



# Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION  
2015

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 25 March 2015



# Legislative Assembly

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

## WANDINA PRIMARY SCHOOL

### *Petition*

**MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton)** [12.01 pm]: I have a petition from 33 petitioners regarding Wandina Primary School in Geraldton. It reads —

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

We, the undersigned, say

*That enrolments at Wandina Primary School are running at levels considerably higher than initially projected, and that the Stage 2 build is now required.*

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly

*To call on the Minister for Education to include the Stage 2 build in the next State Budget.*

[See petition 226.]

## NORTH WEST COASTAL HIGHWAY — GERALDTON

### *Petition*

**MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton)** [12.02 pm]: I have a petition from 309 petitioners regarding North West Coastal Highway in Geraldton. It reads —

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

We, the undersigned, say

That the intersection of North West Coastal Highway and Hosken Street, Bluff Point, is rated by RAC members as one of the riskiest in the Mid-West

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly

To ask the Minister for Transport to implement the best solution to improve the safety of the Nor-West Coastal Highway and Hosken Street intersection.

[See petition 227.]

## LIQUOR STORE DEVELOPMENT — BALCATT A

### *Petition*

**MR C.D. HATTON (Balcatta)** [12.03 pm]: I have a petition signed by 375 petitioners relating to a proposed liquor store development in Balcatta. It reads —

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

We, the undersigned, are most concerned about the planned Liquor Land development in Northlands Shopping Centre. The Centre has a number of ongoing issues with antisocial behaviour and we feel a bottle shop may affect the other businesses and local residents adversely. There are already a number of liquor outlets in the vicinity and adjacent to the shopping centre. We ask that the Legislative Assembly resolve that a Liquor Licence not be granted at this time.

[See petition 228.]

## SCHOOL BUSES — DUNSBOROUGH

### *Petition*

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse)** [12.04 pm]: I have a petition from 207 petitioners regarding school buses in Dunsborough. The petition requests the following —

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

We, the undersigned, say that the current school bus arrangements for Dunsborough are inadequate and put student's lives at risk.

Students have to sit on the floor and stand in aisles on journeys which can be in excess of one hour and at speeds of 90 km/h. There are no seat belts for any students on these buses.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly request the Government to provide more school buses for Dunsborough and that all buses have seat belts provided so that local children can travel more safely to school.

[See petition 229.]

#### **PAPER TABLED**

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

#### **TAXATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015**

##### *Notice of Motion to Introduce*

Notice of motion given by **Mr W.R. Marmion (Minister for Finance)**.

#### **PERTH CULTURAL CENTRE PRECINCT — SUMMER EVENTS**

##### *Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts*

**MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Minister for Culture and the Arts)** [12.05 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority has managed another very successful summer series of events in the Perth Cultural Centre Precinct. These events have continued to breathe new life into the heart of Northbridge and have made the Cultural Centre a place for celebration of arts, culture, music, food, design, and community. They contribute to the vibrancy of the area and also its safety, transforming Northbridge into a cosmopolitan and welcoming place for all.

Obviously the Cultural Centre has become synonymous with the Fringe World Festival, as I have previously discussed. However, many other free events take place in the space every year. These events offer a variety of experiences for people with a range of ages and interests. Most recently, the Fairfax noodle market opened last Wednesday night, 18 March 2015. The first-ever night noodle market in Perth is an authentic yet contemporary hawker-style food market in the Cultural Centre. It is an outdoor meeting place for locals and visitors of all ages. It features quality restaurant stalls, themed bars, chill-out areas and live entertainment. A similar event has previously been run in Sydney and Melbourne and now Perth people are enjoying the night noodle market with large crowds and an overwhelmingly positive response in the first week.

The event is being run in association with Eat Drink Perth and is supported by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. The noodle market is open until 29 March and is anticipated to attract 50 000 visitors to the Cultural Centre over the 12 nights it is open. It was certainly very busy last Saturday evening when I was there.

This kind of success follows on from the William Street night markets that attracted approximately 15 000 people in December and the urban beach, which was back by popular demand between December and February. This once again provided beach lovers of all ages with the opportunity to build sandcastles in the heart of the city and attracted up to 4 000 in the course of a day.

The Liberal-National government has overseen the transformation of the Perth Cultural Centre and William Street through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. This is a strong example of an area that languished and was neglected under the previous government and is now realising its potential as a cultural and civic space for members of the community to enjoy. I encourage everyone to go along and experience this fantastic part of our city.

#### **“MINERAL ROYALTY RATE ANALYSIS FINAL REPORT 2015”**

##### *Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum*

**MR W.R. MARMION (Nedlands — Minister for Mines and Petroleum)** [12.07 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the “Mineral Royalty Rate Analysis Final Report 2015” has been finalised and to table a copy of the report.

[See paper 2756.]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** This government announced the mineral royalty rate analysis in 2012 and the Departments of Mines and Petroleum and State Development have undertaken this important piece of work in the three years since.

The current royalty system has remained largely unchanged for 30 years. I believe that it is the state government's responsibility to periodically review the royalty system and confirm that Western Australians are

receiving a fair return for the resources of their state. The review constituted a detailed technical look at the WA royalties system and its key focus was to identify any anomalies that were at odds with the general principles of the system.

One of the key findings of the report reads —

Western Australia's royalty system ... has successfully delivered a return to the community while providing industry with a straightforward, transparent and predictable cost structure.

I want to emphasise that there will no changes to royalty rates as part of this year's budget. The state government is keen to seek industry and community feedback on the report and its recommendations. This has been a very valuable exercise and I thank the departments for their hard work and the input provided by industry, particularly the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies and the Chamber of Minerals and Energy. Copies of the final MRRR report can also be found on the DMP website.

### **REGIONAL AIRPORTS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

*Statement by Minister for Transport*

**MR D.C. NALDER (Alfred Cove — Minister for Transport)** [12.08 pm]: Today I announce that regional communities across Western Australia will share in \$2.5 million towards airport infrastructure works as part of the 2015–17 regional airports development scheme funding round. Western Australia's vast distances and extreme conditions mean that regional regular public transport air services and emergency and clinical services provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service are critical for communities remote from Perth. Adequate regional airport infrastructure to support the continued provision of these air services is crucial for many of these communities.

The regional airports development scheme was introduced in 1997 with the aim of improving Western Australian regional air access and safety through the provision of financial assistance to regional airport owners for public airport infrastructure. The 2015–17 regional airports development scheme received 51 applications. Applications for runway development, airside development, grounds development and airport planning were received. Applications were reviewed and prioritised by a consultative committee consisting of representatives from the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Western Australian Local Government Association and various state government agencies.

An initial 25 regional airports will receive funding for 30 projects to help improve airport safety, operations, security and planning. A total of \$3.9 million was budgeted for the 2015–17 regional airports development scheme funding round, which means that approximately \$1.4 million has been set aside for projects that require further consideration or are pending funding approval from other sources. The awarding of the remaining available funds will be announced in the second half of 2015. The initial allocation of 2015–17 funding to each of the Western Australian regions will be: Gascoyne, \$94 000; goldfields–Esperance, \$698 621; great southern, \$81 290; Kimberley, \$610 829; midwest, \$742 764; south west, \$109 839; and wheatbelt, \$164 618.

The largest grant, of \$300 000, for the 2015–17 funding round has been awarded to the Shire of Dundas to raise the level of the Norseman airstrip to make it all-weather appropriate, making it easier and safer for the Royal Flying Doctor Service to land. The Norseman aerodrome has had 49 medical evacuations in the last five years. By raising the level of the airstrip, it will be safer and easier for the Royal Flying Doctor Service to land in all weather conditions and will improve the safety of airport operations in medical emergencies.

### **ALUMINA REFINERY (MITCHELL PLATEAU) AGREEMENT (TERMINATION) BILL 2015**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr C.J. Barnett (Minister for State Development)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

*Second Reading*

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Minister for State Development)** [12.12 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to ratify an agreement made on 20 February 2015 between the state, Mitchell Plateau Bauxite Company Pty Ltd and Alcoa of Australia Ltd, which I will refer to as the termination agreement. This agreement will, upon its ratification, terminate the Alumina Refinery (Mitchell Plateau) Agreement 1971, which I will refer to as the state agreement. This bill is necessary in order to amend the Alumina Refinery (Mitchell Plateau) Agreement Act 1971, which I will refer to as the principal act, to ratify the termination agreement.

I am very pleased to bring this bill to Parliament as it will allow for the land covered by the state agreement to be included within the boundary of the proposed Kimberley national park. The proposed Kimberley national park was one of the Liberal government's key election commitments in 2013 and, along with the creation of the

great Kimberley marine park, is a central component of this government's Kimberley science and conservation strategy. Protecting the unique environment of the Kimberley has been an unrealised aspiration of successive governments, the conservation movement and the public. One of this government's proudest achievements has been to do just that through the implementation of the Kimberley science and conservation strategy. This is the largest conservation project ever undertaken in Western Australia, delivered in collaboration with traditional owners, non-government organisations and pastoralists. The strategy is a major state government priority, with an investment of \$81.5 million, and will protect a significant part of the only Australian bioregion to have no recorded extinctions of mammals since European settlement.

Together, the proposed Kimberley national park and the great Kimberley marine park will cover almost 50 000 square kilometres, forming interconnected protected areas containing some of the most spectacular natural and cultural features in Australia. These include the renowned World Heritage-listed Purnululu National Park, home to the famous Bungle Bungles and Mini Palms Gorge, and the wonderful marine environments of Camden Sound, a known humpback whale calving area and habitat for snubfin dolphins, and the Horizontal Falls, which offers visitors a once-in-a-lifetime experience and where huge tidal movements create a waterfall effect on the ocean surface—a truly unique spectacle.

The government commenced discussions with the Mitchell Plateau joint venturers in late 2013 with the aim of negotiating the termination of the state agreement. In recognition of the significant conservation and cultural values of the area, the joint venturers indicated their willingness to work with the government on achieving this broader outcome by agreeing to relinquish their right of occupancy of temporary reserve 5610H and to terminate the state agreement. The termination agreement was executed in February 2015 following the completion of negotiations. I would like to acknowledge the substantial contribution of Rio Tinto Aluminium and Alcoa of Australia to this outcome. The companies have worked closely and co-operatively with government during what have been very detailed and lengthy negotiations to ensure that the significant conservation and cultural values of this area can be appropriately preserved within a new national park.

The government is also engaging with the Dambimangari, Wunambal-Gaambera and Willinggin native title holders to develop joint management arrangements for the national park and to address the future act requirements under the commonwealth Native Title Act 1993. Significantly, as part of the creation of the national park, the state government has committed to amending legislation, to be progressed shortly, to enable national parks to be jointly vested with native title holders. This will recognise and give effect to the vital role and responsibilities of traditional owners in the management and protection of this unique and remarkable landscape and the cultural and environmental values within. This bill and the termination of the state agreement are an important precursor and significant step to achieving this outcome.

To put this termination agreement into context, I will now provide some background on the state agreement. The Alumina Refinery (Mitchell Plateau) Agreement 1971 was originally entered into between the state and Amax Bauxite Corporation in November 1971. Since the early 1980s, the Mitchell Plateau joint venture has held rights as the "company" under the state agreement, including the right of occupancy over the temporary reserve. The Mitchell Plateau joint venture is currently a venture between the Mitchell Plateau Bauxite Company, with 65.625 per cent, and Alcoa of Australia, with 34.375 per cent, and the Mitchell Plateau Bauxite Company, as the majority participant, is the manager of the joint venture. The Mitchell Plateau Bauxite Company Pty Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto Aluminium (Holdings) Limited.

