

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 29 March 2007

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

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AMENDMENT BILL 2007

Appropriations

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the bill.

DAYLIGHT SAVING REFERENDUM

Petition

MR G. SNOOK (Moore) [9.03 am]: I table a petition in relation to the Daylight Saving Act 2006, containing 376 signatures. This is in addition to the petition I recently presented to the house on the same matter. The petition is in the following terms -

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

We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia, being opposed to daylight saving, say that we do not wish to undergo a further two years of daylight saving trial before a referendum is conducted.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to amend the "Daylight Saving Act 2006" to provide for a referendum within one month of the end of this year's finishing date of 25th March 2007, and not proceed to the following two years' trial unless this proposed referendum result supports its continuation.

The petition bears 376 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

[See petition 198.]

DAYLIGHT SAVING REFERENDUM

Petition

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [9.04 am]: I also table a petition on the topic of daylight saving. It is in the following terms -

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

We the undersigned support the push for the referendum to be brought forward to October this year.

The petition bears 167 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

[See petition 200.]

YARRAGADEE AQUIFER - WATER SUPPLY DEVELOPMENT

Petition

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta - Leader of the House) [9.05 am]: I have a petition signed by 6 788 petitioners regarding the south west Yarragadee. It is in the following terms -

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

We the undersigned, strongly object to the Yarragadee Water Supply Development because the proposal is environmentally unsound, and will threaten the unique biodiversity of the South West.

Taking water from the Yarragadee Aquifer on the scale that is proposed is unsustainable for both the community, and the ecosystem of the Blackwood River Region.

We call upon the Legislative Assembly to reject this proposal due to the significant negative environmental and social consequences that will occur if the development goes ahead.

The petition bears 6 788 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

[See petition 199.]

PAPERS TABLED

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

PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE - LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEE SYSTEM REVIEW

Report Date - Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling): I advise members that the Procedure and Privileges Committee has reviewed the date for its review of the Legislative Assembly's committee system and has resolved that it will now report to the house on 25 October 2007.

STATE OF THE WORLD POPULATION - NOTICE OF MOTION

Removal of Notice - Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling): I advise members that private members' business notice of motion 9, notice of which was given on 19 September 2006, will be removed from the next notice paper unless written notification is provided to the Clerk requesting that the notice be continued.

PILBARA TAFE ANNUAL REPORT - TABLING DELAY

Statement by Minister for Education and Training

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham - Minister for Education and Training) [9.07 am]: The annual report for the Pilbara TAFE college was due to be tabled today. However, an emergency situation was recently declared in the Pilbara region by the Premier due to damage caused by cyclone George. The college suffered severe damage and its information technology system was consequently inoperable for a week. This meant that the report could not be worked on. The report will be available for tabling prior to Easter.

COMPULSORY YEAR 11 AND 12 COURSES - IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS

Grievance

MR G. WOODHAMS (Greenough) [9.08 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Education and Training. I have on several occasions in this house publicly endorsed the development of compulsory year 11 and 12 courses in secondary schools in Western Australia. It is a much-warranted concept, and one which I believe will eventually achieve some very desirable outcomes from both an educational and social point of view. However, the demonstrably sad lack of planning and resourcing for the implementation of compulsory year 11 and 12 courses has created a range of problems for an already embattled public education sector, and has led me to pursue this grievance. Instead of providing opportunities for development to many students and their parents, it has led to crowded classrooms full of frustrated year 11 students - who will be year 12 students next year - whose needs are not being met. I ask the minister to visit Geraldton Senior College for an example of how difficult the challenge is. There are five classes - two of them year 11 classes - without a dedicated and qualified English teacher. This is hardly the way to deliver essential curriculum. I know that the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education system is being used, and I have no quarrel with that system.

However, its place in delivering a mainstream subject in Geraldton Secondary College, the biggest senior college north of Perth, should not be seen as a permanent answer, nor should that be the case at other schools where the demands of increased year 11 and year 12 students will place the system that is in considerable meltdown under even more pressure. The students, teachers and public school system are the innocent victims of inadequate planning on the government's behalf. The minister knows they deserve better, and it is the responsibility of his government, now it has introduced compulsory years 11 and 12, to follow its words with action. He will produce statistics supporting his government's employment of more teachers to manage this development. However, the harsh reality is a scenario repeated statewide of a more than substantial lack of resources, programs and people suitably qualified to deliver programs that are of a beneficial nature to all concerned. The minister understands that I am not taking a position contrary to his. I support compulsory years 11 and 12 in the school system. Along with my fellow Nationals, I unconditionally support the program the government has embarked on. However, what concerns me is that, although the intention is honourable, the outcomes have so far fallen far short of the expectations of the schools, students, parents and communities.

This is an issue that is having a considerable impact across much of regional Western Australia. I am not making a hasty judgement when I say that compulsory year 11 and 12 programs need far greater scrutiny than they appear to be receiving. One of the requests I made in this house at the time we were considering the legislation was that appropriate resourcing be provided to schools. It seemed appropriate at the time, and it is no less appropriate now because, as everyone's friend the Treasurer will tell anyone who is prepared to listen, the state is in a marvellous economic position. I hope the minister is making himself tremendously unpopular in cabinet and caucus by continually complaining about the lack of resources being provided to the educational sector by the government. This economic boom we are enjoying is a window of opportunity for the government

to upgrade and provide educational facilities in schools that have not in many instances received substantial support in 20, 30 or, in some cases, even 40 years. I make this point because, essentially, we have the most ideal circumstances in the history of this Parliament and, more importantly, in the economic community of Western Australia, to introduce and build the compulsory year 11 and 12 programs. If I might borrow some medical parlance: new and appropriate programs for years 11 and 12 should be stitched into the mainstream; the stitches will then dissolve painlessly, leaving the system totally functioning. However, that is not the case at the moment. The minister should check the veracity of what I am about to say with any school in my electorate, particularly the public sector schools, and they will tell him that I visit regularly and am interested in every aspect of their concerns. Teachers tell me that the school they are in, be it Dongara District High School, Geraldton Senior College, Morawa District High School, the Western Australian Agriculture College at Morawa, Kalbarri District High School, and even any of the private schools or colleges, is under enormous pressure to provide some form of what I will describe as babysitting, because many of the courses are being looked after by people who are not appropriately qualified, for a significant number of year 11 students.

I give the minister my undertaking and that of my colleagues that we want this program to work. However, the minister must convince his Treasurer that he must spend more money on schools to accommodate greater numbers, more money on teacher training to produce appropriate trainers, more money on schools to build more appropriate facilities, and definitely more money on the development of industry and community-linked programs to enable the year 11 and 12 programs to work. We need to accept that, with the introduction of compulsory years 11 and 12, we have taken - I believe the community wants it - a major departure from previous practice, one that the minister has heard me endorse several times this morning and previously in this Parliament. This new practice has not been given real support and I wonder why.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham - Minister for Education and Training) [9.14 am]: I thank the member for Greenough for his grievance and the manner in which he delivered it. First of all, I am pleased to hear that the National Party has endorsed the moves that the government took in its last term in office to ensure that all young people aged 16 and 17 will be in some form of formal schooling or training in Western Australia. It was a very unfortunate, virtually disgraceful, situation that in a modern, affluent, successful society young people were leaving school at 15 and going into the workforce or doing whatever they felt like doing. That situation needed to be addressed. The member will recall that the person who led that particular issue was the then education minister, now the Premier, who went around the state hosting fora in which he put forward the proposition - I might add against considerable opposition; although I understand it was supported in the Parliament - and made sure it happened. Accordingly, the number of young people remaining at school has now increased. Throughout country areas of Western Australia, the increases have been quite dramatic. I released the figures recently. The number of people participating in education in the north of the state in the past year increased by 14 per cent and in southern parts of the state the increase was 7.5 per cent. Both those figures are terrific. They are milestone achievements. Among the achievements of the Gallop government, this would be near the top for its value and lasting effect.

As I understand it, the member for Greenough's complaint is that some difficulties have arisen with the program's implementation. I think his complaint contains a mix of issues. First, he said that the government was not providing sufficient facilities to cater for this growth. Additional funding and resources were provided for this program to handle this change. All the feedback I have received is that this change in the system has been remarkably trouble free. The member for Greenough claims that there are insufficient facilities. The government has a \$1 billion budget over four years for capital works - new schools, improvements to schools and maintenance - which is double that which it inherited when it took office. Indeed, in real terms, the school education budget from when we took office until now has climbed by 28 per cent. I compare that with the commonwealth's spending on tertiary education, which is its area of responsibility; it has declined in real terms by seven per cent in the 10 years the federal Liberal government has been in office. If the member is looking for a government that actually puts resources into education, it is this government. The budget for schools around the state is \$4 billion. To assist with the education of children in public schools, in human capital terms, the government has provided enormous resources with the staff formulae, educational assistance for children with special needs, reading and writing under the specialist Getting It Right program, the behaviour management discipline program, and the reduction in class sizes. The member for Greenough said that I would quote statistics. The first statistic is 1 300 additional teachers since we have been in office. I do not have the exact figure for education assistants across the state, but it is roughly 2 000. They are the statistics for the people in the classroom designed to assist with these problems. The member also said that there was a problem providing English teachers in Geraldton. I invite the opposition to work with us on these issues. I note that the member for Greenough recently said that every head of a school department should be paid the same as a member of Parliament. That line will be very popular among teachers.

Mr G. Woodhams: They should be paid the same as backbenchers.

Mr M. McGOWAN: A base salary of a member of Parliament. No doubt that is a very popular line among teachers. However, we must live in the real world with the state budget that we have. Although people say that

we can afford this and that, the expectations compared with the capacity of the budget are often not the same. We have provided regular pay rises for teachers. I have tried to resolve many of the issues in the teaching workforce to remove some of the onerous and unnecessary assessment tasks put upon teachers. Those tasks were instituted in 1998 during the term of the former coalition government, not the Labor government. We have removed some of those onerous tasks so that teachers can get back to teaching. I want teachers to teach young people rather than be engaged in assessment tasks which have little relevance to a child's education but which provide enormous angst among the teaching workforce.

I can talk about some of the many programs we have put in place to make sure that children in rural areas are accommodated as part of this change. In a nutshell, new courses of study, particularly in years 11 and 12, are much more relevant and interesting for students. We now have vocational education for year 11 and 12 students. Many people who would otherwise have left school have remained in school because they can now undertake apprenticeship training, which is relevant to them, rather than the type of academic training they would have done in the past that might not have been relevant to them. That is keeping young people interested and involved in school. I appreciate the member's concern for education. The government will continue to do its best.

BALGA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL - TEEN FAMILY CENTRE

Grievance

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine) [9.21 am]: I also grieve to the Minister for Education and Training. My grievance is a flow-on from the previous grievance. I grieve about a remarkably successful program that has been running at the Balga Senior High School for almost six years that is now faced with being scrapped due to a senseless decision to slash federal funding under the jobs, education and training program. Balga Senior High School sits on the border of the member for Girrawheen's electorate and mine. The school runs a teen family centre, which was originally established in recognition of the need to provide assistance and give a future to teenage mothers and parents of high school age who wished to continue their education while caring for their children. In each year since its establishment it has catered for between 14 and 20 young women. These young women are children themselves; some are as young as 14 years of age. Many of them come from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds and it is the first time that they have had access to a sensible, compassionate and effective program that often provides them with the very first stable platform they have known in their lives from which they can launch their future and that of their babies.

The teen family centre provides childcare and parent support services for teenage parents. It allows students with babies to continue their secondary education with their peer group in mainstream education and it has been run extremely successfully for almost six years. It has helped dozens of teenage parents to reshape their lives and achieve employment skills and a more independent future. It is a unique organisation in Australia that has received national recognition on television and in the printed press. The centre is staffed by a loving and dedicated team and is led by the centre's manager, Carole Lyons. She is ably assisted by Laura Allison, a teen support worker, and Kate Maughen, who is the parents support program teacher. They are underpinned by a volunteer management group and committee, which is chaired by Margaret Maassen.

The children who use the facility are guaranteed support to continue their high school education while their babies are properly cared for. In addition to providing these children with parenting workshops, which include recognition of the individual needs of each parent with a particular focus on teenage parenting, the workshops promote strategies that target improving the health of the mother and baby, their wellbeing and the development of personal esteem and parental skills. An outreach program visits the homes of the teen parents and their parents in turn to make sure that the kids are encouraged to re-enter and remain in mainstream education. That segment of the program is supported by The Smith Family, to which I give thanks. The federal Labor candidate for Stirling, Major Peter Tinley, and I visited the school last week. Currently, 14 teenage girls are using the school-based program, all of whom are receiving parenting allowances. Until recently, they were also receiving job employment training assistance funding of up to \$121 a week, which pays for the childcare program. This leaves a gap of just \$6 for these kids to pay out of their weekly stipend of around \$390 that they receive from the government for parenting. Almost one-third of their pay is being saved. The scheme has operated well for six years. Remarkably, many of the young women from totally disadvantaged backgrounds have gone on to attend university and TAFE. As a bonus, many teenage fathers who attend the same school have learnt their roles and responsibilities. The portent of teenage parenting has become so self-evident to the other kids in the school that they realise the consequence of their actions.

The program draws on funding and also relies on whatever amount the girls put in. However, the majority of the funding for the program - about \$130 per person a week - is received through the JET program. At the commencement of the current year, the federal Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Mal Brough, made a unilateral decision to withdraw the program's funding and slash the budget. As of 1 July, the JET assistance will be available to students for only 12 months. These kids are 14 for goodness sake! They have three years of their education left to go before they begin university or TAFE studies. This impending disaster was brought to my attention last week by Geoff Harris, the new principal at Balga Senior

High School. Until last year, he was the deputy principal of Mirrabooka Senior High School. He is doing a magnificent job and has taken on some enormous challenges sorting out some of the failed programs that we have heard so much about in the house recently. This program has not failed. It has been successful. However, it will be made untenable by a stupid and short-sighted decision made in Canberra without any thought being given to the impact it will have on the lives of these kids. A letter sent to me by the 14 young women who are currently in this program reads -

We are teenage parents completing our secondary education at Balga Senior High School. Our children attend the Balga Senior High School Child Care Centre on school grounds.

We have been told about the changes in JET saying that we can only claim for twelve months of our study. Most of us will be at high school for two to three years, not including if we continue with Tafe or University after graduation . . .

If we have to pay \$127 per week we will not be able to keep going to school because we can not afford that as we live off the parenting payment and tax benefit at the moment.

Why we want to complete our education:

- Because we don't want to be on welfare for the rest of our lives.
- We would rather pay tax than receive welfare.
- We want to get a good job.
- To be more intelligent.
- Will make us feel better about ourselves.
- We want to be a role model for our children.

If we have to pay JET payment:

- It will be a third of our benefit.
- We won't have enough money for rent or nappies.
- We will leave school, stay home . . .

Please review this arrangement regarding JET otherwise we will have to leave school, as we can't afford to use the Childcare Centre. This will have a big impact on our future.

These kids have real issues. What kind of government is it today in Australia that opens a door marked hope and then slams it in the faces of these kids? As late as yesterday, Mal Brough said on *perthnow* that the biggest number of people who cite child care as a reason for not being in the workforce are making the choice to care for their children themselves. He said that it is great for them to feel they have that choice. He said that yesterday. What a nonsense statement. I ask the minister to take up this matter with his state colleagues to make sure that we overturn this myopic and stupid decision that will send these kids back into a grinding cycle of poverty and disadvantage that they have tried so hard to get out of. This decision is an absolute scandal. I will not let this matter rest.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham - Minister for Education and Training) [9.29 am]: I thank the member for Yokine for his grievance. He obviously feels strongly about it. He set out the facts very clearly. The program at Balga Senior High School provides an education for young mothers. The mothers are ordinarily between the ages of 14 and 18, although conceivably they could be younger than that. The aim is to ensure that these young women who have a baby, or even babies, are given an opportunity to continue with their schooling and obtain an education. The reason behind the program is quite obvious. The member for Yokine referred to the principal and his aims. The aims are to ensure that these young women are given the psychological development of mixing with their peers and the opportunity to advance their education. Unfortunately, if they do not attend school, that opportunity will be dramatically curtailed. If statistics are to be believed, it will probably be curtailed for the rest of their lives. We would have a group of young women who left school at age 13 to rear a child and never returned to education. This would no doubt mean the future employment prospects for these young women - which is an ambition that all sides of Parliament hope that young people have and will fulfil - would be curtailed by that decision. These young women have become pregnant and have decided to continue the pregnancy and have a baby. It is an incredibly big responsibility at a young age, and a difficult one. I find a small child a difficult responsibility at my age, let alone for a 13, 14 or 15-year-old. Impossible demands are placed upon a parent by that child at all hours of the day and night. I feel for these young women. It is very easy for some segments of the population to blame them for their predicament, but they are children themselves. They have babies who are completely blameless and we should be trying to ensure these women have the best opportunities in life. A program was offered whereby they receive some additional financial assistance so that they can afford child care and can go to school. I understand the childcare facilities are on the site.

Mr R.C. Kucera: The vast majority of resources are supplied by the state government, but without the payment from the federal government, those programs would have to cease. I do not seek to further burden the state government; I think this is absolutely a role for the federal government.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Social security is a responsibility of the commonwealth government. These women are receiving a \$120 a week payment to assist them with the cost of child care at the centre at the school. If they do not receive that, they will not be able to afford to send the children there because of all the costs associated with having a child and ordinary living costs, which we know are very expensive. The aim was to provide them with a payment that they could use to obtain childcare assistance while they go on with their schooling as a 13, 14, 15 or 16-year-old. The commonwealth has decided it will cut out after one year. It does not seem to me to be a logical decision that a 13-year-old should lose a payment after one year when she hits year nine or year 10. That will be it for her schooling. I also call upon the federal minister to reconsider this decision. If his ambition is in line with what the commonwealth government says - that is, to have an educated workforce and for people to continue in employment - this decision would seem to be contrary to that ambition. I am happy to take up this issue with the commonwealth government. It is obviously a serious issue for a number of young women and their families in the northern suburbs of Perth. I will take it up with the federal minister to attempt to ensure that the federal government reconsiders what one would have to say is a pretty mean-spirited decision in relation to these young women.

Mr R.C. Kucera: The federal Labor candidate for that area, Major Peter Tinley, has already taken the issue to Canberra. The local federal member has been conspicuous by his absence and silence on this matter. I thank the minister for his offer to take the matter up with Canberra. It is a myopic decision.

Mr M. McGOWAN: If I had Major Peter Tinley beating on my door about an issue, I would certainly be listening. He is a formidable individual. We will also take it up with the federal government.

These are just young and poor girls. I am sure when people are sitting in their offices in Canberra, Perth seems like a long way away and this matter appears to be fairly unimportant. These are young lives and I urge the federal government to recognise that every individual is important and that creating social and employment opportunities for young people is a worthwhile thing to do.

INFILL GAS STORAGE

Grievance

DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville) [9.35 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Energy and relates to infill gas in my electorate. I have had conversations with the minister prior to this. I remind the minister that he was going to try to get me a copy of the agreement reached on the sale of Alinta, which set out what the requirements on Alinta were. I hope the minister has got that so that he can refer to it when he replies.

About half of my electorate is without reticulated gas. The problem is the cost to have it installed. Alinta says that it will put in infill gas only where there is a return on its investment. The problem with that is that the cost of putting in infill gas is very high. In my electorate are areas that are not far off the line that goes through, say, Falcon, where Alinta's stated costs to install the pipeline could be \$10 000 to \$15 000 a house. We have been working very hard on the southern side of the Dawesville Cut to find ways to fix that situation because that is a relatively new area and development. Unfortunately, while power, water and sewerage are regarded as essential requirements for any housing development and a developer is required to put them in, gas is not required as an essential service. The situation is the same as what used to apply for water, where a developer who was the head of the development had to pay all the infrastructure costs to get the service there and was then recompensed by other developers down the track. It is a huge financial burden to have to pay those moneys up front, so some of them are not doing it. Therefore, it is difficult to get gas in those new areas that have been developed. Alinta says that if people have already built a house and installed an electric hot-water system, it is very difficult to get them to change to a gas hot-water system. It is the hot-water system that provides the financial returns that make the service economically viable. Having gas heating and a gas stove does not provide a sufficient return, hence the very high cost of installation.

I have been working with Mr Peter White, who has been organising the installation for the whole region, to find a way of doing it. We have done deals with Alinta under which we have obtained prices for the whole area. We worked out that we needed, say, 40 per cent of people to say yes to connection and that it would cost them, say, \$2 000 a house. We have lobbied to get those people to agree to sign up. It has been a long and tortuous process and we are now just getting to the stage at which one of those areas may get infill gas. As part of that, we negotiated at my request a deal with Alinta whereby instead of charging people thousands of dollars up front, they could offset that against the future value of the house or even have the cost staged over a number of years and pay the amount off slowly. Again, that was a great innovation. It is an enormously difficult process, and I bet I am not the only member who has people living on the periphery of the system and who did not have infill gas put in. The stupid thing is that if people live in an area in which Alinta gas goes past the door, they get the

line for nothing except the connection fee. If people are 100 metres away from the line, they have to pay thousands of dollars.

After a lot of lobbying, the Minister for Water Resources very kindly agreed to reinstate some of the infill sewerage programs in my electorate. I am pleased to say that four of them are going ahead. It is very important, because many of them are close to the Peel Estuary, and there are issues of the possible effect of nutrients. The first area is Falcon 3A, which is 420 lots. It is too late for us to do anything there now about infill gas. It is to be connected by September of this year, and most of the work has already been done. The second area is Falcon 2B, which is 270 lots. Both of these areas are on the estuary side, and are to be finished by September. Halls Head, consisting of 582 lots, is the third area. At least half of that area does not have mains gas. The sewerage project is scheduled to start in April this year and finish by May 2008. The fourth area, Dawesville, has four little sections totalling 490 lots. It is to be commenced in 2007-08 and completed in 2008-09. The point I am making is that trenches will be dug, and there will be an opportunity to install infill gas.

The opposition will take to the next election a proposal for a system similar to that introduced for electricity by the Minister for Energy in the previous government, whereby contributions can be made by all parties. I am suggesting that the contribution could be paid by the local residents and the state government to assist in getting mains gas through to all those areas - about half of my electorate has not been done - and particularly those areas where the state government is about to dig holes in the road to put sewerage in. Getting all those people organised to put in their money up front and pay for the total amount when many of them are retired pensioners is impossible to do. The government could come to the party and beat the opposition to the punch in what it hopes to do after the next election, and introduce a state government subsidy and negotiate with Alinta on behalf of those residents so that the government can work in with the Water Corporation as it does the infill sewerage. We could make sure at least that when those holes are dug in the road, the pipes can be put down to reticulate gas to all those areas. It is just commonsense. There is no other way that gas will ever be provided to those areas. When that sewerage is installed, the government pays a community service obligation back to the Water Corporation. The Water Corporation does not make a loss for putting in that infill sewerage; it is subsidised by the government. It is therefore reasonable for the government to also provide that assistance to subsidise the reticulated gas project. This government made a lot of money from selling Alinta, and it should give some of it back to the community.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn - Minister for Energy) [9.43 am]: In responding to the member for Dawesville, I will go back to the beginning and remind the house that the previous government, and some of the members opposite, privatised Alinta in the first place. I find it surprising that they did not actually think of these things when the privatisation was carried out.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We did - read the regulations.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No, they did not think of those things at all, otherwise they would be in the regulations now. If the previous government had thought about these things, they would be in the licence and in the act, but it did not.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Read the regulations.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will read them for the member for Cottesloe, because he has a very funny memory in which the truth seems to go in and out. I will read the regulations for the member now. The only options available for the people whose plight has been highlighted by the member for Dawesville, in terms of the obligations of Alinta to connect them to the gas, are provided under clause 8 of the gas distribution licence. In summary, clause 8 says that the connection obligation applies only to residential premises. Non-residential premises are therefore not eligible. Alinta is obliged to connect residential premises to the gas system if requested to do so by a gas trader. Alinta must pay up to \$650 of the costs for establishing the connection. If the cost exceeds \$650, Alinta may require a capital contribution to undertake the connection; that is, it will require either the local council or the owner of premises to make a contribution. Further, if the cost exceeds \$650, requires 20 metres or more of pipe or requires a mains extension, Alinta may decline the connection. That is what the previous government left for the state. The urban front is now expanding all the way to Dawesville, and the member for Dawesville, who was a minister in the previous government and who discussed this issue in the cabinet, failed to pick up those points and address them. Now he has the hide to ask the government to fix the problems created by the previous government, in which he was the minister. That is what he is trying to do.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will waffle on if the member likes, but it is his grievance. I will highlight a couple of things for the member for Dawesville about what the government is doing, and what the previous government failed to do. We are thinking of not only those people at the fringe of the grid who are unable to connect to gas, but also those people in rural and remote areas who are required to use liquefied petroleum gas bottles. We have instituted a committee to examine how we can address their problems and look at the pricing structure they are suffering from at the moment from having to purchase LPG bottles for cooking, primarily, and heating. That

committee is headed by the member for Collie-Wellington and includes the member for Avon. The committee is looking principally at the price of LPG. It has received a series of submissions from across the state highlighting the issues raised by the member for Dawesville. Submissions have been received from the City of Mandurah, other councils and developers. As with the member for Dawesville, it has been highlighted to them that in some developments on the urban fringe the actual cost of connection for the entire development is only \$80 000. However, Alinta is arguing that the rate of return on that \$80 000 expenditure does not justify carrying out the connection. That is how small some of these issues are. The committee is looking at that issue and will no doubt make some comment on it. It is also looking at the cost of reticulation from large bottle gas to rural and remote towns, and whether it is possible.

The member for Dawesville touched on the issues about the options available. He spoke about using the undergrounding of power as a way of addressing the issue of connecting residences to mains gas reticulation. There is a big difference between the undergrounding of power and the undergrounding of gas. Power is placed underground for specific reasons. It is done particularly for reliability.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: There is a big difference; the member for Dawesville should think about it. Power is placed underground primarily because of the gains in reliability and efficiency. If the member will let me finish, I will go through what he has put forward and explain why there are problems with what he said. Power is placed underground because of efficiency, reliability and aesthetics and to optimise the efficiency of the overall system for consumers. Gas is not like that. Those customers already have electricity; it is not as if they do not have heating and cooking. If a program of installing gas, similar to the undergrounding of power, is carried out, the only benefit will be to private residents. It is possible to ask for a community service obligation, but where is the community benefit from undergrounding the gas? There is a community benefit from undergrounding electricity, because it results in a more efficient system and has overall community benefits. The only people to benefit from the installation of gas are the residents themselves, because it gives them a choice of energy sources. We are looking at the option of a community service obligation, whether from councils or the state government, and we are also looking at the option of capital contributions gathered from the residents in the same way as the member has organised in his own electorate. We are looking at those three items. However, I point out to the member for Dawesville that the community benefit from the expenditure of taxpayers' money is questionable when it comes to the connection of gas to people's private residences.

KIMBERLEY WATER RESOURCES

Grievance

MRS C.A. MARTIN (Kimberley) [9.49 am]: I rise to grieve to the Minister for Water Resources.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: This mob is very rude.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But honest; that's the difference.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: The member wishes! Maybe we will discuss that during my grievance.

I rise to raise some issues about water from the Kimberley, and of course the Yarragadee problems that we have here in Perth. One of the issues which has become really clear to people in the Kimberley and which has been ongoing is the belief of some people that the Kimberley has the answer to all the questions in regard to water needs. We have heard about the canals, the big bags, the pipelines and the dams. However, one thing that people in Perth just do not get is that 50 per cent of the population in my electorate is Aboriginal, and most of them practise their law and culture. That means that they have songs, and they practise their law and culture regularly. I would like to table this publication called "New Legend" for the rest of the day.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: It refers to the struggle of indigenous people to protect their rights and interests in terms of law and culture. Of course, part of that is their water. That book states that there are more than 70 language groups in the Kimberley, all of whom practise their law and culture and all of whom are concerned about water. When I walked outside the other day, I saw posters that said, "There's water in the Ord." We know that there is not. Ord stage 2 is coming on line, and of course that water will all be used to benefit the region and the 14 000 kids who live there by providing them with a future in terms of employment, economic development and participation. The other thing that I have a real concern about is that if we do not handle the water issue properly, we will have another Kalgoorlie. For 70 years, seven wood mills operated full time. There were huge forests there. We are paying for that today. We are providing water from Mundaring to feed Kalgoorlie. It is another issue, I know, but all these issues culminate in my concern that there is an interest which other people

have in the Kimberley but which excludes the Kimberley in terms of where it should go, what its future is and what the future is for the children. As I said, there are 14 000 children. It is a very young community.

