in 2007 to just over \$US40 a pound today. In Europe, 150 nuclear stations are scheduled for closure—whoopee—and, shamefully, Australia is inextricably linked to the ongoing nuclear crisis at Fukushima, where we understand that rats chewing at power cords threaten to disrupt the vital cooling process for the spent fuel rods, so it stumbles from crisis to crisis. This is because there was Australian uranium in each of those four reactors.

Nuclear power is in retreat in Europe, Japan and the United States of America. The industry is pursuing India as a customer—a country that has nuclear power, refuses to sign the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has an appalling track record on nuclear safety. A decade into the nuclear renaissance, the global nuclear capacity has not increased. There may be modest growth, but utilities will have to build several hundred reactors in the coming decades just to replace the current cohort of mostly middle-aged reactors. The huge capital cost of these new reactors is proving to be the industry's Achilles heel.

Another area I have introduced legislation in is the area of cat management. A Greens initiative that was eventually recognised and delivered by this government—congratulations; it was long overdue—was legislation to limit the number of unwanted cats in Western Australia. The Minister for Local Government was the actioning minister. I think at one time about six of them went through. I had to try to persuade each minister that this was a good idea, but I was unsuccessful, including, I seem to remember, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, who was not persuaded about the merits of cat legislation. Having undertaken a considerable amount of groundwork and community and stakeholder consultation, drafting and redrafting—I note with the valuable assistance of the now Hon Lynn MacLaren, who was at that time my research officer; who also knows way too much about cats!—I introduced a Cat Bill into this house in 2003. Although the bill was never formally debated and ultimately lapsed, I believe it advanced the push from conservationists and cat welfare organisations for laws to provide for

the welfare of domestic cats while at the same time reducing the negative effects of cats on native wildlife. Again I congratulate this government, in particular the member for Jandakot, Joe Francis, for successfully steering cat legislation through this Parliament. It was not an easy task. It was the only piece of legislation about which I received a death threat! Beware all those who want to enter into the area of cat management; it is fraught.

One of my aims when I arrived in this place was to work in the spirit of consensus but also to stand firm on matters of principle. On working in the spirit of consensus, the quality of Western Australian laws, as we all know, relies heavily on members' ability to work together. Although it is not much publicised in the media, a great number of bills actually pass with the support of all parties—probably about 80 per cent. I am proud to have played my part in helping this house reach agreement on numerous bills and on a variety of amendments to bills as well. Indeed, on my calculation—I lie; on calculations by one of my research officers!—I have contributed to debate on 380 bills in my time in this place. No wonder my hair has gone the colour that it has! In terms of standing firmly on matters of principle, I am proud also to have been a member of the only party that has consistently supported judicial discretion and opposed mandatory sentencing and, together with Labor and the majority of National Party members, to have opposed the stop-and-search laws. I am also proud that my office has been a supporter of the parliamentary intern program and has hosted, over the years, 30 interns on a range of topics. I congratulate the education officers in Parliament who do a great job in keeping that program going. I also acknowledge the work of Janice Dudley at Murdoch University who I have worked with over many years.

The next thing I want to raise is the committee work, which is a lot of work actually. As we know, much of the important but often invisible work of Parliament is done within its committees. From the commencement of my time here, I have invested considerable effort in our committee system. I started as a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation in June 1997 and went on to spend 12 years on that committee, including eight years as the deputy chair. I concur with Hon Linda Savage's comments in her valedictory speech that it is of serious concern to see the demise of that committee. During the last Parliament, I was very concerned when that committee, in effect, became dysfunctional—let us not mince our words—not just for the immediate but also for the long-term consequences of a very important committee in terms of the scrutiny of legislation. There were many occasions during the last Parliament when I referred bills to the Standing Committee on Legislation in the hope that that committee would be reactivated to do the work that it was designed to do. In my experience, the reports by the Standing Committee on Legislation have provided significant additional research and public input into important areas of law. Not to have that committee functioning, no matter what members might think about it, is a disservice to the public of Western Australia who, hopefully, we are here to work for.

I also jumped straight into the challenging area of native title law, being a member of the Select Committee on Native Title Rights in Western Australia from September 1997 to November 1998. In 2003, the Greens provided the numbers to support the establishment of a Select Committee on Advocacy for Children. Between June 2003 and July 2004, Hon Barbara Scott, Hon Kate Doust and I examined the case for a children's commissioner in WA. The report of this select committee report provided much of the groundwork and momentum for the establishment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia. The commissioner in my view has proved to be an important and much needed advocate for children and young people, and I congratulate the commissioner, Michelle Scott, on the excellent work that she is doing on behalf of children and young people in Western Australia.

In September 2005, the Greens again provided the numbers for the Select Committee on the Adequacy of Foster Care Assessment Procedures by the Department for Community Development. Hon Robyn McSweeney chaired that committee, and Hon Sue Ellery and I were the members of that committee. We concluded that particular inquiry in August 2008.

Between November 2006 and August 2008, I chaired the Select Committee into the Department of Education and Training. Between May 2008 and June 2009, I was a member of the Select Committee into the Police Raid on the *Sunday Times*. I am looking at Hon Adele Farina, who was also part of that exhaustive committee inquiry. That inquiry went some way towards setting the scene for laws that we passed through this place recently, the so-called shield laws for journalists. I think that committee played a role in highlighting the need to provide protection for journalists for their sources.

I was also a member of the Select Committee into the Appropriateness of Powers and Penalties for Breach of Parliamentary Privilege and Contempts of Parliament, along with Hon Norman Moore, I seem to remember, from November 2008 to June 2009. This committee inquired into the appropriateness of the powers and penalties provided for in the Parliamentary Privileges Act 1891 and the Criminal Code in respect of breaches of parliamentary privilege and contempts of Parliament. The recommendations of that committee have yet to be implemented. I do not know whether any of the recommendations have been implemented; I think not. That does concern me. It is often the case that the momentum is there with a select committee and the tabling of the report, but the actual carriage of the recommendations through this place stalls, for various reasons. That really is a

business that should be sorted out, because it is only a matter of time before another circumstance will arise in which the Parliament will come under scrutiny, and potentially criticism, for having such limited options to deal with matters of contempt. We cannot brush it back under the carpet. We need to address that issue, and I would encourage members of this incoming Parliament to look at that report. My recollection is that it was a unanimous report. I do not think there was any dissent from the recommendations of that committee.

Hon Norman Moore: I agree with you entirely.

Hon GIZ WATSON: So hopefully there will be broad support for the changes that are proposed. It just will require the time of the chamber to put them through.

I was also a co-opted member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges from June 2005 to November 2012. I would like to note, as others I think have, the particularly successful review and adoption of the new standing orders by the Legislative Council. That was a long process—again I am looking at Hon Norman Moore and Hon Sue Ellery—and many hours were spent discussing the standing orders, as probably should be the case. It was a long, exacting and often tortuous process, over probably two years, to achieve that end. I think that most normal people would find much of the standing orders a bit esoteric, but they are the rules by which we operate in this place. That review of the standing orders has resulted in clearer rules, and in non-gendered and contemporary language, which some of us worked very hard for. I have enjoyed being part of that committee to deal with, I guess, the internal workings of the Parliament and some of the challenges that we have in terms of governing ourselves.

Finally, in my committee work I have particularly enjoyed chairing the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations from June 2005 to November 2012. I would like to particularly thank my most recent fellow members of this committee. First, I thank my deputy chair, Hon Phil Gardiner, who was always an excellent deputy. I knew that if for some reason I could not be there, he would step straight into the breach. Actually, I must mention a couple of things that arose. I would come back from not being at a particular meeting, and suddenly there was going to be an inquiry into something, or there was something controversial, and I would think, “Gee; that seemed to happen when Hon Phil Gardiner was in the chair a couple of times”. You have done an excellent job, Hon Phil Gardiner, and I enormously enjoyed working with you. You have contributed an extraordinary amount to this Parliament in the short time that you have been a member of this place, and I appreciate your capacity to have an open mind, because that is very important, and also your capacity for hard work on that particular hardworking committee.

Hon Liz Behjat was also a member of that committee. It was not necessarily an easy job to be the only government member on a non-government dominated committee that was constantly prodding the state’s finances. But, Hon Liz Behjat, I have really enjoyed working with you on that committee, and I appreciate your fair play in that role and the fact that you truly operated as a parliamentarian, because one of the good things about committees is that hopefully we can take our party political hats at least half off in the work that we do there.

I also thank Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, an absolute stalwart, who always does her homework and always has been up since four o’clock in the morning writing the necessary questions to slowly grill any public servant who dares walk through the door—legendary—and also Hon Ken Travers, who does excellent work and has a fantastic knowledge of state finances. Of all the committees that I worked on, this was the one on which I thought we finally got all of that combination working well.

Hon Ken Travers: With your good leadership!