The purpose of the state agreement was to establish a refinery to produce alumina from the identified bauxite resource at Mitchell Plateau in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. A temporary reserve covering an area of approximately 175 900 hectares, or 1 759 square kilometres, was established under the Mining Act 1904 in November 1972 to protect bauxite resources in the area. In 1972, a right of occupancy over the temporary reserve was granted for prospecting for the purposes of the state agreement. This right has been renewed since 1972. In 1985, 14 mining leases—MLs 80/47–60—at Cape Bougainville, approximately 100 kilometres north northeast of Mitchell Plateau, were granted under the Mining Act 1978 to the joint venturers for the purposes of the project under the state agreement. These leases, referred to as the Cape Bougainville mining leases, were renewed in 2006 for a further 21 years and will expire in 2027.

The state agreement requires the joint venturers to submit detailed proposals to the minister responsible for the state agreement for the development of bauxite mining and a refinery. The joint venturers have actively investigated the development of a bauxite mine and refinery; however, the development of an integrated project has proven economically challenging.

The principal activity that has been carried out under the state agreement is exploration. Existing infrastructure at Mitchell Plateau includes an airstrip, which was originally constructed for large cargo planes and is now used by the joint venturers and the Department of Parks and Wildlife for servicing the Kandiwal Aboriginal community and for growing tourism. There is an access track from the Kalumburu road to the airstrip, which is also used by tourists to the region. The area is therefore still largely undeveloped. The joint venturers have also committed \$760 000 to complete rehabilitation works associated with past exploration in the area.

I now turn to the provisions of the bill, which are outlined in detail in the explanatory memorandum that I have tabled. The key provisions are as follows. Clause 6 will replace section 4 of the Alumina Refinery (Mitchell Plateau) Agreement Act 1971—that is, the principal act—with a new section that ratifies the termination agreement and provides for it to operate despite any other act or law without limiting or affecting the operation of the Government Agreements Act 1979. Clause 6 also inserts a new section 5A that cancels the temporary reserve; a new section 5B that terminates all pending applications for mining tenements over the “Mitchell Plateau area”—being in essence the area of the temporary reserve—and for the state not to be liable with respect to such termination; and a new section 5C that precludes the making, or grant, of any application for a mining tenement over the Mitchell Plateau area until the creation of a national park, classified as class A reserve, over the Mitchell Plateau area. These provisions essentially terminate the state agreement, cancel the temporary reserve and preserve the Mitchell Plateau area from mining tenement applications until the Mitchell Plateau area is made a national park. The creation of the park is a separate process being managed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Clause 7 inserts as the fourth schedule to the principal act a copy of the termination agreement and also inserts the fifth schedule, which defines the Mitchell Plateau area. Clause 9 inserts a signpost in the Mining Act 1978 that its provisions regarding the application for, and grant of, mining tenements are subject to provisions in the bill regarding the application for, and grant of, tenements over the Mitchell Plateau area.

The key provisions of the termination agreement, contained in the proposed fourth schedule, are as follows. Clause 4(1): the state agreement is terminated on and from the operative date; that is, the operative date is the day after this bill receives royal assent. Clause 4(2): the company remains liable for any prior breach under the state agreement and in respect of any indemnity given under the state agreement. Clause 4(3)(a): the Cape Bougainville mining leases on and from the operative date shall continue in force, subject to the provisions of the Mining Act, and shall cease to have the benefit of the rights and privileges conferred by the state agreement. Clause 4(3)(b): from the operative date up to the earlier of the expiry of the current term of each mining lease, 2027, or the date on which the current holders cease to hold greater than a 30 per cent interest—in aggregate or by one of them—in the mining lease, the holder of the mining lease shall not be required to comply with the expenditure conditions under the Mining Act. The Cape Bougainville mining leases do not form part of the proposed national park, and it was considered appropriate to continue this exemption given the joint venturer’s agreement to relinquish its right of occupancy and to terminate the state agreement. Clause 4(4): the company to pay to the state \$760 000 to fund rehabilitation of priority exploration areas within the area of the temporary reserve. Clause 4(5): the company to indemnify the state for a period of 20 years from the operative date, against third party claims for any work undertaken by the company pursuant to the state agreement, other than ground disturbance exploration works, but not to the extent the claim relates to activities of the state, including future rehabilitation and other on-ground activities. The exclusion from the indemnity of any future third party claims relating to prior ground disturbance exploration works is consistent with the state undertaking future rehabilitation works. Clause 5: on and from the operative date, the right of occupancy over the temporary reserve is to be deemed surrendered.

Upon ratification of the bill by Parliament and upon it becoming operative, the provisions will take effect, including the simultaneous termination of the state agreement and protection of the Mitchell Plateau area, pending creation of the national park. This bill and termination agreement are significant milestones towards achieving conservation of a significant area of the Kimberley.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr M. McGowan**.

### **TREASURER — MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### *Standing Orders Suspension — Motion*

**MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition)** [12.24 pm] — without notice: I move —

That standing orders be suspended so far as to allow the following motion to be debated forthwith —

That this house calls on the Treasurer to resign from cabinet for his significant breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

We raised this issue yesterday in the house, and the response from the government was absolutely as weak as water. We had half an hour for the government to debate these issues, and the sum total of the time taken for the Treasurer’s defence of himself and the Premier’s defence of the Treasurer was 11 minutes. They had half an hour to defend their case and they took 11 minutes. The Premier’s defence was absolutely half-hearted because he knows that we have the Treasurer on toast with a conflict of interest under the Ministerial Code of Conduct and that this Treasurer has behaved inappropriately. Now we are saying that in light of new information, we want to raise it again and ensure that this motion is debated. I am seeking an indication from the Leader of the House that we will have 15 minutes a side.

*Standing Orders Suspension — Amendment to Motion*

**MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House)** [12.26 pm]: As the Leader of the Opposition said, we did debate this issue yesterday, and so it is puzzling as to why the opposition feels the need to raise it again. However, so as not to waste time, I move —

To insert after “forthwith” —

, subject to the debate being limited to 15 minutes for government members and 15 minutes for non-government members.

Amendment put and passed.

*Standing Orders Suspension — Motion, as Amended*

**The SPEAKER:** Members, as this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need an absolute majority in order to succeed. If I hear a dissentient voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

*Motion*

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition)** [12.27 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the Treasurer to resign from cabinet for his significant breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

This is a government that does not understand standards. Here is a classic example of a minister who has confused his private interests with his public duty. He has confused his private shareholdings with his public duties. What do we see from the government? Nothing! There is no consequence for a minister behaving appallingly and owing shares in a corporation in which he participates in a decision that provides a benefit to them. That is unacceptable, and there must be a consequence for that.

Earlier this year or late last year, we saw a consequence for the Minister for Transport, but now we see no consequence for the Treasurer of Western Australia—and his offence is worse! What the government always does is this. First of all, the government denies that there is a problem. Then the Premier redefines the standards and says that the standard has to be a gross impropriety such as the minister taking money or something of that nature. Then the Premier says, “Oh, it’s all okay because belatedly the minister goes and sells the shares, and therefore whatever the conflict was that happened prior is no longer relevant.” That is because on the Premier’s standards the Treasurer has now sold the shares. I will give the Premier the tip: the Treasurer should have never owned the shares in the first place. He, as a minister, should never have held shares in mining companies, telecommunication companies and insurance companies, each of which has significant dealings with the Western Australian government—each one of them does.

However, I want to specifically deal with the case of the QBE Insurance shares. The original line from the Treasurer is this: “They pay a good dividend”, he said on the television, and that was his excuse for keeping the shares. Then the line turned to, “Well, I did have a meeting with them or their lobbyist to discuss compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance, but we’re not outsourcing that anyway, so there’s no conflict.” That is what the line was, and the Treasurer said, “That’s the only dealing that QBE has with the Western Australian government.” Then we discover that the Western Australian government has very significant dealings with QBE, and the Treasurer holds shares in that corporation. The Western Australian government was the underwriter of that corporation, QBE, in home indemnity insurance. That is what we then discovered. Then we have the Treasurer’s excuse in Parliament yesterday—I wrote it down, it is so good. It is so good to listen to the Treasurer’s excuse. He said —

QBE used to be the insurer for home indemnity, but QBE pulled out of that. We, the state, insure that now. Through the Department of Commerce, QBE processes the forms and gets paid for it. The state wears the indemnity for home insurance.

“The state wears the indemnity for home insurance.” So, the Treasurer’s excuse now in relation to this massive conflict of interest is this: the state has assumed all the risk from the company in which I hold shares. That is now the Treasurer’s excuse. The Treasurer’s excuse is: we have provided a huge benefit to the company in which I hold shares, and therefore that excuses me for holding those shares. That is an outrageous excuse!

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** Is that all you have?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** That is an outrageous excuse! Absolutely —

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** Pathetic!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Treasurer is right: it is a pathetic excuse.

**The SPEAKER:** Treasurer, I am going to call you to order for the first time. You are going to have your turn to speak. I only want to hear the Leader of the Opposition, and when the Treasurer speaks, I only want to hear the Treasurer.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Treasurer's excuse now is: I do not benefit because I provided a benefit to QBE, and the state is now out of it. It is an outrageous excuse in relation to these matters!

But the Treasurer also said yesterday in the house that —

The Minister for Commerce did renew QBE's decision to process home indemnity insurance, and that was a decision for the Minister for Commerce.

In other words, saying, "I had nothing to do with it." That was the Treasurer's excuse yesterday. He compounded the error and I will tell members why: it was because he misled the house in respect of this matter. We asked a question in the upper house last evening. It turns out that the extension of the 2010 heads of agreement was considered by cabinet on 20 May 2013. Who was sitting in cabinet as Minister for Finance on 20 May 2013 when the decision was made to extend the agreement that assisted QBE, and guess who was sitting in cabinet holding shares in QBE? It was none other than the Treasurer.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** So, when the Treasurer said the decision was made by the Minister for Commerce, firstly he misled the house because it was not; it was made by the cabinet, according to answer C337 given by the Minister for Commerce. It was made by the cabinet itself. Then, just to confirm it, the Department of Commerce "Annual Report 2013–14" states —

Private insurers ceased underwriting home indemnity insurance in Western Australia from 1 November 2013.

A date when the Treasurer held shares and sat in cabinet. The report continues —

The state entered into an interim agreement late October 2013, with the two remaining insurers Calliden and QBE, to 100 per cent reinsure policies issued after 1 November 2013, ...

The report continues —

The Building Commission Division has worked closely with the Department of Treasury and the Insurance Commission of Western Australia to examine options for a public sector scheme, and after considerable evaluation recommended to Cabinet that the current contracts with Calliden and QBE be extended for a period of 24 months whilst the parameters of home indemnity insurance are reviewed to attract renewed private insurer interest in the medium to long term.

In other words, it was recommended to cabinet in November 2014. Who was sitting there in cabinet recommending or being part of this decision, and who no doubt signed off on this decision? It was none other than the Treasurer, who owns shares in QBE and who would have benefited from this decision.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** My goodness; there is no more clear-cut a case of a conflict of interest than this. This is as stark as it gets. In light of what happened to the Minister for Transport who lost the finance portfolio, it is now incumbent on the Premier to exercise the same standards in relation to this minister; otherwise, it will be said that there are no standards in this government. They slip and slide depending upon the circumstances and how much of a favoured son or daughter the individual involved is. That is what has happened here. The Treasurer has misled the house, and he has benefited from a decision of a cabinet in which he sat, and for those reasons he should go.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [12.35 pm]:** I want to reinforce some of the points made by the Leader of the Opposition. I want to start with claims yesterday that the Department of Finance does not oversee information and communications technology anymore in this state. Again, that was another false claim by the Treasurer yesterday. In fact, it was the ICT issue that the Minister for Transport got caught out on. The Treasurer yesterday said that the Department of Finance does not oversee ICT contracts, but when we go to the Department of Finance website and see the ICT contracts, we see that what he said was again false.