I am concerned about the water issue. Professor Appleyard said that it was not viable to bring water from the Kimberley; it did not meet the triple bottom line. However, did anybody even look at things such as a canal or a pipeline going over everybody's tenure on the way down to Perth? That in itself would be a legal nightmare that would cause more humbug than anyone could possibly imagine.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It might save Western Australia, though.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: You have your go every day, mate. I do not agree with the member. He has not been honest. He says one thing about it costing a few billion dollars, but when we come down to the guts of it, we find that he does not have any economic nous whatsoever. He misinformed the public at the wrong time. He also misrepresented Tenex. Let us get this straight. This needs to go on the record. The Kimberley will not provide the solution. The Kimberley is not a place to which people can bring their stuffed-up technology from the south of the state to do something else. It took a hundred years to muck up the land down here. If the technology is taken up to the Kimberley, will it take another hundred years to do the same there? The technology does not work. We need to look at things properly.

As far as I am concerned, as the member for Kimberley, it is my job to represent my whole community. I want people to look at that book, because Aboriginal culture is alive and well. The Aboriginal people worship water. They know the value of it. Without water, everything dies. Water is about life. It is about life everywhere, and it is about opportunities everywhere. I have been asked to put this on the record because it is important. Every time the water issue arises, of course the Kimberley is seen as the answer. It is not. There are problems here in Perth. We must deal with the problems here. I know the government is doing that. However, it needs to be out there. People need to know that we are looking for the solution. Yes, water might need to be taken from one place for a little while, but that is just in the interim. The problem is with us now. We have known about it for years. What has been done about it? This government looks at sustainability. What I really want on the record is an assurance for my electorate from the government regarding these stupid ideas about canals, dams, big bags of water or getting big tankers to move water down the coast. Water is not expendable. Every tiny drop of water has a place. We have a pearling industry in the Kimberley. How do we get the nutrients into the sea to provide the marine diversity that we have?

I know that people hate change; I know all that. However, if the water is to be used, it should be used for the future benefit of the children, and the people who have made a commitment to the Kimberley and who share in its heartaches. Members should think about it. Every time a cyclone goes through the Kimberley, people read about it in the paper. However, we have to clean up the mess. Yes, there is a lot of water lying around. It stuffs up our brakes; we have to get them changed every season. We live with all that, and we do not complain. However, whenever this question comes up, it is as though that water goes nowhere. As I said, the marine diversity we have off the coast comes from the nutrients in the water that comes off the land. We believe that the industry we have in the Kimberley is viable and worth looking after. With Ord stage 2, that water is off limits. No dibs, guys; it is finished. We will have trouble providing enough for what we are developing up there.

As far as the Fitzroy River is concerned, we need to leave something for our children. It is their heritage. The last wild river needs to be protected in perpetuity for our kids, because I want to teach my grandchildren how to catch a barramundi out there; I want to do that. If it is dammed, we will have another Ord River. We do not want that. We do not want an Ord dam; we do not want any of that. We want one wild river to remain that we can actually celebrate into the future.

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta - Minister for Water Resources) [9.56 am]: I thank the member for Kimberley and appreciate the passion with which she speaks about representing the Kimberley and the interests of the people of the Kimberley, particularly when it comes to water. As the member has pointed out, a very high proportion of the population of the Kimberley is Aboriginal, and many of those people are very young. Therefore, she feels a particular responsibility to speak up for those young people who do not have the opportunity and perhaps do not have the education and the sophistication to be able to deal with people in Perth and with the authorities who have the very simplistic view that because it rains more in the Kimberley, water is available there, and that water can be taken away. As the member has quite rightly pointed out, the Kimberley people rely on that water for their economy and the maintenance of their environment, but it also has spiritual significance for a very large number of people for whom the Kimberley is their home.

Making decisions about water is quite complex. It is very easy for people to have a simplistic view that if water is in an area and it is needed, that water should simply be taken. However, we are way past that sort of simplistic view. When we make decisions about water, those decisions must be based on the very best available information. The information and knowledge available are sometimes inadequate, and a lot of work must be done to more fully understand the environment, the importance of the water to the environment and how the water might be used in various productive ways. We also need to take account of the interests of the key

stakeholders - as the member said, in this case they are the communities throughout the Kimberley that rely on that water and see the very special values of that water. It is only when we have gone through all those factors that we can make a decision on how that water might be used, whether it is possible, and what the consequences will be of taking some of that water for our use. Even in the Kimberley itself, we need to provide water for the towns and their residents. In many of the smaller remote communities, we have a real problem providing quality water. Those issues need to be addressed.

As the member has quite rightly pointed out, damming a river has huge consequences for the environment and the people who live there, because the environment is changed totally. Although people go up to the Kimberley to see what we have there with the Ord dam and the Kununurra development, and the produce and the wealth that are generated there, we must also count the cost of what has been forgone to produce that. As the member has rightly pointed out also, many people are opposed to forgoing the wonderful environment in the Kimberley, particularly around the Fitzroy as a wild river, for economic gain. The considerable environmental consequences of putting a dam on the Fitzroy, or a tributary of the Fitzroy, need to be weighed up against the economic gain. It has been suggested that, rather than put a dam on that river, we put in bore fields. However, that will create huge problems. Although the Fitzroy carries a huge amount of water, that water is seasonal. The environment in that area is sustained throughout the dry season by the waterholes and the underground water. If water is sucked out of the groundwater through a bore field, it will have huge consequences for the environment and species such as swordfish. The Kimberley Land Council is doing a study on how to protect the swordfish in the Fitzroy River. If these waterholes dry up, it may destroy the swordfish and a range of other fauna. These matters need to be considered carefully. There is no simple answer.

It does not make sense from an environmental point of view to pipe or channel water from the Kimberley to Perth. It also does not make sense from an economic point of view. To pipe water from the Kimberley is the second best option economically by a country mile. The report states that the cost of piping water from the Kimberley to the south west is \$5.10 a kilolitre. The equivalent cost of desalination is \$1.16 a kilolitre. To pipe water from the Kimberley to Perth costs four times as much as desalination. To pipe water from the Kimberley also has a huge environmental impact, because it uses more energy. It requires 5.8 kilowatt hours of energy a kilolitre to pipe that water. The desalination plant in Kwinana needs only 4.5 kilowatt hours of energy a kilolitre. Therefore, to pipe water from the Kimberley is not sustainable either economically or environmentally. It has been suggested that the energy cost would be lower if the water was run through a channel rather than a pipe. However, the environmental consequences of a channel would be absolutely horrendous. It would be impossible to deal with the stream flows, the movement of the sand dunes in that area, and the movement of animals over 3 000 kilometres, and to protect the local ecosystems. It would be the greatest environmental disaster ever inflicted upon the state.

I believe there is a way in which we can bring water from the Kimberley and use it in the south west of the state. We should let the Kimberley water flow from the Fitzroy and the Ord into the Indian Ocean, and, when it goes into the mighty Indian Ocean, we should put it into a pipe in Perth and desalinate it. That will be very simple and cost effective. That is the only way in which we should bring water from the Kimberley to the south west of the state. I give the member for Kimberley a guarantee that while this government is in office, water from the Kimberley will not be piped to the south west of Western Australia. That idea is, with the current technology, absolutely stupid, and this government will not be pursuing it. We have done the research. We know the facts. That is recognised also by the federal government and by Minister Turnbull. The proposition simply does not stack up. It is the second best option by such a huge distance that it simply will not happen. I know that the member for Kimberley will continue to speak on behalf of her constituents to knock on the head this silly idea that people come up with from time to time.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Twenty-second Report - "Annual Report 2006"

MR P.W. ANDREWS (Southern River) [10.04 am]: I present for tabling the twenty-second report of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, titled "Annual Report 2006".

[See paper 2556].

Mr P.W. ANDREWS: I am very happy to present the annual report and to inform members of some of the activities of the Delegated Legislation Committee. The committee has taken the approach this year of bringing down a number of reports. The committee has obviously done a similar thing in the past. However, what we have endeavoured to do throughout the year is work in conjunction with government agencies to inform them of various issues that come to the attention of the committee on a fairly regular basis. The committee has also endeavoured to present local government authorities with examples of subsidiary legislation, such as local laws, that are in a form that could be approved.

The committee brought down six reports in 2006. Those reports ranged in diversity from the City of Subiaco Eating-House Local Law 2005, to the Oaths, Affidavits and Statutory Declarations (Act Amendment)

Regulations 2006, the Western Australian College of Teaching Rules 2006, and the Strata Titles General Amendment (No.4) Regulations 2006, which was tabled on 29 November 2006. That list of reports indicates the diversity of the issues that was addressed by the committee.

Throughout 2006, 452 instruments were scrutinised by the committee. That is a large number of instruments. A great amount of work was involved in addressing those particular instruments. Of the 452 instruments that were scrutinised by the committee, 68 were local laws. The committee placed protective notices of motion for disallowance on 18 of those instruments, and in the end it withdrew 15 of those notices. The committee has endeavoured throughout the year to negotiate with various government agencies to encourage them to give the committee an undertaking that they will amend certain irregularities in a number of different areas. Those areas relate particularly to explanatory memoranda and fee tables. We are pleased that 29 undertakings were provided to the committee to amend or repeal various instruments. One indication of the success of the committee is the low number of disallowance motions that have had to be put before the Legislative Council. The committee was able to negotiate its way through most of these instruments and produce a better result for government in Western Australia. The committee has also endeavoured throughout the year to not simply sit in a committee room and bring down a report that criticises a particular body, and leave it at that, but to negotiate with the various government agencies to achieve a result other than through confrontation. That has also been very successful. My colleagues on the committee will obviously speak about that also, but I think that has been the right way to go.

This report raises a number of issues that the committee deals with on a weekly basis that need to be addressed. The report notes that since the Premier's Circular 2005/06, there has been a considerable improvement in the quality of explanatory memoranda. However, a number of difficulties still persist. The report identifies five particular deficiencies. Four of those deficiencies are the absence of adequate justifications for the instrument; the identification of, and justification for, unusual provisions; the identification of the sections of the statutes under which the subsidiary legislation is made; and advice as to comments made in the consultation process, and the response to any comments made. An explanatory memorandum often states that consultation took place, but it does not state the exact nature of the consultation that did take place. The committee is concerned to ensure that if consultation has taken place, we are told about it through the explanatory memorandum; and, if it has not, we are told about that as well. The fifth deficiency is the absence of tables providing details of fee changes in subsidiary legislation. In the short time that I have been a member of the committee, the provision of fee tables has improved considerably. However, every now and again we find an instrument in which the information relating to fees is inadequate. One of the problems in looking at whether an explanatory memorandum is adequate is that it takes up a huge amount of committee time. As I say, it would be far more preferable for agencies to address the Premier's circular and to ensure that those things are done adequately. Although they are not being done adequately, significant progress has been made. The report contains numerous examples of inadequacies in explanatory memoranda for the benefit of the organisations that we deal with.

One of the major issues that the committee deals with is fees and charges, particularly in relation to cost recovery. One of the committee's terms of reference is to consider whether an instrument is, amongst other things, authorised or contemplated by the empowering enactment. Sometimes committee members are concerned that something that is considered a fee for cost recovery may be a straight tax. We are conscious of that. That is one of the matters we wish to pursue. In fact, at some stage during the year we intend to hold discussions with small business representatives, who constantly raise the issue of red tape. We want to address some of those issues within the committee's terms of reference to determine what issues relate to fees and taxes and whether one has masqueraded as the other. The report provides a number of relevant examples.

Another area that the committee has identified and focused on this year is the issue of sub-delegation. Often the expression "delegation of powers" relates to sub-delegation. The committee came across a number of instruments that had no power to sub-delegate. We have included those in the report and given a number of examples whereby the sub-delegation of power has not been authorised.

The committee intends to release a separate report on issues relating to local laws, hopefully by the middle of 2007. We are very aware that local governments have varying degrees of access to practising lawyers and that ensuring that their local laws are valid can sometimes be a financial impost on smaller local governments. We try to provide them with as much information as possible and make recommendations without assisting them with the written words, as it were. We intend to continue to pursue the issues of fees and charges, the sub-delegation of powers, and explanatory memoranda. Further, we will continue to assist local governments.

The committee has been exceptionally productive throughout the year. Despite the fact that not many members of this place are interested in the committee's work, we will continue to present more reports because delegated legislation affects a great number of people in the community and their daily work.

I thank the committee members who are members of this chamber. I refer to the members for Roe, Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Swan Hills. I also thank the committee members who are members of the other place for their excellent work. The committee meets at 8.30 on Wednesday mornings, which is a struggle given that the house

sits late on Tuesday nights. Our committee members are a dedicated group of people. A huge amount of reading is involved in our work and a huge amount of legal understanding is required. We rely heavily on the committee staff. I thank all committee members. We will continue to apply ourselves and make every endeavour to make the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation an attractive aspect of Parliament.

MS J.A. RADISICH (Swan Hills) [10.15 am]: I thank you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr M.J. Cowper), for the opportunity to speak to report 22 of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation. I rise mainly to concur with the comments made by my colleague the member for -

A government member: Southern River.

An opposition member: You should know!

Ms J.A. RADISICH: We are frequently mistaken for being the member of each other's electorate. I am not sure why.

The member for Southern River does an excellent job chairing the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation. I thank him for his efforts and leadership and for his ability to bring consensus and fairness to the committee's work. In the chairman's presentation of the report, the member for Southern River mentioned that the committee is not into punishing local governments, government departments and ministerial offices. Rather, it attempts to educate the different organisations and agencies about the committee's work and the importance of the regulations that come before the committee. The committee tries to fix errors in the regulations to ensure that they do not happen again. It also seeks to provide an ongoing improvement process for the delegated legislation that passes through Parliament. I would particularly like to thank Susan O'Brien our senior legal officer, as well as the other committee staff. As the chairman mentioned, we covered 452 instruments in the past year, which is a significant volume of regulations, some of which were extremely interesting, relevant and important to the community and some of which were not. Nonetheless, our staff must thoroughly review all that material from a legal point of view before it comes before the committee for consideration.

As I said earlier, I concur with the comments made by the member for Southern River. He has drawn to the house's attention many of the issues that we investigated thoroughly in our deliberations over the course of the year. The regulations we examined included navigable waters regulations and teachers' registration regulations. It is worth mentioning the burden that falls to local government of creating regulations. There seems to be a lot of cutting and pasting of regulations. I understand that many of the smaller local governments cannot afford an in-house lawyer or a consulting lawyer. That could explain why many local governments copy other regulations. That matter should be pursued in more detail to determine what assistance government and the Western Australian Local Government Association can provide to ensure the better coordination and formulation of regulations that are relevant to all local governments, whether they be parking or eating-house laws. I am frustrated that ratepayers and taxpayers' money is wasted as a result of every single local government having to invest funds to create by-laws. Sometimes local governments have found themselves in trouble after, in an attempt to save taxpayers' money, they have copied other local laws that fit in with their intentions only to find out that the laws they copied were not that good to start with. Some examples of those local laws have been presented to us. We have had to make recommendations for change and potentially put protective notices of motion on certain by-laws. I hope that through the Department of Local Government and Regional Development and WALGA we can achieve better coordination and a better utilisation of resources to the benefit of everyone involved in the creation of regulations.

Again, I thank the chairman and my colleagues, who were a pleasure to work with. Apart from the members of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee, I could not ask for better committee colleagues. Congratulations to all those involved with report 22.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr M.J. Cowper): I take this opportunity to welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from Peter Moyes Anglican Community School, which is in the electorate of the member for Mindarie, who is an Acting Speaker. I welcome you to the Parliament and hope you enjoy today's proceedings. We are dealing with committee reports. The call goes to the member for Roe.

DR G.G. JACOBS (Roe) [10.19 am]: I have been a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation since I have been in this place. Initially, I found the committee fairly dry.

Ms J.A. Radisich: That's saying something if you found it dry!

Dr G.G. JACOBS: The committee's first meeting was at eight o'clock in the morning on a Wednesday, after this chamber had adjourned at 10 or 11 o'clock - or maybe even later - the previous night. Of course, during the first few weeks the committee had a fair workload; the so-called electoral reform legislation was being debated in Parliament, so there were a lot of late nights. Members had to front up at eight o'clock the next morning to deal with myriad dog and cat laws. Whether those laws reflected, or represented the sentiment of, the legislation was a bit daunting for me. However, two years down the track, I am enjoying being a member of the committee. One of the reasons I am enjoying it is that I have been forced to learn what delegated legislation really is.

Members in this place, and in the other place, go to a great deal of trouble to draw up legislation, but how is it enacted and put into practice? In that process, the subsidiary legislation is the legislation under the legislation that we pass in this place. How does the rubber, as it were, hit the road? Do those laws, regulations and codes reflect the true sentiment and intent of the legislation? Members in this place can make all the legislation they like, but if it does not move down through the subsidiary legislation and if those laws are not enacted to operate properly for the people of Western Australia, all that trouble is for naught. Are the different government departments making their own rules and not reflecting the true sentiment and intent of the legislation that is passed in this place?

What makes the committee fun - the member for Swan Hills alluded to this issue - is that the people who have been thrown together quite randomly form a very effective and, generally, happy committee. Essentially, there is very little politics and politicking on the committee because members are on the committee to ensure that the legislation and the subsidiary legislation are effective.

Ms J.A. Radisich: Are you going to tell them about our morning group hug?

Dr G.G. JACOBS: However, member for Swan Hills, there are some nuts and bolts issues, such as being presented with a large pile of stuff for members to read by eight o'clock or eight-thirty the morning after the house had adjourned quite late the previous night. One could say that that is our job and that is what we are paid to do. Although members do not get special payment for being a member of a committee, some people say that in the global sense they are paid a stipend for the year, and being on committees is part of that responsibility. However, there are some members of committees who do more work than others. I am not reflecting on members of my committee, because I think they do an excellent job. I thank the member for Southern River for his great chairmanship and his balanced views. He also has a great sense of humour, and those are the sorts of things that make this committee fun to be a member of. The other members of the committee are Hon Ray Halligan, the deputy chairman, and I thank him for his contribution; Hon Barbara Scott, the member for Serpentine-Jarrahdale - can I name him, Mr Acting Speaker? - Mr Tony Simpson -

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr M.J. Cowper): Yes, you can, as the member for Serpentine-Jarrahdale.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Hon Vince Catania and the member for Swan Hills are the other members. Have I missed anybody?

Ms J.A. Radisich: Who's your favourite?

Dr G.G. JACOBS: As a parent with five children, I had advice from a very wise person who said that I should never get into the debate about who is my favourite child and that what I should say is that they are all my favourites and I have no particular favourite. Obviously, as human beings, there are characteristics of people that we like and there are other characteristics in other people that we do not necessarily like. However, in fact, we also have those inherent characteristics.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Would you like him to be your father?

Dr G.G. JACOBS: If members were to ask Jesse, Daniel, Aubrey, Lucy and Julian, they would say that, essentially, they can choose their friends but they have me for a dad and they are stuck with me.

In the short time I have left, I will give the chamber an example of an issue that I have had to grapple with while on the committee; that is, what is a fee, what is a charge and what is a tax? The committee quite often gets presented with tables in the explanatory memoranda, as per the Premier's circular. For instance, the table of fees for the granting or renewal of a fishing boat licence for a boat under 6.5 metres long and for a boat that is 6.5 metres or longer includes the date of the last update for the increase or decrease in the fee, the old fee, the new fee and the increase or decrease in the fee. Some of the issues that the committee often deals with include whether the increase or decrease is justifiable, whether it is a fee or a charge and whether it is cost recovery or is over and above cost recovery. In 2007 the committee scrutinised some 171 instruments involving fees, charges and penalties, and 37.8 per cent of the instruments involving taxes had not been included in this tally. Of those, 49 of the explanatory memoranda relating to fees and charges did not comply with the relevant circular. Over time the committee has attempted to get departments to present their tables as per the Premier's circular so that they can be easily read and understood by committee members and others.

In closing, I thank the legal staff Mr Paul Grant, Ms Felicity Mackie and Susan O'Brien, who have done a lot of work for us particularly over recent times, for their assistance. Anne Turner, our advisory officer, has been involved from time to time. We thank Kerry-Jayne Braat, the committee clerk, who provided us with a lot of assistance and administrative and clerical support; Kay Sampson who provided clerical assistance and technical and Internet reception services; and Mrs Lauri Glocke, who provided reception services and allowed us to do our job, which I believe is a very important job for the state of Western Australia.

MR A.J. SIMPSON (Serpentine-Jarrahdale) [10.29 am]: I too rise to comment on report 22 of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, which I am also proud to sit on, as other members have

acknowledged. The committee does a lot of work on issues surrounding local government. I do not want to repeat comments made by my colleagues but, as an ex-councillor, it is interesting for me to see what it takes to get legislation enacted. The member for Swan Hills touched on the fact that cutting and pasting was happening within local government. Maybe that is a way for them to save costs, but it certainly gets them into some trouble along the way. They are quite simple little mistakes. I know local governments say that they have limited resources to get lawyers to help them, but we offer advice to those local governments. We have recently been contacted by agencies asking for our comments and thoughts. I should imagine that the cost would not be a great deal, back and forth. I encourage all local governments or agencies that wish to go down the road of trying to implement a local law, if they have trouble finding advice, to be aware that we are always here to give advice too. That point should really be made known so they do not get themselves into bother when trying to amend a local law.

The committee works very well. An 8.30 am start can sometimes be a little daunting after a late sitting. Finding the time between lunchtime on Tuesday until eight o'clock on Wednesday morning to read what we have to discuss at the meeting can sometimes take us longer into the night than we had planned. We seem to get through it all. We have a lot of fun. We sometimes disagree, but we tend to agree to disagree and we move on. The committee is good in that way. We all seem to get on well together. We are a great committee. I too take this opportunity to thank the staff - KJ, Susan, Anne, Felicity and all the other staff - who help us with the paperwork and get letters out. They do a fantastic job; we could not do our work without them.

When I tell members who have been here for a number of years that I am on the delegated legislation committee, they express dismay. I must admit that it is not the most exciting committee, but it does an important job. The member for Roe pointed out that he looks forward to its meetings now. We do get some meaty legislation that we have to consider and we have a bit of fun. They are not mundane local government dog acts and so forth. There are some interesting aspects of those laws that local governments are trying to change. It is a matter of what we make of it. We are getting on really well and enjoying it.

I recommend that all members have a quick look at this report. Some interesting things are happening. It can help members understand what a local government goes through to get a law through. I recommend that members have a quick look at it while they are sitting in the chamber today; it will be well worth it. Again, I thank the staff. I thank my fellow committee members for helping me on the committee. I missed last week's meeting; I apologise for that. I thank members for covering matters for me while I was not there. Again, I thank members for their support and help and hope that all members have a chance to read the report.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION

Twentieth Report - "Public Hearing with the Integrity Coordinating Group on 13 September 2006"

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [10.33 am]: I present for tabling in the thirty-seventh Parliament report 20 of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, entitled "Public Hearing with the Integrity Coordinating Group on 13 September 2006".

[See paper 2557.]

Mr J.N. HYDE: As far back as August 2002, in my former capacity as a member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Anti-Corruption Commission, predecessor to the Corruption and Crime Commission, the then committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into integrity within the public sector. One of the core components of its examination was the integration of oversight agencies, including the concept of a one-stop shop for public access to these services. The inquiry ceased on the tabling of the Corruption and Crime Commission Bill in 2003 and the subsequent dissolution of the Anti-Corruption Commission. In the formative stages of establishing the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, brief discussions occurred with some of the integrity agencies around the notion of effective mechanisms for information sharing, again, given ongoing concerns about possible overlap in service provision and perceived inadequate frameworks for information sharing among key integrity and regulatory agencies. Of particular focus were the Corruption and Crime Commission, the Office of Public Sector Standards Commissioner, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations and the Office of the Auditor General.

Early 2005 saw the establishment of the Integrity Coordinating Group, designed to enhance integrity within the public sector through greater policy coherence and operational coordination between the above detailed agencies. Although not a one-stop shop, the committee views this to be a significant development for improved service delivery, both to public sector agencies and, where relevant, to the public at large. The concept follows along similar lines to that of whole-of-government approaches to service delivery, the benefits of which are outlined in our report. It is the committee's mandate to keep appraised and to report to Parliament on developments impacting on the levels of public sector corruption in this state; hence this examination of the Integrity Coordinating Group. It is fair to say that with the date of the scheduled hearing some 12 months after the establishment of the group, much attention has been given to the determination of processes and future

directions. That said, some very interesting work has been undertaken around the issue of conflict of interest, a concern raised regularly within the hearings of this committee and its predecessor committees.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION

Twenty-first Report - "Report on Release of Records Pertaining to the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission and its Predecessor the Joint Standing Committee on the Anti-Corruption Commission"

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [10.36 am]: I present for tabling in the thirty-seventh Parliament report 21 of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, entitled "Report on Release of Records Pertaining to the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission and its Predecessor the Joint Standing Committee on the Anti-Corruption Commission".

[See paper 2558.]

Mr J.N. HYDE: The committee strongly believes that the public is entitled to the same access to the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission's records as exists for cabinet papers. The State Records Commission releases cabinet documents after 30 years, enabling general perusal by the public of Western Australia on matters of interest. The committee is firmly of the view that the same opportunity should be afforded in respect of the records of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission and its predecessor, the Joint Standing Committee on the Anti-Corruption Commission. As detailed within our report today, a large proportion of these records pertain to issues of political and public policy, something which this committee contends holds significant public interest. The standing orders of the Legislative Assembly currently allow for the release of unpublished committee records after 10 years of date of receipt or production on endorsement of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. This excludes in camera material, which may be released under the same arrangement after a lapse of 30 years.

The committee contends that the release of all committee-related documentation as a matter of course after 30 years provides the protection of a person's name within, allows for general perusal of documentation by the public and ensures the commitment to open and transparent government. The current arrangements requiring the Speaker's approval for release of documents after 10 years or 30 years is largely reliant on the public being aware of the information contained within committee records. The committee considers this to be restrictive. It is a matter of commonsense that if one does not know something exists, one is not able to ask for it to be released.

In the past three years I have had the honour of representing the Premier at the official release of cabinet documents at the 30-year mark. This year I joined with 1975 coalition ministers. They were coalition ministers of quality 30 years ago. This year former ministers Lawrence and Grayden attended the Alexander Library with me. Material that is released from cabinet documents at the time they are produced, or a year later, whether that be about the Tronado machine, daylight saying or whatever, could be considered to be material that is secret and needs to remain confidential. In much the same way, today or this year we might consider documentation or closed hearing evidence that is produced by the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission to be very important and confidential to enable members and witnesses to speak freely. However, it is very important for public confidence in the processes of government, and transparency itself, that this material be made available. A big problem in today's society is information overload. The Internet has increased the amount of information available and has increased, not decreased, the amount of paper used. We need a process for the release of information so that experts - historians - are able to distil information, and make public in the way that the incredibly talented historians of the state of Western Australia do, the relevant pertinent issues in such material. Historians already do that with cabinet documentation. The Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission believes that it is very important that historians have similar access to material produced by the joint standing committee.

I commend this report to the house. Far be it from me in my position to even dare to offer advice to other committees or parliamentarians, let alone even dare to offer an opinion on the operations of the other place, but I urge members of the Legislative Assembly to consider the issue of information sharing and the publication of documents.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 5) 2006
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 6) 2006

Cognate Debate - Motion

On motion by **Mr J.C. Kobelke (Leader of the House)**, resolved -

That leave be granted for the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) 2006 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 6) 2006 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) 2006 to be declared the principal bill.

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from 2 November 2006.

MR T. BUSWELL (Vasse - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.42 am]: The Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) 2006 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 6) 2006 are effectively technical appropriation bills that follow on essentially to cover moneys paid out of consolidated revenue under the Treasurer's advance account, which we have dealt with previously in this house. It is important to note at the start of my remarks that the Treasurer's advance authorisation account was effectively set up to cover expenses that were over and above appropriations in certain areas or for unforeseen expenses that arose. There are, of course, some technical issues associated historically with the use of the TAA, especially surrounding the definition of "extraordinary" or "unforeseen", and also the nature of the reporting. The significant delays in reporting expenditure made under the TAA through these appropriation bills have always concerned me. They sometimes occur a significant period after money has been expended. It was pleasing to work with the Treasurer on the passage through the house last year of the Financial Management Bill. He gave an indication then that more frequent reporting would be provided on moneys expended by the government under the Treasurer's advance account. That is a good step forward for accountability. However, it is interesting to understand some of the details of these appropriation bills. The total sum of the two bills this year is \$332 million. Last year when we sat in this place and passed these bills, the total amount was \$672 million.