Hon GIZ WATSON: Thank you; I appreciate that. So I say thank you very much to the excellent and hardworking committee members for putting in enormous hours and dedication, for their support for me as chair, and also, dare I say, for occasionally having some fun.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Very rare!

Hon GIZ WATSON: That is not true, honourable member! I will tell members a story, then, because the member has just made me think about it. There was an occasion when the committee came back together for the first time after the summer break, and there was a spontaneous outbreak of hugging. I did not initiate it, which was actually quite unusual, but it was lovely to see, to the extent that the staff felt that they were missing out, so we actually had to include them as well. That is an indication of what can be achieved in a parliamentary committee with a little bit of fun.

I want to particularly pay tribute to the staff of the committee, because, of course, all this committee work cannot be done without a huge contribution from the committee staff. I pay tribute to all the committee staff. They do a very professional and extraordinary job. I think I have worked in various committees, both historically and currently, with practically every committee staffer, and there are too many to thank individually. But I would particularly like to thank the staff members who have supported the Standing Committee on Estimates and

Financial Operations: Lisa Peterson, Carolyn Malouf, Renae Jewell, Samantha Parsons and Steve Hales. They have done an excellent job.

I now want to go onto the bits that need a bit more work. At the top of the list of unfinished business is responding to climate change. I wish I could leave this place secure in the knowledge that this government, and indeed this Parliament, is working to address climate change—cutting our carbon emissions, mitigating the impact of carbon pollution and adapting to a dryer climate. But sadly this is not the case. Accelerating climate change and reducing rainfall is upon us now. The south west of Western Australia is drying. We can see the changes occurring before our eyes in the south west, with significant die off, across the landscape, of mature eucalypts and other species—flooded gums, marri, jarrah and peppermint. We only have to drive through that area to see it. According to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, rainfall in the south west has already decreased 15 per cent since 1975. Stream flow has decreased by about 45 per cent. CSIRO's climate modelling predicts that the south west will get hotter and drier again by 2030, the most likely range being an additional seven to 14 per cent decline in rainfall. Not only is the drying climate already impacting on the health of our forests, agricultural land, wetlands and threatened species, it will increasingly impact on human health and wellbeing.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has confirmed that Australia just had its hottest summer on record. Perth has just experienced its hottest April on record. Alarm bells should be ringing as we note that the Bureau of Meteorology has had to add two new colours—deep purple and pink—to its interactive weather forecasting chart. Its temperature range had previously gone up to only 50 degrees, now it extends to 54 degrees. David Jones, the head of the bureau's climate monitoring and prediction unit, is reported as saying that the scale has just been increased today and he anticipates it is because the forecast coming from the bureau's model is showing temperatures in excess of 50 degrees. The Australian Climate Commission recently acknowledged that Australia's recent "angry summer" was worsened by climate change. Penny Whetton, senior principal research scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation recently said that such record temperatures will become the new normal in 40 years, as we are facing five degrees of warming by 2070 unless we significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Every major international institution, including most recently the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, tells us that exceeding two degrees of warming will cause unprecedented human suffering.

The response by this state government has been to ignore and downplay the changes and threats. Despite WA being a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions this government says response to climate change is a federal matter. On top of that, successive governments have invested in the refurbishment of the Muja coal power stations, an outrageous waste of money. Originally costed at \$150 million, it now stands at more than \$250 million and rising, with no completion date or final cost—more than \$250 million squandered on nineteenth century technology and polluting coal. What would \$250 million-plus have bought in clean energy?

Nationally, the latest clean energy index report tells a story of rising emissions and simultaneously falling electricity consumption across Australia. The key driver of increased emissions is growth in consumption of fuels, particularly bulk fuel for mining and aviation. However, output from coal-fired power stations is down and being squeezed out by the uptake of renewable energy and natural gas. The weaker demand for electricity, together with the shift to cleaner fuels, which has been noticeable over at least the last four years, largely explains the continuing fall in electricity-related greenhouse gas emissions. Perth households are leading the way with the installation of roof-top solar panels and the CSIRO tells us that wave power alone could meet Australia's electricity needs five times over. The Australian Energy Market Operator also has recently found that it is technically feasible and affordable to run the national electricity market with 100 per cent renewable energy. The AEMO's analysis identified that concentrating solar thermal power—technology the Greens have been championing, particularly in this last election—with molten salt storage is a key enabling technology as its thermal energy storage provides reliable around-the-clock power. What is lacking is the political leadership to make these renewable options reality. The lack of interest and commitment on this critical issue is astounding; it is inaction that we will all rue. This is an area in which being visionary and being practical are the same thing, and I implore this and future governments to immediately embrace this challenge.

The next issue I want to mention is biodiversity protection. We are consistently failing in our international obligation to protect WA's unique plants and animals. In Western Australia there are 419 plants and 233 animals listed as "likely to become extinct or rare and therefore in need of special protection". There are 21 ecological communities listed as "critically endangered", 17 as "endangered", 28 as "vulnerable" and three as "presumed destroyed" in the Threatened Species and Ecological Communities database. Only 20 per cent of Western Australia's biological subregions meet the objective of 15 per cent or more reserved and 11 per cent of the subregions do not contain any formal reserved areas.

This is why, among other reasons, I introduced the Biodiversity Legislation (Priority Reforms) Bill 2012 to update the antiquated Wildlife Protection Act. Unfortunately, the bill lapsed but not before the government gave a commitment to introduce legislation of its own. I note that the opposition did the same. I urge the electorate to

hold this government accountable to provide world-class biodiversity conservation legislation fitting for our internationally significant flora and fauna.

It is also worth noting that another piece of legislation that I introduced into this place was legislation to protect areas such as Margaret River from coalmining. Again, that was legislation that did not gain the support of other parties in this place. But I flag that that issue will not go away either. The question of the conflicting land use between things like coalmining and bauxite mining and, indeed, the potential impact of fracking in the state will see these issues arise in various communities again before too long. As much as I appreciate that it has been taken up by this government as a policy position, it is a bit like the uranium mining situation, easily changed by the stroke of a pen, a change of minister or a changed policy position. I am suggesting that somebody else might like to look at how we provide legislative protection, particularly for prime agricultural land in this state, and give the community a voice in determining what land use they want in their area

The next issue I want to touch on is sustainable agriculture. I note the recent heightened attention from the Premier and the media to the state of agriculture in WA, and not before time. The viability of traditional farming practices is under sustained pressure from the high value of the Australian dollar and reliance on export earnings, increasing costs, pressure from the giant retailers, continuing degradation and loss of fragile soils from erosion, salt and acidity, and reduced and more erratic rainfall. I note that the Premier said he could not make it rain. In fact, he is wrong. Clouds like trees, and he could do a lot to recreate the conditions that generate precipitation by refunding landcare work to reduce soil degradation and salinity and restore belts of native vegetation. New carbon farming and biodiversity initiatives also have the potential to diversify and supplement farm incomes but have been flatly rejected by the state government. As the Centre for Policy Development's recent paper "Farming Smarter, Not Harder: Securing our agricultural economy" states —

Without action to adapt to more variable and extreme weather, by 2050 Australia could lose \$6.5 billion per year in wheat, beef, mutton, lamb and dairy production.

With my background in environmental management I would never have guessed how much of my energy over the past 16 years would go into criminal justice matters! In the bidding wars between the other parties over who can be toughest on crime—I note from the motion debated earlier today that perhaps a truce has been called, which is an excellent sign—we have often been the only voice for rigorous scrutiny and an evidence-based, compassionate approach to this complex area of policy.

In December 2011 the outgoing president of the Law Society of Western Australia, Hylton Quail, wrote the following in *Brief* magazine —

Over the decade and a half that I have been involved in considering parliamentary criminal bills on behalf of the Society, most of them have promised 'tougher' laws in what seems to be a never-ending 'law and order' auction. As these initiatives are often perceived as electorally popular, they have rarely been subjected to close parliamentary scrutiny by major parties other than the Greens. Yet, with each passing year these new laws change the nature of our essential liberal democracy.

I am heartened that there is renewed interest in justice reinvestment. Taking a cooperative approach across all departments—education, health, housing, social welfare and justice—to address the causes of crime, is a far more just, sensible, compassionate and economical approach to criminal justice. Western Australia incarcerates people at twice the rate South Australia does, and I would like to think Western Australians are sick of forever throwing money at endlessly enlarging our prison capacity. Unfortunately, people are easily led by populist rhetoric geared to play on their fears, and I hope the current government might rise above this and provide some true leadership on this issue. On that note I thank Hon Simon O'Brien for his motion today, which points in that direction.

Throughout my time in Parliament I have strongly advocated for an alternative approach to reducing the scandalous rate of imprisonment of the custodians of this country, Aboriginal Western Australians. I have also called many times for the implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which have been gathering dust for 22 years. We have been reminded of the failure to act on these recommendations and the faults in a privatised custodial service by further outrages such as the wholly preventable death of Aboriginal elder Mr Ward in the back of a scorching transport vehicle owned by the state and run by the international prison corporation G4S.