Let us go through this QBE issue, because it is a key issue. QBE was one of the two insurers in home indemnity insurance from 2010 to the end of June 2013. There was an extension of those arrangements, but in October 2013 the arrangements were changed in that the state government took all the risk and basically became the reinsurer. In relation to that, it is important to note that QBE actually wanted to pull out of the home indemnity insurance market. The Economic Regulation Authority report in 2013 noted that QBE wanted to pull out because its returns were not strong enough. That is what is written in the government's own ERA report. So, basically, new arrangements were struck with QBE in late October 2013. This Treasurer was sitting around the cabinet table as Minister for Finance when new arrangements were struck with QBE. Let us compare what he said in this

place yesterday with the facts. He said the new contract with QBE was simply processing home indemnity insurance, and, “It is not a reinsurance issue.” What does the Department of Commerce annual report actually state? That it is a reinsurance issue, and that the state entered into an interim agreement in October 2013 with Calliden Group and QBE to 100 per cent reinsure policies. The Treasurer said yesterday that it was not a reinsurance issue. Why does the government annual report say it was a reinsurance policy issue? Again, it is a complete contradiction.

I turn to the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*—the document the Treasurer specifically has responsibility for; he signed off on it. In 2013, the midyear review notes that new arrangements were struck with QBE in which the state wholly underwrites the insurance market. That was extended a year later when the member for Riverton was Treasurer. To come into this place and say that the QBE relationship is null and void and does not exist is absolutely wrong. I will tell members why. We asked another question yesterday in the upper house about whether the government has an existing arrangement with QBE in relation to insurance matters. The minister in the upper house said yes.

The key point here is that cabinet sat around and renegotiated these agreements with QBE. The then Minister for Finance, now Treasurer, had shares in QBE. It is clear-cut. The midyear review of 2013–14, and the midyear review of 2014–15, which this Treasurer signed off on, allocated more expenditure, and money actually flowed directly to QBE—\$500 000 flowed to QBE from July 2014 to February 2015. It is clear-cut. The now Treasurer was then a minister and he was in cabinet. The cabinet was renegotiating a very complex matter with a company that the Treasurer held shares in. It was a matter that his company wanted to exit from. So, basically, the Treasurer was doing what the company had wanted.

Basically, to come into this place yesterday and say, “Look, the Department of Finance no longer has ICT responsibility”, was wrong, to say that those mining companies had no operations in WA was wrong, and to say that QBE does not have any contractual relationships with this state government is wrong! The now Treasurer sat around the cabinet table when companies he had shares in were having agreements struck with the government. It is clear-cut! The Treasurer should have sold those shares within 60 days of becoming a minister; that is what he should have done. I do not know whether anyone on his side told him that, but that is what he should have done. The Treasurer is seriously conflicted. There is so much evidence to show that he was a minister, and he was Treasurer in some instances, when key decisions were made to give funding or contracts to companies in which he had shares.

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier)** [12.40 pm]: I note that yesterday the Treasurer indicated that he will be selling his shares in four different companies that form part of his superannuation fund. As I said yesterday, I think it is desirable than ministers do not hold shares.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Yesterday, and again today, opposition members have made a series of claims. They have demanded the resignation of the Treasurer, and on it goes. I want to address some of the claims that have been made by the opposition, and the Treasurer will address some of the others. Again, most of what I will say was stated by the Treasurer yesterday. The Treasurer’s shareholdings are ABM Resources and Medusa Mining, which are both in the gold industry, QBE Insurance, and Telstra. First, with respect to the mining shares, as was stated yesterday, ABM Resources has several gold discoveries in the Northern Territory. That is its focus of activity. Its head office is in Alice Springs, although it does have a Perth office. ABM Resources has no tenements in Western Australia; it operates in the Northern Territory.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The claims there are completely unfounded. Beyond that, the Treasurer has no responsibility for the administration of tenements—none at all. The opposition is wrong on that one.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Decisions on tenements do not go to cabinet. They are not cabinet decisions. Please understand that. The administration of mining is the responsibility of the Department of Mines and Petroleum and the Minister for Mines and Petroleum. Tenements do not go to cabinet. Therefore, there is no conflict; there is no interest at all in that respect. As the Treasurer explained yesterday, Medusa Mining operates solely in the Philippines. It has no mining operations in Western Australia. In fact, it has no mining operations in Australia. Therefore, there are no issues at all with those two shareholdings. As I said, mining tenements come under the responsibility of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, not the Treasurer in any sense, and those issues do not ever come to cabinet.

I want to address the issue of Telstra. Members opposite made a lot of Telstra yesterday, but they are a bit quiet on it this morning, I have noticed. Let us talk about Telstra.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Members opposite made a big push on this yesterday, and suddenly they have changed tack—because it fell flat, didn't it?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** In September 2010, cabinet considered a joint submission from the Minister for Commerce and the Minister for Regional Development on a royalties for regions funding allocation of \$40 million over three years for a regional mobile communications project. That is a deserving and good project. There are a lot of gaps, and for the convenience of people, for safety on our roads—a host of reasons—building more mobile phone towers around the state is an excellent thing. The intention, as I say, was to address the gaps and establish as many mobile phone towers as possible. It was very clear when cabinet considered that matter that that project was subject to a competitive tender process. The submission to cabinet did not refer to Telstra in any sense. It was a submission to put money into a process in which there would be a competitive tender. Yes, Telstra was one of the three companies that bid for that work, and Telstra won that work.

**Mr M. McGowan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** No; listen. The awarding of that contract was the responsibility of the Minister for Commerce, it was done according to the procurement rules of government, and it was settled by Commerce. It did not come back to cabinet. The Treasurer and minister at the time had no involvement, other than to agree that we would spend as a government \$40 million on mobile phone towers. The process was then followed, absolutely appropriately, by Commerce.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Members opposite giggle! That is because they would not have done that.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You're a hypocrite!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I am a hypocrite, am I? The standards of this government, compared with those of members opposite —

Several members interjected.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Mr Speaker, I withdraw that comment, because I realise that it is unparliamentary.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** There is another big point that members opposite tried to make yesterday. They held up a media release, which had on it photos of the Treasurer and the Minister for Commerce, about a further budget allocation of \$45 million for the mobile phone towers. Again, that was handled in the same proper way, and a bidding process took place. If they had taken the time or been honest enough, they would have seen that every budget press release had a photo of the Treasurer on it—one was in arts, one was in science, one was in water, and whatever. That is standard practice. Members opposite tried to imply yesterday that this was the Treasurer's decision. It was not the Treasurer's decision. It was not a cabinet decision.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, I call you for the first time. Member for Girrawheen, I call you for the first time. The opposition spoke for 12 minutes, and I called one person. I want the same courtesy extended the other way.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The opposition tried to build an argument around this media release. There were probably a dozen media releases with the Treasurer's photograph on them, along with that of the responsible minister. That is standard budget practice, because the Treasurer has overall responsibility for the budget. The opposition's argument yesterday was that the Telstra matter went to cabinet, and the Treasurer held shares and he signed off on that. They are wrong, because the Telstra matter never went to cabinet. The only thing that went to cabinet was the decision to fund the program and to leave the Department of Commerce, according to the normal rules of government contracting, to run a tender —

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** No, I do not want to hear from the member for West Swan.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the first time.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Willagee, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Albany, I call you to order for the first time.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The claim was made yesterday that the Treasurer had sat at the table when cabinet considered a contract with Telstra. That did not happen. Cabinet made a decision to fund the mobile phone tower program. The responsibility lay obviously with the Minister for Regional Department from a policy point of view but the handling of that contract was done through the Department of Commerce. The tender process was run by Commerce, Telstra won it and the contract was awarded. It did not come back to cabinet. Members opposite are 100 per cent wrong on that.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** So why is he selling his shares?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** For goodness' sake! How many more times do I have to explain that? I will leave it to the Treasurer to comment on the QBE Insurance issue. But, on those issues, opposition members are wrong in what they said. Opposition members did not do their research. They held up one press release out of 12 and claimed it was the Treasurer's decision. It was not; it was a Department of Commerce tender.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cockburn, I call you to order for the first time.

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Treasurer)** [12.48 pm]: I want to reiterate what the Premier said. The first is the accusation about Telstra. When the member for Cannington waved that document, it was clear that my picture was on it. I could not read the detail, and I was reluctant to respond to it, because usually everything he says is wrong, but I went back and looked at it. It was a budget statement about the allocation of \$45 million for a tender to build mobile phone towers. It had no reference to Telstra, contrary to what the member for Cannington claimed in this house. It was allocated to the Department of Commerce. The Department of Commerce, through tender arrangements, put out a tender, and Telstra evidently won that contract. On the issue about allocation, as the Premier said, cabinet does not oversee tenders. Those are administered by the Department of Commerce. They went out to a competitive tender and Telstra won. I had no input into the tender process, which is appropriate, and no knowledge about who was going to win the tender and who the bidders were for that tender. The parade yesterday of press releases and whatnot was just a facade. That highlights the issue here. This is a muckraking exercise.

I now go back to the mining companies. None of those mining companies have any tenements in Western Australia.

**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** They have none—the opposition claimed otherwise, but they have none. By the way, this is my self-managed super fund. The listing of those shares was transparent to everybody. It did not take the shadow minister for accountability very much effort. She only had to go to the Clerk's office and get a photocopy of the record. That is all she did. First the opposition went around here and told everybody that there had been a conspiracy, but it did not check to see where the assets were. There is no substance to this claim about Telstra, Medusa Mining and ABM Resources. QBE was one of two private insurers for home indemnity—the government has a rule that there must be household indemnity insurance—but they were not regulated by the government. In 2013 or thereabouts—probably before that—QBE announced that it was pulling out of, exiting, the market, and it did. It no longer insures houses for household indemnity insurance in this state. In 2013 cabinet decided that it would pick up the liability, not for QBE but for households. QBE left the market. We are not underwriting QBE; we are underwriting Western Australian households. That is what is in the books, that is what is transparent and that is what has been discussed here. It is a major issue. The Western Australian government now carries that insurance. When the government entered into that in 2013, rather than starting the paperwork again, the Department of Commerce hired QBE and Calliden Group, which was the other insurer, to levy the fees and process the claims. That is it. The opposition claims repeatedly that we underwrote it—that is false.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the second time.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** The opposition repeatedly claims that we were underwriting QBE's liabilities—that is wrong. In 2013 the Western Australian government assumed the liabilities. QBE had a contract with the building authority to collect the fees and pay that—that is it. The Department of Commerce decided to contract that out—that is it—and it was reimbursed for the cost. The Economic Regulation Authority put it in a report at the request of the Treasurer and laid this out in full. Of course, the member for West Swan can distort it to say that QBE may leave the market, which it did. It is not in the market. It was in the market as a private enterprise charging households with no government regulation or involvement, but it exited the market. How can that be a conflict of interest? QBE is no longer in the house indemnity insurance market in Western Australia. Before that it was selling insurance to households in a competitive market and the government was not yet an intermediary. What is the problem? In 2013 the Department of Commerce signed an agreement for it to collect the fees and pay the payouts. It had an option to renew, which it did under the option in 2014. It renewed an existing contract. The opposition is saying that the Treasurer should go to the Department of Commerce and get involved in contracts. Maybe that is what members opposite would do, but I do not. It is the height of hypocrisy for members opposite to lecture me or anybody on this side of the house about propriety. Before coming to government, I was a public servant when Brian Burke and Julian Grill reigned supreme and were parachuting their minions into the public service one after another.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I came back to Western Australia when “WA Inc Mark II” was in full run. We saw one disgraced minister after another, not by leadership on the part of members opposite, but by the Corruption and Crime Commission. The member for West Swan worked for a series of Western Australian opposition leaders and Premiers and whatnot. She worked for a slew of them as a permanent public servant from Treasury to the office. Shortly before the 2008 election, when she knew she had a safe seat, she shifted over and got a \$178 000 payout, yet she is sitting there lecturing me! When she left government she worked for, I believe, the Dockers for a while.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Standing order 92 states that imputations of improper motives and personal reflections on a member of this place can be made only through a substantive motion. It is clear that the Treasurer is doing that. I request that you call him to order.