I am always interested to read about what happened when the Labor Party was elected to government in this state in 2001. The Treasurer, of course, would not have been the Treasurer at that time. However, the Labor Party at the 2001 election had a policy called "getting value for money" and essentially it was the party's financial management policy. That policy commented on the Treasurer's advance account at that time, and I will read it into *Hansard*, as it makes interesting reading and is an interesting guide by which to measure the performance of the government in subsequent years. It said -

The Court Government has increasingly used the Treasurer's Advance Account as a means to "top up" funding for the financial year.

This fund was designed to be used only in "urgent and unforeseen" circumstances. Under the Court Government, Ministers have used this fund extensively for a range of purposes.

It goes on -

Labor will overhaul the . . . Treasurer's Advance Account . . . and in particular will:

. . .

- halve the annual allocation from \$300 million to \$150 million.

The target of this government when it was elected in 2001 was therefore to spend only \$150 million from the Treasurer's advance account. Guess what? Like a lot of financial promises contained in that document, that target never came to fruition. As I said, last year the appropriation from the Treasurer's advance account was \$672 million and this year it is \$332 million. Every time I speak on Treasury matters I will highlight some of the promises on financial management made by this government to the people of this state in 2001, because none of those promises has been kept.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr T. BUSWELL: It is very interesting. I have only 57 minutes and I am sure in that period the opposition will be able to highlight a number of failings by the government in its financial management of the state.

Mr J.N. Hyde: Just look at the economic growth; it is double the rest of Australia. You can't discount that.

Mr T. BUSWELL: I know. I will tell the member for Perth about economic growth in the state. When he talks about economic growth, is he talking about growth in gross state product or state final demand? Which measure does the member for Perth use? He is a worldly person.

Mr J.N. Hyde: I use all of them. We look at all of them, and they are beautiful sets of numbers; all of them.

Mr T. BUSWELL: The member for Perth knows nothing about either of them.

It has been interesting to note that the economic growth of Western Australia has been generated, particularly in the preceding two years, by investment in the mining industry. To the best of my knowledge, investment in the mining industry has been impacted upon negatively by the policies of this government. We can therefore only imagine the extent of the economic growth had the approvals process in the state been a little better to encourage foreign investment in Western Australia, in particular in the mining industry. A lot of opportunities have been squandered by this government's policies on investment. The investment cycle is tailing off. Economic growth in the next couple of years will now be driven by export earnings as investment projects come online. We have all heard reports about imports and exports, and that is a good thing for the long-term economy. However, the

point I am making is that the specific policies of this government have had almost no impact on the aggregate economic performance of Western Australia.

Mr J.N. Hyde: Rubbish! Who cut the hiring tax? Who cut the bus-building tax?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr M.J. Cowper): I am sure that the member for Perth would like to participate in this argument.

Mr T. BUSWELL: I want to raise a number of points; however, I am sure removal of the hiring tax made a big difference to economic growth! Hiring tax was the tax people paid when they hired an outfit from a party hire shop. The member for Perth may not need to hire his outfits; he may have some already stored away. However, as one who does not engage in such colourful costuming, I am not aware that removal of the hiring tax led to a rush of foreign investment in the resource sector. I cannot imagine that the managers of Rio Tinto's head office in London said, "Thank God, the Western Australian government has got rid of the hiring tax. We don't have to pay hiring tax when we hire a clown outfit for the fancy dress party. Let's invest \$5 billion." What a ridiculous statement for the member to make.

It was interesting to listen last week to the comments of the member for Peel. I appreciated his comments on what he had observed in his first week in this place. He is right. A lot of the things we engage in in this place - the theatre of the Parliament - do not make a positive contribution to the development of good public policy in this state. He made a valid statement. As almost a new member of Parliament, I also struggle with the need to look at good public policy development. The reason we came into this place is to make a positive contribution. The member for Peel will discover over the next couple of years that political excitement overcomes these matters. To use a military vernacular, occasionally one does suffer from enemy fire in this place. Another thing the member for Peel will find is that occasionally one does suffer from friendly fire in this place. That happens on both sides; it is part of the process.

Last week the member for Peel spoke about land tax and said that when he went around his electorate no-one was interested in land tax. I was interested to know that, and I will come to land tax shortly. The member may be interested to know that the rental paid on a four-bedroom house in Port Kennedy has increased in the past two years from \$195 a week to \$251, a 30 per cent increase. The forecast is for another 30 per cent increase in rents across this state. Members must understand that every property that is rented out is levied land tax. Land tax feeds into rentals. It is a basic fundamental fact that when property owners get their land tax bill, inevitably they will put up rents. The facts of the matter are that the residents of Peel pay land tax, particularly those who are caught in the rental end of the market, because they cannot afford to get into property ownership.

Another interesting thing that has happened in Port Kennedy - I know, because I spent time there handing out how-to-vote cards on polling day - is the increase in the median house price from \$236 000 to \$375 000, an increase of 57 per cent. In the same time frame, on the same house, the stamp duty it attracts has increased from \$7 600 to \$14 200, an increase of 90 per cent. I will talk about land tax and stamp duty later, but these issues affect ordinary Western Australians irrespective of which electorate they live in.

I want to look at some broader issues.

Mr J.N. Hyde: What about the threshold?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr M.J. Cowper): I understand the member for Perth likes to interject. Clearly, he has already demonstrated his understanding of this topic. If he wants to continue, I will have to call him to order.

Mr T. BUSWELL: My son is in year 6 studying economics and I suspect he may be able to impart some knowledge to the member for Perth. I may arrange a brief meeting for them. I hasten to add that it would be brief because I would hate my year 6 son to strain the cranial absorption capacity of the member for Perth through a very long conversation.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Sounds like you are seeking interjections.

Mr T. BUSWELL: I beg your pardon.

There was a very interesting show on television last week on C.Y. O'Connor. In part, it reflected the level of capital investment that was made in this state in the 1890s. It is a truism that at the moment Western Australia is enjoying one of the most sustained periods of economic growth, personal wealth creation and population growth in its history. If members cast their mind back through the history of this state, I suggest they would have to go back to almost the 1890s to find a similar period of economic growth and wealth development in this state. It was in the context of the 1890s that C.Y. O'Connor and Sir John Forrest launched into a tremendous period of infrastructure development which took this state forward well into the twentieth century. I compare that with what this government is doing now with its unique economic opportunity to position our state to grow and develop into the twenty-first century. It pales in significance compared with the use of the good economic conditions that occurred in this state in the 1890s. There is absolutely no doubt that Western Australia is in this

once in a century boom in which we have good economic conditions. Members should look at how these conditions were used in the 1890s to position Western Australia's growth in the twentieth century. Look at what is happening now and where we are headed as a state. It pales in significance with what occurred in the 1890s. The member for Peel talks about public policy development, but we need to do a lot of things in broad policy development.

I will talk shortly about tax and government expenditure - topics which excite many members of the house, as I see by the number of members in this place. We must look at some serious areas of public policy development, in my humble view. Firstly, we must look at making Western Australia a can-do state; a state where businesses, investors and households can get on with things in a well-governed, well-managed environment. Secondly, we must focus on making sure that we can attract and maintain a suitable workforce to drive this state forward into the twenty-first century. The incapacity of Western Australia to attract and maintain a workforce is the single biggest factor that will inhibit us leveraging off the boom times that we are currently enjoying and growing consistently into the twenty-first century. Associated with that is the issue of housing affordability. Western Australia, Perth in particular, is now Australia's most expensive capital city in which to live. It is an embarrassing crown to have placed on this state. Why is it so expensive? It is because property prices have increased dramatically. Why has that occurred? It is because there has been a failure to ensure adequate delivery of land supply in a state with a larger land mass than almost any other jurisdiction in a democratic environment that one can think of.

The third area we must focus on in public policy development is families. We must make sure that Western Australia is a place where families can develop, grow, mature and develop aspirations for themselves and, through hard work, get on and achieve those aspirations. For a state government, that often relates to core service delivery - education, health and the like. The government must make sure that young Western Australians, through our education system, can rise up and take their place as members of an international community. The fourth public policy area we must turn our attention to is efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of core government services by making sure that they are delivered with focus on value for money within the context of a low taxing state environment. Finally, members on both sides of Parliament must make sure that, through public policy development, this state is a place in which the businesses that do business here, the people who live here and the public institutions in this state can contribute in a positive way to the global environment. If we focus on those five overarching principles, we will be able to move Western Australia forward and position this state to grow on the boom.

I come back to the nub of the question before the house; that is, the appropriation bills. I will refer quickly to government expenditure. There is absolutely no doubt that since 2001 there has been an explosion in recurrent government expenditure in Western Australia. In 2001, recurrent government expenditure in the general government sector in this state was \$10.4 billion. That had grown to the end of the 2005-06 financial year to \$13.9 billion. The figure this financial year is expected to reach \$15.4 billion. In other words, in the past five or six years the size of the public sector as measured by recurrent government expenditure has increased by 50 per cent. In the past year alone we had a \$1.5 billion increase in recurrent government expenditure in this state. In other words, we are heading for a 10.7 per cent increase in recurrent government expenditure in one year. It is very interesting.

We need to put that in context, and to do that I will use a key performance indicator, because the government is focused on KPIs. When the government was elected in 2001 it set a financial management goal in government expenditure and that has been repeated every year in the government budget papers, but it has not been achieved. Its financial management goal was to cap the rate of growth of recurrent government expenditure at a real per capita growth rate. In other words, the rate of growth of population is added to the consumer price index and the result is a percentage figure. That should be the cap which sets an upper limit for the growth in recurrent government expenditure.

It was in last year's budget and it was in the budget of the year before, but it has never been met. If we track back to 2001 and look at where government expenditure would be today if that cap had been met every year, the government would have spent in aggregate \$4.2 billion less than it has; that is, if it had kept to its own performance target on expenditure. To the best of my knowledge, \$4.2 billion is a reasonable sum of money, which could have been put to a range of uses in this state other than recurrent expenditure. It could have been used for taxation reform, the provision of infrastructure and the like. It is very interesting to drill down into current expenditure growth and ask where the money has gone. It is quite clear that the driver of the increase in recurrent expenditure in this state has been an explosion in the size of the public service. Consider the following figures. Between March 2001 and June 2006 the size of the public service increased by 14 000 full-time equivalents, excluding all the contractors, consultants and third parties who the government keeps at arm's length from its payroll and hides from proper scrutiny. We do not know the exact expenditure on people in government departments; that is, whether they are direct employees, consultants, contractors or the like. However, we know that the FTE numbers have gone through the roof. The Treasurer often says to me that that

is great because it is reflected in an increase in the number of teachers, police officers and nurses. We are starting to ask questions about what is happening about teachers, police officers and nurses, because it is not so. The Treasurer's picture is blurry. I will give the house some examples. I am dealing just with the period from June 2005 to June 2006 in the three portfolios of health, education and police. Different ministers provided the information through questions on notice. Between 2005 and 2006 the FTE headcount in health increased by 642 people; that is, an additional 642 people were employed. The number of nurses went down by 103. For every nurse who left the health system seven extra people entered the health system. That is an interesting analysis. In education the headcount increased by 1 544 yet the number of teachers increased by only about 530. For every additional teacher who went into a classroom two other people went into the education department. Fortunately, in the portfolio of police the performance was a lot better. I think that reflects in part the Frontline First philosophy, which may one day result in additional police officers on the beat. For an increase in the headcount of 197 there was an increase in police officers - according to the figures I have been provided with - of 120. There was a much better performance in the police department but certainly not in the other agencies.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: We made a commitment to provide public servants so that they could do some of the desk jobs and police who were doing desk jobs could go to the front-line. There is no negative in having non-police officers employed as part of that program.

Mr T. BUSWELL: I am not making any negative comments about the police at all. In fact, I have said that before in this place. However, the aggregate figures in health and education debunk the argument that is often put by the Treasurer when I talk about the rate of growth in the public service, in which he says that they are all on the front-line delivering services. That is the argument the Treasurer often raises. Last year I had a very interesting meeting with one of the public sector unions. I showed them these figures. They asked me why I talked about the rate of growth in the public sector. I showed them the FTE figures across every department. They told me that their department had had a headcount freeze for years. That department was a core service provider. If my recollection is correct, it was in the Department for Community Development. They said that they had not seen one of those extra people at the coalface delivering better services. That is the argument; it is all about efficiency of service. There has been a huge explosion in recurrent government expenditure driven by a dramatic increase in the public sector wages bill when there has been no discernible increase in the level of service provided to the public of this state as a result of that. If we went to the suburbs and visited a school and said that public sector spending has increased by 50 per cent, which is well over the rate of inflation and population growth, and asked people whether they had seen that sort of improvement in service delivery in the school they would say no. Do we see it in the hospitals? No. There is a fundamental breakdown in the delivery of services and the provision to the taxpayers of this state of value for money. I highlight the general public sector wage bill, which has increased by almost \$2.3 billion over the past five years. That is almost a 50 per cent increase.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Didn't you increase rates in Busselton by 15 per cent one year?

Mr T. BUSWELL: Go back to your John Travolta videos! Go to Perth airport, wait for the private jet, jump on and go over. He is a pilot; he will take you over. The member can go to his parties with John Travolta and Tom Cruise. He might even show them his investment property in Bassendean - the one he is trying to cook the value on. Anyway, we will move on.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The member for Vasse knows the rules very well. He is accusing a member of this house of impropriety - illegality even, if his comment is to be taken literally - and I suggest that he withdraw it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr M.J. Cowper): When a member interjects in the manner that just happened there is usually a retort. It is a consequence of an action that creates a reaction. If the member finds that reference to cooking the value of the books is offensive, I call upon the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to withdraw that comment. Members should be warned that if they interject they should expect a retort of that kind.

Mr M.P. WHITELY: The comment that the member made is either out of order or it is not.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Please sit down, member! I have ruled. The member for Vasse has the call.

Debate Resumed

Mr T. BUSWELL: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Maybe I should explain for the benefit of the house what I was referring to. It is a little property that the member for Bassendean owns in Rosetta Street, Bassendean. It is near the foreshore.

Mr M.P. Whitely: It is 700 metres from the foreshore.

Mr T. BUSWELL: Yes, just around the corner. I will show the member a map. On a number of occasions the member has made representations to try to have the foreshore in the vicinity of his home opened up to public access.

Ms J.A. Radisich: Saying that is outrageous.

Mr T. BUSWELL: That is what he has done; I did not make this up. He has come in here and made representations to the minister and asked whether the foreshore could be opened up. He did not tell the minister that he has a property just around the corner. That is all I was referring to. I said that it might enhance the value of the property. I believe that if a property valuer went out to Rosetta Street in Bassendean and looked at the property, and if I asked that if the property had uninhibited access to the foreshore would the value go up, what do members reckon he would tell me? "Yes!" What would the owners in Rosetta Street say? "You beauty!"

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs J. Hughes): Order, members! The previous Acting Speaker has made a ruling. Members should conform with the ruling. We must get on with the matter at hand.

Mr T. BUSWELL: Thank you -

Mr M.P. Whitely: You little south west blowie -

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, member for Bassendean.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bassendean, I will not ask again.

Mr T. BUSWELL: I sometimes wonder in this house why some members need the help of their federal colleagues to get preselected. One federal colleague will no longer be a senator next time. I wonder who will help them when preselection comes around? It will be determined in the fullness of time.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Noel Crichton-Browne -

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Bassendean!

Several members interjected.

Mr T. BUSWELL: I will turn to the matter of taxation.

Ms J.A. Radisich: Bring back Bernie Masters!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr T. BUSWELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am wilting before the intellectual storm from the member for Bassendean. He is the only member of the government who nobody wants to share an office with - the property mogul from Bassendean! The best thing that John Travolta -

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Vasse. Before the house is the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) 2006. The member is drawing comment from the other side of the house. I ask the member to speak to the order of the day.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr J.J.M. BOWLER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was directed by the previous Acting Speaker to withdraw the remarks he made, but he still has not done so.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs J. Hughes): Has the member for Vasse withdrawn those remarks, as directed?

Mr T. BUSWELL: My recollection of the direction from the Chair was that if I was of the opinion that my comments could have been interpreted as offensive, I should withdraw them. I am not of that opinion.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I did not hear the comments. The Clerk informs me that it was the Chair's intention that the member for Vasse would withdraw his comments if he felt that, in his opinion, his comments were offensive. I advise the member to be very careful about some of the comments he is making.

Debate Resumed

Mr T. BUSWELL: I will soldier on under this tirade of abuse as I talk about taxation. Taxation reform is a key matter confronting this government.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Your day will come.

Mr T. BUSWELL: The member for Yokine has said that before.

When I talk about taxation reform, the Treasurer often says that the same dollar cannot be spent twice. He said it just the other day when he prepared to board the plane and do battle with the nasty federal government in Canberra. I told him that I believe that the allocation of federal funds is an important and serious issue. The federal fiscal arrangements in this country need to be reformed. The Treasurer's comments to that extent are accurate. He asked me whether I would support him. I told him that I would if I felt that he had any credibility on taxation reform, but he does not. He will be exposed for that as part of this process of taxation reform based

around the state tax review. If I felt that the Treasurer were genuine about taxation reform, I would help in whatever way possible. The system of financial arrangements that exist under the Federation today will not work in the best interests of this state in the long run. That is a fact. They have to change. We collectively have a responsibility to lobby for change in a way that better looks after the interests of this state. That is not an argument from me or from the Treasurer; it is an underlying issue. I find it difficult to argue with a person who has no commitment to taxation reform and who has subjected the people of this state to the most oppressive state-based taxation regime that has ever been seen in the history of Australia.

I will touch on three measures of taxation competitiveness that are generally bandied around. When the government was elected in 2001, it spoke about taxation per capita. It said over and over again that it would maintain or improve Western Australia's position of tax competitiveness as measured by taxation per capita. Taxation per capita is the aggregate of taxes divided by the population. In 2001 Western Australia was Australia's third most competitive state in terms of taxation per capita. A range of figures inform us on taxation per capita. I will quote some figures produced recently by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. If members ever wanted an argument about why the financial relationships in the context of Federation must be changed in this state and members want some stimulation, they should read the information on the Commonwealth Grants Commission's website. It would put a hyperexcited five-year-old to sleep. It is incredibly dull. However, there was an interesting chapter towards the end on total state taxation per capita. In 2001, according to its figures, the Western Australian government collected on behalf of every man, woman and child in this state, \$1 439 per capita. To put that in context, the taxation rate in Queensland, which was the lowest taxed state at that time, was \$240 less than ours. We paid \$240 more than Queenslanders in terms of taxation per capita, and Western Australia was the third lowest taxing state. By the end of last year, after a 73 per cent increase in taxation per capita, Western Australia had assumed the mantle of Australia's highest taxing state. The taxation per capita measure now for this state is \$2 484. That means that the Western Australian government collects \$734 more in taxes on behalf of every man, woman and child in this state compared with the amount paid in Queensland. That is an outrageous position to be in. Taxation competitiveness per capita has disappeared in Western Australia and we wear the crown of being Australia's highest taxing state. What did the government do in response to that? It did not worry about taxation reform; it changed the measure. Some time in the past 18 months it said it would not use the taxation per capita measure any more because it is not working. The reason it is not working is there is a huge flood of tax revenues into the government's coffers, mainly from the property sector. The government decided that the figures were looking terrible and so it changed the economic measure to another measure, which is called tax as a percentage of gross state product. Of course, that enables the government to mask the effect of increasing taxes in the context of economic growth. Notwithstanding that, let us look at taxation as a percentage of gross state product. Since the government came to power in 2001-02, taxation per capita in Western Australia has increased from 3.71 per cent to 4.29 per cent. That is an increase of 15 per cent in taxation per capita in this state. What has happened in the rest of Australia? The weighted average of all the other states has decreased from 4.64 per cent to 4.5 per cent. That is a fall of three per cent. My source for this data is economic analysis conducted by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia. Let us leave taxation per capita, because we have failed on taxation per capita. Let us move on to taxation as a percentage of GSP. Again we have failed. Western Australia has increased taxation as a percentage of GSP by 15 per cent and the rest of Australia has gone down three per cent. We have failed on taxation as a percentage of GSP.

Another measure that the Commonwealth Grants Commission produces is called a taxation effort measure. It measures taxation effort and it measures taxation capacity. Taxation capacity is the size of the golden goose and taxation effort is how hard it is squeezed and how much tax is wrung out of the tax base. Let us look at what happened to taxation effort in Western Australia. The taxation effort in Western Australia has increased over the past five years at almost eight times the rate of increase of taxation effort in Queensland and New South Wales, while Victoria and Tasmania have enjoyed a decrease in taxation effort. This government is squeezing the goose. It is squeezing the taxpayers of this state like they have never been squeezed before. Whichever of the three measures is used to assess taxation competitiveness, it can be seen that we have failed dismally. One of the great tragedies to come out of this economic boom is that the legacy to the future of this state from this government is the most uncompetitive state-based taxation regime in Australia. That is a disgraceful state of affairs. We should be positioning ourselves as a low-taxing state where people want to come and invest and where householders can get on with their lives and are not punished by paying a higher rate of tax than the taxpayers in Queensland. There is no rationale for why we should be paying more in taxation than other Australians. I have long held the view that the long-term goal of taxation reform in this state should be to position Western Australia as Australia's most competitive state-based taxing regime. We do not do that. We just change measures to try to hide our failing performance.

I will quickly talk about the aggregate tax take. In 2001, this state collected \$2.9 billion in taxation revenue. The mid-year review that was conducted towards the end of last year indicates that at the end of 2006-07 - the current financial year - the taxation take will be in the vicinity of \$5.5 billion. That is an increase across that time of \$2.6 billion in total state taxes, or 90 per cent. As I said earlier, in the corresponding time since 2001,

has the provision of services of this state improved by 90 per cent? I do not think anyone would suggest they have. Has the provision of core public infrastructure improved by 90 per cent? No. Has the provision of public economic infrastructure in this state improved by 90 per cent? No.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: What is your measure for the rejection of the improvement in services?

Mr T. BUSWELL: I am using my anecdotal observations, and the surveys that the government does of people's views about the quality of services being provided. They have not changed by that much; not in a pink fit. The minister knows that, and I know that.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: I know things have improved drastically, and objective measures will show that - smaller class sizes and much smaller surgery waiting lists in hospitals. The range of objective measures shows a vast improvement in services.

Mr T. BUSWELL: Every person in Western Australia knows that things have not improved.

I want to point out another interesting issue; that is, what was promised in this year's budget in the area of taxes. In 2005-06 the state government collected \$5.2 billion in taxation revenue. The budget speech said that taxes would be cut; that \$5.1 billion in taxation would be collected. That happened last May, when the Treasurer said that there would be all these benefits from the boom, including cuts in land taxes and other things. Guess what has happened? The midyear review has said that tax collections will now be \$5.5 billion. Again, the government cannot predict the final tax outcome with any accuracy. We had this debate last year and we will have it again leading up to the budget this year. The capacity of the government to predict what it will earn in tax revenue and what it will spend is a major issue. If the predictions were more accurate, the government would better understand its capacity to absorb taxation relief in a range of areas.

I will very quickly touch on some of the major state taxes, which are payroll tax, stamp duty on conveyancing and transfers, land tax and stamp duty on motor vehicles. Payroll tax revenue is estimated to increase by the end of this year from \$832 million in 2001 to \$1.635 billion. That is an increase of \$803 million, or 96 per cent. It is little wonder that the business community is almost begging the government for payroll tax relief at every opportunity. Stamp duty revenue has increased from \$550 million to \$1.9 billion. That is an increase of \$1.357 billion - only 250 per cent - paid for by the people of this state every time they buy properties. We know that stamp duty has a major impact on the property sector, in particular on first home buyers. First home buyers need relief from stamp duty. We have had debates in this house about this many times. Last year the opposition brought in a private member's bill through which the government could have provided stamp duty relief for first home buyers up to the median house price.

A young couple entering the home market for the first time, chasing their dream and trying to fulfil their aspiration of homeownership for themselves and their family, go out and buy their first home. They buy it at the median house price. Instead of leaving the settlement office all happy, they go around the corner and bump into the Treasurer, who says, "Congratulations, struggling first home buyers, on overcoming this huge hurdle presented by the massive increase in housing prices. Congratulations on buying your first home at the median house price. Here is a bill for \$19 000. Please write me a cheque, and I will let you go in through the front door." That is what the Treasurer does, but what happens in other states? In Queensland, if my recollection of the election campaign there is accurate, on the Brisbane median house price at the time, a first home buyer pays no stamp duty. The government there has made a conscious decision to give that money back as a concession. We do not do that in Western Australia. There is a concession for first home buyers, but it is sadly lacking. I think the Treasurer will increase the concession in the next budget. He has as good as said that is what he will do. I have no idea why he did not introduce the concession when he said he would do so. He has spooked thousands of people out of the property market in this state. That was a grossly irresponsible statement for the Treasurer to make. If he talks about providing tax relief to the sectors that are sensitive, he needs to do it when he says he will do it, not foreshadow it. Watch what will happen to first home buyer activity in the Perth property market in the first half of this year. It will die.

People ask why I am fixated with increases in stamp duty; it has gone up in line with increases in house prices. That is a reasonable argument, but let us have a look. In 2001 the Perth median house price was \$172 000. It is now \$450 000. In 2001 a buyer paid \$4 800 in stamp duty, and now it is about \$19 000. In other words, the median house price has increased by 160 per cent in five or six years, while stamp duty has increased by almost 300 per cent. The rate of growth in stamp duty is far outstripping the rate of growth in median house prices. In 2001 stamp duty comprised 2.79 per cent of the median house price; today it is nearly 4.1 per cent of the median house price. An unfair burden has been placed on the property sector in this state. I will explain what happens when people get hit with a stamp duty bill. Last year, \$2 billion in stamp duty was collected in Western Australia. By and large, home buyers have to borrow more money. The young first home buyer must go to a mortgage provider and ask for another \$19 000 to meet the stamp duty commitment. That borrowed money is then transferred to this government, which uses it. In a way, an explosion in private sector debt is paying for recurrent expenditure growth by the government. That is not acceptable at all.

We carried out an analysis based on people who bought houses at the median house price in 2001 and borrowed 90 per cent of the value of property at prevailing rates of interest, compared with the situation now. If they had a full exemption from stamp duty at the median house price, they would today be paying \$125 a month less in debt servicing than they otherwise would. That is a substantial amount for struggling families in this state. It equates across the life of a 30-year loan to \$45 000. This is the debt impost that the government's stamp duty regime is placing in particular on the first home buyers in this state. It is outrageous. It is more outrageous to think that the Treasurer will change that in the May budget. He could have done it a year ago. The opposition gave him an opportunity, through a bill introduced into this house late last year, and he just thumbed his nose at it. That was incredibly irresponsible. The thousands of people who have had to struggle to pay that stamp duty in the intervening period have every right to be incredibly angry at the actions of the Treasurer in greedily trying to absorb as much of that stamp duty income as he could before it became too politically difficult for him not to act.

The last area of taxation I will touch on is land tax, which has also increased dramatically in the past few years, particularly in the past year. It has gone up from \$220 million in 2001 to \$391 million, an increase of \$171 million in aggregate. Land tax aggregate collections are estimated to increase from \$313 million to \$391 million by the end of this year. That is a \$78 million increase in land tax in one year. It is way above what the Treasurer estimated at the start of the year. That is why hundreds of people have been complaining about their land tax bill. I am sympathetic to their calls for land tax relief. Land tax has some serious implications. People often have the view that land tax is paid only by the wealthier members of our community who invest in property, but that is quite simply not the case. Hundreds of ordinary Western Australians have chosen to create wealth for their future economic security through investing in the property sector. It is a traditional form of investment in this state. They are now being hit and hit again with land tax bills. It is having an impact on a range of investors in this state, not just on people at the upper end of the market from higher socioeconomic groups. What else does land tax do? It flows on into rents, as I indicated before in discussing the situation in Port Kennedy. Inevitably, investors in residential properties attempt to recoup increases in land tax by increasing rents. Landlords have rung me and said that they are in distress because they have to go to their tenants - good tenants whom they may have had in their houses for 10 or 15 years - and put the rent up because they cannot afford the land tax.