That was after there had been a number of warnings about the condition of transport vehicles. I sounded the alarm by advising the house, well before Mr Ward's death, of an incident at Sandfire where a transport vehicle had overheated while Aboriginal prisoners were still inside it. This information had been provided to me by an executive member of the Aboriginal Legal Service. While I will watch with interest the approach within prisons of the new Minister for Corrective Services, there is an ongoing urgent need to stop people going into prison unless it is really warranted. Increasingly, evidence suggests that imprisonment does not deter, and results in worse behaviour than the behaviour that was actually the cause of the sentence. This fact has been highlighted numerous times—in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report, in the latest report of the

Commissioner for Children and Young People, and in the evidence of criminologists including Professor Richard Harding, Professor Neil Morgan and Associate Professor David Indermaur.

Another area that still needs work is the issue of violence against women. Over the years, I have used my position here to be a voice for women and children affected by domestic violence. It is a depressing fact that women continue to be assaulted and killed within their homes, most frequently by family members or partners; 85 per cent of the victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence are women; and it is still the case, in a wealthy community like ours, that every day, half of the women and children who apply for refuge are turned away due to a lack of safe accommodation—the most basic of human needs. This has to change. I was pleased to play a small part in the amendments to the restraining orders legislation, in particular ensuring that the voices of those people who work at the coalface of this difficult issue were heard and reflected in the legislation.

Another significant area in which Western Australian laws were made antiquated and dangerously inconsistent is the area of sex work. I was proud to provide leadership in the push to decriminalise sex work in Western Australia. In 2008 this Parliament passed legislation that effectively decriminalised prostitution, but the legislation was never proclaimed and lapsed under the incoming Liberal–National government. It is entirely predictable that any renewed push by this government to further criminalise sex work, as has occurred in Queensland and Victoria, will result in the sector being pushed further underground and into the arms of organised crime. One of the consequences will certainly be poorer public health outcomes and greater safety risks for sex workers. Meanwhile, Western Australia's unofficial containment policy continues in some form, despite the fact that it was supposedly officially abandoned and despite the fact that it has been the subject of adverse comments and criticism due to its lack of clarity, the absence of legislative foundation and the potential to afford opportunities for corruption. The police have retained a unit within the organised crime division of WA Police that is responsible for liaising with operators and workers at sexual service premises. This unit maintains a database of sex workers, despite the fact that it is not an offence to be a sex worker in Western Australia, and that these people have not committed any crime. It is highly inappropriate, to say the least, for WA Police to retain this database—a permanent potential blackmail list—and to continue the unit's practice of contacting and obtaining the identity of sex workers and other information. In my view, sex workers should have the same right to privacy as anybody else.

I leave troubled by the lack of transparency around the role of private donations and the influence this may have on policy and politics in Western Australia. When I say “donations”, I mean not only gifts, but also fees paid for service—for example, political fundraisers where purchasers receive ministerial contact in return for the cost of a seat. In WA, mining company donations to the WA Liberal Party went from less than \$100 000 in total in the mid-2000s to more than \$1.2 million in 2010–11, forming around one dollar in five of the party's revenue. There is a serious question to be answered about the influence of such donations on the Liberal–National government. I am also troubled by the vast inequality in electoral spending and the effect this has on our democracy. It is becoming harder and harder for political parties that decline the donations—and the influence—of corporations to compete in election campaigns. The Greens will continue to advocate for a cap on election expenditure to provide a more level playing field.

The Legislative Council and its members in my view need to remain vigilant in protecting the powers and privileges of this place. Over my time here I have been deeply embroiled in understanding the history and ongoing role of the parliamentary system. While not, of course, perfect, the Legislative Council continues to play a vital role on behalf of all Western Australians by holding inquiries, scrutinising the operations of departments, working with parliamentary commissioners, interrogating the budget, accessing information withheld from the community and holding the government to account. Again, a lot of this work gets done within the committee system. It is of grave concern that the last Parliament saw a number of challenges arising in a number of committees.

During my time here there have been a number of challenges to the powers of the Legislative Council from either overzealous corporations—or their legal counsels—paid lobbyists and bodies such as the Corruption and Crime Commission. I am proud to have played some part in defending the Legislative Council, often in difficult circumstances. I believe the powers of the Legislative Council remain intact, but vigilance will always be required to maintain those powers.

I want to also stress the important role of independent commissions in this state. The Ombudsman, the Auditor General, the Commissioner for Children and Young people, the Inspector of Custodial Services and the Equal Opportunity Commissioner all provide important advocacy, advice and oversight in their particular areas.

Finally, some thank-yous. I have enjoyed working with, and having been hugely supported by, my friends in the Greens; I am delighted to see many of them up there in the public gallery, and thank you very much for joining us this afternoon. They are too numerous to name, but I want to say that I love the Greens, I love the party and I love our commitment to the values of consensus and nonviolence, our commitment to social justice and the environment, and our commitment to working closely with the community. I hope I have been able to

demonstrate some of the values of my party in my work here. I am deeply indebted to all the staff who have supported me in my work. I will start firstly with the staff here at Parliament—the chamber staff in particular, who I probably see more often than members of my own family and who feel like members of my family! Thank you for the friendly, professional and always timely assistance that you have provided over the years I have been here. I particularly want to thank Brian for his advice on my cricketing skills from time to time, when we had occasion to be playing the media. My skills did need some work, so thank you, Brian! I also thank the Clerk, Malcolm Peacock, for your support and advice and the professional work that you do on behalf of the people of Western Australia. I have valued it greatly. On that note, I also acknowledge the support and advice of two former Clerks, Mia Betjeman, and, in particular, Laurie Marquet, who was Clerk when I first started here. He was always a source of information and advice, whether it was the advice I was actually looking for or some other bit of useful information about the history of the separation of powers, or the French Revolution! Usually, if I went for a five-minute piece of advice in Laurie's office, I would emerge an hour later thinking, "I must remember all that; it was probably really important!" Seriously, I learnt a lot and I know my colleagues at the time, Hon Chrissie Sharp and Hon Jim Scott, also benefited from Laurie's advice, and we miss him.

As I have already mentioned, the committee staff do an extraordinary job. More broadly, the staff of the dining room, the telephonists—everybody in this place—provide the most extraordinary service in a very professional way; I cannot fault the support that is offered to members of Parliament here. It has been a delight, and I will miss all of you very much—particularly some of the dining staff who, again, I feel are part of my family: Deb, Steve, Vince and Ozzie. They will be greatly missed, and I will have to come back and have lunch just to see them. I want to thank the many friends I have made in this place from all the other political parties I have worked with here. I have learnt from them and disagreed with them and we still remain friends. I note particularly the formidable parliamentarians such as Hon Norman Moore, whom I respect for his extraordinary and tenacious contribution and his honourable conduct. I think I have said this before, but when Hon Norman Moore gives his word, that is what will happen. I might not always like it, but he has been consistent. I respect the amount of work that it must I respect the amount of work that must have been done by someone who has been in this place for as long as you have, Hon Norman Moore. I wish you all the best for some more time to do other things. I also note other leaders from other political parties with whom I have enjoyed working. I did some committee work with Hon Murray Criddle. He left very suddenly from this place. I certainly enjoyed working with Hon Murray Criddle. Hon Kim Chance was the previous Leader of the Labor Party in this place. We also spent many, many hours working together. There are many other members of the Labor Party, in particular, whom I have worked closely with over many years. I of course need to particularly note the honourable comrade, Hon Sue Ellery, who I think after many years of protesting might now understand the value of a good hug.

Hon Sue Ellery: No!

Hon GIZ WATSON: She still denies it! Thank you, friends, for the work we have done together. I also thank Hon Adele Farina. We have talked about a lot of issues together, particularly in the area of criminal justice. I valued her advice and discussions. She does extraordinary work on behalf of her constituents.

I also want to thank, of course, my Greens parliamentary colleagues for their support and wisdom, not just the ones here in the state Parliament but also those who have gone before. In particular, I note the former Senator Jo Vallentine who has kindly joined us here this afternoon. Jo has been an inspiration and a long-term friend of mine for many decades. Thank you, Jo, for the leadership you have shown. I also thank former Senator Christabel Chamarette, and Senator Dee Margetts, who also, of course, was here as a member for Agricultural Region for a term. Senators Rachel Siewert and Scott Ludlam continue to do a great job in the federal Parliament. I wanted to acknowledge our pioneering Green in this place, Hon Jim Scott, who came into this place as the first Green. It must have been a tough gig, but he did a great job. To former members Hon Chrissy Sharp and Hon Paul Llewellyn, who represented the south west and in whose footsteps I hoped to follow but did not quite get there, you both did excellent work in this place. I also thank my colleagues here. I think to the detriment of the Parliament and public life, Hon Alison Xamon will not be continuing here. Alison has done an extraordinary amount of work in this place. She understood straightaway the opportunities that arose by being a parliamentarian. Her capacity to get her head around an issue or a bill and to produce excellent contributions to debates here has been noted by many people. I think it is a sad loss that Alison will not continue here. I wanted to acknowledge her work in a number of areas. She has worked very closely with mental health advocates and has earned their respect, as she deserves. In juvenile justice she was always right at my heels, waiting to take my portfolio and to debate juvenile justice issues. That is great; that is keen. She has been a very fine advocate. Her passion for workers' rights included raising the issue of industrial manslaughter in this place. She has also made contributions in the area of urban bushland, has raised concerns about fracking in this state and more generally has spoken about critical issues around water. Thank you, Alison; you have done a great job and I wish you all the best in whatever you do next. To Lynn and Robin, who will carry on in this place and carry the Green vision forward, I wish you all the very best; I am sure you will do a great job. I look forward to watching your work and progress from somewhere else.