**The SPEAKER:** Carry on, minister.

*Debate Resumed*

Several members interjected.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** There was!

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** There goes the pointy finger again!

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes, here we go! It is just a statement of fact. There was no conflict of interest.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for West Swan!

**Mr N.W. Morton** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Forrestfield!

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for West Swan! Treasurer, through the Chair.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Despite the opposition's argument, there was no conflict of interest with Telstra. There is no substance to the opposition's argument. There was no conflict in the mining share. It does not own mining tenements in this state and one of them does not own them in this country. There is no conflict of interest with QBE. Members opposite have not made a case. They are just hopping up and down. Yesterday, I announced a major review of the electricity industry.

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington)** [12.57 pm]: The problem with the Treasurer is that he does not get his story straight from one day to the next. On Monday he said —

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** “Mr Sleaze”.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members! I do not want to hear a wall of noise.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** On Monday he said —

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I call on the Premier to withdraw the statement he just made about a member of this house. It is completely and utterly unparliamentary to refer to a member of this house as “Mr Sleaze” and I ask that he withdraw.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I withdraw.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** On Monday the Treasurer said that QBE has no contracts, but today he said that it only has contracts. He said that Telstra does not have any deals with the government, yet it has million-dollar deals with the government. Let me go back to Bob Kucera. Bob Kucera resigned when he was the Minister for Sport and Recreation not because he gave money to Alinta, but because he made a decision that may have given money to Alinta. That is exactly what has happened here. The Treasurer made a decision that allowed Telstra to get money; that is exactly the same as what happened with Bob Kucera.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the first time. I do not want to hear from anybody else.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Bob Kucera sat in cabinet and participated in a decision that may have benefited Alinta—it did not benefit Alinta, but it may have. The Treasurer sat in cabinet and made a decision that may have benefited Telstra. He was a part owner of Telstra. His situation is exactly the same as that of Hon Bob Kucera. The difference is that Bob Kucera was honourable because he came into this chamber and resigned. They are exactly the same circumstances; there is absolutely and utterly no difference between what Kucera did with respect to Alinta —

**The SPEAKER:** Time, member!

*Division*

Question put and division taken with the following result —

*Ayes (20)*

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

*Noes (34)*

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

*Pair*

Mr D.J. Kelly

Mr I.C. Blayney

Question thus negatived.

**FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2015***Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr J.M. Francis (Minister for Emergency Services)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

*Second Reading*

**MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Emergency Services)** [1.04 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Fire and Emergency Services Amendment Bill 2015. This bill is an important part of the government's response to the report of the special inquiry titled “A Shared Responsibility: The Report of

the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review” undertaken by Mr Mick Keelty, AO, APM. That inquiry was established by this government to examine aspects of bushfire risk management in the Perth hills area after the bushfire that destroyed 71 homes and damaged a further 39 in the Roleystone–Kelmscott area on 6 February 2011. The inquiry had specific terms of reference and ultimately made 55 recommendations.

Recommendation 3 was that the state, through the Western Australian Planning Commission, should be given responsibility for designating bushfire-prone areas. There is no express provision in any current legislation for any state agency to certify bushfire-prone area maps or designate bushfire-prone areas, and consequently development in bushfire-prone areas has not been guided by a standard that is designed to reduce the risk of bushfire to life, property or assets. Designation of bushfire-prone areas is required under a statutory power to trigger mandatory use of the Australian standard for building in bushfire-prone areas—Australian Standard 3959.

Following interagency discussions, the State Solicitor’s Office advised that the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998 is considered the most appropriate legislation to contain these provisions and that the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner would be the most suitable officer to carry out this function. The designation of bushfire-prone areas is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of other measures recommended in the report relating to development in bushfire-prone areas. The suite of measures is intended to reduce the risk of bushfire to life, property and infrastructure, achieved through minimising the risk of new land development in areas of extreme bushfire risk; establishing mechanisms to ensure bushfire risk mitigation is applied to new developments in bushfire-prone areas; ensuring that prospective purchasers of property in bushfire-prone areas are informed of the potential risk; and considering future incentives to facilitate the reduction of legacy risk for existing buildings in bushfire-prone areas.

The bill will provide for the designation of bushfire-prone areas by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. An area will be designated as bushfire prone if it is an area that is subject, or is likely to be subject, to bushfires. A proposed development within an area designated as bushfire prone will require an assessment of the bushfire attack level. This assessment will then inform the standard of the proposed development to align with Australian Standard 3959.

The generation of the statewide bushfire-prone area map is being coordinated by the Office of Bushfire Risk Management, with local governments, where able, providing local assessments of bushfire-prone areas, and technical support provided by Landgate. The statewide map will be publicly available on the Department of Fire and Emergency Services’ website from 1 May 2015 following designation by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, and will be updated on a regular basis. The suite of measures that support the reduction of bushfire risk to life, property and infrastructure has been a collaborative body of work between the Office of Bushfire Risk Management, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Department of Planning, and the Department of Commerce, through its Consumer Protection and Building Commission divisions. The Interagency Bushfire Management Committee has been kept informed of progress and the Department of Local Government and Communities, and the Western Australian Planning Commission, were consulted during the development of the measures.

The Department of Planning, through extensive consultation with the community, local and state governments, and industry, has developed the “Draft State Planning Policy” on bushfire planning and revised the “Planning for Bush Fire Protection Guidelines”. Once finalised, the bushfire planning documents will articulate the importance of addressing bushfire risk at the strategic planning stage; clearly specify requirements that must be met at each stage of the planning process, including structure planning, subdivision and development; improve consistency in administration, interpretation and implementation of bushfire planning controls, including referral agencies and mechanisms; and require non-residential development in bushfire-prone areas to address bushfire protection criteria.

Designated bushfire-prone areas are prerequisites for the effective implementation of the state planning policy. These measures, through their development and application, are supporting a growing awareness of bushfire risk to the community and enhancing communities and individuals’ understanding and undertaking to manage bushfire risk. The government considers the bill will reduce the bushfire risk to life, property and infrastructure through informed development. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms S.F. McGurk**.

### **BARROW ISLAND AMENDMENT BILL 2015**

#### *Second Reading*

Resumed from 18 March.

#### *Declaration as Urgent*

**MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House)** [1.09 pm]: I move —

That the bill be considered an urgent bill.

I will speak briefly to the motion. The Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015 relates to the agreement between the commonwealth and the state whereby the commonwealth will indemnify Western Australia against 80 per cent of the state's liability under the state's statutory indemnity in relation to the Gorgon liquefied natural gas project—the Gorgon joint venture. The undertaking of a post-closure indemnity was provided to the Gorgon joint venture in 2009 during its consideration leading to a final investment decision. Subsequent arrangements were agreed to by the commonwealth and the state to have such an indemnity in place by 30 June this year. In July of last year, cabinet approved the Premier executing the state–commonwealth agreement to provide that 80–20 ratio of indemnity to the state. The agreement was executed by the Prime Minister on 13 February this year—quite recently—and there is a termination clause in the agreement that requires the bill to be enacted by 30 June this year, unless otherwise agreed by the parties. Understandably, there is an expectation from the Gorgon joint venture that the indemnity will be in place prior to the expected commencement of the injection operations in April 2016. The bill has been fairly recently drafted, as I understand, and has quite recently gone through cabinet. There is a need for the bill to be agreed to by both houses of Parliament before 30 June this year, and therefore it is imperative that the bill be debated and consideration concluded in this house before the end of this week, so that it can be introduced into the Legislative Council on Thursday to enable it to pass by the required date.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Did you say that the agreement was that the bill be passed by 30 June, or that it be introduced by 30 June?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The agreement requires the bill to be enacted by 30 June 2015. I commend this urgency motion to the house.

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington)** [1.12 pm]: The opposition, of course, does not like to truncate the ordinary procedures of the house. There is a good reason to have three weeks between the second reading speech and the commencement of debate on a bill; it allows a wide process of discussion. We have only had since last week to look at this bill. We have had the benefit of a briefing from the agency, but we have not had any opportunity to widely canvass the issues in the bill. That makes the Parliament's capacity to consider the legislation suboptimal. I was not aware that the bill had to be passed by 30 June. Often, state agreement legislation has to be introduced by a particular date but normally does not have to be passed by a particular date. We certainly would not like to put anything in the way of ensuring that the commonwealth provides its 80 per cent indemnity to the state, but we do not know the full facts and have not had the opportunity for further discussion. We did not specifically ask the agency questions about the time line; we were dealing more with the technical aspects of the bill. However, we have always found that we can take the word of the Leader of the House, and we will take his word on that. We find it surprising that the government entered into an agreement that obliged the Parliament of Western Australia to take action and that again we have the executive truncating the capacity of the Parliament to act. That is not a practice that should be allowed. We will not delay the bill. We have given the government a commitment to have the bill passed by some time tomorrow, and we will adhere to that, but it is not ideal when there is not proper opportunity for discussion, particularly if an agreement between two governments has acted to truncate the capacity of the Parliament to act in its sovereign right. That would be very disappointing. We note our objection to this practice, but we will not divide on this motion.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells)** [1.15 pm]: I rise to voice my concerns about the haste with which we are being required to deal with this bill, noting that the bill refers to one of the longest time spans that we know of—geological time. To deal with technically complex legislation requires members to grapple with new technology. That is one of the exciting aspects of this legislation; it is about something very new—geosequestration on a huge scale. Chevron and its Gorgon partners have been talking about this project for a long time. It does not really make sense to me why we are being asked to deal with this legislation in such an unseemly rapid-fire fashion, when surely there could have been a way of doing it that would have given members time to consult with stakeholders, get their heads around the technical complexities, and properly consider all the legislative implications of this shift of liability. It is a very complex area, so for us to be rushing this through without proper explanation does not make sense to me, but I look forward to hearing the Premier's justification for the urgency.

Question put and passed.

#### *Second Reading*

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington)** [1.17 pm]: I am the lead speaker for the opposition on the Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015, and I begin by saying that the opposition will support the bill. I will make a few comments. Firstly, this is a very complex area. I went back and looked through the debate on the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 from almost two years ago. That bill dealt with geosequestration outside of Barrow Island, and the debate on it was very complex. I will start by talking about what geosequestration is all about. It is the idea of capturing carbon and storing it “permanently” underground. One of the difficulties in dealing with carbon pollution is that often the point of combustion is the first opportunity to deal with carbon. With liquefied natural gas, there is also the opportunity to deal with carbon

emitted during the processing of the gas and getting it ready for use—in the case of Barrow Island, freezing it to a liquid and transporting it. Different gas fields have different amounts of carbon occurring naturally in the gas reservoirs. That carbon is vented during the processing of the gas. Because it is coming from a single source, it is quite easy to capture it, which is very different from post-combustion capture, which is often talked about in respect of the burning of coal. Unless the coal is processed, the first opportunity to capture the carbon is after it is burnt. We are talking here about capturing the carbon that occurs naturally in the reservoir, not the carbon that might be emitted by the gas when it is finally burnt in a power station in Japan, Korea, Taiwan or wherever else it might end up being used. One of the issues here is that the Gorgon field is particularly high in carbon in its natural state. When the Barrow Island project was first being considered all those years ago, one of the considerations was what would happen with all that carbon. Indeed, when Chevron and its joint venturers approached the former Labor government to seek the approvals, one of the advantages that Chevron identified for basing the project on Barrow Island was the fact that the carbon could be reinjected underneath Barrow Island. The Premier would remember that he said the carbon could be stripped on the island, reinjected, and the gas could then be transported to shore for processing. One way or another, whether that project or Chevron and its joint venturers' project were to proceed, the idea was to reinject the carbon into the very deep aquifers underneath Barrow Island. To make this clear, we are talking about injecting carbon 2 000 metres under the surface of the island. One of the effects of that—I am not a science graduate and I have no particular knowledge of science—is that increasing the pressure on the gas reduces its volume. Therefore, by the time the gas gets down to 2 000 metres beneath the surface of the earth, with that enormous pressure—I do not know the proper term—the gas is effectively a liquid and occupies a very small space. That is how 1 000 000 tonnes of carbon can potentially be injected into what seems to be a very small space.