I have said to those landlords that they should show their tenants their land tax bill, and a photo of Eric Ripper, so that their tenants will understand clearly why those landlords are being forced to increase the rent. Increases in land tax have a significant impact on rents. Members opposite can jump up and down all they like about letting fees, and blame someone else for the problem. I find that incredibly hypocritical. The Minister for Employment Protection decided, without any consultation with the industry, that the government would abolish letting fees.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Western Australia is the only state in Australia that has letting fees.

Mr T. BUSWELL: Those letting fees will be recouped elsewhere. The consumers will end up paying for that, because it will be passed on through rent increases. It is hypocritical of this government to say that the abolition of letting fees will solve the problem, when it is not willing to do anything about land tax. That is a very inconsistent argument to put. It is similar to what happened last year. Last year, when property prices were going up, the government blamed the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia and real estate agents. It blamed real estate agents, who are charging fees to lawfully go about their business, for the problems that were being faced by struggling homebuyers in Western Australia. This year, when rents are going up, the government is again blaming real estate agents. This problem is far more complex than that. If the government were serious about rent relief, it would do something about the land tax regime, because it is killing people. I can give examples of situations in which the rental income on properties, admittedly pretty average properties on fairly good pieces of land -

Mr R.C. Kucera interjected.

Mr T. BUSWELL: It is everyone's responsibility. REIWA has never denied that. It is hypocritical of the government to blame one sector while it is raking in an extra \$70 million in land tax. I can give members examples of situations in which the rental income received by landlords has been less than the land tax bill. That is ridiculous. What will those landlords do about that? They will sell their rental properties. Those rental properties will then go out of the rental pool, and the supply of rental properties will go down. If the supply of rental properties goes down, but the demand is strong, rents will increase.

Mr G.M. Castrilli: The consequence is that housing will become even more unaffordable.

Mr T. BUSWELL: Yes. The rental crisis that this state will face in the next 12 months is the second wave of the property crisis. As sure as day follows night, rents will increase to follow the increase in property prices. Historically, rental returns have comprised about five per cent of the gross return on the value of the property. That means that an increase in rents will inevitably follow. That will create a huge social issue in this state, because those rent increases will impact on those people who are excluded, because of capital growth, from

becoming a homeowner in Western Australia. I foresee difficult times ahead for a range of Western Australians. Housing affordability is one issue that we need to grapple with collectively in this state in terms of public policy. We need look only at what is happening to Homeswest waiting lists. All members would know about this, because people come to see us about this matter. People are in crisis. People are becoming desperate. Homeswest waiting lists are increasing dramatically. They will continue to increase dramatically. The answer is not just to increase the public housing stock. We need to take a broader and holistic approach to housing affordability in this state.

Tax reform in Western Australia is needed urgently. This state is becoming uncompetitive. That lack of competitiveness may not have a significant impact on people during buoyant economic times. However, it will have a significant impact when the economy comes off the boil. An increasing number of reports are indicating that the rate of growth in our economy is beginning to slow. Investment is already slowing in the mining and construction industries. As the rate of growth in the economy begins to slow, competitiveness will become a significant issue. One reason that taxation reform is needed urgently is that the people of Western Australia deserve some protection from the uncompetitive taxation regime that has been imposed by this government. There is no justification for imposing upon the people of this state higher taxes than are paid by other Australians. This government has the capacity to provide tax relief. This government is heading towards its second \$2 billion budget surplus. This government has ample capacity to quarantine a significant amount of money into the next budget, and beyond, to provide taxation relief. That is a great challenge for the Treasurer of this state. The Treasurer's performance on taxation reform has been abysmal.

I will give members an example. I expect that this year, the government will again put out advertisements like the ones it put out last year. The particular advertisement that I am holding up for members to see appeared on 26 March last year, so the government may be running a bit late this year. The government said in that advertisement that it had cut taxes. What a nonsense! The government listed 11 taxes that it said it had cut. Every single one of those taxes is a tax that the government had to cut under the GST agreement! There have been only two types of tax cuts in Western Australia: tax cuts that the government had to deliver under the GST agreement, and tax cuts that the government made after it had increased the level of taxes in the first place! The other thing that the government never shows in its wonderful advertisements is the big, fat GST cake! A lot of people in Western Australia do not understand that when they purchase goods and services, that money goes to Peter Costello in Canberra and comes back to this state.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Part of it comes back.

Mr T. BUSWELL: A large percentage of it comes back. A large percentage of the state's revenue comes back to the state through that fiscal flow. However, that is never explained to the people of this state when these sorts of phoney advertisements are placed. If the government wanted to place a real advertisement, it would show people how much the tax take in this state has gone up every year so that they will know by how much they are being slugged. This government is taking no action on taxation reform. That is an absolute disgrace. I have seen the interim report of the state tax review. It is farcical. The government asked this group of people to map the future for tax reform in the state of Western Australia. They have produced an interim report. It is a delaying tactic of the highest order. I hazard a bet that the members of the state tax review will be excluded from the processes that the Treasurer will use to develop his tax reform package this year. We have already seen reports to that effect. The Treasurer has pretended that these people will have an input into tax policy in Western Australia. These people are very good and well-meaning. However, half of them want to put taxes up! I cannot understand how the government can set up a state tax review when the people who are doing that review are people from the WA Council of Social Service and Unions WA who want to put taxes up! The government has cooked up this concoction called the state tax review. It will fail. People will see right through it.

I want to make a couple of points in closing about some matters that I touched on earlier. The first is federal-state relations. There are major problems with the flow of money from the federal government to the states. The Treasurer is right to raise this issue. The principal problem is that state governments are becoming increasingly dependent on the flow of money from the federal government, either through the GST pool or through some other funding arrangement. That means that state governments are becoming increasingly less responsible for raising the money that they spend. That means also that the state governments do not need to be as accountable for their spending programs and patterns. If the state governments overspend, they can hide behind the flow of money from the federal government. That is not acceptable. State governments need to align more closely what they spend as a state and what they generate as a state, through whatever process. They will then be able to be held accountable, because if they overspend, they will need to put up taxes in a meaningful way, and people will then know that they were responsible for that. This imbalance is having a major impact on fiscal accountability in every state.

Mr A.P. O'Gorman: So you do not agree with the GST and the way it was introduced?

Mr T. BUSWELL: I am not saying that. However, when we look at how things have panned out -

Ms M.M. Quirk: The reform agenda is going to deal with that.

Mr T. BUSWELL: We will see. I am saying, as the member for Victoria Park also suggested, that the whole issue of the Federation needs to be reviewed. I take a particular interest, because of my shadow portfolio responsibilities, in the fiscal flows that occur within the Federation. We need to advocate on that issue as a Parliament to ensure that we get the best deal for this state into the future. Part of getting the best deal for this state is making sure that our spending programs are managed effectively. Part of that is also making sure that there is a closer alignment between what we spend and what we earn. That is a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed. This state is stuck in a regime in which much of the money that comes to this state - as the government would know, and as we can only dream about in opposition - is tied to specific programs. Through the tying of grants, we are losing our fiscal autonomy as a state. These are major issues with public policy development that have to be confronted not only in Western Australia, but also in every state in the Federation and by the commonwealth government. There is a lot of merit in the argument that it is now time to sit down as a nation, as a federation of states, and understand where the Constitution is at. Is it time to look at reinvigorating the Constitution to move us forward into the twenty-first century? There are very sound arguments for doing so.

Ms M.M. Quirk: That is what the national reform agenda is about, and the federal government is going slow on it.

Mr T. BUSWELL: We have to push these issues. I get frustrated. The Treasurer had a go at Peter Costello about some suggestion related to state taxes. I say to Peter Costello, "Keep your hands off our state. Let us live and die." Do not get me wrong; I am very critical of the Treasurer's performance, but that is our responsibility. The state Treasurer should not just tell me that Peter Costello is bad; he should tell me what we could be doing differently. He should have a look at the monumental personal sacrifice and effort that went into the development and framing of the Australian Constitution during the 1890s. It was a tremendous period of growth in this country, and the Constitution has given us so much. This is an opportunity for us to go back and have a look at it. From the point of view of fiscal management, things are not positioned for the best long-term interests of this state.

I will touch on one point that the Treasurer often talks about; that is, a little thing called the expenditure review committee that the opposition has set up. The Treasurer is fond, as are all governments, of creating this thing called the "spendometer". I suspect that I will see Peter Costello's "spendometer" out soon. It is a technique that governments use to try to undermine the financial credibility of oppositions. It happens everywhere. Of course, one of the single biggest challenges for oppositions is to build their financial credibility. The Treasurer is right when he says that oppositions cannot promise to spend money left, right and centre; it is irresponsible. He is absolutely right, and we acknowledge that. We acknowledge that our role in opposition is to present a financially credible alternative as we move towards the next election.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: When are you going to start doing that?

Mr T. BUSWELL: Let me get to that. We will have plenty of debates about that along the way.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: When are you going to start that new approach?

Mr T. BUSWELL: I am getting to that. I will answer the minister's question. We have established our expenditure review committee to ensure that the policies we develop are well costed.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Who is on it?

Mr T. BUSWELL: Me, Hon Norman Moore, Hon George Cash and Hon Helen Morton comprise our expenditure review committee. We are working through this process. That does not mean that we are precluded from engaging in public policy debate and discussion that has cost implications. There will come a time when the opposition will move, as do all oppositions, from dialogue about policy - some of that dialogue has cost implications - to a process of giving firm commitments for the election. The government cannot - the Treasurer can stand in this place until he falls over blue - keep adding to the bottom of the list; it just will not work. The federal opposition is an interesting opposition to study for its financial management. I had a look at what it did. It did exactly the same thing. It engaged in a process that I think Kim Beazley called policy dialogue with the people of Australia. A lot of the policies that have been produced and discussed over the past couple of years have enormous cost implications. In October last year he said that the process of dialogue had finished and that from that time on the opposition would release properly costed policies that it would commit to as part of the election cycle. This state opposition is in a policy dialogue with the people of this state. We will keep doing that and we will not back away from that process just because the Treasurer insists on saying in this place that there is a cost implication in that dialogue. The opposition has an obligation to develop good public policy. Of course that public policy will be based on philosophical differences with the government. We will go through that process and, through our expenditure review committee, we will deliver, come the election, a credible financial alternative for the people of this state. I wanted to put on the public record that there are members of the expenditure review committee. I know the Treasurer gets himself very excited about it, and I do not like to see the Treasurer get overexcited; it concerns me.

Essentially, that is our view. We will work through some issues with the appropriation bills just to make sure that, in our estimation, certain items of expenditure add up. However, I will conclude by saying that we are concerned about the financial management of this state, not only for political gain, but also because we feel that the economic boom that this state is currently enjoying is not being managed effectively to position this state to grow to its optimum capacity into the twenty-first century.

MR M.J. COWPER (Murray) [11.44 am]: This cognate debate gives me a great opportunity to speak about the current government's expenditure and how it affects my constituents. At the end of the day, members are placed in their respective positions because of the people's faith in their representatives coming to this place and speaking boldly so that they get their fair shake of the tree or slice of the cake.

The Murray district is the fourth oldest municipality in Western Australia. Pinjarra, the heart of the Murray district, was established in 1834. Primarily, it was established because the Swan River Colony was starving. There had been some anecdotal evidence from settlers that some cows had wandered south. This renowned parcel of land was very intriguing to the settlers of the Swan River Colony because it offered something that they did not have on the Swan coastal plain; that is, good soil for farming, which would solve the problem of starvation that confronted the Swan settlers. The rest is history.

Governor Stirling dispatched a whaling ship south along the coast to find the Murray River. The Murray River was so named before it was discovered. Members might wonder how on earth that could happen. The Murray River was named after Lord Murray, the colonial secretary at the time. He was a Scotsman and he was in the House of Lords. His home town in Scotland was Perth; hence the connection. Perth is the only capital in Australia that was named after another place. All the other capital cities were named after people. The Murray River in the Peel region in the Murray district was named before it had even been found. The settlers had heard reports of this great river that would, hopefully, save the bacon of the Swan River Colony, which was starving. The whaling boats dispatched by Governor Stirling sailed along the coast via Fremantle and Garden Island. They expected to find a river mouth, but they did not. They missed entirely the mouth of what is now known as the Harvey-Peel waterway and continued south. As I recall, it was November and they experienced a very strong sea breeze - the Fremantle doctor, as it is now known. They came ashore at Preston Beach. The member for Collie-Wellington has a place in the area, and some friends of mine - Superintendent Watson, Superintendent Parkinson and another good friend - own a general store in the area. The people from the whaling boats spent three days on the beach; they were unable to get their whaling boats off the beach because of the very strong prevailing sea breeze. After spending a few days there, they managed to get their whaling boats back into the water and they decided to head back north. As they travelled north, they came around the point at what is called Doddie's beach and saw through some breaking waves what appeared to be a river mouth, which led to the 167 square kilometre estuary and river system that is one of the best systems of its kind anywhere in the world. I am very proud that it is largely in the Murray electorate. Those people established a camp there at what is now Halls Head and began to explore the waterway. The following day they went out into the estuary. They realised that they were in fact in an estuary and went to look for the mouth of the Murray River. They initially travelled south and engaged with Aboriginals for the first time on what is now Point Grey. They continued travelling south along the Peel Estuary. They got over a sandbar and found what we now know to be the mouth of the Harvey River. The Harvey River was not the river that was described to them by the settlers. Therefore, realising their mistake, they came back and later the next day they found the mouth of the Serpentine and Murray Rivers. Of course, the rest is history. The reason Pinjarra is where it is today is that it was as far as they could get their boats along the Murray River to establish the townsite of Pinjarra. It was a pivotal place and they discovered that there was good pastoral land there. Pinjarra has been pivotal to this state ever since then. Some memorable people preceding me have represented that electorate. I made mention of them in my maiden speech and I pay homage to those fantastic people. Pinjarra has for many years been an enclave of very good support for people on the Liberal and conservative side of politics. It goes right back to the time of a former Premier of the state, Sir Ross McLarty, who is iconic in the town of Pinjarra; hence many of the roads and parks there are named after him, such as McLarty Road and Sir Ross McLarty Park, where my son plays football on Saturday morning.

In recent times, perhaps because Pinjarra is renowned as a Liberal stronghold, it has suffered at the hands of successive Labor governments and does not get a fair shake of the tree or a fair cut of the pie. That is why I am talking about it today. I will first talk about schools. We all know that the Peel region and the Murray district are the fastest growing areas of Australia. My electorate office sends out about 150 welcoming letters a fortnight to residents of my electorate, which indicates a fair whack of growth.

Mr A.P. O'Gorman: Not as many as the member for Wanneroo sends out.

Mr M.J. COWPER: The fact remains that my electorate has only half the population of the member for Wanneroo's electorate. I understand that there are about 30 000-odd people in her electorate. Notwithstanding that, Pinjarra is a very fast growing area. It is an undeniable fact that it is the fastest growing area in Australia. This urban sprawl will continue in years to come. Many members of this house, including me, have stood in this place and complained about the infrastructure there not keeping pace with growth and about it not getting the

attention it deserves. A recent *Stateline* program two weeks ago discussed this very issue. It stated that the infrastructure in the area has not kept up with growth. A classic example is schools. A number of reports have been compiled by municipalities there. One was compiled by the City of Mandurah and one by the Shire of Murray. The one compiled by the City of Mandurah was very interesting and is available on the Internet for members who wish to read it. The report broke the City of Mandurah into 12 regions and described the growth in each of those regions. The number one fastest growing area in the City of Mandurah was Lakelands. That is a suburb on the left-hand side going south to Mandurah near Mandurah Baptist College. We all know the fantastic record that has been established at Mandurah Baptist College. I had the pleasure of visiting the college last week for the announcement of the expansion to the school. In 2004, 100 people lived in that subdivision. I believe that by 2012 there will be 9 000 people in that subdivision. It is the number one fastest growing area in the City of Mandurah; number two is Dawesville; and number three is Meadow Springs, where I live. In excess of 200 homes are under construction around my electorate office at Meadow Springs Shopping Centre. That indicates how fast the area is growing. For members who are interested, the fourth fastest growing area in Mandurah is Falcon.

The Shire of Murray is almost a totally different environment. I have two electorates, so to speak: one that is very much an urban environment in the north corridor of the City of Mandurah and another in the Shire of Murray. People say that Pinjarra is 25 kilometres and 30 years away from Mandurah, or from the rest of Australia, because it suffers from a lack of services. The people of Pinjarra are the first to point out that it does not have the services available to it that are available in Mandurah or in any part of the Perth metropolitan area; namely, deep sewerage, access to broadband and access to reticulated gas. Notwithstanding the fact that the Dampier to Bunbury gas pipeline travels straight through the heart of the Shire of Murray and also feeds off to Alcoa, Pinjarra does not have access to reticulated gas. Something like 2 700 residents in that area want to connect to reticulated gas. At the last election I heard the Gallop government promise that there would be a rebate given to pensioners who must use bottled gas. As we all know, there is a rebate given to those who are on reticulated gas. I believe that the people in my electorate have been disadvantaged significantly in many ways.

I go on. The Peel region does not have a transport system or other appropriate services that people expect in the metropolitan area. I will speak about a few of those in my speech. The number one appropriate service that the Peel region does not have is schools. Yesterday I heard the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure talk about how wonderful it is in the Peel region and about the many schools the government is building there. I wrote a letter to Hon Ljiljana Ravlich when she was the Minister for Education and Training and asked her which new schools were being built in the Peel region. A response some weeks later said that she was proud to announce that a new middle school and a new primary school would be built at Secret Harbour. I thought that was fantastic, particularly for my cousin who lives up that way, for friends who live in Secret Harbour and for all my friends at the Secret Harbour Surf Lifesaving Club. My fundamental point is that Secret Harbour is not even in the Peel region. The answer therefore was zero. No school was being built in the Peel region, notwithstanding that it is the fastest growing area in Australia. At budget time there was nothing in the forward estimates for a new school there. I will give some credit to the government as, miraculously, last year it plucked some money out of the air. We know where that money came from. Because of the incompetence of this government in planning ahead, as the member for Vasse explained, the government plucked money out of the Treasurer's advance account to build a new school at Seascapes estate in what is called south Halls Head. That area, as I explained, is the second fastest growing area in the City of Mandurah. Miraculously, the government found some money and dropped it right where it was needed. Well done to the government for that! However, it has not gone far enough, as not one public school is planned for my electorate in the foreseeable future, and not even one is listed in the forward estimates. There is not a red cent for a public school there, notwithstanding that it is the fastest growing area. I am angry about that. There is already land available at Ravenswood that has been provided under the outline development plan - ODP - for the development of 19 000-odd homes that will be built in that area. There is land available in Meadow Springs. Currently, 230-odd students must cross Fremantle Road to get to North Mandurah Primary School. I want to give a plug to Councillor Bruce Blay, the principal of North Mandurah Primary School, for the fantastic job he and the school community have done to save the crosswalk attendant there, as the government was going to take away the attendant. I also acknowledge police Inspector Paul Bond for doing a very good job on the crosswalks.

The third fastest growing area of Mandurah still does not have a new-school plan, notwithstanding that the region will have about 1 394 primary school-age children between the ages of six and 12 years in the next six years. The government has no forward plan. What is the current population of students in schools in that area? In my electorate, Singleton Primary School has about 650 students; North Mandurah Primary School about 650; the new Riverside Primary School about 750 - it also has four demountable classrooms; and no new schools are planned for the future.

Let us consider the Shire of Murray. Again, this is a different region. It is as though I have two electorates in one. How many primary schools are there in the Shire of Murray? There is one in Dwellingup. Dwellingup is struggling, as we well know. I have commented in this place that we need to support the people of Dwellingup

in light of the fact that businesses are struggling as a result of the fire. I encourage anyone in this house to take their families to Dwellingup - it is only an hour's journey and is a fantastic part of the world - and support the wineries and cafes that survive on the tourist dollar. The Hotham Valley Tourist Railway has been decimated because of the fire. There needs to be an injection of funds into Dwellingup through support for the local community. I am very proud that my Rotary club and the Rotary clubs of Mandurah and Pinjarra had a meeting at the Millhouse Cafe, which has a chocolate factory. I am sure the Acting Speaker (Mrs J. Hughes) would be fond of that.

Mr A.D. McRae: You look like you're very fond of it!

Mr M.J. COWPER: The other point is that there are no new schools in the Shire of Murray; none whatsoever. For the past 50 years, students in the Shire of Murray have travelled to the three schools at Pinjarra, which include St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and the Pinjarra Primary School. The principal of the Pinjarra Primary School is a good Rotarian friend of mine, Mr Rob Davis. His partner, Beth Aitken - who was the 2005 principal of the year and another good Rotarian friend - is the principal of the Pinjarra Senior High School. Those three schools have between them 1 600-odd students. The layout of the shire means that nearly half of those students travel to and from their homes on a school bus. They travel from Waroona in the south, North Dandalup in the north, Dwellingup, Yunderup, Murray River Estate, Ravenswood, Barragup and Furnissdale, which is right on the boundary of the shire

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M.J. COWPER: Nearly half the students living in those locations require public transport. As my electorate is on the outskirts of the greater Perth metropolitan area, there are growing pains associated with the rapid growth of the area, in addition to the pressures being brought to bear on the community in dealing with growth. I empathise to a degree with the government, but there has been a total lack of planning for the future development of land, schools, roads, hospitals and everything else that is associated with growth. The largest, most productive alumina refinery in the world is situated within that community. Alcoa World Alumina Australia, Pinjarra is a world leader in the production of alumina. Alcoa World Alumina Australia, Wagerup is situated just down the road. Between the two of them, which fall into the catchment for my electorate, they produce a huge amount of wealth for the state. Are they getting a slice of the pie? I am here to tell members they are not, and I will explain why.

In my capacity as shadow minister for emergency services, I visited some firefighters at the Perth Fire Station. They showed me around their fire station. I recall it being built 28 years ago, when I was walking the beat. I thought it was a fantastic building. The students in the gallery might be pleased to know that when it was planned to construct the Perth Fire Station, a delegation travelled all over the world to find out what was the best possible fire station to be constructed at that time. They came up with what became the current Perth Fire Station in Hay Street. It was opened with great fanfare. It had something in the vicinity of 36 firefighters, 16-odd officers and 10 fire appliances in a 10-bay fire station. Today, it has been reduced to 12 firefighters and three officers, and the station has only four appliances. It is now proposed to build a new fire station a few hundred metres down the road at a cost to taxpayers of \$10 million. As I understand it, most of that money will come from the emergency services levy. The Dwellingup Fire Station is a tin shed and has limited resources. Notwithstanding the fact that some of the biggest fires in many, many years have occurred at Dwellingup, the situation has been ignored. Tim Birmingham is the fire control officer at Dwellingup. He did a fantastic job during the Dwellingup fires, and I commend him for his work. The chief fire control officer for the Shire of Murray, Jimmy Camplin, did an equally good job. These people are local heroes. When I was fighting those fires alongside those very brave people, I understood at first hand the job they did. What does it mean to those people that \$10 million will be spent on a new Perth fire station? I tell the young people in the gallery and members that staff at the Perth Fire Station do not want to move from the current premises. They think it is adequate, but that it is rundown because of lack of maintenance. I do not know the agenda for the Perth Fire Station; I have been trying to establish it. However, someone has had a rush of blood to the brain and decided that a new fire station will be built on Wellington Street, notwithstanding the fact that the firefighters and everyone associated with putting fires out are happy with the present facility. Meanwhile, there are problems with infrastructural needs in country regions. I have been to the member for Mindarie's electorate and I have seen the Hester fire station. It is a joke. It is a fire station that is open only between the hours of 6.00 am and 6.00 pm. What is that? That is a Clayton's fire station. Do not have a car crash or a fire in that area, because the fire station is open only half the time. What a joke!

I will return to the subject of my electorate, because I am trying to get to the bottom of the question of where the government is spending its money. Racing and Wagering Western Australia - RWWA - is a fantastic organisation. It raises lots of money through the Totalisator Agency Board so that it can spend money all over the place, particularly in regional Western Australia. I again acknowledge that last Friday night, in the company of the member for Rockingham, I attended the opening of the new greyhound track in Mandurah. I had some of the best food I have ever tasted. It is a fantastic place and I recommend it to everybody. I will also give a tick to

the member for Rockingham - he has done well. Let us turn to the Pinjarra Race Club. The government will spend in the vicinity of \$2.3 million there. That is fine, too, but the government spends something like \$7.4 million on a training facility because Bob Maumill and Brian Burke -

Ms M.M. Quirk: Who? Never heard of him.

Mr M.J. COWPER: The member's mate - Brian Burke. There is a horse called "General Strike"; I would not advise members to back it! It is owned - I will stand corrected if I am wrong - by Bob Maumill, Kev Reynolds, Brian Burke and Rennie Gardiner.

Ms M.M. Quirk: That would be primed to put on a bit of condition!

Mr M.J. COWPER: Let us work out why they are getting \$7.4 million and the Pinjarra Race Club, which has been around for many years and has a fantastic new clubhouse, is getting only \$2.3 million. Further down the road is the Pinjarra Trotting Club, of which I am a proud patron. Guess what it has? It has a big fat zero - not a sausage, not a brass razoo. I have raised the issue of the Pinjarra Trotting Club in this place on a number of occasions, and I will continue to do so.

The minister says that we will have a fantastic transport system in the Peel region. It will be fantastic, all right. It was to cost \$1.2 billion; then it went to \$1.3 billion, \$1.5 billion, and \$1.68 billion. What will the amount end up being? Perhaps the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Vasse, will be able to shed some light on what it might cost. His guess would be as good as anybody's.

Mr T. Buswell: It's going to cost a fair bit.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It will cost a fair bit - exactly right. That means the schools in my electorate will not have the opportunity to get what they need because the government has been spending willy-nilly all over the place. I am not very pleased about it at all, considering the situation for students in my electorate. Students in the gallery might be able to empathise. The bureaucrats in government departments have drawn a line on a map and designated it as the boundary for the Perth's public transport area. It comes across the Serpentine River and into the Shire of Murray by some several kilometres. Notwithstanding that, the students who live in the area of Furnissdale-Barragup are affected by the education department boundaries, which states that they must go to the Pinjarra Primary School and the Pinjarra Senior High School, as students in the area have done continuously for the past 50 years. But no, some boffin in Perth has drawn a line around the area and said that the children must go to school in Mandurah. That is ignoring the fact that schools in Mandurah are full. In fact, I mentioned before that Riverside Primary School - the nearest primary school - has 750 students. There is no capacity to take more students. Despite that, parents have been told that the students must pay a 50c fare and that in five years the school bus service will be discontinued. It will happen despite the fact that there is not one single public transport bus travelling through those areas. The day before yesterday I was in my electorate watching the school buses. They left young Xander Mettam - a-three year-old - by the side of the road. It is an unmitigated disgrace. He is a three-year-old! I have the photographs to prove the case.

Mr A.D. McRae: Why was a three-year-old there?

Mr M.J. COWPER: He was going to preprimary school. There were also children aged from six to 14 years left by the side of the road.

Mr A.D. McRae interjected.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is an unmitigated disgrace; they were left by the side of the road. The Public Transport Authority is using jackboot tactics. It is threatening parents with the Department for Community Development and the police if the children are not picked up. What we have here is a bureaucracy that has gone absolutely mad. Tactics are being used that members would not believe. What was going on with the PTA will soon become well known. I want to see an independent review into the PTA because, as a result of this incident in my electorate in the past two days, I am receiving calls from all over Western Australia. Similar tactics have occurred in Busselton in the electorate of the member for Vasse. I am getting complaints from Swan Hills, Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Esperance. I want to see that authority tipped upside down. The tactics the PTA are using are an unmitigated disgrace. It is an indictment of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. She is a disgrace. Her fingerprints are all over this. I am as angry as hell about this. I can assure the house that there will be more on this.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Order, member for Vasse! I am sure the member will want to hear the member for Murray.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I turn now to the Murray District Hospital. The hospital has been used by five generations of local Pinjarra people. It is now nothing more than a shell of its former self. It provides very limited services, notwithstanding the fact that it is in the fastest-growing area in Australia. It is strategically located on the South Western Highway; an area where there have been many deaths caused by accidents in that region. It saddens me

greatly that last Sunday, Dimity Gal, a 35-year-old mother of two, had a crash in her car on Kargotich Road in Mundijong on her way home and was killed. She had two of her own children with her in the car, and one sustained a broken arm. My condolences go to her family. I feel very sad for them and the community. That puts things into perspective.