Finally, I want to give my heartfelt thanks to my electorate staff, who have done extraordinary things over the years. My first electorate officer was a woman called Carole Hutchinson. Previous to working for me she worked for Fred Chaney and then worked for Reg Davies as a then independent member in this place. It was fantastic to have Carole working with me in that first term in Parliament. Even though I thought it was interesting that this person was coming from, in effect, the conservative side of politics, when I asked her what she thought her political leanings were, she thought about it for a minute and said, “I think I’m a Marxist.” That was a perfect fit! Carole was an excellent asset to me and to the party in that she knew how the Parliament worked, so I was able to land on my feet. I thank her enormously for what she was able to contribute. At that time my research officer was Hon Robin Chapple, so thank you, Robin, in that capacity as well.

I want to thank and acknowledge Trish Cowcher, who job-shared the position of electorate officer for eight years. She was then poached to go and work with Senator Scott Ludlam. She does not claim that she was poached, but I think it was definitely poaching! Sue Hall also worked for me for eight years and then went on to work for Hon Lynn MacLaren.

My most recent staff have been extraordinary. If anybody has commented on the amount of detail and research that has gone into some of my contributions in this place, that has been the work of two extraordinary researchers, Irma Lachmund and Tonia Brajcich, who are both legally qualified and are both sharp, capable, energetic, indefatigable and extraordinary. I am going to miss you both very much, because we were a great team. Thank you.

Part of that team also, of course, was Nina Jurak, who has been my electorate officer. Nina has been an extraordinary anchor for our office. She is always ready to do the utmost and was always ready with a joke when we were feeling a bit flat, so thank you, Nina. Members will know in their own work how much constituent work gets done by our officers without us necessarily seeing it happening. There have been many times when I have got feedback about the service provided by my staff in my office, which has been fantastic. I have been told by people that they had tried every other political office and that mine was the only office that actually took on their issue, had a look at it and provided some resolution for them. Thank you, team, and all the best for whatever happens next.

I also acknowledge and thank Cameron Poustie, who worked in the last Parliament for all Greens members and assisted us with the legislative program. Cameron made an extraordinary contribution and I am very sorry that he is not now going to be a member for North Metropolitan Region, because he gave it a good crack. Thank you, Cameron.

I wanted to also acknowledge some of the many relief and temporary staff I have had in my office from time to time over the past 16 years, as members can imagine. I want to emphasise in particular a number of young women who have worked in my office. Some of these young women started out by doing an internship and then did some work in my office, and they have gone on to be and will be extraordinary contributors in the political landscape. Most recently Jess Panegyres did a fantastic job working on forest-related matters. She is a brilliant young woman who will go far. I am sorry that she has been poached and gone off to Sydney, but I am sure she will have a great future. Roxanne Moore also did an internship with me in my office. She has had a fantastic career. She wrote an internship for me on the need for a judicial commission in the states—something I meant to mention in my speech. I have put that on the agenda for work still to be done in dealing with the criticisms that happen from time to time about the role of the judiciary. New South Wales has an excellent system of a judicial commission, and it is long overdue to have something like that here. Indeed, the former Attorney General thought it was a good idea too but probably not a high enough priority. Rox did that particular report and she went on to work for the Chief Justice. Now she is just about to go to America as a Fulbright scholar, so best of luck to her. Amy Green also did fantastic research for me and will go on to great things, and also Jess McColl, who worked in my office. My partner, June, did a bit of talent spotting at the University of Western Australia and engaged her in Greens politics. She now has very high-powered job working with Senator Rachel Siewert. It is great to see young women get involved in these important issues and the politics of the day.

I want to acknowledge you, Mr President, in terms of your role and what you have provided in this place in the last Parliament. You are an excellent President—having experienced a number of them, which is no criticism of the other ones. Your commitment to a consensus approach is excellent and this Legislative Council is in safe hands with you in the Chair and I acknowledge the work that you do.

My last thank you is to my family. “Hi” to Mum and Dad who are watching me on the screen in Albany, if they have worked out the technology—I hope they did. They may be in their 80s but they can still work the technology, which is pretty good. They have been a constant source of support and inspiration to me. They remain politically active and interested and are forever giving the member for Albany a list of things that he needs to do. The member for Albany has said to me, “I saw your mum the other day. She still wants me to do this.” They remain very engaged in the political process and were active in the recent election campaign even at the age of 87 years, so thank you very much.

Finally to my partner, June, who has put up with me working ridiculously long hours and being preoccupied with public matters for 16 years. She has been an invaluable source of advice, support and, to top it all off, an excellent campaign manager. I first met June when she was the campaign manager in 1990 for my first campaign when I ran for the seat of Forrest in the south west; I was so impressed that the rest is history. Thank you, June. Perhaps we can have some time to do other things now rather than being preoccupied with Parliament. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion be agreed to. Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich has the next call I believe.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: No.

The PRESIDENT: Have you finished?

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: No, I have not. I have deferred my speech. I have sought leave to continue my remarks at the next day of sitting.

The PRESIDENT: This is your opportunity to continue them if you wish.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I am paired, Mr President; therein lies the complication.

The PRESIDENT: That has not stopped people in the past, but I will take whoever stands.

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [4.05 pm]: I am not paired and I am here. I would like to join other members in this house in thanking His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia, Malcolm McCusker, for his speech opening the first session of the thirty-ninth Parliament of Western Australia.

This is my final opportunity to make special mention of Hon Norman Moore, my colleague from the Mining and Pastoral Region, who has been a consistent source of guidance and counsel as I am sure he has been to other members. After 21 May his absence will be noted and he will be sadly missed. His contribution to Western Australian politics has been significant. Last week we were attending the “Cue Parliament”; that is, the Murchison zone council meeting made up of councils from Meekatharra to Yalgoo, Sandstone, Mt Magnet and Cue. That was the last Cue council that Hon Norman Moore attended in his official capacity. In reciting the number of years he has been going there, he has attended 60 of those “Cue Parliaments”, which is probably a record that nobody else will match for a long time.

Hon Norman Moore: I don't know if anybody wants to.

Hon KEN BASTON: I think I have done only 16 and I will certainly not reach 60. Hon Norman Moore, I wish you and Lee all the best for the future and I hope that parliamentarians can honour your legacy by continuing to govern to the best of our abilities and conscience for all Western Australians.

I recently welcomed newly elected members from the electorates in the Mining and Pastoral Region, and I also express my thanks to the very hardworking Liberal candidates in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and the north west. Although they were ultimately unsuccessful, they mounted wide-ranging and engaging campaigns, and, of course, the views of their electors were passed on to me and I will endeavour to ensure that they are represented in Parliament.

I will use this time today to outline my priorities for the Mining and Pastoral Region in our next term of government and beyond. The Mining and Pastoral Region possesses a huge amount of potential and is currently at an embryonic stage of development. As I previously said, I strongly believe it should be a priority of this government to facilitate the growth of this region. In order to do this, we must look carefully at what must be done to continue to encourage investment in regional Western Australia. We must continue to build strong foundations for growth. Decisions made about Western Australia's future in the next decade will likely reverberate throughout much of the next century.

The Mining and Pastoral Region offers great potential for many industries: mineral resources, tourism, agriculture, fishing and aquaculture and so on. I believe the government can help to lay that blueprint so these industries can develop; most importantly, we must ensure the beneficiaries of this growth are the towns and communities that play host to these industries. As we all know, Western Australia has experienced a period of strong growth, although it is coming to a bit of a slowdown now, and I feel strongly that the government must consciously invest in our regional centres so that the state can absorb this growth. It is our job to ensure that the state's economy remains strong and diverse and that our cities and towns are liveable and sustainable places where people can experience each stage of their life rather than having no choice but to move away to access better health and education opportunities. The key to achieving strength, diversity and liveability is ongoing investment in infrastructure such as roads, ports, air services, health services, education and housing in our regional centres.