Again, I am not a scientist and I am unable to properly describe the way that carbon reacts with the rock and the salt water at those great depths, but it is supposed to calcify—I think that is the right term—or turn into a solid. Of course, not all the carbon will calcify in one spot because whatever the reaction is that occurs in the formation, it progressively moves out from the point of injection. As it does, the process of the gas turning into a solid continues at the edge of that plume of injected carbon, but there is always a small amount that continues to spread. We were presented with some details about this in a map provided by the advisers that showed the expected progress of the plume under Barrow Island from the time of starting the injection to the computer model for 1 000 years from now. Why is this an issue? There are two separate issues involving risks. The first issue is that the carbon may escape explosively out of the ground through a fracture or fissure and damage the island's surface. If infrastructure was located above where the gas escaped, it could potentially cause physical damage to whatever is there because of the immense pressure. That is discussed in respect of the south west geosequestration project in the Harvey region of Western Australia. The second risk is that escaping CO<sub>2</sub> contributes to global warming and carbon pollution. The conundrum for everybody is that in geological terms, 20 years is no time at all—it is not even the blink of an eye—and 1 000 years is barely the blink of an eye. If it has taken 50 million or 60 million years for the formations underneath Barrow Island to take their current form, 1 000 years is no time at all. That is the conundrum when we are talking about a permanent storage solution because none of us have done this, so we do not know what 1 000 years of carbon sequestration is going to look like, much less a million years or five million years of carbon sequestration. We had quite a debate on another bill about the term “permanent”—which was not actually described in that other bill—because how permanent is permanent when we are talking about a million years?

There is the question of liability. The liability will belong to the companies until 15 years after the minister issues a certificate. There are procedures for the minister to issue that certificate, but basically it means that the reinjection of carbon has ceased and the minister is satisfied that the proponent, the Chevron joint venture, has taken appropriate action to ensure that, to the extent that is reasonably possible, the carbon will not escape. The potential liability 15 years later for that injected carbon will transfer from Chevron and its joint venture partners to the Crown and the right of Western Australia. Given that the commonwealth gets 90 to 95 per cent of the tax benefits out of the Gorgon project through the petroleum resource rent tax and commonwealth company tax, and Western Australia gets no royalties at all, but only gets some —

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Payroll tax.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Payroll tax—that is the word I was looking for. As there is almost nothing else in it for the state, it is only appropriate that the commonwealth bear the principal liability for this potential liability. That is what this amendment is about. The amendment recognises an agreement made between the commonwealth and the state in relation to an indemnity of the state of Western Australia for a proportion of the long-term common law liability in respect of carbon dioxide injected under Barrow Island, Western Australia, pursuant to the Gorgon Gas Processing and Infrastructure Project Agreement 2003 (WA). The commonwealth is indemnifying Western Australia for 80 per cent of the potential liability.

It is very hard to cost that liability because nobody has lived for a thousand years to know what is going to happen. Some of my colleagues are going to talk about some of the other geosequestration projects that are

happening in other parts of the world, but as I understand it, this is the world's largest geosequestration project. Although some of these projects have been going for what we might think of as a relatively long time—10 to 15 years—it is still only a short time. Each of these projects is necessarily different because each part of the world is not the same. As laypeople, we have to rely on advice, and the advice we received from the experts is that this system will work and that Barrow Island is stable and, once injected, the carbon dioxide will stay in place for the reasons that I only barely understand, but have tried to outline. The experts also tell us that there are risks. There needs to be an indemnity against those risks. That liability lies with the proponents for the project, plus 15 years, but beyond that it will go to the state.

We had this discussion previously but I will raise it again. I am advised by people in industry that these long-term liabilities are relatively cheap to insure against. When I last talked about it, I used the example I am about to use; that is, the trilogy of books *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. One of those books is *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. To pay for dinner at the restaurant, Milliways, one has to deposit 1c in a bank account and one billion years of compound interest pays the bill when one has dinner there. We do not have the benefit of time travel so we cannot benefit from that way of paying for our unbelievably expensive meal. Equally, if we insure against a liability that might occur in 100 years, it is very cheap.

Just as a complete aside, the cost of insuring against death by comet impact is extremely high. Even though the probability of it occurring is very low, the number of deaths is very high so the insurance companies cost that very, very highly. On the other hand, if we are insuring against an unlikely event in a distant future time, the cost is very small because of the benefit of compound interest. The new environmental financing system in the mining industry in Western Australia works by charging a small tax on all the operators to create a pool to deal with environmental liabilities. We have been able to withdraw the environment bonds. Insuring against the future potential risk from a carbon dioxide reinjection project is quite small. That is not the process that the government is taking, and we are not objecting to that, but I am making the point that there are different ways of doing this. That is how those countries that have well-regulated nuclear industries pay for the dismantling of plants because they have a very small charge on the electricity produced that goes into a sinking fund to pay for the cost of dismantling and disposing of the plants after 60 or 80 years of operation. They need only a very small insurance premium. But that is not the way we are doing it here.

There is a problem that the liability for this project and any other geosequestration projects will last much longer than any company. Very few companies have been around for 100 years. We cannot expect that the companies we now deal with, no matter how large, will be around in 100 years. We cannot expect them to carry the potential liability on their balance sheet because if they disappear at some time, the liability will have to go somewhere. The government is much more likely to be around in 100 years than any company. We are only a young country but many countries have had hundreds of years of continual government. It is appropriate to put the liabilities onto the government. The question is how it is financed. There are alternatives to the way that we are doing it.

I want to note that the project is getting close to first production. As the Premier said in his speech, the start-up in first gas is expected in mid to late 2015, which is not that long away, and domestic gas is planned for 31 December 2015—the first stage of the domestic train. I know the Premier's view but I note again that the Gorgon project's LNG capacity is 75 per cent contracted at this stage. Only last night I was reading another report out of media in Asia about what is happening with the LNG market. We are already a world-scale producer of LNG but we are about to move way up the curve and become even more important and perhaps become the world's largest supplier of LNG.

The one good thing about the Gorgon project and the Wheatstone project, which is also a Chevron joint venture, is that they are onshore projects for which the significant part of the work is being done domestically. My colleague the member for Cockburn might talk a bit further about local content. When we were in government, we were pleased at being able to secure such a major project. As Gorgon is an onshore project, it makes it a lot easier to negotiate domestic gas needs.

I continue to note the ongoing debate about domestic gas reservation. I was recently talking to executives at Woodside. I know that Woodside would not split from its Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association colleagues because I am sure it does not want to have a war amongst the members of APPEA. The executives noted to me that Woodside had never had trouble negotiating an outcome for domestic gas in each of its projects. I am looking forward to that happening at Pluto, of course. Indeed, Chevron in its two joint venture projects has been able to achieve the same thing. I again note the words of the representative from Chevron when he gave evidence at the domgas price inquiry chaired by the member for Riverton during the last Parliament. He was asked about the commercial issues surrounding the Gorgon domestic gas plant and his answer was that that was not the issue; the issue was that it was a state agreement requirement with Western Australia. Other states may live to regret not having entered into similar arrangements, as we have done here in Western Australia for all of our LNG projects. Again, I make the point that clearly having a domestic gas obligation does not kill off an LNG project because we have such large projects here in Western Australia. If we

have the resource and the project is bankable, it will go into production. I am unconvinced of the argument that says a domestic train makes a project unviable. I would love to see the financial details that could show that a domestic plant makes any particular project unviable. As a humble opposition member of Parliament, I do not imagine that I will get to see any such presentation but I would be very interested to see it if I was able to. Of course, we are very lucky to have such large volumes of gas in Western Australia, and it needs to be borne in mind that we have continued to find more gas in Western Australian reserves and our current known reserves are larger than they were 20 years ago. We are very lucky that that has continued to be the case, and I hope that our gas companies continue to put down wells and find additional gas, which will be so important to our future.

It will be interesting to see how we move toward separating the infrastructure involved in LNG production from the fields. I note that there is a sort of tolling feature to the Gorgon project. I hope I get this one right. I think it is from BP's interest in the Io gas field that gas is sold to I think it is Shell at the inlet valve and then Shell sells it back to BP as LNG at the end of the project. That is not quite tolling, but it is very, very close to third party gas. Obviously, the more that we can do with third party gas, the better our industry will be. We will be able to have a higher capital utilisation. That is good for investors because they run their assets harder, and it is good for the state because stranded fields can get to market. That is good for the commonwealth because the petroleum resource rent tax is paid on that, and it is good for jobs because there are more jobs available, particularly for onshore projects and any additional local content.

I was recently at a conference at which people were talking about the Norwegian example of managing the hydrocarbons industry. Industry representatives have raised the Norwegian example with me and have commented that even today the Norwegians always start by going back to the principles that have underpinned their hydrocarbon sector for 40 years unchanged. To think that there could be a government policy that lasts that long and stays intact. That obviously makes it easier for companies making decisions about investment. I also note that Norway has compulsory local content and the highest taxation rate of any hydrocarbon sector in the world. Of course, Norway also has all its royalty income held in foreign currencies. I have always found that fascinating. I point out to people who say that we should be like Norway—I am not objecting to that—that if we were, it would mean that we would have less tax revenue available today to spend, which is either a good thing or a bad thing, depending on one's point of view, because, in the long term, the Norwegians use only the income from their wealth fund and none of the principal of the tax revenue. Norway has a 14 per cent budget surplus. That is in a country with very, very high levels of government expenditure. It is clearly a system that works, but it works only if the decision is made to forgo short-term benefit to take advantage of long-term benefit. There needs to be national consensus about that, because if governments are constantly changing policies, it will not work.

It is interesting, and industry players always point this out to me as well, which I acknowledge, that Norway does not have a domestic gas policy. It does, but Norway's domestic gas policy is to not to use its gas. The preference in Norway is to not use gas, because Norway has a very large hydro-energy capacity, and it does not need to rely on gas like we do. It is a different environment from the one we have in Western Australia and Australia. If we had that sort of long-term low-cost energy source, it would make a real change. In Iceland, which is a highly volcanic place, geothermal resources are used to power electricity, which is why Iceland has ended up with a large-scale aluminium sector. It is a long way from bauxite deposits, but because the energy costs are so low, companies transport alumina from other parts of the world, such as Australia, and process it into aluminium for sale around the world. That is the opportunity that a country gets through having low-cost energy.

In our alumina sector in Western Australia, I note that Alcoa recently announced another review of its business. When I was at the conference on the east coast recently, I spoke to an Alcoa executive who said that he had been involved in the review of the Portland Aluminium smelter, and that the change in two years of what was or was not financially viable was a constant struggle. That is the same for our bauxite and alumina operations in Western Australia. We have to think about what we can do to help that industry, given that energy is such a major component of that industry. We have to ensure that we continue to have competitively priced energy.