I am very proud of my electorate; I am very proud to represent it. It is not getting its fair share of the financial cake. The Murray District Hospital is being neglected; it is just white ants holding hands!

I must mention Mrs Edna Trickett, a dear lady, and her husband, Bob. They are the matriarch and patriarch of Pinjarra. Bob Trickett passed away recently and I made a promise to Mrs Trickett - she reminds me of my grandmother - that I would see that the hospital got back to its former glory, which it deserves. At the moment it is just a shell of its former self. The community will need the hospital because the Point Grey development is coming on line and the Perth to Bunbury highway will be going through. All that land will be opened for development and a lot of planning needs to be done. When I hear the harebrained ideas of bringing on Amarillo - which was the former member for Peel's brainchild - which will involve the back drilling of the Serpentine River and impact severely on the waterways, I question why LandCorp is not left out of it so that the businesses and companies that want to develop land in my electorate can do so without costing taxpayers money.

Industrial land is another issue, but I am rapidly running out of time to speak.

MR A.J. SIMPSON (Serpentine-Jarrahdale) [12.15 pm]: I wish to add to the debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 5) 2006. This gives me an opportunity to talk about some financial issues that concern me.

One of the biggest issues that face us as a state is rubbish. It is a huge issue. Everyone produces it and we all have to deal with it. I have a landfill in my electorate in Cardup. It is an old quarry that is being filled. It has six years to go. Recently, the government gave its approval to modify the footprint, which is because it has six years of life left. The government has a policy of zero-zero waste by 2020. We are working towards that. On the other side of my electorate is a regional resource recovery centre - an RRRC. It takes household waste and turns it into compost. There have been some major difficulties getting a perfect result. There are issues with the compost it produces because it contains a certain percentage of glass. Food growers are not keen to use the compost in soil. However, it is probably the lesser of two evils. I sometimes get frustrated with constituents who contact me about these issues, whether it is about the RRRC or the Cardup landfill. We all put our wheelie bins at the front of our properties each week and want someone to take the rubbish away. Generally, it is the local government that has to deal with that situation. Sometimes it is the state government. The RRRC is a Bedminster system and it has its problems; we do not deny that. I have spoken to the minister recently and I have spoken in the house about the issue. It is unfortunate that the way in which it is operating allows a smell to be emitted. An amount of \$2 million has been spent but it is not operating all that well. I understand that someone has arrived from the eastern states to look at the problem of the smell. I hope that we will hear back from the RRRC and Stuart McAll on the process and that we can move forward. It is quite an amazing process. Some people in my electorate are concerned that the rubbish tip is leaking. No matter what report is undertaken, even my own independent water testing -

Mr A.D. McRae interjected.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: No, I asked for it to operate within its licence.

Mr A.D. McRae: I do not think that is right.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: It was operating out of its licence.

Mr A.D. McRae: That is not right.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: As the minister, the member shut it down and reopened it.

Mr A.D. McRae: That is not right either.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: We will move forward because we have the same situation. In my electorate, the RRRC is composting at one end, and there is the landfill site at the other end. Both of these are not acceptable to the community. We should stand back and look at the bigger picture. I keep telling people that we all produce rubbish but nobody wants it in his backyard. That is what it all boils down to. The Bedminster system has been proved to work but, unfortunately, unless the facility is situated in the middle of a desert where no-one is affected, it cannot operate as well as it should.

We all try to work towards not burying rubbish any more because we realise it is not doing the environment any good. The Cardup project is quite interesting. Holes have been bored and methane gas is being sucked out. I think they are getting enough methane gas at the moment to generate enough power for 2 500 houses. When the tip is finished and closed, there should be three generators, which is enough to provide power to 5 000 houses for the next 20 years from the methane gas. That is the positive side. The negative side is that there is a hole in the ground in a quarry. It has been confirmed that it is on a watertable. I have done my own independent water

sampling but I have not found any proof that it is leaking. I understand that the community is concerned, and I will continue my monitoring this year and in years to come to try to alleviate the concerns of residents. I live in the town just near the rubbish tip and so I am aware of their concerns.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Is the old quarry a clay quarry or a sand quarry?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Gravel was taken out, so it is a granite quarry. A liner has been put in it and a pipe has been placed at the bottom so that the water is drained through the pipe and is sent to a leachate lake to evaporate the water. Bore sampling is constantly being done and the site is monitored. It is very well run tip. All rubbish is weighed in and it stores only household waste. There was some concern that it was being used to store toxic waste from the Brookdale plant when that closed. However, the tip has taken only household waste since the plant's closure. We all produce waste and must deal with it. Unfortunately, the tip will operate for only six more years. We must look to the future and decide how we will deal with household rubbish. I have spoken to the minister about the impact the Regional Resource Recovery Centre has had on the community. I feel for the people who live only 400 metres from the centre, because it smells bad. Last Thursday at 10.00 pm the smell was so bad that we drove to the RRRC. When we arrived, the CEO of the RRRC was walking around the fence and noting the smell. We all agreed that the so-called negative pressure is not working. On Monday or Tuesday this week someone looked at the extraction unit and the biofilters. The former member for Roleystone did a lot of research on this matter when he was a member because the City of Gosnells was considering installing a similar centre. The City of Gosnells now transports its waste to a site in my electorate in Cardup. Each country in the world faces a similar problem. It is a matter of thinking outside the area. I had a good conversation with the minister on Tuesday about the RRRC and how to alleviate the smells. We must go through the process of trying to work out how to get rid of household waste so that it does not impact on the community. The RRRC is working, because it is reducing compost, but there is a bad smell that is impacting on people and that issue must be addressed. The centre is considering building another similar centre in the northern suburbs. The centre in Canning Vale will be used as a testing plant to iron out all the faults before the next centre is built. About \$70 million has been invested in the centre at Canning Vale. It will have to continue to operate and we will have to try to fix the problem. I spoke to the minister about that on Tuesday. He will look into it for me to find out whether it is operating within its parameters. When it was first licensed, it was licensed to treat 50 000 tonnes and it is now treating 100 000 tonnes of waste a year. It is treating double the amount of rubbish that it was originally licensed for. The minister can look at that issue.

I have said previously that the link road through Jarrahdale will always be an issue in my electorate. The minister is working towards getting an outcome on the link road so that the community can progress and have the cloud of doubt lifted from its shoulders. It has been two years since the last election, but this issue will rear its head at the next election. I hope that the minister will heed my concerns and resolve the issue of the link road. Once that is resolved, we can resolve the issue of the Tonkin Highway extension past Thomas Road around Byford. Currently, the highway terminates at Thomas Road and all the heavy traffic travels through the small town of Byford. Byford is growing rapidly. I have written to the Minister for Education and Training regarding the construction of new schools in the area. The member for Murray talked about a similar issue. My daughter goes to Marri Grove Primary School, which has 360 students. That is a reasonably small school and it is located on a small site. It has only one oval and two playgrounds. There is limited room to expand the school unless the state government acts now and acquires more land near it to give it room to expand. I hope that the minister will look at that issue favourably when the times comes, because the government will have to address that situation. I will not take up any more time because other members wish to speak on this. I thank members.

DR G.G. JACOBS (Roe) [12.24 pm]: I take this opportunity to talk to the appropriation bill. My remarks will not necessarily be related to the projects in my electorate that the government has not financed. I will raise the issue of the lead pollution that has descended on the port town of Esperance over the past six months. I will walk members through some of the issues that will have an economic impact on Esperance and the electorate. It is an issue that will encompass many departments, including health, Treasury, transport, planning and infrastructure, fisheries, the Water and Rivers Commission and tourism. The impact this issue will have on the port town will be immense. Recently, various people have told me that this issue is a storm in a teacup that has been driven by the media. They have said that the port authority is being subjected to a trial by media. It has been suggested also that I have a political axe to grind. There is no political axe to grind when we talk about the health of a community.

This issue began in November or December last year when residents in Bostock Street behind the port noticed that many birds had died. It has been extrapolated that more than 4 000 birds, mostly of the nectar feeding variety, have died. After a long process of pathological diagnoses and toxicological tests, it was announced on 3 March that the birds had died from lead toxicity. There was another important spate of deaths in early March when 185 lorikeets were also found to have died of lead poisoning. That statistic alone is not an issue for scaremongering. It is not a political issue; it is an important environmental and human health issue. I have said in this house previously that we all understand at least a small amount about the implications of having lead in

the human body. People wonder whether, because it can get into birds, it can also get into humans, and particularly into our children, who are vulnerable to the effects of lead toxicity. There is no doubt that the town has been tainted. The problem is probably worse than an oil spill because at least an oil spill can be seen; lead pollution cannot be seen easily.

A media statement by the Department of Environment and Conservation last Monday said that marine sediment samples collected from the seabed directly under the Esperance Port Authority discharge pipe have returned very high lead levels. The department's pollution response unit collected six samples of marine sediment over a five-square-metre plot under the Esperance Port Authority's discharge pipe two weeks ago. The marine samples collected showed lead readings between 3 600 milligrams per kilogram and 29 000 milligrams per kilogram, which is well above acceptable environmental levels. The acceptable environmental levels for lead under the Australian guidelines are set between 50 milligrams per kilo and 220 milligrams per kilo. There has been an absolute quantum leap in the levels found at the bottom of the harbour. The fisheries regional manager, Phil Shaw, has advised people to avoid consumption of shellfish, crustaceans or fish taken from the vicinity of the ship-loading wharf until the status has been determined. Without scaremongering, our environment has been tainted. It is worse than an oil spill because we cannot see it happening.

At a public meeting I chaired last Monday night, the major concerns of the community were how this happened, the possible health impact on the community, how it is to be cleaned up and how it is to be prevented from happening again. Did anybody take their eye off the ball? How did this happen? Three major issues were raised at the meeting. The first was the report of the Department of Environment and Conservation that the Esperance Port Authority had not been exporting the lead carbonate in the form required by the export licence. The export licence specifically details pelletised lead carbonate. However, for 18 months, during which time some 130 000 tonnes of lead carbonate has been exported, the process has involved granulated powder. Compared with pellets, the pollution potential of granulated powder is a lot higher in causing dust and airborne pollution, and creating an increased possibility for lead toxicity in birds and, even worse, our children.

The second issue raised at the meeting was that the Department of Environment and Conservation report showed that there were significantly higher dust levels at two monitoring sites in February and May 2006. One dust deposit gauge returned a reading of 42 milligrams of lead deposit per square metre over 30 days. To put that in context, the average acceptable readings are one to five milligrams per square metre. A reading of 42 is significantly high. In May 2006, two other dust monitoring gauges returned levels of 18 and 24 respectively; still significantly higher levels. These readings seemed to incite no response. The Esperance Port Authority could say that it had complied with the conditions of the licence. It had been monitoring and it had composed a report that was submitted, and it had received no response. We now see the blame game happening. The Esperance Port Authority submitted the report but the department said nothing about it, and did not alert the authority to the results. The report was released some months later. That is a significant question, because the prevention notice issued to the port to stop any operation involving either inward or outward transport mentioned the high dust monitoring results, although it was issued some months later. The high dust monitoring results were returned in February and May 2006, and now it is March 2007. Some community leaders have been asking what has happened in that time to the ongoing potential for pollution. The third issue that came from the meeting was that of marine sediment, for which I have already provided some figures.

The very real concern of the community is no more highlighted than by the fact that I was contacted by the regional medical officer of the Department of Health. It is his responsibility to inform me of the blood level results of patients in my practice. A couple living in the suburb of Sinclair have a daughter with two young children. One of them, 11 months old, has a blood lead level of 11 micrograms per decilitre. To put that into context, we heard on Monday night from the lead expert in Australia, Professor Brian Gulson, from the Graduate School of the Environment at Macquarie University, that the accepted level of lead in human populations in Australia is 10 micrograms per decilitre, or 10 millionths of a gram per 100 millilitres of blood. My 11-month-old patient has a lead level of 11. As I said in my introductory remarks, this is not sensationalism. However, we must be cognisant of those results, which have produced some justified concern about children in the community.

Mr R.C. Kucera: I notice there was a report in the newspaper this morning that attributes some of the sediment to the recent flooding. Will that be part of the inquiry?

Dr G.G. JACOBS: I was also rung by the media this morning, with the suggestion that the lead levels in the harbour were due to the recent flooding event that we had on 4 January. It does not matter. These events do happen; we do get rain. Admittedly, it was a lot of rain on this occasion - 200 millimetres in 36 hours.

Mr R.C. Kucera: That is the point I'm making. If the flooding is proven to be partly responsible, there obviously needs to be provision for that in the future.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: As the member for Yokine rightly says, infrastructure, practices and procedures need to take those sorts of events into account, because we understand how important the issue of lead pollution would

be, particularly in the bay, and all the implications for marine life and human populations. To provide an avenue for these issues to be addressed in the future, and at other sites and for other activities, whether they be nickel, lead or iron ore, common practices or procedures need to be considered for determining where the breakdown occurred. This is not a witch-hunt or politics. I have had conversations with the other side of Parliament about the need for a parliamentary inquiry into those practices and procedures.

I gave notice of this motion yesterday. I hope the government will see the merits of debating this motion, not as a political stunt, but for the benefit of the people of Esperance. There is no doubt that Esperance will suffer economically. There has already been a downturn in tourism in Esperance. Tourism is a bit like politics. It is all about perception. The perception is that Esperance has a problem with lead pollution. There is evidence that Esperance certainly does have a problem with lead pollution. We need to talk about the causes of that pollution, the processes for dealing with that pollution, and the processes for preventing that pollution in the future, not only in Esperance, but perhaps also at other sites.

The motion that I propose to move is that the house refer this matter to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee for consideration and report. The motion goes on to outline five proposed terms of reference for the committee. I intend next week, with the permission of the Leader of the House, to present this motion, hopefully with the support of the government.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr G.G. JACOBS: I do not intend to take up a lot of the time of the Parliament on this motion. As I have said, I hope to get some indication that the government will support this motion. The proposed terms of reference for the committee's inquiry are as follows -

The cause and extent of lead pollution in the Esperance area with specific reference to the following matters -

- (a) how the licensing process for the export of pelletised lead enabled the export of granulated lead;
- (b) the effectiveness of dust monitoring and reporting in relation to lead levels in the area, and the adequacy of the response to those reported levels;
- (c) the extent to which handling and other practices at Esperance port gave rise to extremely high benthic lead levels in the harbour;

That may answer some of the questions raised by the member for Yokine. It continues -

- (d) whether the Esperance Port Authority properly exercised its responsibilities in relation to the potential lead pollution; and
- (e) whether the existing responsibilities of the Department of Environment and Conservation in relation to the Esperance Port Authority processes, practices and procedures were adequate and were properly exercised.

That is, was the Esperance Port Authority keeping its eye on the ball? Was it looking at, and responding to, the dust monitoring results? Did the port authority do everything according to the conditions that had been imposed by the Department of Environment and Conservation? Is there an issue with pelletised lead as opposed to granulated lead? I notice - I am not sure whether it was a press release or an article in *The West Australian* - that there may be a problem with the definition of "pelletised", and about whether lead is pelletised if it is granulated with water. I am not sure about all the details of that matter.

These are the issues that a bipartisan parliamentary committee should examine. I am raising this motion not to promote my political career or play political games, but so that a committee of this Parliament can examine these issues and arrive at an outcome that is concrete and that will enable us to deal with this problem effectively.

I hope the government will support my proposition that three additional members be appointed to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee for this inquiry. I hope one of those members will be me, not only because of my involvement with this matter from go to whoa, but also because I am a long-term resident of Esperance. I went to Esperance as a seven-year-old farmer's son. I went to Perth to study medicine. I then went back to Esperance as a general practitioner and practised medicine in that town for over 26 years. I also brought up a family of five children in that town. I believe that I have a pretty good feel for not only the town, but also the situation that has arisen in the town. I have suggested that the member for Churchlands also join that committee, as well as a nominee from the government. This is an important issue. I have raised this matter during the debate on this Treasury bill because it is a matter that will have a significant effect on the economy of Esperance. It is important that the members of this Parliament get together in a bipartisan way to find answers for the people of Esperance.

Another important matter in my electorate is education. There has been a significant increase in population in my electorate. Esperance Senior High School has over 1 000 students. A new Anglican private school for

secondary students will commence operation in 2008, in a graduated way from year 8 onwards. It is expected to take 30 to 40 students in its first year. The Ravensthorpe nickel mine has attracted about 300 resident workers to my electorate. Part of the agreement between the federal government and the state for that mine was that the workforce be resident rather than fly in, fly out. Those people will live in Hopetoun, Esperance and Ravensthorpe. The parents of high school students will have the option of sending their children to Esperance Senior High School. However, that will be possible only if Esperance Residential College is upgraded to enable it to accommodate those boarders. The residential college is bursting at the seams. It is accommodating 105 students in three transportable units in order to meet the need in the community. That cannot go on forever. With the expansion of the mine, the increase in the town's population and the construction of the new Anglican school, it is very important that we get in this budget round \$11 million for the upgrade of the Esperance Residential College. I have spoken to the Minister for Education and Training. The head of the board and the chief executive officer of the college have also had talks with the minister. He has some material that I have given him recently, and we have asked that that be a high priority for Esperance. We missed out in the last budget round.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 980.]

CITY OF ALBANY SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Statement by Member for Stirling

MR D.T. REDMAN (Stirling) [12.50 pm]: I bring to the attention of the house the very successful 2006 City of Albany sportsperson of the year awards held in Albany last night. Jessica Jasper and Matthew Mitchell were the joint junior winners for equestrian and bowls respectively. The senior winner was Geoff Faulkes for clay target shooting, and the veteran sportsperson of the year was Peter Muller for table tennis. The winner of the prestigious Mike Stidwell award for outstanding contribution was Celia Waugh, who is very active in the Albany Surf Life Saving Club.

The ceremony highlighted that we must not underestimate the wider value of sport in our regional communities. Sport cuts across many social and cultural boundaries and is often a conduit for youth to develop self-esteem and a strong sense of belonging. Investing in sports and sporting clubs yields a far greater benefit for the community than just the development of the sport itself. I encourage all levels of government to fund community sporting organisations commensurate with this broader community benefit. Last night's awards ceremony demonstrated not only the depth of commitment to sports in regional areas, but also the strong leadership and volunteer base that exists and is needed in the future to support various sporting clubs and organisations.

GREENWOOD JOEY SCOUTS - DONATION OF TOYS TO DWELLINGUP

Statement by Member for Kingsley

MRS J. HUGHES (Kingsley) [12.52 pm]: I am very pleased to have been involved with a very fine group of young children from the Greenwood Joey Scouts. After hearing about the devastation of the Dwellingup fires from their dedicated group leader, Mrs Sarah Gover, they decided that they would like to donate some of their personal possessions to the community that had experienced such a loss. Last week the Joeys came to my office to hand over a huge swag of toys to be passed on to the children in Dwellingup. The Joeys and their helpers who gave their toys were Matthew Gover, Matthew Gasionowski, Bryce Tough, Madison Hilton Shepherd, Georgia Babun, Danielle Nuttal, Rheanon Murphy, Phoebe Morris, Ryan Hewitt, Josh Coulter, Jayden Waters, Richard Duncan, James Gover, Simeon Gover, Sophie Gatfield, Ben Gatfield, James Gatfield, Lucas Overstone and Fiona McLaughlin. The toys will be received by the president of the Dwellingup Playgroup Association, Mrs Emily Johns, and we thank her for her participation in this project.

Acts such as this one create a sense of sharing and empathy with others. It is even more significant and noteworthy that I am talking about the generosity and understanding of six-year-olds. It has been a wonderful exercise. It was not easy for them to relinquish their personal possessions. It was an enjoyable afternoon to chat with them as they explained their giving of some of their favourite things. When other children found out that the Joeys had undertaken this project, they also dug deep and donated. I acknowledge David and Jaymie Boys for their generosity as well. The Kingsley community can be proud of the efforts of these children. I commend their participation and the wonderful guidance that they receive from their scout leader, Sarah Gover, and their parents.

PEEL REGION - NEED FOR MORE SCHOOLS

Statement by Member for Dawesville

DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville) [12.53 pm]: I was alarmed to learn in 2005 that the government had not specifically budgeted for any new schools in the Peel region for the next 10 years. With the overcrowding in schools and the huge population growth in my electorate, there is an urgent need for more schools, especially in

Dawesville. Meetings with education staff have confirmed this point. The former Minister for Education and Training was requested on many occasions to visit the Peel region to see first-hand the urgent need for more schools, and when she finally did visit the region, the result was that a new primary school would be built in Halls Head in 2008. Now there is a high priority for a new high school in south Mandurah. With primary schools already reaching their capacity, coupled with increasing numbers due to the raising of the school leaving age, it is essential that the government now commit to a new high school to cater for the growing population. Although the Halls Head Community College provides an excellent service, it is nearing capacity. Mandurah Senior College is the only government secondary school available for students to complete their studies. Mandurah Senior College is currently at premium capacity with 1 120 students. Mrs Jenny Humble, Mrs Barbara LeBreton and Sonya Perry, representing families in the region, have confirmed this urgent need and are requesting a high school for years 8 to 12 south of the Dawesville Channel. Land has been allocated in Melros for a high school. Mrs Perry strongly supports the Melros site as an ideal location for the new high school, and says that it would also provide much needed facilities south of the Cut, such as playing fields. I am grateful to the Minister for Education and Training for agreeing to meet the parents.

SCHOOLS IN SOUTHERN RIVER ELECTORATE

Statement by Member for Southern River

MR P.W. ANDREWS (Southern River) [12.55 pm]: I draw the house's attention to some of the outstanding achievements of primary schools in my electorate. Seaforth Primary School, which is on the edge of my electorate, has a sustainable gardens program for which the school won an award this year. It involved the children establishing and working throughout the year on a compost and vegetable garden. The principal, Mr Graham Auckett, and the science teacher, Kate Wilton, envisage that the school will enter phase 2 this year, which will involve a major expansion of the program. Fruit trees and flower gardens will be planted and the school plans to hold an open day to show off its wares to parents and the community. Plans are also under way for the school to potentially sell its wares as a method of fundraising for future school projects.

I also congratulate Forest Crescent Primary School. Yesterday it held a "lapathon", which was organised by Belinda Cusworth and Sue Fourneau and which raised more than \$9 000 for the school. The principal, Gregory Travers, informed me that at the end of 2006 the school choir won an award at Greyhounds WA Cannington centre and picked up a prize of some \$2 000 for that. That is an outstanding achievement.

Huntingdale Primary School, which is another excellent school in my electorate, recently won the Canning District Education Office excellence award for its literacy and numeracy programs for Aboriginal children. I congratulate Ed Black and staff, particularly Mrs Christine Nash and the Aboriginal community chairperson, Mr Norm Yarran.

BUSSELTON JUNIOR SPORTS

Statement by Member for Vasse

MR T. BUSWELL (Vasse - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.56 pm]: I wish to draw the house's attention to the terrific state of junior sports in my home town of Busselton, all of which are growing and prospering and providing much needed recreational activities for children in my electorate. As we all know, childhood obesity is a major social issue confronting not only this state but also Australia. Although the government talks about taxing fast foods and banning advertising of them, we should be encouraging parents to take responsibility for their children. On the weekend I had an opportunity to visit the end-of-season celebrations for Busselton junior tee-ball, junior basketball and junior surf-lifesaving. I take the opportunity to congratulate the hundreds of children who were involved in each of those activities in my home town. In particular I acknowledge the work of the parents who support their children in training in sporting activities by helping to train and coach them and for officiating at many other children's sporting activities. In particular I highlight the contribution made by three people whom I consider to be true champions of my electorate: Marilyn Royer, president of the Busselton Tee-Ball Association; Neil Stallard, president of the Busselton Basketball Amateur Association; and Robbie Cockman, president of the Junior Surf Life Saving Club. Those three people are making a fantastic ongoing contribution to the development of junior sport in my town and play a terrific role in community building, which is incredibly important in a modern social setting.

NARDINE WIMMIN'S REFUGE

Statement by Member for Victoria Park

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [12.58 pm]: I rise to commend the work of all those associated with Nardine Wimmin's Refuge. Nardine was established in 1974 by a group of committed feminists. It was the first community-based women's refuge in Western Australia. Nardine was first set up to offer crisis accommodation to women and their children who were escaping domestic violence. Nardine was funded by the Whitlam Labor government through the state government Department of Health. In its early years, Nardine was located in rental accommodation in North Perth, moving to Victoria Park in the mid-1980s. The refuge moved to its current

purpose-built home in Carlisle in 1991. The building provides a communal home for five women and their children at any one time. In the course of a year, this accounts for between 45 and 50 women and between 75 and 100 children. Women stay for between one day and several months. These women are from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, with between 30 and 40 per cent of clients coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The women and children are provided with a range of services, including immediate needs assessment; the provision of emotional, practical and emergency relief, such as food and clothing; retrieval of personal belongings; and referral to health services. Ongoing support includes advocacy and referral to various support agencies, both government and non-government. Practical support includes transport to appointments, taking children to and from school, assisting with new accommodation and weekly shopping trips. Currently, the refuge has moved from its home in Carlisle to temporary accommodation while its premises are renovated. This project has been supported by the Department of Housing and Works. The renovations will provide much needed upgrades to the houses and increase the space for staff and residents, and are scheduled to be completed in late 2007. This will pose staffing and financial strain on Nardine; however, I am sure that the strength of all involved with the refuge will ensure that these challenges are met and overcome. I look forward to working with the refuge on this issue in the future.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF WATER - APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR GENERAL

1. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's recent interest in maiden speeches and direct his attention to the maiden speech of one of his most senior ministers, the member for Balcatta, who said in his maiden speech -

Mrs M.H. Roberts: There isn't one.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I mean the member for Balcatta.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: It sounds as though members opposite are all confused. I am referring to the member for Balcatta. He says in his maiden speech -

Personally, I am indebted to Brian Burke for showing to me that our political system can work, . . .

He refers further on to the men of the calibre of Brian Burke who formed the Labor Party. He makes four or five significant comments. I refer the Premier also to the transcripts of the Corruption and Crime Commission and the detailed relationship between Brian Burke and Paul Frewer, including comments from Brian Burke as follows -

Frewer will fight this to the, to death for us.

- (1) Why, after consulting the member for Balcatta, did the Premier decide to reject the three candidates put forward by the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards for the position of the head of the Department of Water and, instead, continue to favour Mr Frewer, who was interviewed by Ms Murray, but did not even make the short list?
- (2) Given the close connection between Brian Burke and Paul Frewer and the member for Balcatta's glowing endorsements of Brian Burke in his maiden speech, why has the Premier not removed Mr Frewer?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Before I respond, I welcome into the gallery young adults representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who are visiting Parliament and the Constitutional Centre today. Welcome.

- (1)-(2) I do not quite know where to begin. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition; he has done a bit of research. That was good work.

Mr P.D. Omodei: The only difference is that you misquoted my maiden speech. I can guarantee that those words are in the member for Balcatta's maiden speech. There are five glowing references to Brian Burke.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: What is on the historical record is on the historical record. There is no walking away from it. The Leader of the Opposition's support for the timber industry was articulated very powerfully in his maiden speech to the Parliament. The member for Balcatta, which he is now - I think it was Nollamara when he was first elected in 1989, in, I think, the same election as the Leader of the Opposition - had previously been a staff member for Mr Burke.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: In 1989 he no doubt felt that it was appropriate to recognise the support he felt he had been given by Mr Burke at that time. In relation to that matter, it would be fair to say that a lot of water has passed under the bridge since 1989. A lot of people have had cause to reassess their view of Brian Burke since 1989. I understand that the member's relationship with Mr Burke is not quite as it once was, we might say. We will leave that matter at that.

If issues surrounding Paul Frewer require investigation and the Leader of the Opposition has cause to believe that they do require investigation, I urge him to take his concerns -

Mr P.D. Omodei: He did not even make the short list. You are the Minister for Public Sector Management; you are the minister responsible.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I was provided with advice by the minister that it was not an appropriate time to replace him because there was a lot of transformation and other work going on that he wanted Mr Frewer to see through.

Mr T. Buswell: What sort of work was he seeing through, and on whose behalf?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: On behalf of the government and the minister. If there are issues relating to Paul Frewer that the Leader of the Opposition feels are not being addressed adequately in the CCC inquiry, please take them to the CCC.