Much work has been planned and completed by the Liberal–National government in making this a reality, and I look forward to seeing this continue in our next term of government. For example, in health, Kalgoorlie has received a \$55.8 million upgrade to health services, including a palliative care wing and an expansion that allows most of the acute services to be located closely together. The emergency department and the special care and observation wards will be located alongside the medical imaging department and a new building will be constructed on the site. The expansion of the patient assisted travel scheme will also reduce the financial burden on people living in remote areas when they need to access special medical treatment. This is very important.

In housing, the affordability of and access to entry-level housing for young families and first home buyers is a challenge that has been met by this government in a number of regional centres. Learning from the incredible growth in population and housing shortages faced by centres such as Port Hedland and Karratha, this government has successfully and efficiently delivered projects in Broome, Kalgoorlie and Kununurra. I will mention LandCorp's Broome North development, which has provided much needed land, giving some breathing space to absorb the growth that is very likely to occur as the resources, agriculture and tourism industries continue to grow. The only word of caution I have is that we have tended to make the blocks smaller in those new developments. It is a shame that in order to bring down the price, we shrink the size of the block. When we have so much land in those vast areas, I think we can afford to continue to have 450 or 650 square metre blocks. Some of the blocks in those developments are smaller than that and I suppose that makes the land affordable so that somebody can build a house, but I believe that with people living closer together, we could have social problems in the future.

In referring to infrastructure, I would like to talk about the Browse liquefied natural gas joint venture partners, who have decided against a processing plant at James Price Point in its current form. However, I am hopeful that other projects will come into that area. Onshore Canning Basin gas was mentioned today, and I think Hon Norman Moore mentioned that in his speech yesterday, and, of course, that LNG industry is still there.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 698.]

Sitting suspended from 4.15 to 4.30 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STUDENT SUSPENSIONS

46. Hon SUE ELLERY to the Minister for Education:

- (1) In 2012, how many student suspensions occurred?
- (2) In 2012, how many individual students did these suspensions involve?
- (3) In 2012, what percentage is the number of students in part (2) as a proportion of the total student population?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

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

- (1) There were 25 988 suspensions.
- (2) They involved 11 715 students.
- (3) It is 4.4 per cent.

EDUCATION — WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS

47. Hon SUE ELLERY to the Minister for Education:

How many workers' compensation claims related to mental stress have there been to date in 2012–13?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The answer is 70.

METROPOLITAN CEMETERIES BOARD — GREAT WAR VETERANS' HEADSTONES

48. Hon KATE DOUST to the minister representing the Minister for Heritage:

Under the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board renewal program, many headstones of Great War veterans are being destroyed or lost.

- (1) In light of the impending 100th anniversary of the Great War and Anzac landings, what measures are being taken to identify and preserve these important items of heritage?
- (2) Has the minister discussed the issue with his counterparts, the Minister for Veterans and the Minister for Local Government?
- (3) If no to (2), will the minister undertake to do so without further delay?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I would like to clarify that the original question was directed to the Minister for Local Government. Consequently, I am of the understanding that the answer has come from the Minister for Local Government.

- (1) The statement that under the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board renewal program many headstones of Great War veterans are being destroyed or lost is wrong. The following measures have been taken to identify and preserve headstones of Great War veterans as important items of heritage. Members of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board's monument assessment and advisory committee diligently conduct a thorough assessment of each burial section, looking at every single headstone and developing a full schedule of every grave prior to its final report to the minister. MCB has a long and collaborative relationship with the Office of Australian War Graves regarding military graves and the renewal process. MCB has a longstanding memorandum of understanding with the OAWG and is the only cemetery authority in Australia to have formalised the relationship in this manner. The state manager of the OAWG is a member of MAAC and plays an active role in the pre-renewal assessment of each burial section. Should a war dead or veteran be found in a burial section due for renewal, research is done on the eligibility of the deceased for war grave status. Most of these have an unidentified grave and OAWG puts a headstone on the existing grave, which is retained in situ. Headstones of official war graves are not disturbed or modified in any way during the renewal process—these are left in situ. When MCB receives an email, letter or phone call with information that a deceased may be a war veteran, MCB refers the person to OAWG to have the grave assessed and recognised as a war grave. During the process of cemetery renewal, all headstones are photographed and their inscriptions recorded for posterity. Records of these are maintained and are available to the public for reference. The cemetery renewal process has been refined and improved over the years to include an entry on the cemetery records system stating the location in the renewed area where a headstone or inscription has been relocated—for example, in garden bed A, or on a particular wall.

It is unfortunate that one section of the community perpetuates these incorrect and distressing claims regarding the Metropolitan Cemetery Board's renewal program and works being undertaken.

- (2)–(3) An ongoing dialogue occurs between the office of the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Veterans on this matter.

FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER — CHILDREN IN CARE

49. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Child Protection:

Of the 2 311 children from metropolitan districts and the 1 469 children from country districts who were in care at 30 June 2012, how many were known to be suffering from foetal alcohol spectrum disorder?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support advises that on 25 February 2013, 60 children in the care of the chief executive officer had a diagnosis of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, comprising 14 children from metropolitan districts and 46 children from country districts.

AGRICULTURE — CLIMATE RISK MITIGATION INSURANCE

50. Hon PHILIP GARDINER to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

In considering strategic support measures for farmers, in particular within the context of the state's \$7.8 million package that is being provided to grain farmers —

- (1) Is the Western Australian government considering climate risk mitigation insurance as a complementary plank to its farm assistance package?
- (2) Does the state government have any independent report concerning climate risk mitigation insurance and its relevance to Western Australian agriculture; and, if not, will it commission one?
- (3) Has the state government engaged with Swiss Re or any other reinsurance company that has been looking at rolling out a risk mitigation insurance option to WA farmers; and, if so, what has the government offered it in the way of support?
- (4) Does the state government believe it is taking an unacceptable risk on frost or drought hitting those farmers who will receive state and federal farm support funds this year?
- (5) Does the state government consider that any future taxpayer-funded financial support should go only to farms with risk insurance?

- (6) Would the state government support a two-year, two-million-hectare underwriting trial at \$5 per hectare in the eastern wheatbelt, with an additional \$10 million investment for radar, satellite, weather and data collection to help kick-start crop risk insurance in Western Australia?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

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

- (1) No; the state government is not targeting the state package at underwriting the costs of a climate risk insurance program. Rather, the package is aimed at supporting communities and viable farm businesses that have high, but manageable, debt levels.
- (2) No; the state government has not commissioned any independent report on the cost benefit of risk mitigation insurance for Western Australian farmers, but it has reviewed a wide range of reports on its effectiveness and cost. At this stage the government will work to support farmers, the banks, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd, grain traders and potential insurers on any independent economic and due diligence study.
- (3) The state government has met with Swiss Re a number of times and has provided it with data on yields, rainfall and frost risks. The Department of Agriculture and Food WA is currently rolling out a number of micro weather stations to help farmers and insurers manage crop risk.
- (4) No; the state government has put in place minimum equity provisions so that only viable farm businesses with at least 55 per cent equity are being supported, and it believes that all farmers receiving support this year are viable.
- (5) At this stage no frost or drought risk mitigation insurance is available to WA farmers, but the state government would be prepared to consider making it a condition for any future assistance if such insurance was available.
- (6) At this stage the government has no funds to allocate to underwriting a scheme for any crop risk insurance trial but it is looking at what additional data collection support it can provide to farmers to help them manage seasonal risks.

Having met with Swiss Re, and having had a look at some of the data and the possibilities, I must admit that I found it extremely interesting. I have to say that I believe that in the very near future, that is the way we will have to go. If people borrow money to buy a house, they need to have it insured. If people borrow money to buy a car, they need to have it insured. So I believe that with the technology that is available, we are getting closer to what we need to have.

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL AUSTRALIA
ACCREDITATION

51. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the minister representing the Minister for Forestry:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Giz Watson, who is unavoidably detained from the house at the moment. I refer to the pursuit of Forest Stewardship Council Australia accreditation for Western Australian logging operations.

- (1) What was the cost to the Forest Products Commission to bring the Forest Stewardship Council to Western Australia?
- (2) Was any other expenditure incurred by the FPC in seeking accreditation?
- (3) If yes to (2) —
- (a) what was the expenditure for;
 - (b) what was the amount; and
 - (c) who was it paid to?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The Forest Products Commission did not bring the Forest Stewardship Council to Western Australia.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) (a) To undertake an audit against the FSC controlled wood standard—FSC-STD-30-010—and to ensure that all elements of the FSC controlled wood standard were addressed and documented.
- (b) Approximately \$25 000 to date.
- (c) Auditors and a temporary employee.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT — METRO AREA EXPRESS LIGHT RAIL

52. Hon KEN TRAVERS to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Can the Minister for Transport identify any complex engineering issues involved in constructing the Metro Area Express light rail that he was not aware of prior to the recent state election?
- (2) If yes to (1), what is the issue, and on what date was the minister first advised of the issue?
- (3) Can the Minister for Transport identify any other issue that could have an impact on the MAX light rail that is to be built by 2018 that he was not aware of prior to the recent state election?
- (4) If yes to (3), what is the issue, and on what date was the minister first advised of the issue?