What do people mean when they use the term “competitively priced energy”? It is energy that is competitive with other places in the world where the same investments could be made. It is more than just comparing the energy price with domestic alternatives. One of the arguments about gas prices is that the gas price is lower than the price of diesel to run a power station somewhere in the goldfields, but that is not what we are talking about; we are talking about where else in the world could that investment be done. Investment in a goldmine can be made only where people find gold, but investment in an alumina refinery can be made almost anywhere in the world, particularly now that it seems there is potential for seaboard bauxite trading.

I previously made the point that to our north Indonesia has just banned the export of mineral ore and allows only the export of processed minerals. On the surface, that is an attractive option. Of course, I am always accused by the gas companies of having a different view, because I support a gas reservation policy. This is actually different from gas, because, firstly, all those commodities are fundable—that wonderful word that means that the price is the same wherever it is traded; it is only the cost of transport that makes a price difference. Secondly, there is incredible abundance of all those minerals. Looking at the iron ore history in Western Australia, if one

were to say, “You cannot export iron ore; you can only export iron”, we would lose all the jobs in the iron ore sector and other parts of the world would set up steelworks because steel production would be cheaper somewhere else. That is why we export ore and not just finished metals. Of course, if exporting finished metals is going to be financially attractive, we need to make sure that we are providing whatever opportunities we can, and that includes a price of energy that is no worse than it is in other places where projects could be established.

When the former Labor government originally approved the Barrow Island project, I think it was estimated that it would be a two-train project costing \$9 billion. Now it is a three-train project costing \$55 billion. There is always the potential for a fourth train on Barrow Island. The current government or any other government would be very happy to see a fourth train.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You didn’t quite approve it. You developed the state agreement act; I acknowledge that. The final piece in the jigsaw was this bill and the indemnity, and then the approvals happened. I am not diminishing what was done, but it was not approved until 2009 or 2010. But the agreement act is good.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Sure. Yes, we have been through all that.

At the end of the day, governments make approvals of proposals from companies. I do not even remember when the fields were found. Some of them have been around for quite some time. There is no question that it takes a long time for a project to come to fruition. The Premier’s comment reminds me of the saying that governments get to cut the ribbons of opposition projects.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** I think gas was discovered in the late 1980s, so it was 25 or 30 years ago.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Anyway, it is a long-term project. In my comments about the Valuation of Land Amendment Bill that we were dealing with yesterday, I asked where else in the world would a centre-left government approve the use of an A-class nature reserve for a petrochemical plant. That is exactly what happened under Labor with the Barrow Island bill. I cannot imagine another jurisdiction in the world in which that would happen. In most places in the world these things do not occur, but Western Australia is a place that is based on resources. I remember the Conservation Commission of Western Australia, under its fine leadership at the time I was state secretary, making the point that it was prepared to agree to an outcome that might not be what it saw as ideal because, firstly, it understood that it would probably go ahead because that was the nature of Western Australia, but, secondly, it would be able to get benefits to offset some of the losses. When I am in other parts of the world and I tell people that a centre-left government approved a petrochemical plant in the middle of an A-class nature reserve, there is some incredulity. One of the reasons is that Western Australians understand that WA is a resource state, and without resources we will not have jobs. The Labor Party is the party of jobs; that is what our name means. It is natural that we are interested in supporting jobs, and that is why Hon Clive Brown did such a great job negotiating with the joint venture partners at the time. After he retired from Parliament, I remember talking to him about some of the things that he was told, such as, “If the government insists on whatever”—I cannot remember what the issue was—“the project won’t work.” He said, “Oh, that’s a terrible shame. We really wanted the project to go ahead.” The next week the proponents came back and said, “Oh, we’ve worked out how to do it.”

**Mr F.M. Logan:** Some people in this house were opposed to anything on Barrow Island.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Yes, indeed.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** In fact, that person is the Premier of Western Australia today.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The Premier of the state of Western Australia—yes. The last time we were here I read in all those things. I am not going to do that today.

Western Australians get it. We get the need for the resource sector. That is not to say that we are not critical; that is not to say that there are no problems with health and safety. I do not know the details, but apparently 1 000 workers were trapped on Barrow Island, and not in storm shelters, during a recent cyclone event, and a worker was severely injured in the clean-up afterwards.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** He lost his legs.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Yes, he lost his legs. These are serious matters about which there needs to be a proper explanation. The need to maintain the quarantine on Barrow Island is clearly a problem for the proponent. I understand that lots of costs have been added into the project because of the need to have that strict quarantine. Of course, the reason that we were able to approve the use of the A-class nature reserve was that the companies committed to provide that level of biosecurity for the island. It is an arc. The industry has often said that if the industry had not been operating on the island for such a long time, the island probably would have been degraded. One of the things done with the environmental fund from Barrow Island was to eradicate vermin on Dirk Hartog Island. It is often said that Barrow Island would have looked like Dirk Hartog Island if it had not been for the oil industry, because the oil industry was incompatible with other visitors. So, the A-class nature reserve was preserving the wildlife and the oil industry was keeping other people off the island. Although there

were clearly impacts from the oil industry, there were not those broader impacts that might have happened if it had been a grazing lease or some other higher volume, higher impact activity. The fact that we can have this geosequestration project on the island is very good. We will watch with interest how it progresses, how much the proponent needs to spend on the project and the reinjection, and whether in the short time in front of us the injected carbon dioxide will behave in the manner that we expect it to. Obviously, if this project can work, it will give us confidence that other projects might also work in sequestering CO<sub>2</sub>, because we should not forget that what we are trying to do is ameliorate climate change and carbon pollution. The only reason we are doing this project is that we are trying to ameliorate climate change. If we were not concerned about climate change, we would not be putting the company to the expense of sequestering the CO<sub>2</sub>.

The south west of Western Australia is one of those places in the world where there have been very significant climate impacts. Indeed—the Minister for Water is in the chamber—I note that the Water Corporation advertisements on television regularly point out to the people of Western Australia the problems impacting the south west of the continent because of the changing climate. The clear impacts of climate change are the effect on our water supply in the metropolitan area, the lower recharge rates of the aquifers that we rely on so strongly for water resources in the metropolitan area, and the lower rainfall and run-off into our dams.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2175.]

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### URANIUM MINING — MULGA ROCK

**218. Mr W.J. JOHNSTON to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:**

I welcome the students from Ashdale Secondary College in the member for Girrawheen's electorate.

I refer to the minister's media statement last week and his answer to a question in this house promoting the milestones of the uranium company operating at Mulga Rock.

- (1) What is the name of the company that the minister referred to, but did not name, in his media statement?
- (2) Is the minister aware of any connection between the chair and directors of the company and his ministerial staff; and, if so, what is that connection or connections?
- (3) If there is such a connection, how did the minister manage that issue?

**Mr W.R. MARMION replied:**

I thank the member for Cannington for the question.

- (1)–(3) I recall making a general comment about uranium and mentioning four uranium mines that are nearly ready for production, two of which are further advanced than Mulga Rock. That is about all I know. I do not know anything about their shareholding. As the regulator, I am advised about their compliance with the laws of Western Australia. I do not know anything about their company ownership or the specifics of their venture.

#### URANIUM MINING — MULGA ROCK

**219. Mr W.J. JOHNSTON to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:**

I have a supplementary question. Noting that the minister made a special remark in his media release regarding the Mulga Rock project receiving recent approvals, can he confirm that Cheryl Edwardes, the wife of his chief of staff, Mr Colin Edwardes, is the chair of Vimy Resources?

**Mr W.R. MARMION replied:**

The member is being very sneaky by talking about a press release that I do not have in front of me. I know—because I can remember what it was—that the bold lines at the bottom of the press release mentioned four uranium companies and that the release was all about where we are at in terms of exporting uranium. I mentioned the four most progressive mines in Western Australia and one of those happens to be Mulga Rock.

#### NEW NORCIA BYPASS

**220. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:**

Many people in my electorate, especially those in the New Norcia monastic community, have for several decades raised concerns about the impact to the monastery of heavy vehicles travelling through this unique location. Can the minister advise when their prayers will be answered?

**Mr D.C. NALDER replied:**

I thank the member for his concern in this matter and for his efforts to progress the matter on behalf of his community.

I had the fortunate experience yesterday of visiting New Norcia with the member for Moore and I was able to inform the community that we are progressing with a bypass around New Norcia. Mr Speaker, I can tell you that the monks of New Norcia were rapt! They feel that their prayers have been answered. They have been working on this issue for more than 10 years and cannot believe how quickly the government has brought this together.

I was lobbied about eight months ago by the local Shire of Victoria Plains. I can announce that we will be putting in a six-kilometre bypass, which will include an 80-metre bridge on the east side of New Norcia. Construction will commence in early 2016 and it will be completed by mid-2017. Currently, some 1 300 vehicles a day travel through New Norcia, of which about 42 per cent are heavy vehicles. This bypass will be a great outcome —

**Mr M.P. Murray:** What about Collie?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** The member for Collie–Preston wants to talk about Collie, but his shadow minister actually acknowledged that Labor dropped the ball when it came to Collie, and this government is doing something about Collie.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I am talking about New Norcia. This is an absolutely great outcome for the community of New Norcia. It will be able to become once again an area of peace and tranquillity. That is exactly what the community is looking for, and that is exactly what this government is delivering for the people of New Norcia, and I think it is a great outcome.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING — GOLDMASTER ENTERPRISES PTY LTD

**221. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Treasurer:**

I refer to answers in the upper house yesterday confirming that the Department of Housing purchased 88 per cent of a private company called Goldmaster Enterprises at a cost of over \$37 million. I refer to answers to questions in the upper house also confirming the fact that Goldmaster is now worth only \$20.2 million while it owes the state \$13.4 million in loans.

- (1) What are the government's rules about the government buying private companies?
- (2) What is the state's total liability in regard to Housing's ownership in this private company, and why did the government buy this private company?
- (3) Can the Treasurer confirm that the company is now worth approximately \$10 million less than the Department of Housing paid for it?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(3) First, given the exercises of the last few days, I actually do not believe anything the Leader of the Opposition says. I will have to check everything he says in his questions. I am therefore not going to answer any of those questions. All I can say is that I will look into the issue. I am not the Minister for Housing. The Department of Housing, as we discussed last week, enters into a range of arrangements in many different ways. Those arrangements are decided by the director general of Housing and the responsible minister; they do not go to cabinet. I do not necessarily overwrite or approve them or otherwise. In the details provided by the Leader of the Opposition, I do not know anything about the arrangement and, most importantly, I do not believe a thing he says. It might be true but I do not know, so I will have to check.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING — GOLDMASTER ENTERPRISES PTY LTD

**222. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Treasurer:**

I have a supplementary question. When will the Treasurer provide an answer to these questions in the house; and, how can his government allow millions of dollars to be put at risk in this highly unusual investment in a private development company in a deal so secret that neither the Treasurer nor the housing minister knows anything about it?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:**

As I indicated last week in answer to a different question, the housing department, in its affordable housing policy, enters into a diverse set of arrangements to encourage the private sector to help with the policy, which is

in all electorates—all over the place. I believe that more than 4 000 affordable housing projects have been developed through various means. Those arrangements are sometimes diverse and wideranging for how the Department of Housing takes equity in them. As Treasurer, I do not get involved in the negotiations of the deals and the specifics of the contracts. If the Leader of the Opposition puts the question on notice to the housing minister, I will look at the details and I will answer it. However, to answer the question specifically, the real issue here, and my problem, really, is that of course I am not involved in the detail and, given the exercise of the last two days, everything the Leader of the Opposition puts up is rubbish, so how can I believe it and respond to it?

#### CRIMINAL CODE INFRINGEMENT NOTICES

##### **223. Ms E. EVANGEL to the Minister for Police:**

Before I proceed, I acknowledge on behalf of the member for South Perth the year 6 students from Penrhos College.