It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition referred to the transcript and what Mr Burke had to say about Paul Frewer. I cast my mind back to when Brian Burke was in the witness box during the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters. My memory is pretty good at recalling these things. I spent a lot of time listening and observing.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You didn't do much.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I have come a long way since those times. Mr Burke also has traversed a great distance one way or another. I remember when matters were being put to Brian Burke that were given in evidence by Laurie Connell about his relationship with Brian Burke, and I paraphrase them, because I cannot exactly recall Brian Burke's own words about this sort of assessment of evidence. He said something like this, "Just because Laurie Connell says something is true, it doesn't mean it is true." I say to people, when they are listening to what comes out of the CCC, to hark back to those words. I also say that just because Brian Burke says something is true, it does not mean that it is true.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You are questioning the CCC.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: The member for Hillarys is not really this thick, is he?

Mr R.F. Johnson: I'm not as thick as you would like to think I am.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Maybe I am being overly generous. He is not really that thick.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Read *Hansard* to see what you just said.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I am not questioning the CCC. I am urging a bit of caution by people reading evidence from particular witnesses and accepting it as fact, untested. The CCC is there to make those sorts of judgements about what Mr Brian Burke said. It will make that judgement in relation to Paul Frewer.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You do not think you should make a judgement?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: The evidence about Paul Frewer is nothing at all like the evidence about some of the other people who have been before the commissioner.

Does the Leader of the Opposition want to ask me a supplementary question while I am on my feet?

CLIMATE CHANGE - GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

2. Mrs J. HUGHES to the Premier:

Mr Speaker -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kingsley has the call.

Mrs J. HUGHES: Can the Premier please advise the house of the state government's latest initiative to help address climate change?

Mr P.D. Omodei: Nuclear power.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

That would make a story. I wonder why members opposite are in opposition.

I thank the member for the question and for her interest in this matter because climate change is a big issue in her electorate.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: It is. Today was a good day. We recently experienced the effects of climate change in Western Australia first-hand - everybody knows it. From the north to the south of the state - I will not say from the top to the bottom because that might give the impression that water flows easily from the north to the south, and we know that it does not necessarily do so - this state has been experiencing the effects of climate change. We have noticed it particularly here in the south west. We have to be able to improve our capacity to predict change and plan for the future. We have already implemented many initiatives designed to address the issue of climate change, such as reducing the need for cars by doubling the size of the Perth rail network through building the new southern rail line. It is a very good initiative.

Mr T. Buswell: How many cars is that going to take off the roads?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I see we are still being criticised for it by the visionaries from the other side.

We are also doing that by investing in renewable energy - wind, solar, biodiesel - by committing to a national emissions strategy -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and the member for Vasse. When members ask a question, they have a limited capacity to interject. If the member thinks it is a great question, he should have asked it.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Perhaps I should have forewarned the young people in the gallery about what to expect when they come to question time. Please do not be alarmed!

Mr R.F. Johnson: They actually expect answers. They never get them.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I believe in discipline. Just think of it as the best live theatre in town. It is unscripted.

We are committed to a national emissions trading scheme by 2010. Much more needs to be done; we all recognise that - well, some of us do. As part of the state government's greenhouse and state water strategies, earlier today I announced an \$8.6 million funding boost over five years to research climate change and its link to extreme weather events across our state. I will be in Canberra this week to attend Australia's first National Climate Change Summit, convened by federal Labor leader Kevin Rudd; I congratulate him for it. The new state funding will go towards research to extend our knowledge of current and future climate patterns around WA; identifying those regions in the state that are most vulnerable to climate change, and using research to help those regions, industry and government in adapting to the impacts of climate change. The research to be undertaken will provide greater knowledge and understanding about future climate change to ensure effective planning for water supply -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Isn't there already an Indian Ocean climate change group?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Yes. It started in 1998.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Why start another one?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Because the funding has come to an end; otherwise, there would be no funding left. We are extending the funding and increasing it to allow the research to branch into other areas. It is a very important initiative and I thank the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO for the work they are doing. Stage 3 expands earlier strategic research on the south west and will include new research on the north west. As I said, the initiative was begun in 1998 and it has provided very valuable information. Part of that information allowed us, for example, to make a positive decision about the establishment of the desalination plant, which is now heralded as visionary. Other cities around Australia are wishing that they had been able to do it as well. It was a very good decision by my predecessor, Hon Geoffrey Gallop. We will be rolling out a range of initiatives this year and next year to address the impact of climate change and today was one of them.

OFFICE OF SHARED SERVICES - RON MANCE

3. **Mr A.J. SIMPSON to the Premier:**

I refer to the news that the head of the Office of Shared Services experiment, Mr Ron Mance, has been given a management-initiated retirement.

- (1) Why was Mr Mance forced out and what was the value of his payout?
- (2) What conditions were placed on Mr Mance's management-initiated retirement?
- (3) Under this termination agreement, is Mr Mance prohibited from discussing possible irregularities in the awarding of contracts to Oracle and its partner ASG?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

- (1)-(3) I thank the member for the question. I am glad I got another question because I wanted to take the opportunity to wish our Australian Football League sides the best this week in the first game of the season, even the Eagles. I hope they do well.

As I understand it, "mace" is the stuff that is sprayed at people if they are having a go at someone. The gentleman's name is Mance.

Mr T. Buswell: You know what he meant; just answer the question.

Mr M.P. Murray: Oh, come on, member for Vasse. The last time I saw lips like that they had a hook in them! It was a groper.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: He is Mr Ron Mance. Until very recently, Mr Mance headed the Office of Shared Services. When we first got into government, Ron Mance was the deputy director general of the Department of Education and I formed a very high opinion of him. I still have a very high opinion of him. When I discovered a week or so ago that he was about to leave the public sector through a management-initiated retirement, I asked if he could be persuaded otherwise to stay, even if he did not want to stay in the Office of Shared Services. I wondered whether there was some other place in the public sector where we could accommodate Mr Mance, because I do not believe we can afford to lose people of his quality.

Mr T. Buswell: Did he instigate it?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: As I understand it, it was by mutual agreement after discussion between him and the head of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. As I said, I asked the -
Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I am endeavouring to answer the question and to pay tribute to Ron Mance, who has provided wonderful service to the public sector and the people of Western Australia over a very long period. I think he is a very good man. He was always apolitical in his approach to his position and his work and he made a great contribution to public life in the state. For my part, I wish that he had stayed on.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Why is he leaving?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Because he decided, I think, in discussion with -

Mr P.D. Omodei: He decided?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: He decided in discussion with -
Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I do not have the details of his payout. I do not carry them around in my pocket. I am assuming, but I do not know, that the same requirements or conditions that apply to other management-initiated retirements, that disclosure and commentary thereafter -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: There is no cover-up. Do not be pathetic.

In anticipation of a question along these lines, I was furnished with a copy of the final report of the Office of Shared Services of 1 July to 31 December 2006. Mr Mance gives the executive director's overview and it is worth reading. The last two paragraphs state -

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all the staff who have contributed so much to what has been an exciting and dynamic period for us all.

I would also like to thank the Treasurer, Hon. Eric Ripper MLA and the Premier, Hon. Alan Carpenter MLA for their support of the Shared Services reform process.

The SPEAKER: Before I call for the next question, I refer the member for Collie-Wellington and anyone else in the chamber to my direction in relation to calling members various birds. That extends to fish and any other animal people may wish to use. It is inappropriate to refer to members by names that are designed to ridicule those people. I urge members to be a little more imaginative than that.

NUCLEAR POWER

4. Mr J.R. QUIGLEY to the Minister for Energy:

I refer the minister to the claims by the Prime Minister that nuclear power is the only solution to climate change. Will he update the house on the Carpenter government's approach to this serious issue?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

I think the member for his question and his commitment to opposing the nuclear industry in Western Australia. I do not know about you, Mr Speaker, but I remain amazed by the recent statements that have been made by the Prime Minister about nuclear power.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I urge members to try to allow this chamber to continue with question time. I call the Minister for Education and Training to order, and the members for Nedlands and Darling Range.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: As I said, I remain amazed by the attitude of the Prime Minister to nuclear power, and particularly his response just recently to what are seemingly relatively innocuous statements by Sir Nicholas Stern, the former chief executive officer of the World Bank, about where Australia should be going with climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It seems that the Prime Minister, in his response to Sir Nicholas Stern's statements, is now saying that nuclear power is the only alternative energy to be used to address climate change.

Mr T. Buswell: Where did you see that?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is what he said. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should go back and check it. The Prime Minister said that it is the only alternative. As one commentator said recently -

Mr T. Buswell interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Vasse to order for the second time.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: As one commentator said recently -

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Dawesville to order for the first time.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I know they love interjecting on me, Mr Speaker. As I heard one commentator say recently, suggesting that nuclear power is the only alternative for addressing climate change is like giving up smoking by going onto crack. The position of the Prime Minister is absolutely untenable when it comes to nuclear energy - absolutely untenable. What he is doing is promoting an energy source that is the most expensive, the most risky -

Mr T. Buswell interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Vasse to order for the third time.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Excellent. He is promoting a technology that is the most expensive, the most risky and the one that leaves -

Dr S.C. Thomas interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Capel!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is the one -

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Capel to order, and I urge him to listen to the Chair. If he wishes to continue to make interjections when I am attempting to silence him, I will name him.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It is the technology that will leave the greatest legacy for humankind - a 25 000-year legacy - because of the nuclear waste; and yet, the Prime Minister says that it is the only alternative energy source for addressing climate change, with all those problems associated with it. What the Prime Minister fails to take into account is the use of clean coal and the fact that Australia is one of the largest coal producers on the planet and has the largest coal reserves on the planet. In the debate, the Prime Minister always forgets to mention gas. Australia is one of the largest producers of exportable liquefied natural gas in the world, and we will become one of the largest exporters of LNG in the world. Does that come into the Prime Minister's statements? Not at all. Of course, we have one of the most fantastic environments in the world for renewable

energy when it comes to solar power, wind power, geothermal energy and wave power. All of those technologies are alternatives to an expensive, risky, dangerous source of energy that will leave a legacy for 25 000 years. However, that is the direction in which the Prime Minister is going. He says that nuclear power is the only alternative energy source.

The way forward for Australia is carbon emissions trading. Western Australia is one of the states that has been leading the nation on carbon emissions trading by putting forward various structures for the carbon emissions market as an alternative to nuclear energy.

SEWERAGE SCHEME - SMALL COUNTRY TOWNS PILOT PROGRAM

5. **Mr T.K. WALDRON to the Minister for Water Resources:**

Before I ask my question, further to the Premier wishing good luck to our Australian Football League teams, more importantly, I wish the Speaker's parliamentary cricket team good luck. It will do battle with the press over the next couple of days. I am sure it will do well.

Given that the small country towns sewerage scheme pilot program is about to be scrapped due to high costs, I ask -

- (1) Will the minister give consideration to establishing a parliamentary task force or working group to examine alternative ways to deal with the looming sewerage-related health crisis in several country towns?
- (2) Will the minister consider providing such a task force with the resources to look at how other states are dealing with small town sewage disposal issues and the recycling of waste water for small local projects such as parks, gardens and ovals?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

That is a very good question, and I intend to try to answer it so that we can go forward on this. However, I also use this opportunity to wish both the West Coast Eagles and the Fremantle Dockers well, and the parliamentary cricket team.

- (1)-(2) The member for Wagin, along with the member for Merredin, came to see me with a delegation of people from Kondinin, because Kondinin was one of the towns that was on the list to be part of the small country towns sewerage scheme pilot program. As the title indicates, it is a pilot program. It was suggested in 2000, but it was in only about 2003 that we kicked it off in Kulin. The work in Kulin has now been completed. When I became the minister responsible a couple of years ago, work was about to start in the town of Tambellup. However, because of the rising costs, the Water Corporation was not sure whether the work in that town would go ahead. However, I said that we should at least complete the work in two towns before the review was undertaken. I think it was suggested earlier that work would be done in many more towns. However, the cost has increased significantly. The work in Tambellup is almost finished.

Mr P.D. Omodei: What about Kondinin? Why could you do the work in Kulin and Hyden but you cannot do the work in Kondinin?

The SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It is not the Leader of the Opposition's question. Does he not have any respect for any members in this house? It is a genuine question from the member, and I will answer it, Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wagin asked the question on behalf of the National Party. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will enjoy hearing the answer at the end of the day.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: As I said, it is a pilot program. It was seeking to find innovative ways by which sewerage services could be provided to small country towns in a cost-competitive way. That is proving to be a real challenge. As the member hinted in the introduction to his question, the review will take place, and I will get the results about midyear. However, the numbers are not looking too good. No decision has been made. The problem is clearly with the cost going up to \$25 000 a lot to provide sewerage according to the required standards. That is starting to look like it will be a real problem. The member suggested in his question that perhaps we could put in place a task force to look at that. I think that is a suggestion that has merit. However, at this stage I believe it is appropriate that we wait for the Water Corporation to come back with its review, because the work of such a task force would not be to look at the technical information, which the Water Corporation could do; its task would really be to look at a much bigger picture, because part of the cost comes back to environmental and health standards. There would need to be community consultation to gain a much wider view of whether those things form part of the obstacles. The task force would also need to look at the contribution local communities can make. I believe that a task force comprising members of Parliament, or another small

group, could look at that and might be able to advance those issues. I accept the genuine nature of the question and the real interest that the member for Wagin and other members have in small country towns. I also want to see what we can do. I will take the interjection.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Minister, you need to know that, near Northam, there are three places where raw sewage is going into the Avon River, which becomes the Swan River.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: That is the issue that was raised with me by the Kondinin people with regard to Hyden. That certainly causes me concern. I respect the very positive approach being taken by the member who asked the question to see what we can do about it. I am certainly willing to take up discussions with the member when I have the report from the Water Corporation midyear to see how we can look at the issue in a different way to try to deal with what is a real issue in a number of country towns.

COMMONWEALTH STATE/TERRITORY DISABILITY AGREEMENT MEETING

6. **Mr P.W. ANDREWS to the Minister for Disability Services:**

Can the minister inform the house of the anticipated outcome of the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement meeting in Brisbane next week?

Ms S.M. McHALE replied:

I thank the member for his question. First of all, I thank all the families and organisations that work for people with disabilities for welcoming me warmly back into the portfolio. It is a great privilege to be able to represent people with disabilities. Next week, all state and territory ministers and the commonwealth minister will meet to thrash out the fourth CSTDA, which will set the framework for the next five years of funding from the commonwealth, states and territories. Therefore, it will be a very important meeting. Unfortunately, already the commonwealth has indicated its preliminary position, which is not good news for families in Western Australia or, indeed, anywhere else in the nation. On 8 February, the commonwealth made a supposed offer that contained no growth to the existing level of base funding, had indexation at 1.8 per cent and had no additional funding for unmet need. That was the same day that the Senate's Standing Committee on Community Affairs released its report into the funding and operations of the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement. It was a unanimous report in which members from both sides of the political spectrum recommended that all jurisdictions commit to a fourth agreement involving substantial additional funding to address unmet need. I can report to the house that the Carpenter government will commit - it has done so in its forward estimates - additional funding to address unmet need. By 2009-10, the state will have increased the disability services budget to \$340.5 million. That is an increase of 104 per cent since 2001.

Since coming to government, we have doubled the budget for people with disabilities. Members can compare that with the paltry efforts of the commonwealth government. In the past year, 96 per cent of growth funding received by families came from the state government. That is in direct contrast with the commonwealth's paltry effort. The commonwealth has asked the states to commit to improve the systems that counter unmet need and improve accountability and produce quality services. On behalf of Western Australia, I am happy to recommit to those requirements; however, in return we want the commonwealth to recognise the inequity faced by Western Australia under this agreement.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Roe to order.

Ms S.M. McHALE: The behaviour of opposition members is quite appalling. I had an amicable conversation with the minister last week at which I made our position very clear. We have committed substantial growth and we expect -

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

Ms S.M. McHALE: No, the Leader of the Opposition was trying to catch this government out. Of course I am advocating on behalf of people with disabilities. In return, I expect a decent indexation, a commitment to growth and a recognition that since agreement one, Western Australia has been duded by the commonwealth's refusal to recognise the inequity in the funding. I hope that I will be able to report good news. Quite frankly, the effort is one-sided. The state Labor government is committed to families with disabilities. There has been no increased effort -

Mr P.D. Omodei: That's nonsense and you know it!

Ms S.M. McHALE: The Leader of the Opposition should look at the figures. He ought to be ashamed of his commonwealth colleagues for neglecting families with disabilities.

OFFICE OF SHARED SERVICES - MANAGEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

7. Mr G. SNOOK to the Premier:

I refer to the implosion of the government's shared services experiment and the fact that the project had to be shipped out of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and into the Department of Treasury and Finance at the beginning of the year.

- (1) Why was the Premier's department incapable of successfully managing the implementation of this project?
- (2) Who in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet was involved in the shared services experiment and has anyone in the department been held accountable for this shambles?
- (3) Why was the Under Treasurer forced to base himself at Cannington for a week in an attempt to fix up the mess that the Premier's department left behind?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(3) I will ignore the many rather over-exaggerated assumptions in the member's question. I would not call the Office of Shared Services an experiment. The implementation of shared services has not gone as well as we would have liked. This issue was under discussion throughout last year. By the end of last year we, as a group, determined that fundamental changes were necessary given that significant financial implications were involved in the implementation program. We took the view - I shared that view - that it would be best if Treasury had a more direct role in overseeing the implementation of shared services, which, we still anticipate, will eventually deliver significant reform benefits to Western Australia that will enable the public sector and, therefore, the people of Western Australia to get better value for money. Some of the problems associated with the implementation of the program have been well and truly documented. They involve issues with Oracle's provision of the software package, which was referred to in an earlier question. That company has explained its inability to meet certain deadlines and requirements by saying that, similar to areas in the public sector, it has had difficulties attracting and maintaining enough skilled staff to allow the implementation to proceed according to the projected time line. The group came to the view - I share that view - that rather than have the Department of the Premier and Cabinet overseeing the implementation, that role would be best carried out by the Department of Treasury and Finance. The Under Treasurer has taken a specific role in the change of responsibility to ensure that we get a clear appreciation of the difficulties that are involved, the challenges that must be met and the strategy that will best meet those challenges. As I said before, I regret the fact that Ron Mance has left the public sector. He was a very good contributor to public life in Western Australia.

OFFICE OF SHARED SERVICES - MANAGEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

8. Mr G. SNOOK to the Premier:

I ask a supplementary question. Given that the project continues to lurch from crisis to crisis, and that it has already cost taxpayers millions of dollars without any benefit, will the Premier support the opposition's call to refer the project to the Public Accounts Committee; and, if not, why not?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I believe that we have a fairly good handle on the issues that are at stake.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I have absolutely no reason to believe that anything that the opposition might bring to the discussion table would enhance the prospects of delivering our desired outcome. I do not believe that it is necessary for the matter to be referred to a committee. What is necessary is for us to get on with the job.

INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS PROGRAM - FUNDING ROLLBACK

9. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Education and Training:

Will the minister comment on the recent rollback of funding available under the federal government's Investing In Our Schools program?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I will. I am agog at what the commonwealth government has done. The state government's \$1 billion capital works budget over four years is building new schools and additional facilities for schools all over Western Australia. The commonwealth government's Investing In Our Schools program has allocated \$1 billion for all

schools in Australia over four years. When that is averaged out, if Western Australia receives its fair share, we will receive \$25 million. Of course, Western Australia never gets its fair share. We will receive less than \$25 million. The state government's average capital works budget per annum is more than \$250 million. The commonwealth's contribution to Western Australia is less than \$25 million. It gets worse. Until recently, a commonwealth program offered schools grants of up to \$150 000 per application. A couple of weeks ago midway through the program it lowered the amount from \$150 000 to \$100 000. Schools applying for funds for small projects are now limited to \$100 000.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the members for Murray and Roe to order.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It gets even worse for us here in Western Australia. A letter to the federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Hon Julie Bishop, dated 15 March 2007 that was written by our colleague the member for Bunbury has come into my possession. He wrote to the federal minister a couple of weeks ago about this particular program.

Dr K.D. Hames: How did you get it?

Mr M. McGOWAN: He sent a courtesy copy to me. The member for Bunbury wrote -

I write on behalf of a distraught group of parents and educators in Bunbury in regards to a recent rejection of an Investing in Our Schools application for Round Three.

In the letter he indicates that the school applied for just over \$50 000. The member for Bunbury will like this: one of the things that the school applied for under this program was some shade structures. The school was knocked back by the commonwealth government because it said that the school was not allowed to have shade structures as part of its application. It could not have shade over playgrounds etc as it was outside the criteria. However, having received the letter from the member for Bunbury in good faith, I looked at the commonwealth government's Investing In Our Schools website. It shows a picture of students playing under a new shade structure at Solway Primary School. It states -

Slipping, slopping, slapping and staying in the shade were the focus at the recent unveiling by federal Treasurer and local MP Peter Costello of the much awaited shade structure at Solway Primary School in Victoria.

Schools in the leafy eastern suburbs of Melbourne in the federal Treasurer's electorate can receive money for shade structures but schools in the member for Bunbury's electorate, the federal electorate of Forrest, are ineligible. It is further evidence of the commonwealth government's lack of concern for Western Australia, lack of concern for Bunbury - it hates Bunbury - and its complete disregard for shade structures in schools in Western Australia.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX - REPORT RECOMMENDING INCREASE

10. **Mr T. BUSWELL to the Premier:**

I refer to revelations that Labor state premiers have commissioned a report that recommends an increase in the rate of the goods and services tax.

- (1) What role did the Premier play in the commissioning of this report?
- (2) Does the Premier support an increase in the rate of GST above the current 10 per cent?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

- (1)-(2) I thank the member for the question. I am reminded of a video of my now 14-year-old daughter taken when she was about 18 months old. On the video I asked her a question and she replied, "Now let's think about that." Do I support an increase in the GST? Let me think about that. I do not think I do. Does the member for Vasse support an increase in the GST?

Mr T. Buswell: No.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: We agree on something. Nor do I.

Mr T. Buswell: Why did you commission the report?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: When we commission a report on this side of the Parliament we do not necessarily tell the person who is writing the report exactly what we want him to report. Is that what the opposition does? When it commissions a report, does it say, "By the way, we're commissioning a report on the taxation regimes as they apply in Australia? We want you to find that we should increase the GST." Is that how the opposition operates?

Mr T. Buswell: You and your mates and Kevin Rudd have been caught out.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: We have been found out commissioning a report! As I recall, we announced the fact that we commissioned a report. The member for Vasse's approach reminds me of a quote. I do not remember which prominent Liberal described members of his own side as small-time crooks and non-achievers. Who on that side of the Parliament described his colleagues as small-time crooks and non-achievers? Which of those two categories does the member for Vasse fit? The leaders in the council of federation are looking at ways of improving the way government does its business in Australia. As part of that, a variety of reports will be commissioned to provide advice. Occasionally, there might be some controversial recommendations in that advice. That does not necessarily mean that we will blindly adopt those recommendations. We will look at the advice that comes forward, look at the research and make a decision. It is a bit like the question I was asked: do I support uranium mining? The reason I asked the member for Vasse those questions is that the nature of the question I get from members opposite comes from people who support uranium mining. No, I will not allow uranium mining in WA whilst I am the Premier and have the power not to. I do not think I could describe the member for Vasse as an underachiever; I would describe him as an overachiever. No, I do not support an increase in the GST.

MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA - ELECTRONIC ROAD SAFETY SIGNS CONTRACT

11. Mr J.E. McGRATH to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

- (1) Did Main Roads Western Australia recently award a \$900 000 contract for 11 electronic road safety signs in the southern suburbs to the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority at the expense of two other tenderers, both of which were Western Australian businesses?
- (2) Why is the government giving taxpayers' money to a New South Wales state government agency at the expense of WA businesses?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

- (1)-(2) It is quite extraordinary that the opposition has such confidence in my extraordinary powers to think that I would know about every single contract that has been issued by Main Roads. Any member who seriously wanted an answer to that question would have given me some notice of it. I do not believe that such a contract has been granted. If the member wishes to put the question on notice and give me an opportunity to check, I will be more than happy to do so.

FREIGHT NETWORK REVIEW LOCAL IMPACTS COMMITTEE - REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Mr A.D. McRAE to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

What progress is the Carpenter government making in addressing the report and recommendations of the Freight Network Review Local Impacts Committee, a committee comprising state and local government and industry and community representatives from across the south metropolitan region?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the way in which he has chaired the Local Impacts Committee, which deals with the very challenging issues of managing the freight traffic through the metropolitan area, particularly through the south west corridor. It has been an exemplary process. We have already completed about \$1.6 million worth of projects, including stage one of the South Street priority bus lanes, mast-arm signals on Leach Highway, anti-skid treatments on Leach Highway and Manning Road, and the east-west cycle link on Leach Highway, crossing the Kwinana Freeway, in association with the Bull Creek train station. We have also approved \$6.1 million worth of additional works to be undertaken this year and next year. They include: stage 2 bus transit priority lanes on South Street from the Kwinana Freeway to Roe Highway; widening of South Street, Ranford Road and Bannister Road to three lanes; lengthening of right turning lanes on Leach Highway and Manning Road and upgrading pedestrian facilities; lengthening right turning lanes and upgrading pedestrian facilities on Leach Highway and North Lake Road; and left lane and double right turns on Leach Highway and Stock Road and an upgrade to pedestrian facilities. A great bundle of works has been delivered in fulfilment of the undertaking that we made to the local community that we would seriously implement the committee's recommendations. I congratulate everyone who participated in that process.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS - TITLE OF "THE HONOURABLE"

Standing Orders Suspension - Motion

DR J.M. WOOLLARD (Alfred Cove) [2.50 pm]: - without notice: I move -

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the following motion to be moved forthwith -

That this house calls on the Premier to advise His Excellency the Governor that the conferring of the title "The Honourable" on members of the Legislative Council by virtue alone of being a member of that house, should be discontinued.

It is important that standing orders be suspended to enable this house to debate this motion. Whilst many members in this house believe that the next election may be 18 months away, it could be sooner.

Several members interjected.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It actually does.

Western Australia has had representative government since 1870. When government was first formed in Western Australia, two-thirds of the members were nominated and one-third were elected, many of whom were from the landed gentry. The first official Parliament was formed in 1890.

Point of Order

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Should we not be considering why this is a matter of urgency and the reason it cannot be considered in the normal course of business? It is not clear.

The SPEAKER: The point of order is exactly correct. However, we usually give some leeway to the member moving the motion. I am sure that the member, having spoken for only one minute, can be allowed to speak generally for a short time before she addresses her motion; that is, the reason for the suspension of standing orders. I look forward to hearing what the member says in relation to the suspension.

Debate Resumed

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I do not believe that I have seen a member opposite jump up so quickly.

It is urgent that we debate this matter now. Why, 130 years after this Parliament was formed, is there still an inequity between the two houses? I have looked at the qualifications for backbenchers of the two houses and they are very similar.

As I said earlier, standing orders should be suspended now because, depending on what happens, there could be an election later this year. We know from comments by the Greens (WA) in the upper house that, depending on what happens within the next few months, they may not guarantee supply this year. That being the case, there may be an early election. Irrespective of whether the government retains government or the opposition gains government, this Parliament should consider this issue now so that a decision can be made. If members agree that there should be equality for backbenchers in both houses, it will give the Premier the opportunity to write to the Governor and set in motion the actions that need to be taken to give that equality. That being the case, it is important that standing orders be suspended now rather than in two or three months when there would not be time for this Parliament to debate this issue and reach a decision.

It is possible that the government is happy with the inequality that currently exists with some backbenchers being given an honorary title that dates back to when members of Parliament did not receive a salary. Nowadays, backbenchers receive the same salary. Many members in this house believe that they work hard in their electorates. We were very pleased when the government gave us extra research support and were surprised when the upper house members got the same support.

This an important motion. When we consider the word "honourable" -

The SPEAKER: Member, time is up in relation to not addressing the motion. It may well be that members in this place might support the motion the member wishes to debate. However, that is not what we are currently debating. I need the member to address urgently the reasons that this motion should take priority over everything else and that we should put the business of the house aside to debate this motion. That is the motion the member is debating and I direct her to address her comments to that.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It is an urgent motion that needs to be debated. I have had discussions with members on both sides of the house and I believe some of them would like to participate in this debate. Many of them have suggested that this issue should have been debated several years ago. Therefore, I believe the time is right to move the suspension of standing orders to allow this debate to take place.