Hon JIM CHOWN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

The Department of Transport advises —

- (1)–(4) MAX light rail is an innovative project that will transform public transport in Perth. Detailed planning and procurement options are still underway and will identify a range of issues as this progresses.

ALBANY — ANZAC CENTENARY

53. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's decision for the state government to replace the local Albany Centenary of ANZAC Alliance in planning the centenary of ANZAC commemorations.

- (1) When did the Premier make the decision to take over the organisation of centenary planning; and what, if any, consultation did the Premier have with the federal government on this decision?
- (2) Has the federal government expressed concurrence with the Premier's decision for the state government to take control?
- (3) Why did the Premier make the decision to take control of the organisation of the centenary?
- (4) Before taking control of the centenary commemoration organisation in Albany, how much state government funding was expended?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(4) The Anzac Centre Implementation Committee was established in late January 2013 with the specific objectives of overseeing the construction of the Anzac interpretive centre on time and on budget, developing the interpretive exhibition component of the centre, and developing a sustainable business model for its future. The ACIC has not taken over the organisation and coordination of all Anzac centenary planning in Albany. The ACIC was established after consultation with, and with the support of, the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Western Australian branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia and the City of Albany. The federal government is fully supportive of the formation of the ACIC; it is represented on the committee through the deputy commissioner of the Department of Veterans' Affairs in WA.

To clarify it once again, the state has not taken control of the organisation of the Anzac centenary. The ACIC was created following advice from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and other stakeholders that the centre was unlikely to be completed within the required framework and proposed budget. The government of Western Australia has committed \$2.2 million to the Anzac interpretive centre; none of this funding has yet been expended. It has also provided \$5.83 million to upgrade infrastructure at Mt Clarence; however, this work is being managed by the City of Albany and is not within the scope of the ACIC.

POLICE — DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

54. Hon ED DERMER to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to the increase in domestic violence reported to police in the northern suburbs in the last 12 months.

- (1) Has any work been done to identify the cause of this marked increase?
- (2) Have additional resources been sought by police from other agencies to work within the community?
- (3) If no to (2), why not?
- (4) If yes to (2), what was the result of these representations to other agencies?

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

On behalf of the Minister for Police, I answer as follows —

- (1) Reported domestic violence has increased by 26.4 per cent in the financial year to date across Western Australia, with the rate in the metropolitan police region increasing by 22.2 per cent in the financial year to date. The north west metropolitan police district, which covers most of the northern suburbs, has had an increase of 8.7 per cent in the financial year to date.

WA Police policy directs that an officer who receives information that causes them to reasonably suspect that an act of family and domestic violence is being or has been committed involving a criminal offence is to submit a report. A family and domestic relationship means a relationship between two persons who are or were married to each other; who are or were in a de facto relationship with each other; who are or were related to each other; one of whom is a child who ordinarily resides or resided with the other person or who regularly resides or stays, or resided or stayed, with the other person; one of whom is or was a child of whom the other person is a guardian; or who have or had an intimate personal relationship or other personal relationship with each other. No specific research has been undertaken by WA Police into the cause of this increase.
- (2) Police currently have strong partnerships with other government agencies such as the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, the Department of Education, the Department of Corrective Services, the Department of the Attorney General and the Department of Housing, along with other non-government agencies.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Although WA Police has strong relationships with other government and non-government agencies, the increased prevalence of domestic violence in the community continues to create challenges for this agency.

LEACH HIGHWAY AND HIGH STREET — WIDENING

55. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the federal government has announced \$59 million for the widening of Leach Highway and High Street?
- (2) Will the state government contribute any funds to complete this project?
- (3) When will this project commence and when will it be finalised?
- (4) What will be the impact of this widening on the Fremantle Public Golf Course, the Royal Fremantle Golf Club and the Fremantle Environmental Resource Network?
- (5) How many mature trees along this stretch of road will be cut down as a result of the road widening?
- (6) What changes to the intersection at Stirling Highway are included in this funding?

Hon JIM CHOWN replied:

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

Main Roads WA advises as follows —

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The state's funding contribution will be considered as part of the 2013-14 budget allocations.
- (3) The time line for delivery of this project is dependent on the 2013-14 state budget outcomes.
- (4) Some land will need to be acquired.
- (5) While a number of mature trees will need to be removed, the landscape strategy and a plan will be prepared that will include the planting of mature trees and salvaging or transplanting of trees along the new road alignment.
- (6) The intersection of Stirling Highway-High Street west and the new Leach Highway will be realigned, so that the eastern leg of Stirling Highway and the new Leach Highway will form a continuous route.

CHILD HEALTH NURSES

56. Hon LINDA SAVAGE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the promise by the Liberal government in May 2012 to appoint an additional 100 child health nurses in Western Australia and the allocation of funds for this purpose in the 2012–13 state budget.

- (1) How many full-time equivalent child health nurses were employed as at 30 April 2012?
- (2) How many full-time equivalent child health nurses were employed as at 30 April 2013?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Health.

- (1) 196.7 FTEs.
- (2) 218.7 FTEs.

SOUTH WEST CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE — FUNDING

57. Hon ADELE FARINA to the Minister for Mental Health:

I refer to the minister's answer to question without notice 16 concerning the south west child and adolescent mental health service and the minister's media release of 12 October 2011.

- (1) Is the \$220 000 in growth funding provided to south west CAMHS for the 2012–13 financial year in addition to the \$222 000 in growth funding provided for the 2011–12 financial year and detailed in the minister's statement of 13 October 2011?
- (2) For each of the 2011–12 and 2012–13 financial years, was the growth funding provided to SW CAMHS a one off payment or recurrent funding?
- (3) The minister's 12 October 2011 media release stated that the growth funding would enable an additional two FTEs to be employed, and the minister's answer to question without notice 16 stated that the growth funding for the subsequent financial year would enable an additional 1.75 FTEs to be employed. Does this amount to an additional 3.75 FTEs over the two financial years?
- (4) How many FTEs are currently allocated to SW CAMHS?
- (5) How many FTEs allocated to SW CAMHS are currently vacant and how long has each FTE, or part FTE, been vacant?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I received the answer to this question only at afternoon tea time. I will read out what is here, but if there is any discrepancy, I will get back to the member about that. I have not had time to check it with the staff at this stage.

- (1)–(2) In 2011–12, the South West Country Health Service did not receive any growth funding for CAMHS. In 2012–13, \$222 000 for two FTEs was provided. It is anticipated that this will form part of the ongoing recurrent funding.
- (3) In 2012–13, an additional 1.75 FTE CAMHS staff have been recruited to date. These same positions—the 1.75 FTEs—will continue to be employed in 2013–14, along with the vacant positions outlined in question (5), provided suitable specialist CAMHS staff can be recruited.
- (4) Seven FTEs.
- (5) The vacant FTEs for CAMHS, including growth funding, at this point in time are 2.6 FTEs; 0.5 FTE, vacant for one month since 22 April 2013, and will be occupied by 23 May; and 2.1 FTEs, vacant since early 2013. A 0.4 FTE finished on 28 April and one FTE finished in January. Positions currently advertised aim to appoint FTEs by the end of June 2013. The substantive occupant, a 0.7 FTE, is on a higher-duties contract—CAMHS P2 position.

The PRESIDENT: That was a very detailed question with quite a few sections to it, seeking an answer in a couple of hours' turnaround. Perhaps members need to keep in mind that when they are asking questions, they need to be within reasonable bounds.

BURRUP PENINSULA — ABORIGINAL HERITAGE SITE 23323

58. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

I refer to the Aboriginal interim registered heritage site 23323, Burrup Peninsula, Murujuga, and questions on notice 5024 and 5737.

- (1) What section of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 provides the registrar with the ability to countermand a recommendation of the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee as one of his or her functions?
- (2) Does section 37(2) authorise the registrar to administer—and limit the registrar to administering—the operations of the ACMC and “perform such other functions as are allocated to the registrar by this act”?

- (3) In relation to answer (7) of question on notice 5737, has the project to map the cultural heritage values and boundaries of the Burrup Peninsula been completed?
- (4) If yes to (3), has site 23323 been placed on the heritage site register?
- (5) If yes to (3) and no to (4), why not?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) There is no such provision.
- (2) No.
- (3) No. The cultural mapping project for the Burrup Peninsula referred to in answer (7) of question on notice 5737 has not been completed. The Department of Indigenous Affairs is a member of the Murujuga National Park Council, which administers a large proportion of the Burrup as a national park. The council is developing a program to record the cultural and heritage values of the park and it is planned that DIA will work with the council on this project to avoid duplication of similar programs.
- (4)–(5) Not applicable.

POLICE — COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT

59. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Police:

The PRESIDENT: I am going to depart from convention slightly here and give the call initially to two retiring members rather than frontbench members because it is the second-last opportunity they may have to ask a question.