Can the minister please advise how the new Criminal Code infringement notices introduced by the Liberal–National government will free up police time and reduce the strain on our courts?

##### **Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:**

I thank the member for Perth for the question and Mr Speaker for the opportunity to respond.

I was really pleased on Monday to announce the first stage of implementation for the Criminal Code infringement notices here in Western Australia. We have introduced these notices to provide a more efficient policing service in Western Australia and to free up police time and divert police officers to the front line. The way in which the Criminal Code infringement notices will work, member for Perth, is that for minor stealing offences of goods to the value of \$500 and for public disorder offences—such as offensive language, urinating in public and those antisocial behaviour–type offences—police will have the opportunity to issue an infringement notice, rather than take the offender back to the station and process them, thereby involving about three hours' worth of police effort to put all the information into the system. In addition, if the police have to take the matter to court, member for Perth, that may mean two officers are tied up potentially for a day while they wait for an opportunity to give evidence as part of that court process.

We anticipate that the police will issue approximately 7 300 Criminal Code infringements notices in the first year. That is 7 300 offences and offenders diverted from the courts, effectively freeing up the criminal justice system, and of course freeing up police time. Police officers welcome this initiative. It will reduce red tape. It will take them from behind a desk and onto the front line. It will allow us to divert offenders from the criminal justice system and from the courts. The incentive for those offenders, member for Perth, particularly with the shoplifting offences—the stealing offences—of up to \$500 is that if they pay the infringement notice within 28 days, a conviction will not be recorded against them. That means that in the future, if they are looking for a police clearance, for example, they will not have that offence recorded as a conviction against them, which for some people who engage in this activity is a big incentive indeed. It is also an opportunity for us to divert offenders from the justice system and free up police officer time, as I said previously. This will be rolled out effective in the Perth CBD as of 30 March, and we will be rolling out the next tranche of this in other regional settings and settings across the state from 30 June.

#### WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE — PELAGO EAST APARTMENTS

##### **224. Mr R.H. COOK to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the transfer of 24 Pelago East apartments from the Department of Housing to the WA Country Health Service on 20 January 2015.

- (1) Why did the WA Country Health Service require 24 apartments when only four are being rented to WACHS staff?
- (2) Is the minister satisfied that the weekly rent for the four apartments that are being rented to WA Country Health staff is almost \$4 400 a week?
- (3) Why was the WA Country Health Service forced to acquire those apartments when Pelago rents are so exorbitant and the apartments are not needed by the WA Country Health Service?

##### **Dr K.D. HAMES replied:**

- (1)–(3) When Pelago East was being built, it was always done around the premise that the WA Country Health Service was paying a huge amount of money for rentals in the community. There was a major rental problem, with significant costs. We wanted to purchase housing for those people who were long-term workers within the system.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cockburn!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** We also had a lot of people who were either single or came up for short periods of time, including specialists. So, when funds were made available for Government Regional Officer Housing, as it was at the start, we had a bit of a complaint, because GROH manages all the public service housing, except for the Department of Health; we manage our own housing. We were missing out on some of those funds going to support other state government housing. We therefore asked to be given access to some of those units that were being built. That was all part of those discussions in the first place. When Pelago East was constructed, we did not end up having any units.

**Mr R.H. Cook** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Kwinana!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** But when those units were not being rented out, and the proposal was put forward that we take over the rental of some of those units, we grabbed that opportunity. We did not need all those units at once.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** You were forced!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** No; we were not forced. We volunteered.

When we said that we would take over that number of units—because that is the number that we foresaw, as time went on, we would be able to make full use of—we said that it might take six to 12 months until we were fully using those units, but we would take them then and build our use of them over that time.

#### WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE — PELAGO EAST APARTMENTS

##### **225. Mr R.H. COOK to the Minister for Health:**

I ask a supplementary question. Why is the WA Country Health Service sitting on 20 empty apartments in the Pilbara when Western Australians and the health service are facing so many delays in relation to things like lifesaving surgery?

**Dr K.D. HAMES replied:**

Again, the figures that the member for Kwinana has, I have not seen lately. I last saw the figures maybe four months or so ago, so I would need —

**Mr R.H. Cook** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Kwinana!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Like the Treasurer, I am not going to believe what the member for Kwinana says, because I have heard things from him so many times before. So, I will check it.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** I do not memorise the answers once I have signed them. I do not think, “Oh, my God; I’d better remember that number because he’s going to ask me a question.” For goodness sake! I will double-check that, but I go back to the point that I made. We will have full use of those apartments. We have lots of people who come in for short periods of time. We will be building the use.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cockburn, I call you to order for the second time.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Before we had those units, we were renting other units. We were still paying rent for other premises within the town in anticipation of people moving in and out.

#### HEALTH RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

##### **226. Mr A. KRSTICEVIC to the Minister for Health:**

As members will be aware, Western Australia has some world-leading medical and health researchers. The government is making a huge investment in upgrading hospital and health infrastructure. Can the minister please outline the state government’s current investment in infrastructure to support research?

**Dr K.D. HAMES replied:**

I thank the member for Carine for the question. Once again, this state government is making a significant investment in research. This is actually a program that was started under our government, but not this current government, Premier; it was under our previous government. Back in 1997, we started a funding program to assist in providing some of the basic infrastructure for research. Today, we have announced a \$6 million contribution to research. That will bring to \$72 million the funding that is going into these sorts of programs. It is

based on those who already have runs on the boards in research, and each of those researchers will get just under \$500 000 in research grants to support research in their particular field. I will go through some of the research groups that will receive funding. Professor Martyn French and his team are looking at ways to stimulate the body's own systems to produce antibodies to fight the HIV virus. The grant that will be provided to his team will be used to purchase specialist laboratory equipment. This is an infrastructure grant. It is not for specific research. It is to provide the infrastructure that is needed. Professor Tim Davis at Fremantle Hospital and the University of Western Australia is doing research into diabetes. Professor Martin Ebert at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and the University of Western Australia is doing research relating to the use of radiation treatment in cancer. These are very worthwhile areas of research. A total of 131 high-performing Western Australian researchers will be given access to this \$6 million in research expenditure.

#### STATE BUDGET 2015–16 — ROYALTIES REVENUE

##### **227. Mr B.S. WYATT to the Treasurer:**

I refer to the mineral royalty rate analysis tabled by the Minister for Mines and Petroleum today, and to his brief ministerial statement, in which he said, "I want to emphasise that there will be no changes to royalty rates as part of this year's budget." I note also that in the statement of risks in the *2014–15 Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, there is additional royalty income of \$180 million in 2015–16, \$187 million in 2016–17, and \$193 million in 2017–18 as a provision for the outcomes of that review. How does the Treasurer intend to fill that \$180 million hole for the 2015–16 financial year—by debt, spending cuts or tax increases?

##### **Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:**

The member will have to wait for the budget, which will be handed down on 14 May.

#### YOUTH — WORK READINESS PILOT PROGRAM

##### **228. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Youth:**

I understand that the Liberal–National government announced today that it is funding a work readiness pilot program for students in my electorate. Can the minister outline to the house how this and other initiatives supported by the state government are encouraging participation and engagement by young people in our communities?

##### **Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:**

I thank the member for Southern River for his question, especially to do with youth. The Liberal–National government, through the Department for Communities, funds over \$22 million to 145 community groups, and youth make up a very strong part of that community group. I am pleased to advise the house today of \$170 000 in funding to a program run by the Beacon Foundation. The Beacon Foundation is running a program to help school students transition into the workforce. This week, it will work with students from Coodanup Community College, Balga Senior High School and Southern River College. The Beacon Foundation is very well suited for this program. It has a good track record of easing the transition from high school to the workforce. It is also very good at inspiring, motivating and helping students who want to go on to further education and employment. The foundation is very strong at that. It is great to see that this program will run in the member for Southern River's electorate.

I have taken this opportunity to focus on ensuring that local governments in regional Western Australia also develop a community engagement project with their partnerships. Youth collaborative project grants of over \$25 000 have recently been awarded to the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder; the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River; the West Arthur consortium, which is a shire comprising Dumbleyung, Wagin, West Arthur and Williams; and the Shire of Manjimup. These grants were resourced to local governments to help implement a youth-friendly community plan so that the shires can work with their communities to ensure they provide a youth focus. This program provides one-off funding for local government. On top on that, we will work closely with government and non-profit organisations to deliver youth services in our community. It is important to acknowledge that the government is very supportive of youth. National Youth Week this year will be held between 10–19 April. Over 80 events will be held throughout Western Australia by local governments. That is part of this government's commitment to youth, but also a commitment to making sure youth have the right standing in our community to go on to become our future leaders.

#### SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES — PREMIER'S COMMENTS

##### **229. Ms J. FARRER to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's unacceptable response yesterday to the member for Victoria Park's question, and to the Premier's statement last week —

In 2013, there were 39 cases of gonorrhoea in Aboriginal children ... How many cases of gonorrhoea are there in the wider community? There are none—not a single case.

- (1) Can the Premier confirm that there was not a single case of gonorrhoea in Western Australia in non-Aboriginal children, as he stated last week?
- (2) If no to (1), why did the Premier slur Aboriginal people as the sole sufferers of the disease of gonorrhoea?
- (3) Of the 39 cases the Premier referred to in justifying the closure of remote communities, how many of these cases occurred in remote communities?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:**

- (1)–(3) I explained that answer yesterday, but I will repeat it for the member. I do not have the figures in front of me, but, from memory, those figures related to children aged 10 to 14. They related to children in the Kimberley—across the Kimberley. That was the information I had. When I initially presented it, perhaps it was not made clear that it was within the Kimberley, but those statistics —

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Hang on! I remind members it was two young children, 10 to 14-year-olds, in the Kimberley—that was the information I provided.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES — PREMIER'S COMMENTS

**230. Ms J. FARRER to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Will the Premier now apologise to the Aboriginal people of Western Australia for his misstatement that Aboriginal people are the sole sufferers of gonorrhoea?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:**

At no stage did I say that Aboriginal people —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** No; I am not going to play this game. At no stage did I say that Aboriginal people were the sole sufferers of gonorrhoea. I admitted that I inadvertently did not make it clear that it was the Kimberley I was talking about. I was talking about data on the Kimberley for children aged 10 to 14. The only cases were amongst the Aboriginal population. For the wider population in the Kimberley, there were no further cases. I happen to think that is a damning statistic. It is something that the government deserves to attend to. This government will; the Labor government ignored the issues.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING — SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

**231. Mr J. NORBERGER to the Minister for Planning:**

Can the minister update the house on how the Department of Planning is responding to the needs of the development industry to streamline subdivision applications?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:**

I thank the member for the question. It is the case that the Department of Planning has been very active in recent years in embracing the use of digital technology and developing digital technology applications as part of the government's planning reform program. In particular, on 16 February the department launched ePlan—an online system plan for the lodgement and assessment of subdivision applications. It allows applicants to submit subdivision applications online and also allows the department to more efficiently manage the processing of those applications and associated payments. It already has had the effect of reducing the reliance on manual paper-based processes. Some of the early results indicate that in the last month 111 applications were lodged via ePlan since it went live. Those applications are still being accepted via the traditional manual system when necessary, but they are being converted to an electronic version so that all subdivision applications, including receipt and referral processes, are now electronic. Seventy-eight users have registered on the ePlan e-lodgement system. They are mainly surveyors and planning consultants, but a small number of individuals have also done so. The average turnaround time from the receipt of an application to the referral of that application to the relevant agencies for comment has been reduced to one day. The previous manual system process took between two and five days. This is a big step forward in making the planning system more efficient.