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta - Leader of the House) [2.56 pm]: I do not believe that the member has made a case for the suspension of standing orders to debate this particular motion. The motion is No 13 on the notice paper under "Private Members' Business - Notices of Motion" and it is appropriate that it be brought forward in the time allowed for such a motion. It is not appropriate to suspend standing orders and give precedence to this motion over other matters that the house needs to deal with today.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe) [2.57 pm]: The opposition regards this motion as neither important nor urgent and it will not support the suspension of standing orders.

The SPEAKER: This is a motion to suspend standing orders and if I hear a dissenting voice I will need to divide the house. I have satisfied myself that there is an absolute majority of members present.

Question put and negatived.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 5) 2006
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 6) 2006

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

DR G.G. JACOBS (Roe) [2.58 pm]: I am pleased that the Minister for Education and Training is in the chamber. This is a cognate debate on money-related bills and, previously, I was referring to the future of my electorate, particularly the town of Esperance, which is a growing town. A \$2.7 billion mine will be developed on Esperance's doorstep. The resident staff at that mine will need appropriate facilities to educate their children. When the mine comes on stream, many of these people will live in Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe. It is important that an adequate boarding facility is available to allow children to attend the high school in Esperance. The high school has over 1 000 students. An Anglican school will come on stream in 2008 and there is the possibility that some of the students who will attend that school will come from different parts of the region and will need to stay in a boarding facility. There are 105 students in our residential college hostel now; it is bulging at the seams. The transportable units contain one bathroom and ablution facility for five children. I urge the minister to take our case to the budget process to get that facility upgraded to cope with the students' needs.

At the beginning of my remarks, I referred to the potential public health disaster in Esperance caused by the lead pollution. I ask the Premier and the Leader of the House to support my motion listed on the notice paper, when it is brought before the house. I am seeking to bring it before the house in a bipartisan approach to deal with the lead pollution issue in our town. The motion requests that the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee inquire into, and report on, the cause and extent of lead pollution in the Esperance area and the port. I ask the Premier to support my motion. Its terms of reference seek an investigation into, among other things, how the licensing process for the export of pelletised lead enabled the export of granulated powdered lead, which increased the possibility of air-borne pollution in the town; the effectiveness of dust monitoring and reporting and the responses to those very high levels in February-May last year; and the extent of the handling practices in Esperance. I did say that, in fact, the lead pollution threatened the community. I am reminded of patients under my care in my previous role. I was rung by the regional health officer about an 11-month-old child who was under my care in my practice who has levels of lead in her blood of 11 micrograms per decilitre - 11 micrograms per 100 millilitres of blood - which is over the accepted level of 10 micrograms.

I ask for the people of Esperance that a standing committee investigate the issue, because we must prevent the bureaucracies fending the issue off one way or another. It is important that an inquiry investigate, for the people of Esperance, the extent of their problem, what they can do about it and what will help clean it up. As was evident at the meeting I chaired on Monday night, they particularly want to know how this happened to our very pristine port, bay and environment in Esperance. Who has taken his eye off the ball for this to happen? I ask the Premier whether the government will support this motion when I move it next week.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys) [3.04 pm]: I am thinking of introducing a new game show in Western Australia called "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire in WA". The contestants will not have to appear on television or answer questions, but the show will offer a way of making money. The contestants will not have to buy a Lotto ticket or check the results on a Saturday night or whenever to see whether they have become a millionaire. All they will need to do in my game show is go to the Department of Corrective Services or perhaps, more importantly, the Attorney General's department - I will come to that - and ask it for money. The contestants will not have to provide an invoice to show what has been done. They will not need to sign a contract or an agreement. They will need only to front up and ask for money, and the department will give it to them. What a wonderful system. That has been happening in Western Australia. If it were not so serious, it would be a game show.

I will tell members how this came about. At the last budget estimates committee hearings when questions were asked of the then very new Minister for Corrective Services about contracts for people who were being paid for doing work for the Department of Corrective Services, I was under the impression that I would get an honest answer. I suggest that the same thing probably happens in other budget estimates committees under other portfolios. I am not laying the blame on the present minister.

Ms M.M. Quirk: I rectified it, didn't I?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The minister rectified part of it. She was not responsible for a lot of it; her colleague the Attorney General was.

Ms M.M. Quirk: You are going to go for him.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Yes. It is a pity that he is not here today, because I am going to go for him. When we ask questions in budget estimates hearings, we expect to get honest answers. In my new game show, members will not need to do anything other than ask those departments for money. The minister could not supply me with the answers, which I accepted, because it was unreasonable to expect answers immediately to the many

questions asked. I therefore asked the responses to be supplied by way of supplementary information. When I received that information, it was incorrect. It was a lie; it was false; and the minister accepts that. I am not blaming the current minister.

Ms M.M. Quirk: I said it was incomplete.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: It did not answer the questions put to the minister. I do not blame the minister, because she was very new in the job. It was the people who previously held her position and the Attorney General who were responsible. If people are doing work for the Department of Corrective Services, surely they are under a contract of some form or another and being paid for doing that work. However, that is not the way it worked; all the administration was done by the Department of the Attorney General. What does the Attorney General have to do with the Department of Corrective Services? As if he does not have enough to do. He is the Attorney General and the Minister for Health, and he has taken over almost everything in the justice area, except prisons. I am sure he is a very capable person, but at the end of the day is it right and proper that he should be handling payments of hundreds of thousands of dollars to people, companies and corporations when no contract is in place? I can tell members that, when I received the supplementary information, I knew it was not correct because I knew that some of the people who were listed had been paid through that system of this government. This government should be open, transparent, accountable and honest. It is playing games with taxpayers' funds in a most irresponsible way. I, for one, will not put up with that. If the truth be known, the people of Western Australia will not put up with it.

How did we progress from that stage? When I pointed out to the now minister that the names of some people were missing from the list, whose payments would have amounted to probably about \$100 000 or more - a tenth of the way to making someone a millionaire - I received some supplementary information. However, even that was not comprehensive. In the subsequent debate, I took it up with the Treasurer because he is responsible for the state's finances. He was so shocked that he instructed the State Supply Commission to investigate the matter.

Ms M.M. Quirk: We agreed that it needed investigation; so it was agreement between me and the Treasurer that caused that to be looked into.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The member should not try to claim the glory. It was basically because I brought it to the attention of the house, and specifically the Treasurer, and he was quite shocked. I do not know what discussions the member had with the Treasurer. I do not know whether the member is in the same faction or not.

Ms M.M. Quirk: We are all one happy team.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: It is not a happy team, I can tell you. The Treasurer went out of this chamber and instructed his staff to get onto the State Supply Commission, over which he has authority. I have a lot of respect for the State Supply Commission because it came under my authority when I was a minister in the previous government. The commission carried out a very thorough job. I do have a problem with this: the minister did not come into this house and make a statement about what I believe is a disgraceful situation relating to public funds. I think he must have crept into this place during the hours of darkness, when the house was not sitting, and slipped the report under the door in the hope it would get mixed up with all the junk mail and then dumped in the rubbish bin. Nobody has picked up on this report. I urge all members to look at it. They will be astounded.

The report is the State Supply Commission's investigation into the Department of Corrective Services "Supplementary Information, No. B40". It is dated 20 October 2006. It did not come into the Parliament on that date. It was slipped under the door a few weeks ago, as I say, in the hope that it would be put with all the junk mail and go in the rubbish bin. Madam Deputy Speaker, you will be astounded at the comments and criticisms in this report from the State Supply Commission in relation to moneys paid out for work - I assume it is for work, because they cannot find invoices for some of the money that has been paid out. There are no contracts. We are talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars for some work that has been carried out. There are the barest of descriptions supplied by the Department of Corrective Services, but we are told it is done through the Office of the Attorney General.

I refer to the executive summary on the first page of the document. It says -

Inadequate governance, attention to detail and contract management are the major causes of the identified issues. The lack of procurement protocols, internal practices and procedures is also considered to be a contributing factor to the issues identified.

It lists the different categories of incorrect records. There were 33 amounts paid in the past 12 months that were incorrect. Ten named organisations were not the legal entity. This is the state government dealing with people to whom it is paying money. Nine contract numbers were incorrect or were not even listed. Thirteen contracts had a total value that was incorrect. In eight cases the description of the services was incorrect. The government is paying out money, to individuals in many cases - sole providers - and companies whose names are incorrect.

Sometimes when hundreds of thousands of dollars have been paid out no invoices can be found to match up the payments and there is not even a contract in place. Is that good governance? I suggest the answer has to be a resounding no - absolutely not. If I were running a business, would I pay a supplier money without getting an invoice? No. Would I pay somebody \$100 000 without having a contract in place? No. But this government does. If this is happening in one portfolio area, is it happening in others? This relates only to the Department of Corrective Services, but it is being handled through the Department of the Attorney General.

I demand the Auditor General do a thorough investigation into the Department of Corrective Services and the Attorney General's department to see whether anything else has been missed, because this is absolutely appalling. If he will not do it, I want the Public Accounts Committee to look into this. I think the investigation should be wider because this is an area the Auditor General should definitely be homing in on. In virtually every one of the cases, of which there are many - there are nearly 50 pages to this report - the State Supply Commission is very critical.

The report says that two contracts to engage a particular person that the Department of Corrective Services awarded in the period 24 May 2005 to 25 May 2006 were omitted from the information. It is an open admission. It instances cases where there was no supporting documentation; it has never been made available. There were three cases involving direct purchases; one purchase off a common-use contract; eight verbal quotations; and one written quotation where there was no competitive process. I want to refer to some of these cases because I am not talking about just \$50 here or \$150 there; I am talking about really substantial amounts. The majority of the cases highlighted here by the State Supply Commission contain a rider. I refer to one involving an amount of \$14 975 where no contract whatsoever was in place. That is nearly \$15 000 of public money. The description of the service provided is "Strategic planning services". What the hell does that mean? How does that help members of this house to know what that money has been paid for? "Strategic planning services" relates to nothing, as far as I can see. Nearly all of the cases here contain a rider saying that based on the lack of documentation, the engagement of the company is not in compliance with the State Supply Commission's Open and Effective policy.

The State Supply Commission exists to ensure good governance and openness and transparency of all procurement and tender processes that go on through the government. The report says that another company, David Indermaur & Associates, received an amount of \$3 886 in a 12-month period. The total value of the contract is \$40 000. The description is "Development and delivery of therapeutic programs to address offending behaviours". The State Supply Commission found -

The amount paid in the last 12 months and the total value of the contract listed on the Supplementary Information No. B40 are incorrect.

The copies of invoices -

They are lucky they got some invoices for this one -

confirm a total of \$5,500 was paid to David Indermaur & Associates and not \$3,886.37 as reported . . .

There is a big discrepancy there. Members might think \$1 500 is not a big amount, but a lot of people have to live on that for a month. I refer to another case - this one is a cracker - relating to Gevers Goddard Jones Pty Ltd. The report states -

Both the Supplier Paid Invoice History Report and copies of invoices confirm a total of \$87,956 was paid to Gevers Goddard Jones P/L and not \$19,980 as reported . . .

So a figure of nearly \$20 000 was reported to the house but the actual figure is nearly \$90 000. This should be ringing alarm bells. It is a shame the Treasurer is not here today because I think he would have serious concerns about this. He was concerned when I brought it to the attention of the house earlier and that is why he got the State Supply Commission to check on this.

I could go through this report and quote many different cases. I want to pick out some of the real doozies here. I refer now to Louella McDonald Consultancy. The amount supplied to the house as having been paid is, I think, misleading the house. A lot of this stuff is a misleading of the house. Unfortunately, the present minister is the one who must take responsibility for that. She does not deserve to, but she must, because she was the minister when this information was given to the house. The report states that the copies of invoices confirm a total of \$11 513-odd was paid to Louella McDonald Consultancy, and not the \$4 965 that was reported to the house. That is disgraceful. How can this house operate properly and how can members of Parliament do their jobs properly when there are such massive discrepancies in the information that is provided to them? This borders almost on the criminal, quite frankly. It certainly is a misleading of the house.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: There are other items. There is one for \$1 500. It was for consultation and drafting pamphlets. It does not say what pamphlets; it does not say what they were actually for. It just says

“Consultation and drafting pamphlets”. The amount is \$1 500, and no contract whatsoever was in place. There is another one for \$900. It is for data analysis and report writing. There was no contract. In this report, the State Supply Commission says that, for a lot of items, it can find no invoices for amounts that have been paid out. Once again, the report says that, based on the lack of documentation, the engagement of that particular person, Dianne McKillop, is not in compliance with the State Supply Commission’s open and effective policy. That is repeated many times throughout the report. The next one was Omnitech Systems. It was reported to Parliament that \$32 000-odd was paid in the previous 12 months, and there was no contract. There was no contract for the \$32 000. However, what makes it 10 times worse is that when some invoices were found, those invoices confirmed that a total of \$52 000 was paid to Omnitech Systems, and not the \$32 000 that was reported to this house. It gets worse and worse, and this is just one department. No wonder the Treasurer must have slipped this report under the door one night when it was dark, the Parliament was closed and nobody was here, and put it with all the junk mail. He would have been hoping that it would be dumped with all the Target catalogues and all the other rubbish that we get in our letterboxes. However, unfortunately for him, it was not dumped with the junk mail; it was picked up. I know that one journalist at least has looked at this matter carefully and cannot believe that this is the case.

I will give some more examples, because there are some really good ones. Because I am not actually quoting them all, members should not think that they are not in the report, because they are. It is just that there is no way in the world that I will be able to quote all of these in the time that I have available. It seems that if people want to get some money, and if they say that they want to do consultation in the Kimberley, they need only go to that department. That is the description given: consultation in the Kimberley, or Kimberley consultation, whichever way one likes. People can get a hundred grand - no contract. The minister knows the one I am talking about, I am sure. There are two, actually. Two people have received big money for that sort of thing. I am looking for their names in this report. The report states -

The potential over-expenditure demonstrates inadequate contract management. This is avoiding the intent of the State Supply Commission *Open and Effective Competition Policy* and has the potential that the Government may not obtain the best value for money outcome.

The report is very critical of the minister’s government. Unfortunately, it is in the minister’s area of responsibility. I do not blame the minister, because this was all done before she became the Minister for Corrective Services.

Ms M.M. Quirk: I don’t mind that, but you might like to inform the house, member for Hillarys, that in fact this department has now been split, so that these transactions relate effectively to the Department of Justice prior to the split.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The minister should not talk rubbish. That is not an answer. That is not an excuse.

Ms M.M. Quirk: No, I am not saying it’s an excuse.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The Attorney General was not the Minister for Justice. When the Department of Justice was split, some of the functions went to the Attorney General and others went to the Minister for Corrective Services, or her predecessor as Minister for Corrective Services. Prior to that, the Attorney General did not have any jurisdiction over the Department of Justice. I think it was the responsibility of the member for Ballajura and various other people who have done that job.

Ms M.M. Quirk: That’s not a problem, member for Hillarys. I am not trying to avoid responsibility.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: What I am saying is: why the heck would the Attorney General have ever become involved? Why would his department have any responsibility for paying out funds in relation to a portfolio over which he did not have control? He did not have control over it. I sometimes wonder whether this is just to muddy the waters so that we do not know where the money is coming from and where it is going to. I urge all members to read this report; I really do. They will be staggered if they do. They should read it from cover to cover, because it shows the inadequacies and the incompetence of this government in the way in which it manages taxpayers’ funds. It is absolutely disgraceful.

I will give the house another example; that is, the Kilpatrick Gdowski Trust. Copies of invoices confirmed that a total of \$31 482 was paid to the Kilpatrick Gdowski Trust. However, do members know what amount was reported to Parliament? The amount was \$7 322. The minister knows what I am talking about, because I am sure she has been waiting with bated breath, trembling at the knees, for me to bring this up in Parliament. Unfortunately, it is in the minister’s portfolio area. I know that she has been thinking to herself, “Maybe it did go out with the junk mail. Maybe nobody actually bothered to look at it. Maybe it went with the Target and Myer catalogues, the cheap store catalogues, the catalogues with the tyre deals and all that sort of thing.” It did not. It properly found its way into this house and was picked up.

I will give the house another example. This is an absolute doozy: Quadrant Group. It must have had a contract because there is a contract number. The total value of the contract was \$291 500. What was reported to

Parliament - we must wonder where all this money is going - was \$1 437 for that period; that is, in the previous 12 months. However, the copies of the invoices that the State Supply Commission found totalled \$107 781, and not the \$1 437 that was reported to this house. I do not know how the minister can sit over there without feeling massive embarrassment. It is total incompetence. My kids could have done better than this when they were seven years old - they knew how to spend money and how to record it - and yet the minister's government has been in office for six years, and all we see is a lot of obfuscation. The government says, "How can we hide things? Well, let's get this particular minister to do that through his department, and then when we're asked a question, we might be able to muddy the water and hide the truth." That is what the government has been doing; it has been hiding the truth. How much faith can we put in the accounts of this government every year when there are all these incorrect amounts? I hope that the Auditor General will pick up on my very earnest request that he look into this area. The State Supply Commission has. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Once again, the report goes on to say that the figures are all incorrect and that the guidelines of the State Supply Commission have not been followed. Another supplier was paid a total of \$77 352, and not the \$45 000 that the Attorney General's department reported. Who is cooking the books today? Is it the Minister for Corrective Services' department or is it the Attorney General's department in relation to these contracts or these payments?

Ms M.M. Quirk: Sorry, do you want me to answer?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: It would be a refreshing change, because the minister rarely says anything when she is asked questions by the media outside this house. Who is paying the money; is it the minister's department or the Attorney General's department?

Ms M.M. Quirk: Member for Hillarys, I can you tell you that there are new arrangements for the consultancies. I know that the State Supply Commission has held discussions with the department and that it will be implementing new procedures. I am happy to report to the house when those discussions are finished. I understand that those discussions will finish imminently.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: When did they start? When did it come up with its response?

Ms M.M. Quirk: The department was asked to respond once that report was released.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I am not surprised.

Ms M.M. Quirk: As I said earlier, during our discussions, and after you raised the issue in the chamber, the Treasurer and I felt that the matter should go before the State Supply Commission. Equally, we felt that it should be tabled and made public.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The minister had to table it; she had no option. The minister should apologise for providing misleading information to the house.

Ms M.M. Quirk: I corrected it; you know that.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The minister corrected one or two items; she did not provide corrections for all the items. The minister should not be shaking her head. Is the minister nodding in agreement with me that she did not correct all the items that appear in the "State Supply Commission, Investigation, Department of Corrective Services, Supplementary Information No. B40"?

Ms M.M. Quirk: The State Supply Commission has done a thorough investigation. I am pleased that it is now in a position to provide accurate information.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Is the minister not embarrassed that it has -

Ms M.M. Quirk: I am never embarrassed, member.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The minister should be, because this is about a manipulation of taxpayer funds. I do not mind if the minister blames the Attorney General.

Ms M.M. Quirk: I will not blame the Attorney General.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: No, there is solidarity in the government's ranks no matter what happens. Who from the minister's side of the house will apologise for bringing totally misleading information into the house? Will the minister do it?

Ms M.M. Quirk: I have provided all the information -

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The minister is not going to apologise. We are hearing the same rhubarb. It was stated that \$11 670 was paid to Unisys West Pty Ltd for strategic development plans even though there was no contract. What is even worse with that particular case is that the copies of invoices confirm that a total of \$1 784 000 was paid to Unisys West, not the \$111 000 that the minister quoted in this house after she received figures from the Attorney General's department. The figure quoted is \$111 000. However, what was paid was \$1 700 000. Good God! I would not put members opposite in charge of a lolly shop, because apart from

sticking their hands in the jars all the time, they would never be able to balance the books at the end of the week. They would never have enough money to pay wages. The government is incompetent. A couple of cases refer to "Kimberley consultation". One was for \$100 000 and the other one was for a bit more. That is all it says. There was no contract at all. We are talking about paying \$100 000 without there being a contract in place. The government is showing no accountability and transparency. This is an absolute con on this house and the people of Western Australia.

DR J.M. WOOLLARD (Alfred Cove) [3.36 pm]: On Tuesday I asked for time to discuss the motion that is in my name on the notice paper during private members' business.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: This topic could be a bit of a stretch considering that the appropriation bills are before the house.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It is relevant to this debate, because tabled with the bills were details of recurrent expenditure that referred to new items for the Legislative Council in the 2005-06 financial year. An additional \$439 000 per annum was approved for the operational costs of the Legislative Council's standing and select committees, including the new Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, and for the resources that are required to meet the Legislative Council's obligations under the State Records Act 2000.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is a very good link that probably allows the member to talk about her chosen topic within the realms of a more general debate. Well done!

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I do not know why I was not allowed to debate this matter in private members' business. I do not know why the Leader of the House would not suspend standing orders today so that we could debate my motion. I was not going to enter into debate about what has been revealed by the Corruption and Crime Commission and whether members of the upper house are more admirable, worthy, moral, principled or respectable than Legislative Assembly backbenchers. That was not my intent. My intent was to look at a title that has existed for historical reasons. When Parliament was first formed, members of Parliament were people from the landed gentry. Many of those people were nominated to be members of Parliament. We know looking back through history -

Mr M.P. Whitely: You made a very good speech about this the other day, which convinced a lot of us.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Obviously, I was not persuasive enough, because I have not got anywhere with it. There are only 13 members in the house. The member for Bassendean was present when I referred to this issue the other day; however, other members were not. I hope that the members who are not in the chamber are listening in their offices, because I want them to raise this issue in their party room. Certain members have had the guts to approach me about this issue outside the chamber and tell me that it is wrong that members of the upper house automatically be given the title "honourable" when they become members of Parliament. That practice is archaic and out of date, and it should be thrown out. No-one wants to discuss this issue in this house. Perhaps the Labor Party is protecting a member of the upper house who has been involved in CCC hearings. Perhaps the Liberal Party is trying to calm the muddied waters that arose from its recent internal problems. It is nice being an independent Liberal. I can say what I want without having to run it by a leader of a party. It is a nice feeling.

We had responsible government from 1870 to 1890. It was not until 1900 that members of Parliament were remunerated for being members of Parliament. When that idea was first suggested, it was intended that members of the Legislative Assembly be remunerated. Members of the Legislative Council said that they, too, wanted to be remunerated. Throughout history there has been a sense of one house being more elite than the other. I, for one, do not subscribe to that theory. If we asked people in the street why some members of Parliament are given the title "honourable" while others are not, they would have no idea. As defined in many dictionaries, honourable means admirable, worthy and moral. They certainly would not look at the backbench members of the upper house and this house, like yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am sure they would not say that you are less admirable, less worthy, less moral, less principled or less respectable. Why is that title still given to members of the upper house when it is so archaic? It is still used in some Parliaments, but other Parliaments have moved with the times. Some ministers may still keep the title. I am not saying that we should take this title away from former members who have had it for many years. I think we should move with the times and accept that a member of Parliament is a member of Parliament.

Many members in this house believe that they work much harder than members in the upper house. That is not what the debate is about. For me, the debate is about the use of the honorific title. I have mentioned in this house before that it was a title conferred on members of the Legislative Council 130 years ago when they were very much the landed gentry. In the late 1900s they put in a request to keep the honorary title when they ceased being a member of Parliament. That honorary title is archaic and outdated now. The government has an opportunity to think about this issue. This issue should be debated.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when you are in your electorate office tomorrow, I ask you to ask your constituents who come in and see you whether they know what the title honourable means. They will not know. It is totally

out of date. Victoria got rid of the title in 2003. Other countries no longer use the title. I know the Italians no longer use it. Victoria introduced legislation to remove the title. We do not need to introduce legislation; we simply need to have a debate in this house. If there is a consensus of opinion, under the Australia Acts (Request) Act the Premier can write to the Governor and this title can be withdrawn. In the past I have mentioned the relevant section of the Australia act - section 7, "Powers and functions of Her Majesty and Governors in respect of States". It states -

Subject to subsections (3) and (4) below, all powers and functions of Her Majesty in respect of a State are exercisable only by the Governor of the State.

This house could make a determination from the next election. It would not take away the title and it would not upset the members of the upper house who feel that they are very elite and need to keep their title for the moment. It will allow those members to keep their title but make it very clear for new members of Parliament in both houses that there is no difference between a member of one house and a member of the other house. It shows the community that we are up to date.

When the title was removed from members in Victoria, one of the reasons given for its removal by government ministers was that they felt it alienated them from the community. Do we want something that alienates members of Parliament from the community? I think not. We are all elected to serve our community and we should all be serving our community equally. Members of the community should feel just as comfortable coming to my office as an Assembly member of Parliament as they should to an upper house member's office. I always find it quite surprising when I tell people about the other house when they come to my office. Sometimes I tell them that a certain issue has already been debated and it has gone from our house to the upper house so they might like to contact the upper house members. They say, "Who are they?" I give them the list. I am sure you do the same thing, Madam Deputy Speaker. Do you often have to give your constituents a list with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the upper house members? How can that be happening?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I would love to respond but it is improper for the Chair to enter into the debate.

Ms S.E. Walker: What did you say, member?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I said that often people come to my office about a particular bill or issue. If I say that I have spoken on that issue, it has gone through our house but it is in the upper house so they might like to speak to the upper house members, they say, "Who are they?"

Ms S.E. Walker: I know.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Has the member for Nedlands given them a piece of paper with the names and contact numbers of upper house members so they can hopefully contact members of the upper house?

Ms S.E. Walker: With the exception of sunset.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I am sure the member is talking about an exception there. I also thought this difference in titles had something to do with members' qualifications. I have looked at the qualifications of members from both houses from 1890 to 2005. The only real difference that I could see in members' qualifications is that there are fewer farmer-pastoralists in this house now than there were at the beginning of this century. Otherwise, there are 12 businessmen or women in this house and four in the other house; 11 professional or semiprofessional members in this house and seven in the other house; eight schoolteachers in this house and four in the other house; and six manual workers in this house and four in the other house. The occupations are very similar. Looking through history, the occupations have been the same. Why do some people come in and join the club? That is why I find this government such a joke at the moment. This government talks about equality yet it has a different title for their backbenchers in the upper house. It is all right for the cabinet ministers sitting at the front because they have the honorary title but they are not willing to let their backbenchers have the same credentials as members in the other house. I am not saying that the backbenchers in this house should have the honorary title; I am saying that the honorary title is a thing of the past and we are all equal and we should all be treated equally. It is time that this government, which pretends to espouse equality, looks at how archaic it is to have a different system in both houses.

I was surprised today when the Leader of the House refused to let this debate continue. I wondered why. I thought that it must be because of what has been happening with the Corruption and Crime Commission. Things have gone quiet down at the CCC at the moment. Whilst things are quiet at the moment, the government will be looking to have its budget supported soon. We do not know what else the CCC might bring out. Who knows what else will come out of the woodwork. We know that the Greens (WA) said that if anything further occurred they would consider blocking supply. That is the reason this issue is important. The Corruption and Crime Commission could sit again in a few weeks, and an election might be called as soon as three months after that. That being the case, this government, which espouses equality, will miss its opportunity. Not only government members but also opposition members have discussed this issue with me since I raised it in this house. Members

on both sides of the house have said that they agree that this title is outdated and should be discontinued and that members of Parliament should be seen working in the interests of their community in this Parliament. They should put forward local issues, consider legislation, take part in the debates and be aware of the interests of their constituents on issues that come before the house. Above all, they must put community interests before party interests. With the Leader of the House gagging debate on my motion to suspend standing orders, this debate was unable to take place.

Mr M.P. Whitely: You voted against it.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I did not call a division because I knew I would have time to raise this issue in the debate on the appropriation bills. I would prefer not to use this time on this issue because I have other issues to raise. However, I will raise those issues next week. I will certainly raise issues that the Leader of the House is interested in; for example, St Benedict's Primary School. I am sure he wants an update on what is happening there. I have already shown him photographs of accidents that have taken place near that school, and next week I will have the opportunity to discuss the terrible state of police resources.

Last week a party took place in my neighbourhood and because of antisocial behaviour one of my constituents called the police, but they did not arrive until four hours later, at three o'clock in the morning. By that time the people attending the party had been urinating on my constituent's property. It was terrible antisocial behaviour. Where were the police? Next week I will ask the minister how many police are on patrol in my electorate.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: In my area maybe one or two people occasionally see a police car on the road; it is not very often. We are very poorly off when it comes to police presence. I have gone to the local police station and found the doors locked. I have returned to my office and phoned the police station and found that there is someone at the station, but it is not an officer; therefore, that person cannot answer the door. Where are the police?

Ms S.E. Walker: You are lucky you have a police station.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I do not have enough police stations in my electorate. This government always talks about how wonderful the Perth to Mandurah train service will be. The current levels of policing indicate that it will not be wonderful for my area. Canning Bridge is already a hotspot for burglary and crime.