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: Thank you, Mr President. It is nice to have friends in high places.

I refer to a communications agreement with Western Australia Police.

- (1) On what date was a communication agreement signed by the minister and WA Police?
- (2) Who signed off on the agreement?
- (3) What is the name of the WA Police contact for the agreement?
- (4) Will the minister table a copy of the communication agreement; and, if not, why not?

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) A communication agreement was signed by WA Police on 29 April 2013 and by the Minister for Police on 30 April 2013.
- (2) It was signed by Hon Liza Harvey, MLA, Minister for Police; Road Safety; Small Business; Women's Interests, and Karl J. O'Callaghan, APM, Commissioner of Western Australia Police.
- (3)–(4) I table the attached documents.

[See paper 256.]

ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL — COCHLEAR IMPLANTS PROGRAM

60. Hon ED DERMER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the cochlear implants program at Royal Perth Hospital.

- (1) What was the annual budget for this program in 2011–12?
- (2) What is the annual budget for this program in 2012–13?
- (3) How many implants were provided in 2011–12?
- (4) How many implants have been provided in 2012–13 to date?
- (5) What was the average waiting period per patient for an implant in 2011–12?
- (6) What is the current average waiting period per patient for an implant?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Health.

Providing the information in the time required is not possible, and I request that the member place the question on notice. If I get anything before the member leaves, I am sure we will answer it.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON HOMELESSNESS

61. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to a statement by Hon Mark Butler, MP, federal Minister for Housing and Homelessness, on 14 May 2013.

- (1) Why has the state government not signed on to the federal government's National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness for 2013–14?
- (2) Is the Western Australian government unwilling to match the commonwealth's offer of \$14.5 million?
- (3) Does the minister acknowledge that the WA government has missed the deadline for applications to the associated development fund?
- (4) Which organisations in WA benefited from the development fund in 2011–12, and which organisations currently benefit from the fund?
- (5) How is the minister going to provide surety to homelessness service providers and their clients that there will be no disruption to their services or a reduction in the level of service provided?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The state government is currently considering the commonwealth government's latest offer. The agreement is expected to be finalised in the coming weeks.
- (2) The state government has already committed \$14.5 million to specialist homelessness services under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness for 2013–14.
- (3) The Department of Housing made two applications for the development fund before the deadline of 14 May 2013.
- (4) The development fund is a new feature of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, and did not exist in previous years.
- (5) The Western Australian government is committed to assisting Western Australians experiencing homelessness and working to support people at risk of becoming homeless. The government is dedicated to strengthening its relationship with not-for-profit sector organisations, which play a vital role in the delivery of these services. The Western Australian government has demonstrated its commitment to the sustainability of services through the allocation of an additional \$8.3 million over two years for specialist homelessness services.

PREMIER — MEETINGS WITH JAMES PACKER

62. Hon KEN TRAVERS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Did the Premier meet with James Packer on 24 March 2011?
- (2) Were any minutes, notes or other records of this meeting taken?
- (3) If yes to (2), will the Premier table them; and, if not, why not?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(3) The honourable member has already asked the Premier this question and is referred to Legislative Council question without notice 513, answered in June 2011.

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT — STAFF

63. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Child Protection:

How many Department for Child Protection and Family Support staff working in (a) metropolitan and (b) country regions currently have —

- (1) more than 15 cases allocated to them;
- (2) the maximum 18 “exceptional circumstances” cases allocated to them; and
- (3) a pro rata case ratio greater than 18 cases?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The answers are as at 3 May 2013, as this is the most recent data that can be extracted from the workload management system —

- (a) 56; and
 - (b) 46.
- (2) Answers as at 16 May 2013 —
- (a) one; and
 - (b) four.
- (3) None.

2012 SECONDARY GRADUATION RATE — PUBLIC SCHOOLS

64. Hon SUE ELLERY to the Minister for Education:

What was the 2012 secondary graduation rate by percentage of public school year 12 students?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

Graduation is typically defined as achieving the Western Australian Certificate of Education. In 2012, approximately 97 per cent of eligible public school students attained a WACE. Secondary graduation is defined as the percentage of the year 8 cohort that satisfies the requirements of secondary graduation by year 12. The secondary graduation rate for 2012 was 65 per cent. This means that 35 per cent of the students who commenced year 8 in a public school in 2008 did not achieve secondary graduation in 2012. This can be attributed to a number of factors, including relocation, transfer to the private school system, pursuing an alternative pathway such as a school-based traineeship or employment, or not meeting WACE requirements.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [5.04 pm]: Before question time, I was discussing the demise of Woodside's decision to be involved in the Browse liquefied natural gas development. I was saying that we must continue to provide those facilities, as there will be other players in the market. A member mentioned the other day that the Canning Basin, which is on land, has some 226 trillion or 229 trillion cubic feet of gas. To say that may not mean a lot, but I can say that one trillion cubic feet of gas is enough to supply a city of one million people for 20 years. Members can do the maths from that of what the estimated reserves are now. It will therefore ensure a great supply of domestic as well as export gas, and of course there is the opportunity for oil there as well. Bearing all that in mind, it is important for us to look to the future. However, I must say that it was a tragedy to not have Woodside involved in that development, particularly for the Aboriginal people of the Kimberley. There was an agreement for a \$1.5 billion package that would have given them opportunities for jobs and would have provided health services, education and training. I must say that I have met some of those young fellows who were working for Woodside at James Price Point. They had enthusiasm and a purpose for getting up in the morning to go to a job. I must admit that I was talking to one of them. About six or seven of them came in on a shift and I was talking to them about how they liked their job and the role they were playing out there. It was the first job that several of them had ever had. They said it was great to get up in the morning because they had a purpose to get up and go to work. One of them had been doing night shift and I asked him how he liked the night shift. He said he liked night shift better. I asked why, as I could not think of anything worse than being on night shift—although I must admit we seem to do that in this place! He said that he liked night shift because there were no protesters. When the protesters were blocking vehicles out there, they had to form a convoy every morning and have security travel with them to get them through, and they were losing some 45 minutes every day. Of course, when that is added to the cost of such a project, we probably do not need to wonder why in the end this project was pulled.

I believe the opportunity exists for using offshore floating platforms. I must add that the technology for that has not yet been proven. The supply vessels will operate out of Broome and probably some will operate out of Darwin. However, as a government, we must ensure that the infrastructure is in place to make that option attractive for companies looking to invest.

Hon Ken Travers: Do you know what's happened to the Point Torment proposal?

Hon KEN BASTON: The Point Torment project is waiting for somebody in the resources sector to take part in it. I have been to Point Torment. Now that Hon Ken Travers has raised the point, I would very much like to talk about it. It is about 32 kilometres north of Derby. It is deep water, but actually getting in there through Sunday Strait is quite hazardous, although it used to take Stateships many years ago and it still has barges going out there to service Cockatoo Island. It is still an operational port for light ships. It is possible that it could be used as a port in the future.

Hon Ken Travers: Sorry; has the government dropped it as its proposal for the northern supply base, then?

Hon KEN BASTON: It was never going to be the northern supply base.

Hon Ken Travers: You submitted it to Infrastructure Australia as one of the priority projects about three years ago.

Hon KEN BASTON: I think all ports were being looked at.

Hon Ken Travers: No, Point Torment was in particular.

Hon KEN BASTON: I was not as heavily involved in that. As far as I know, it has always been looked at as a port. It always has the viability of being a port, but a large amount of capital would be needed to do it. If companies such as Rey Resources Ltd, which is a coal company, went ahead, that is the port that would be used, so there is the possibility there in the future. Somebody said that every port should be married in, but I would support any ports that develop along the coast, as they would be exporting out of Western Australia and bringing in real dollars.

Hon Ken Travers: Look, I don't disagree with you, but —

Hon Liz Behjat: Stand up and make your own contribution!

Hon Ken Travers: All in good time, member.

Hon KEN BASTON: I do not mind an interjection about Point Torment. In fact, the member just reminded me —

The PRESIDENT: Order! It has only been the first week and we are getting close to the end.

Hon KEN BASTON: Thank you, Mr President.

The real risk of losing these opportunities is by not making sure that the facilities are there or not encouraging the infrastructure to happen when anyone approaches. The Inpex Corporation proposal was a classic example of this. That project, of course, has gone to Darwin. There were many delays over Maret Islands. The company had been given permission by something like four ministers to go ahead with that, and it did not happen. Interestingly enough, I was invited to the send-off at one of the hotels in West Perth for the Japanese person who was in charge of the Inpex company in Western Australia at the time. I was only a mere member of the opposition, but I was very surprised that I was the only politician there—Parliament was sitting and I took some leave to get out there. I felt, I guess, very sorry for this gentleman, who felt like he had failed because he had not been able to get Inpex up in Western Australia; it had decided it was too hard to deal with the offshore facilities that it required. Of course, it ended up putting that pipeline to Darwin. Darwin made the facilities available and won the catch.