When the Perth to Mandurah train line opens, the situation at Canning Bridge will be worse in terms of burglaries and crimes. The cars will be able to come down the freeway, up the freeway, along Manning Road, along Leach Highway and along Canning Highway. In addition, crooks will get off the trains and go into the local suburbs. Members know that within a kilometre of a train station the crime rate is high. It is all very well for the government to say that there will be police on the trains. What about my constituents who are burgled on a regular basis? What about the lack of police resources in my electorate?

I asked this government many years ago to look at establishing a police station at Canning Bridge because there is so much crime in that area. I do not know about your office, Madam Deputy Speaker, but my office has been burgled three times. Last time, with the use of DNA, the police did catch the culprit several months later. My constituents ask me why I leave the lights in my office on at night and I tell them that the local police told me to do so. They have also told the shopkeepers in the village to keep their lights on. By doing that anyone driving through the village can see if people are up to no good. The village, where I have my office, is done over on a regular basis with graffiti and terrible vandalism. I have witnessed it first hand in my office.

People with fractured ribs and bruises all over their bodies have come to my office to speak to me. The criminals are looking for money but they are using weapons. Why are there so many criminals? It comes back to the fact that this government is soft on drugs. This government's legislation, which was passed several years ago, allows people to grow their own cannabis. We have problems not only with cannabis, but also with the pills that are readily available nowadays. I have heard of people going into nightclubs, opening briefcases and asking people what drugs they want on the premises. When they say no, they have pressure put on them. They then sell their business because they do not want to be involved in drugs.

One of the platforms that this government was elected on was its police and crime platform. We certainly do not have more police. I will put a question to the minister next week about how many police cars patrol my area seven days a week and how many there were for the same time last year and the year before. There are fewer. This government has not given enough attention to improving law and order. People are still locking themselves in their homes.

Ms M.M. Quirk: It is scaremongering.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It is not scaremongering. It is happening in the community. If it is not happening in the minister's community, perhaps the police stations in her electorate have more resources than mine. My

police stations are understaffed and the police are working extra hours to try to provide a service to the community.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You are right: Labor members are in denial of the extent of the drug problem in our society.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: The biggest public promoters of drugs are people like you.

Several members interjected.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The drug situation will be made worse with the government's prostitution legislation. When the prostitution legislation was put on the table two years ago, I spoke to prostitutes. I do not know whether you did, Madam Deputy Speaker. Some of them had worked in the eastern states as well as Western Australia. They talked about the menus that are available in the eastern states brothels. They said it is like going into a restaurant, such as McDonald's, but people select what drugs and cocktails they would like to take. The pimps and the drug dealers come into the brothels with the drugs. They asked me not to support the registration of brothels because young people are taken off the street when they are young and look good. However, when they want to get out of the brothels, they do not know how to dress or feed themselves or get another job. They are frightened to go to Centrelink because they often have a child or two and they know that there is a good chance they may lose their children. What is the government going to do? It is going to legalise prostitution. The Attorney General said in one of his statements that the reason he was doing this was corruption within the police force. A press statement from the Attorney General said that he would legalise brothels because of problems in the police force. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services cannot deal with the police, so the Attorney General will legalise brothels so that he no longer has problems with the police. It is not entirely the fault of police officers. I have many friends within the police force. As in all professions, there are a few that give the force a bad name. The government's legislation on prostitution is a disgrace and will make things even harder for prostitutes who want to get out of the industry. The legislation does not include anything about mandatory checks for drugs or mandatory health checks on the premises of regulated brothels. The drug dealers must be saying, "Whoopie!" They must be looking at the government and saying, "Another Christmas present. What will they give us next year? They have given us cannabis. Now they are giving us brothels. What will it be next?" I will not be supporting the government's prostitution legislation.

I know this matter will be discussed next week, but I hope that if I put this on the table, the government might do some homework between this week and next week. I believe that the government will allow its backbenchers - although there are some inequalities between the houses - a conscience vote on daylight saving.

Mr J.E. McGrath: I think you'll find that's not right.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The member does not think it will? I thought the government might allow that for its backbenchers. I have checked with the Western Australian Electoral Commission and discovered that it would cost \$6 million to hold a referendum this year. If there is no state election this year - depending on what happens in the Corruption and Crime Commission - there will nevertheless be a federal election. It is possible for the government to approach the Australian Electoral Commission about having a referendum on the issue of daylight saving as part of the federal election. It would probably cost the state less than \$1 million rather than \$6 million, provided the government did not want the vote based on Western Australian electorates, accepted the federal electoral boundaries, and looked only at whether the vote was at least 51 per cent for either the yes or no vote. If the government was to look only at that question, the state could save \$5 million. That \$5 million could go into health, education and the police force.

I do not have much time to talk about health. It was interesting yesterday that the member for Dawesville did not let me know that he would be debating the health system. I have looked at some of the debate, but I have not had an opportunity to go through all the speeches. It would be a very good idea for the proposed Fiona Stanley hospital in the southern suburbs to be initially a 600-bed facility, increasing to 1 000 beds. Having two moderately sized hospitals of 750 beds is a better idea than some of the other suggestions, including the proposal to have one huge hospital in the northern sector.

MS S.E. WALKER (Nedlands) [4.04 pm]: The electorate of Nedlands has only one high school, Perth Modern School, and within Perth Modern School is the wonderful Graduate College of Dance. The college has been at Perth Modern School for about seven years, but has been in existence in Perth for over 32 years. The college is supported by the Simon Lee Foundation and the Fogarty Foundation. The state government is understood to be relocating the Graduate College of Dance program from Perth Modern School. I raise this matter because I attended a meeting with concerned parents at Perth Modern School a few weeks ago. I wrote on 26 March to Minister McGowan to express their concerns and to find out whether he would in fact keep the Graduate College of Dance at that school. In September 2006 the Department of Education and Training invited the college to relocate to the John Curtin College of the Arts, and although the college has moved to ensure that it has acted in accordance with the department's wishes, it is concerned that there may have been a change of mind within the department. Current students and their parents have been advised that students will be able to continue their

education and training until 2012. However, this leaves concern for some students in years 5, 6 and 7, as they are unable to plan for their education.

Many students at Perth Modern School live within the electorate of the member for Perth. I have recently spoken to him about this situation. When I wrote this speech in relation to Perth Modern School, I said I had hoped that the member for Perth would be able to persuade his colleague the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Mark McGowan, to help the college stay at the school, which is what parents want; that is their plan A. They want the minister to keep the college at the school. The college is internationally recognised. I have only so many minutes, but I want to put on record my support for the parents. When I attended the meeting with the parents, I was the only local member present. In fact, John Hyde, the member for Perth, often attends graduation ceremonies at the college. I said to the parents that plan AA might be to contact the member for Perth and meet with him, and try to put a bit of pressure on his parliamentary colleague, the Minister for Education and Training. Having spoken to the member for Perth this afternoon and earlier this week on this matter, I must say he moved very quickly. He said that he had the parents here yesterday and that there would be a resolution sometime next week. The parents have another meeting with members of the board next week at the minister's office. I spoke to the minister in private this afternoon, but he did not give anything away. I hope that the minister will address and allay the concerns of parents at Perth Modern School which is, as I say, technically the only high school within the electorate of Nedlands. The member for Cottesloe has in his electorate most of the high schools attended by children from my electorate, including Shenton College, which is on our border.

I am hopeful that the member for Perth has worked wonders and that the Graduate College of Dance can remain at Perth Modern School. In 2001 the member for Cottesloe, when he was Minister for Education, had a new floor installed at the school at a cost of \$600 000. It would be a very great tragedy and a shame for that floor - I do not think it can be put anywhere else -

Mr C.J. Barnett: The whole building was new.

Ms S.E. WALKER: The whole building?

Mr C.J. Barnett: The whole building was new in 2000.

Ms S.E. WALKER: In 2000. The conditions of entry into Perth Modern School are now changing, and instead of the emphasis being on people who are identified as being potentially great dancers, the academic record will come first. I pay tribute to Dawn Weller, who is someone I have met since I have been the member for Nedlands and visiting Perth Modern School for the past six years. She is a very graceful, gracious woman, and she brings almost 40 years' experience in international ballet to that college. It would be a great shame if that program could not be retained for those students who are now worried about its future.

I refer now to something fabulous that happened in the electorate this week. It was the launch by Prospero Productions of the *Eco House Challenge*, a production that is due to commence on SBS television on 12 April this year. The production company, Prospero Productions, is located at 44 Hubble Street, East Fremantle. It is the same company that produced the feature *C.Y. O'Connor* shown on ABC television last Sunday evening, which was superbly produced. I had an interest because the last book that my old university book club, which meets every couple of months, had on the list to read was *C.Y. O'Connor: His Life and Legacy*, written by Tony Evans. It is a very moving story. All the members of the book club who were present at the time were very moved by it. It is a story that needed to be told and needs to be told in Western Australia. From time to time, all members feel the pressure from the media and within the house. It can cause an enormous strain on people. It is a great tragedy that someone like C.Y. O'Connor, whose far-reaching vision resulted in internationally acknowledged huge success, took his life. That feature on the ABC was produced partly by a young man I met some years ago, John McGrath. I thought it was an excellent production.

Mr J.E. McGrath: He's a good man

Ms S.E. WALKER: Did I say John McGrath; I meant John McCourt. I retract that reference.

This *Eco House Challenge* production involves the Edwards and Shepherd families; one from Nedlands and one from Dalkeith. I understand that, in the series, without warning, their energy and water supplies are turned off, their bins are locked, their vehicles are clamped and they are forced to live for 24 hours in an eco shut-down. The publicity information about the series states -

On *Eco House Challenge* two suburban, Australian families are about to find out what it takes to help save the planet. Over several weeks, while still living their normal lives, the families must radically reduce consumption in four eco hot-spots, Energy, Water, Transport and Waste, or face the consequences we all face.

The challenge starts with a bang. No energy, no water, no vehicles and no waste removal . . .

For the Edwards family; a large, frugal family led by logistically minded ex-commando Spike and no nonsense working Mum, Mary, it's going to be tough. With seven in the family, including their elderly grandmother, Nonna, consumption is high.

I met them on Monday night at Scitech. The Shepherd family is from my electorate. It continues -

For the Shepherd family; an affluent family who love the good life, going without is not going to be easy.

They too have several children. People can log onto a website associated with this program and learn how to cut down on consumption in their house. It is a wonderful idea. The Edwards family comprises dad, Spike; mum, Mary Del Dosso; Branton, 15; Lahra, 11, and Taylah, eight, turning nine. In the Shepherd family there is dad, Cam; mum, Shauna; Mackenzie, 19; Jess, 18; Maddie 15; and Judd 11, turning 12. People can study the website for hints on how to reduce their energy consumption and learn how to contribute towards saving the planet. It will be a very successful program. The Internet link is www.sbs.com.au/ecohousechallenge, which is linked to www.prospero.com.au. I am very proud that that production is happening in my electorate. The productions coming out of Prospero are absolutely A1, first rate, and I wish them all the very best with that.

The last thing I will talk about in some detail is a private members' bill I introduced to change the Heritage of Western Australia Act. Early this year I introduced a bill that inserts section 76A into the Heritage Western Australia Act 1990. The explanatory memorandum attached to the bill states -

This section applies in circumstances where an interim or permanent entry in the Register of Heritage Places is made in respect of land. The effect of the entry may be to reduce the value of the land, by reason of the reduced capacity of the owner to develop the land, or the increased costs associated with complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to the land. Under the current Act the owner of an estate or interest in the land in such a case has no right to compensation for any loss in value resulting from entry in the Register. This section addresses this situation by providing that an owner whose land has been entered in the register has the right to require the Crown to acquire the owner's estate or interest in the land at a price determined by reference to the value of land before the entry was made in the register.

It is a real travesty of justice that we are members of Parliament, yet we do not have the political will to change this act and the injustices that occur under it. Those injustices were outlined in the original second reading speech of this bill in 1990. I will refer to them because the act is ideologically based. It is ideologically wrong and it is not something I agree with. I have spoken out about it recently and in the past. I think it started when I became a member with the wholesale signing up to the municipal inventory in Subiaco of virtually all of Subiaco. I helped arrange an enormous public meeting, after which the properties were gradually taken off the register. No Dalkeith houses are on the Heritage Council's list of registered places in Western Australia. Gallop House may be one, but that is not technically a residence. In fact, the Heritage Council website does not reveal which residences are listed in Western Australia, which I find very strange. However, I did get a list and I can tell my electorate that, as I understand it, not one Dalkeith house is on the heritage list. Houses are listed on the municipal inventory by the council as per the act. In this Legislative Assembly on 23 August 1990 there was a debate on this bill between the then member for Fremantle and the then member for Applecross, Hon Richard Lewis. The member for Fremantle said the following, as justification for the bill -

It will be further advanced during 1991 when the Fremantle Gaol is decommissioned and added to the State's list of heritage buildings as a useful public community facility. For some time, the Fremantle City Council has considered placing the City of Fremantle under World Heritage listing.

I raise this because I thought it was interesting that the Fremantle jail was decommissioned. I presume the state paid for it to be brought up to its former glory so that it could be enjoyed as a tourist attraction. However, that could not be done for the Sunset site. Can members imagine the government flogging off land around the Fremantle jail and claiming \$15 million out of the proceeds for health? It is exactly the same sort of issue.

When this bill was debated, the member for Applecross said on behalf of the then opposition -

It should be understood from the outset the Opposition unequivocally supports this legislation and accepts its principles.

... So, let it be known that the Opposition supports heritage legislation. ...

Also, any such heritage legislation must be fair and equitable to all people concerned,

This bill is not. He went on to say -

The legislation does not recognise the property rights of people nor does it lay down that those rights should be protected at all times. In recent years the property rights of Western Australians have been diminished or eroded by the intrusion of legislation and regulations. The time has come when the Government must recognise that people who own property have rights that go with the ownership of that property and that those rights should not, by the stroke of a pen, be diminished in any way -

They are diminished at the moment by the stroke of a pen -

and should not be removed in the public interest. Without compensation the point is that if the public or the State is of the opinion that a person's property rights should be diminished or, indeed, that a property would better serve the public to be in public ownership, the public should be expected to pay for those rights which have been sequestered from the owner.

This legislation does not fully recognise people's property rights, particularly when their rights are removed by a conservation order without any compensation for the loss of those rights. . . . Unfortunately this Bill does not recognise that those rights exist and it does not in any way put in place the necessary machinery for such compensation to be paid.

Nothing has changed. I see the member for Maylands is in the house. When the Subiaco problem arose, I remember that the member for Maylands did not help protect those people's rights. In fact, the member could not even comprehend that many of those people in Subiaco had mortgages. They worked all day and while they were out a student went around and put a tick in a box and put their homes on the inventory and devalued their land. It is disheartening for people because everyone aspires to getting ahead. When I say "get ahead", I mean that people do not want to have a mortgage on their houses. We are all required these days to fund our retirement. The house is their retirement. What happened? The then make-up of the Subiaco City Council decided it would adopt a blanket cover. It caused an uproar. That was the first time it happened in my electorate. It goes back to when this act first came into the house. It needs a complete overhaul. I am pleased that the member for Midland, the now Minister for Heritage, has said that there will be a review. She has done that because I brought in a private member's bill to ensure that when people buy a home that is not heritage listed - even if it is on the municipal inventory one can still apply to have it demolished - and somebody anonymously, secretly and furtively nominates the property under the act, the owners have a right to be compensated. The comments made by the member for Fremantle about whether a person should be compensated are very telling.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms S.E. WALKER: He did not appear to have any compassion at all. I will go back to the legislation because this is Labor ideology. I think the member for Applecross was arguing with him about the fact there was no compensation. The member for Fremantle said -

In my short period in this Parliament one of the things I regret is the lack of application of members' intellect to the questions before them. One of the things to which I am committed as a new member in this place - I have spoken to the newest member, the member for Cottesloe, about this - is that there is a lack of intellectual rigour in the way in which matters are debated in this Parliament. Too often interjections and comments which are thrown across the House are boofheaded in their nature and we should be addressing the issues before the House. I want to address the issue of compensation . . .

Further on he said -

It comes back to the question I posed at the outset: Whether the State should assume the responsibility for everything that makes up our society or whether responsibility lies with individuals.

He goes on to say -

The question of the 42 days in the balancing process when looking at the necessity for preserving our heritage is a small price to pay. I do not believe that every price ever paid by a member of society ought to be compensated for by the Government. Quite simply, if a 42 day stop work order exists there should be no compensation, although I am happy to acknowledge that some loss might be incurred by the person in those circumstances. However, not every loss should be compensated for because a bigger and better good is at stake.

Mr Lewis: Who benefits from a property put on the heritage list?

Mr McGINTY: Society as a whole. . . . I think that we, as responsible members of society, all have a responsibility to contribute to its betterment.

So it does not matter what the people are earning or that they are finding it hard to make ends meet. If they are doing that for the betterment of society as a whole, they should be the ones that bear the burden. I do not think so. I believe it is totally wrong that we should suddenly decide ideologically that we want to confiscate someone's property, and it is a case of tough luck, Jack, it is for society's betterment. That is why I have introduced my private member's bill. This is long overdue. The act has caused people a lot of hardship; more recently it has caused grievous hardship to people in my electorate.

After my private member's bill was introduced, I received a letter from a lawyer at Hotchkin Hanly. I want to read some of what he said about the bill because he practises in this area. He made some suggestions that I want

to put on the record because I think if there is to be a review, he is an expert. He wrote to me without my initiating it and set out in detail what he thought should happen in relation to the Heritage Act. He says -

The proposed section 76A -

That is my amendment -

should prescribe the basis upon which the value is to be determined, to avoid any ambiguity about the proposed contract price. For example, in the face of the Explanatory Memorandum, it would seem that the date at which the property is to be valued is a date prior to registration. However, the date of any valuation should be the date of acquisition, so that the vendor is able to re-enter the same property market without loss. In a rising market, if the property is valued at a date before registration, then the vendor will suffer such a loss that there would be little or no point in requiring the Crown to purchase the property.

- (2) The value to be determined should be current market value without regard to any heritage constraints. The proposed section 76A(3)(b) refers to "a value", which leaves open the question of precisely what value is intended.
- (3) The Bill does not make it clear that the right to require the Crown to acquire property is a right exercisable by any person who had their property on the Register before the date of legislation. In our view, there is no reason, in fairness, why there should be a distinction between those people who have suffered as a result of entry on the Register before the amendment and those who would otherwise have suffered after the amendment.
- (4) There is no mechanism for identifying a valuer to actually determine the current market value of the property.

He suggests certain processes that should be followed, and I will send this to the minister because I think it would be of benefit to her in relation to a review of the act. He goes on as follows -

One of the real difficulties with the current legislation is that there is no connection between any entry on a Municipal Inventory and any decision by the Heritage Council of Western Australia in light of that entry. The Heritage Council can register any property even if it is not on the Municipal Inventory and can ignore any view expressed in a Municipal Inventory regarding the heritage significance of any property.

He has more to say but I am cognisant of the time.

I want to refer to an article, "Property Rights in Western Australia: Time for a Changed Direction", by Louise Staley from the Institute of Public Affairs. At page 6 she says -

A just society does not confiscate people's property without compensation. A just society does not restrict the use and devalue people's property without compensation. A just society treats everyone, rich and powerful or poor and weak, the same in the eyes of the law. Under these criteria, Western Australia is no longer a just society.

A fair system is based on four principles: consistency, openness, compensation, and right of appeal.

There is no right of appeal in relation to the Heritage Council. I find it gives very whimsical decisions.

In the remaining minutes I want to refer to a person, whom I will call owner B, who bought a house from owner A and on sold to owner C. When owner B bought from owner A, the house was on the municipal inventory. On the day of the auction, the auctioneer circulated a document saying that an application could still be made for demolition. When owner B on sold to owner C, he suddenly found that the house had been secretly nominated. I will not go into who nominated it. However, he said that I could read out this letter. I think it is quite sad and quite tragic really. The property belonged to someone who was quite prominent in the community, so he applied for a demolition licence. He states -

To date I have been advised by Staff of City of Nedlands that it is a mere formality to obtain the licence required by the Buyer who has made an Offer on . . .

His home -

and upon this advise and time frames given I signed a offer and acceptance to sell the property while at the same time purchasing another property

I was then asked to supply a historical assessment for Councils archives and was advised that the permit to be granted was conditional upon council receiving the assessment, when I delivered the assessment, which cost me \$1100-00 I was advised that the matter would be dealt with on the 23/05/06 and to be tabled for a full council meeting . . .

I looked at those minutes. It is unbelievable that when a person applies for a demolition licence, he must do this. I go to the council minutes of 27 June 2006, which state -

the applicant commissioning a recognised heritage consultant to undertake a full heritage assessment of the house prior to commencement of any demolition work. The assessment to include historic and physical evidence, measured drawings and a photographic record of the existing building and inchoate fabric to archival and Heritage Council of Western Australia (HCWA) standards. A copy of the Assessment to be made available to the City of Nedlands - Local History Collection and the Heritage Council of Western Australia;

I think it is disgraceful that the City of Nedlands is putting this on people. Other councils want just a photo. The letter continues -

I was issued a letter from the previous owner . . . before I bought the property stating that my rights to alter and Demolish are not effected . . .

The point I am making here is that the vendor at the time of sale made it a point that there was no objection from any one to the property being altered or demolished, . . .

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O’Gorman): I remind the member that she should not read the whole letter.

Ms S.E. WALKER: I am not reading the whole letter. I have actually sliced some out, and I do not have much time. I am getting to the point. It continues -

It is one thing to save a house from demolition by buying it, quite an other matter to sell it with rights to Alter and Demolish and then to undermine those rights, . . . it is costing me \$4000-00 per week while awaiting the granting, which equates to approximately \$54,000 to date and counting.

That is what members of Parliament have done with this act. Some people say that he can afford it. No. Everybody could afford it, I suppose, if they wanted to take out a mortgage. It continues -

You can understand my disappointment, since these undue financial burdens seemed to be never ending . . . because of all this stress my wife health will definitely not be improved, she was diagnosed with a Severe Pulmery Artery problem and now has a possible Heart and Lung Transplant hanging over her and must be kept free of stress at all times

He did not want to keep the house, because his wife could not go up and down the stairs. I cannot read all the letter because of time. However, he ends with -

As we are not prominent citizens I can only hope that fairness and commonsense will prevail, I await a favourable response so that I can get on with my life, conclude the sale of our property, pay of my bridging loan and look after my sick wife who has nothing very bright other then a possible hassle free limited time to look forward to while awaiting out comes of ever ongoing health tests.

People in this place did this. They are responsible, because they all know that this is going on and they do not do anything about it. That is the truth. This sort of thing has been going on for a long time. It has been going on with the Empire Games home. I have an editorial from *The West Australian* of 29 July 2003, headed “Home owners have rights too”, which states -

The WA Heritage Council has found that the former Empire Games village area there is likely to have cultural heritage significance.

It is people in this place who are doing this to all Western Australians. It is as simple as that. I want to make sure that the minister brings on this review and that people who own property in Western Australia have their rights protected and do not have to go through the incredible grief that they go through because members in this place do not have the political will to correct the situation. We sit in this place, in our ivory tower, and we do not want to know what is going on outside in the real world. The member for Maylands was the heritage minister and so was the member for Fremantle. The only justification that parliamentarians have given is that it is for the betterment of society as a whole - ideological claptrap! It is cruel. I think it borders on being evil - it does border on being evil. I do not know how much that man had to pay in the end. At a point he was paying \$54 000, plus the \$1 100 that the Nedlands city council made him pay. If the Nedlands city council wants that sort of detail, it should ask the ratepayers whether that is appropriate.

The fact is that only two houses have been nominated of which I am aware. There are no houses in Dalkeith or Nedlands on the Heritage Council’s register. I hope that every politician in this place will support a change of this act so that ordinary Western Australians do not have to go through the rubbish that those people have gone through as a result of former politicians and some politicians who are still in this house bringing in this shocking piece of legislation.

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta - Leader of the House) [4.35 pm]: I rise slowly as I am acting on behalf of the Treasurer and I will, therefore, close the debate. However, I will respond to some of the issues that have been raised, particularly by the member for Vasse. He spoke about the target that the Treasurer set when he was in opposition with regard to the Treasurer's advance. Clearly, that is a political point, and the member for Vasse will use every opportunity to score points because of that being breached in certain years. However, it needs to be put in context. When the current Treasurer made that comment back in 1999 or 2000, the economy was not going as it is now. In fact, when we came to government at the start of 2001, the state economy was shrinking. Therefore, it is a very different environment, with the growth and expansion of the economy, which makes it difficult to predict where the expenditure will go.

The member for Vasse also commented on the increase in the number of staff in the public sector. I will make a few comments on that. The member said that he had not seen an increase in the level of service. By interjection, I indicated that we could look at a range of criteria, whether it be class sizes, the clear-up rate of police and the lower crime rate, the reduced waiting times in our hospitals or the incredible increase in the number of people having procedures in our hospitals. Clearly, there has been a magnificent increase in services that the extra officers are delivering.

The member also alluded to the fact that he had been provided with the number of nurses, but the total increase in staff in the health area was much bigger than that. Of course, there are nursing aides and all the other people who must work on the wards. Therefore, it is not just a matter of nurses. Again, in education, although there has been a considerable increase in the number of teachers, there has been a huge increase in the number of teacher assistants, who are clearly necessary to help in the classroom.

The member for Vasse also commented on commonwealth-state financial arrangements. I believe that what he said concurs with what the government is saying and made good sense. Although he acknowledges that there is a real problem, I think he was trying to find an excuse for not putting his shoulder to the wheel by saying that he did not have confidence in certain things the Treasurer was doing, and on that basis he did not find it easy to actually assist Western Australia. That is a pretty strange argument when we all know there is a major problem in state-commonwealth financial relationships. The beneficiaries of improving those relationships would be the people of Western Australia. Therefore, regardless of what excuse might be used with regard to certain other taxation matters, there clearly is a need to make sure that we take the fight up to Canberra, and, as the Treasurer has said many times, we welcome the support of the opposition in trying to take up that fight. In fact, the current Treasurer will bring in tax relief of some \$3.3 billion between 2003-04 and 2009-10. A whole range of taxes have been abolished or reduced. Of course, a budget surplus is absolutely crucial in meeting the capital works program of the state. We have a capital works program of some \$19 billion in the budgets for 2006-07 through to 2009-10. A huge amount of work needs to be done. Of course, while we are doing that work, we must make sure that the state continues to expand and that it continues to have a very strong economy. It is things like that that are done by the government, based on its surplus, that enable the state's economy to go as well as it is going.

Other members spoke more generally about matters relating to their electorates. I will not seek to address those. However, the member for Vasse concentrated very much on matters relating to the bill and how they were reflected in the economy.

I thank members for their contributions to the debate. I give an undertaking that the Treasurer, who is away at a ministerial conference today, will be here next week when we go into consideration in detail. The member for Vasse at least has some detailed questions that he wishes to have answered. I would have been prepared to do that today with the assistance of Treasury officials, but I am sure that the Treasurer will do it more ably than I could, so we will leave that until some time next week. On that basis, I trust that we will approve the second readings of these two bills, but leave further matters until next week.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Did you address my issues?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: No, I did not.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Why not?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Because they did not go specifically to Treasury matters.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Of course they did.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The member used the opportunity to engage in a general debate.

Mr R.F. Johnson: The Treasurer was the one who instigated the State Supply Commission's investigation of the Department of Corrective Services and part of the Attorney General's department because inappropriate payments were made and incorrect records were kept. Further, incorrect information was given to this Parliament. That was done on the instruction of the Treasurer.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The member for Hillarys raises a valid matter. What I am putting to the member is that we are dealing with Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bills Nos 5 and 6. I sought to respond to matters that

relate directly to those bills. The member quite rightly raised certain issues because it is a general debate and because they have financial implications that involve the Treasurer. I do not see them tied directly to the substance of the legislation that we are dealing with. Therefore, it is open for the member to pursue those matters through a range of different channels.

Mr R.F. Johnson: We do not know that for sure, do we?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I am fairly confident that that is the case. I accept that what the member raised is valid. He had every right to raise that matter under the standing orders. Further, because of the significance of the matter, I would have expected him to raise it. The matter deserves to be taken up by the appropriate minister. I do not see it sitting specifically with the bills that are now before the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill (Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No.5) 2006) read a second time.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 6) 2006

Second Reading

Resumed from 2 November 2006.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 4.42 pm