Western Australia has had an incredible decade of economic growth and low unemployment, but it worries me that this has perhaps given some of us a sense of immunity to the economic troubles that are faced by other countries around the world and even some states here in Australia. We must strike a balance between regulation and encouraging investment. There always will be a balance between the regulation of environmental issues and encouraging investment. We must make Western Australia a place where it is easier to spend, develop and invest in these big projects that last for a long time and employ the people of Western Australia. Recent discussion with the Chamber of Minerals and Energy highlighted to me the frustration felt by companies which are more than happy to meet, and are extremely capable of meeting, regulations but which face incredible difficulties in navigating red and green tape imposed at both a state and federal level. It would be a shame to see these opportunities lost because it is simply too hard to do business here.

I would like to touch on one of those pieces of infrastructure that I have spoken about in this house before, Tanami Road. This piece of infrastructure requires ongoing consideration and a collaborative approach with the federal government, and possibly private investment, to upgrade this road. For those who do not know where this road is, it goes east from Halls Creek across to just north of Alice Springs. It has 308 kilometres that are unsealed on the Western Australia side and the Northern Territory section has some 414 kilometres of which 321 kilometres are unsealed. The Northern Territory has sealed 193 kilometres already.

[Leave granted for the member's speech to be continued at a later sitting.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Peter Collier (Leader of the House)**.

STATE AGREEMENTS LEGISLATION REPEAL BILL 2013

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Peter Collier (Leader of the House)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.15 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to ratify an act to repeal various state agreement acts, and for consequential and related purposes. Once passed by Parliament, the bill will repeal the following obsolete acts relating to state agreements that have been terminated: the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited Agreements (Variation) Act 1980; the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's Integrated Steel Works Agreement Act 1960; the Broken Hill Proprietary Steel Industry Agreement Act 1952; the Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Act 1997; and the Nickel Refinery (Western Mining Corporation Limited) Agreement Act 1968.

To put this bill in perspective, I will provide some background details on the acts that will be repealed. The Broken Hill Proprietary Steel Industry Agreement Act 1952, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's Integrated Steel Works Agreement Act 1960 and the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited Agreements (Variation) Act 1980 relate to two state agreements that established a steel-rolling mill, blast furnace and pig iron mill at Kwinana, as well as iron ore mining operations at Koolyanobbing and Cockatoo Island. The BHP state agreements were terminated through the ratification of the BHP Billiton (Termination of Agreements) Agreement Act 2005 because the Kwinana operations had ceased, and the Koolyanobbing and Cockatoo Island iron ore mines were operating under general laws of the land.

The Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement Act 1997 relates to a state agreement that was negotiated to facilitate the establishment of iron ore mines and an iron and steel plant in the midwest region of Western Australia. The iron and steel agreement was determined by agreement between the parties in 2002.

The nickel refinery state agreement was terminated through the ratification of the Nickel Refinery (BHP Billiton Nickel West Pty Ltd) (Termination of Agreements) Agreement Act 2008 because it had achieved its development aims, the company had met its obligations for further processing and it was no longer mining nickel in the Kambalda region. BHP Billiton Nickel West continues to operate the concentrator, smelter and refinery under general laws of the land, and the mineral leases were sold to junior miners, which resulted in the re-opening of a number of mines around Kambalda. As a consequence of repealing the nickel refinery act, an amendment is required to be made to the definition of "principal agreement" in the 2008 termination agreement so that it does not refer to the nickel refinery act. The consequential amendment deletes the definition of "principal agreement" in section 5(1) of the 2008 termination agreement and inserts —

principal agreement has the meaning given to the term *the Principal Agreement* in Recital A to the scheduled agreement;

This bill is consistent with the government's commitment to remove obsolete acts in Western Australia. Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and I now table the explanatory memorandum.

[See paper 257.]

HON NORMAN MOORE

Statement

HON PHIL EDMAN (South Metropolitan) [5.20 pm]: I want to just quickly continue with my remarks of this morning and wish all retiring members all the best for the future. In particular, I would like to say a few words about Hon Norman Moore because this will be my last opportunity to say something. Norman, thanks for your mentoring. I have enjoyed your sense of humour and I have valued your support. Thanks for converting me from sauvignon blanc to wooded chardonnay!

Hon Norman Moore: Somebody had to!

Hon PHIL EDMAN: I will miss our combined birthday wine once a year on 24 August, which I believe is the only time we can get you to the members' bar! Your experience and knowledge as a member of Parliament, a minister and a former Leader of the House in my opinion has been an asset for the people of Western Australia. I wish you all the best with your retirement from politics—I am not too sure whether you will take up scuba diving after this, but probably not!

Hon Norman Moore: Not with the sharks out there!

Hon PHIL EDMAN: No; I did not think so! I will just say this, Norman: you will be missed.

Members: Hear! Hear!

PRISON SYSTEM — GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

Statement

HON LINDA SAVAGE (East Metropolitan) [5.21 pm]: I did not have a chance to make any comments this morning on the private member's business brought on by Hon Simon O'Brien, but I would like to now. I was very pleased to see a motion looking at innovative strategies to reduce the number of Western Australians in the

prison system. One aspect of my time as a member in this place is that I had to put my mind to criminal law. I must say that since law school, when I studied criminal law as part of my law degree, which was in England, I had not often thought about criminal law except for a case involving a woman swallowing a snail, which was a civil case, and also some murder cases. There were a lot of areas of law I had to reacquire myself with and I certainly did not bring any expertise with me. However, we have dealt with a lot of criminal law in this place and we have certainly dealt with a lot of issues related to the rate of imprisonment.

The motion reminded me that yesterday in my final speech I mentioned Outcare, which is an organisation that members for the East Metropolitan Region will be particularly familiar with. It is a service that provides a stepping stone into, hopefully, a more productive life for young Indigenous men and youths who have come out of the prison system. When I have visited the organisation, I have been told about the work it does, including the collaboration between Outcare and the Department of Housing, whereby these youths have been able to work with other maintenance people around Homeswest properties, including paving and working in the garden. What was interesting to me speaking to the staff at Outcare was that many of these young men's social skills and their life skills were so poor that staff really had to start with teaching things as basic as how to make a sandwich or even how to make a cup of tea. I think this goes to the point a couple of speakers in the debate made that some of these people have had no semblance of a home life or the caring and nurturing that any normal, average child would expect to receive. I have obviously spoken on numerous occasions about that experience in childhood, and particularly early childhood, when a child is the complete captive of the adult who is caring for them. There is some good news, though, from Outcare. Sam Mesiti, whom some members will know from that organisation, spoke to my office this week and said that the young men who had been involved in a project of building a fence at Kora Childcare Centre in Bayswater had subsequently found work, one working in the kitchen and another as a fly in, fly out worker. That is a testament to the work of an organisation such as this, which has been going for a very long period. I suppose when we talk about justice reinvestment, which is becoming more widely accepted in this Parliament, particularly by the government, it is very pleasing to see that organisations can show the way.

In the last few minutes of what I think the last time I will speak, except perhaps a question next week, if we are getting serious about law and order, particularly trying to prevent that pathway into the criminal justice system for young people, what we need to do, as with everything, is to start at the very beginning. I have quoted before the Californian adverse childhood experiences study, which is one of the most comprehensive studies in the world on the links between childhood maltreatment and neglect, and later life. The study found that children with adverse childhoods showed higher levels of violence, antisocial behaviour, mental health problems, school and economic under-performance, as well as poor physical health later in life. In countries such as America where justice reinvestment has been turned out of sheer desperation because of the absolutely staggering number of people they have in prisons, they have started to realise—as important as that is—that they need to go back a lot further. They have what are called family-nurse partnerships, which is a model for early intervention aimed at first-time mothers who are considered most vulnerable; it is targeted particularly at teenage mothers living in poverty and experiencing a range of social and health issues. What is significant for the motion that Hon Simon O'Brien brought in is that family-nurse partnerships target high crime areas. That is because they found, from 30 years of evidence, that this is the most effective way to put in early those supports that will actually change the potential outcome. We know that often behaviour is intergenerational, and that is the case with poverty and crime. It is a very highly structured home-visiting program for these mothers, providing that assistance until the child is at least two years old, and that can be weekly or more, and it covers health, housing, mental health—any number of things. We do not have anything even vaguely comparable to that in this state.

There is growing bipartisan support for this in America, just as it appears there is in this Parliament for new and innovative approaches. President Barack Obama recently signed into law legislation to provide \$350 million for these programs, which is a very significant amount. That is because this model has the highest number of favourable ratings in child health, child development, school readiness, family self-sufficiency, maternal health, positive parenting practices, reduction in child maltreatment and, very significantly for what was discussed this morning, reductions in juvenile delinquency, family violence and crime. I am very happy to table the document I am reading from.

Leave granted. [See paper 258.]

House adjourned at 5.28 pm