It is worth commenting on the number of transactions that have been processed in recent times. In the second half of last year, 1 399 subdivision applications were received by the Department of Planning for the Perth metropolitan area. That indicates a steady upward trend, with an increase of 14 per cent compared with the second half of 2013. I am pleased to say that the department and the Western Australian Planning Commission is achieving well above the 80 per cent key performance indicator for the number of applications determined within the 90-day statutory time frame. The average is currently 90 per cent of applications are being determined

within the 90-day statutory time frame. Interestingly, compared with the last year of the Labor government in 2007–08, only 59 per cent of subdivision applications were processed within the 90-day statutory time frame.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In response to the member for Gosnells' question, I am sure some applications are either refused or they are required to be modified before they are approved. Maybe there are some the member does not like. If there is some particular issue, perhaps let us know.

I will also place on record that the amount of land that has been conditionally approved for subdivision at the end of 2014 had significantly increased from what was available at the end of 2013. A lot of land is available for residential development, assuming the developers go through with their construction.

In conclusion, I acknowledge and commend the work of officers from the Department of Planning, in particular the information and communications technology staff, for their very effective work in developing this online system.

#### LANDCORP — HILTON HOTEL DEVELOPMENT — KARRATHA

##### 232. **Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Lands:**

I refer to LandCorp's advice to the minister in February this year, revealed under a freedom of information application, concerning the government's Hilton Hotel development in Karratha. In part, the advice states —

- Progress on the hotel site by Ramtron has stalled ... Ramtron has to date been unable to secure construction finance and is looking at alternate options ...
- (1) Can the minister guarantee that Hilton will be the hotel's operator; and, if not, why not?
  - (2) Why has LandCorp allowed Ramtron Australia to continue as the proponent of the hotel development when it is so clearly having trouble sourcing finance?
  - (3) What alternative options are being looked at?
  - (4) At what stage will arrangements with Ramtron be terminated if finance is not realised?

##### **Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:**

- (1)–(4) I thank the member for Warnbro for the question. By way of updating the house, members will recall that LandCorp is involved with a development on the main street of Karratha, called The Quarter development, across the road from the Pelago developments, where there is some commercial activity. LandCorp is building a facility that will include some commercial space. One of the tenants will be the government on one of the floors, and others will be going out to the market. There has been some quite strong interest in the other floors in the development as we approach the building phase. Members who have been there recently will have seen that the development is well and truly out of the ground. Some service worker accommodation will also go into the same complex to help to meet the market for accommodation in that area, for which there is still some demand to support the businesses in that community.

On the other corner is the potential hotel development that the member for Warnbro is talking about. The company involved in that is Ramtron. I cannot remember the formal terminology, but the company has a period in which it has access to carry out that project from its own investments. Obviously, it complements the other investments the government is making. We know that the market has moved a bit, and the company still working through to close off its financials to make that project successful. I am confident that it will actually land that outcome. I get an update every couple of weeks, and I am confident that the company will land that outcome. LandCorp is still engaged with the company, and is still working through its own financials. I am not able to answer a question about the exit strategies from those arrangements or indeed if they reach a point at which LandCorp tells the company to go away and seeks other expressions of interest. That is the party that it is currently engaged with. I have some confidence about that. The company will take into account a number of factors in making a financial closure decision, and I have some confidence it will proceed, albeit a little bit slower than I would have liked.

#### LANDCORP — HILTON HOTEL DEVELOPMENT — KARRATHA

##### 233. **Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Lands:**

I have a supplementary question. What is the proposed contribution payable by the government to Ramtron, on which the minister requested advice from LandCorp in November last year?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:**

I do not have details of those numbers right here, but I am happy to take that on notice. I answer questions on notice every day and, just like the Minister for Health, I actually do not memorise all the answers as they go out the door. There are a lot of them. But I am happy to take that on notice, and get back to the member for Warnbro with a response.

## PARKS FOR PEOPLE PROGRAM

**234. Mr M.J. COWPER to the Minister for Environment:**

Leading up to Easter, when many people will be going to the beautiful Murray–Wellington electorate, can the minister please update the house on the government's Parks for People program, in particular the status of the new campgrounds that are being built?

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** They're being overrun by woylies.

**Mr A.P. JACOB replied:**

If only, member for Girrawheen!

I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for the question. Indeed, yesterday we were addressing some of this government's conservation initiatives in the Kimberley, which are, as the Premier said, the most significant and bold conservation initiatives of this or any government—but that is not to say that we are by any means neglecting the rest of the state. The Liberal–National government is absolutely committed to providing, in the south west, midwest and goldfields regions of this state, affordable holiday options, and a high level of access to our natural areas. At the start of the 2014–15 Christmas and New Year holiday period, and in anticipation of Easter, we have been able to open a total of 103 caravan and tent sites in and around the Murray–Wellington area in the Lane Poole Reserve and at Logue Brook dam—two of the most popular sites south of Perth, given their proximity to the metropolitan area.

The new campgrounds are part of this Liberal–National government's \$21.05 million Parks for People initiative. Stage 1 of the \$2.5 million upgrade at Logue Brook dam near Harvey has been completed. This is something I know that the member for Murray–Wellington has been advocating for during much of his time as local member. This has included the creation of 62 new campsites, new toilets, state-of-the-art camp kitchens with gas barbecues, water tanks, new fireplaces and tables for each of the campsites, plus almost 900 metres of walk trails and an upgraded boat ramp with new and improved roads, all ready for the Easter long weekend. I am sure it will be incredibly popular down there when that comes up. These new facilities will be managed by Lake Brockman Tourist Park under a community partnership with the Department of Parks and Wildlife. This is the first of its kind in this state, and it will provide benefits for both the department and the local community. Another of our most popular camping destinations is the Nanga Brook and Lane Poole Reserve area. Stage 1 of the \$2.2 million Nanga Brook campground upgrade has provided 29 new caravan sites and 12 new tent sites.

Projects like these not only offer an affordable holiday option for Western Australian families, but also provide a direct local tourism stimulus for those communities in regional areas on the fringe of the metropolitan area—therefore, readily accessible for a quick long weekend such as the Easter long weekend. There is still more to come; further development at both of those sites is still to be rolled out, as well as more for the Parks for People program right across the state, and I look forward to updating the house.

## MULGA ROCK URANIUM PROJECT — VIMY RESOURCES — HON CHERYL EDWARDES

**235. Mr W.J. JOHNSTON to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:**

I refer to the minister's media release of 19 March 2015, which states —

Mr Marmion said milestones like this week's Mulga Rock uranium ore announcement and the recent conditional approval of the Kintyre project augered well for the future.

- (1) When did the minister know that the Mulga Rock uranium project was operated by Vimy Resources Ltd?
- (2) When did the minister discover that Hon Cheryl Edwarde is the chair of Vimy Resources?
- (3) What did the minister do to manage potential conflicts of interest in his office?

**Mr W.R. MARMION replied:**

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for Cannington for the question. I have arrangements in my office whereby if any issue related to mining might conflict with any member in my office, that interest has to be declared. In the case of Vimy Resources, Peter Conran has a formal notice from my chief of staff stating that anything to do with Vimy Resources is dealt with by my policy officer and not by my chief of staff, and that has been the case in this instance.

**WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE — PELAGO EAST APARTMENTS***Question without Notice 224 — Supplementary Information*

**DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Minister for Health)** [2.37 pm]: I would like to provide an update to an answer that I gave in this house earlier to the member for Kwinana. He asked a question relating to something I responded to in the upper house. It was actually five weeks ago, which is why I did not remember the detail. I said that four out of the 24 units are occupied. Current figures show that 15 of the 24 are now occupied. In addition, three are reserved for the locums I spoke of earlier, coming in and out—so that is 18 out of the 24. It is expected by the staff that they would all be occupied within the next six to eight months.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. Member for Forrestfield, I call you to order for the second time.

**CHAMBER DECORUM***Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland):** There was a meeting yesterday between me, the Deputy Speaker and the Acting Speakers. A common complaint is that members are not acknowledging the Chair, and they are walking between the member speaking and the Chair. Members must remember that the cameras are taking footage of members who are on their feet, so please, firstly, acknowledge the Chair, and, secondly, when you are moving around the chamber, try to come in from a door that does not cut off the view from the camera to the member speaking.

**BARROW ISLAND AMENDMENT BILL 2015***Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington)** [2.39 pm]: It is always nice to address a large audience. I am always looking forward to it.

Before question time, I was just getting to the point about the fact that the south west of Western Australia is one of the places most severely impacted by climate change caused by carbon pollution. The reason the Chevron joint venture is geosequestering the CO<sub>2</sub> from the Gorgon project is to ameliorate that climate change issue. It needs to be completely understood that if we do not accept the science on climate change and carbon pollution, we do not support geosequestration; we would simply support venting carbon into the atmosphere. It is good that for the second time in this current term of Parliament, this Parliament is taking action based upon our belief and understanding that climate change is an important issue caused by carbon pollution. As I said, if there was no link between carbon pollution and climate change, we would not be going to the expense and effort of geosequestration; we would simply continue to vent the gas into the atmosphere. I am pleased that the Liberal–National government in Western Australia, like the Labor opposition, supports the science on climate change and that it is not an issue for debate. That is now a bipartisan closed issue—members on both sides of the chamber support action on climate change. That is why the government has entered into this agreement with the commonwealth to support Chevron’s actions in fighting climate change. I urge members to go to Chevron’s website and look at the various tools discussing climate change. It has a wonderful little device on its website that represents certain cities. It has various inputs from different sources of energy and shows the effect of carbon pollution on that city. It allows people to make different choices and then see how CO<sub>2</sub> pollution contributes to climate change.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Just on Chevron and what happened at Wheatstone in terms of their village going to the actual site, what are your thoughts on that?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** As the member knows, one of the criticisms of the current government regarding Wheatstone is that the government in which he is a parliamentary secretary approved Chevron keeping the permanent workers’ camp at the industrial site instead of —

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Do you support that?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Obviously not. That is why we opposed it. The member is a formal part of the government. He is a parliamentary secretary, not a backbencher. The member sitting next to him is only a backbencher.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** That is the first time I’ve heard you say that you’re opposed to it.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** We opposed it at the time. We said that it was not a good idea. We asked questions, if the member remembers. The Leader of the Opposition, the most senior person on our side of the chamber, asked several questions, as I did. I asked a question of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum. I asked why people driving to the Chevron project could not travel that distance but people travelling to the North West Shelf joint

venture could travel. I am very thankful to the parliamentary secretary, who is a member of the government that allowed this decision to be made. It is also interesting that another decision of the government—I know the member for Gosnells will talk about this—gave conditional approval for the Wheatstone project on the basis that there was a commonwealth carbon scheme. That was written into the approval—that it did not need to deal with the question of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Wheatstone because the commonwealth government had already acted in that area. The member might make some observations about the fact that the commonwealth government has repealed the carbon action plan, yet we are not aware of any changes to those conditions that were issued on the basis of a national carbon scheme.

I thank the parliamentary secretary for his interjection. It is unusual for the member to make a contribution in the chamber but we do enjoy them when he makes them. We look forward to the next one. The next time he gets up and speaks in the chamber, we will all look forward to that because I am sure his next contribution will be better than his last one. I would very much expect that because it would not be difficult for it to be as good as the last one.

Moving on —

**Mr V.A. Catania:** I think you should sit down now.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** As I said, I look forward to the parliamentary secretary's contribution to this debate. We are endorsing action to prevent climate change. That is exactly what we are doing here.

**Mr M.J. Cowper** interjected.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I look forward to the member for Murray–Wellington making the same contribution, explaining where he stands on the question of action on carbon pollution. The only reason anyone in this chamber supports the Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015 is because we have a deep-seated concern about climate change caused by carbon pollution. There is no other reason for supporting it.

I was making the observation when I was interrupted by the interjections from the parliamentary secretary that Chevron's website has a very good tool with which people can experiment with the impact of various technologies on carbon pollution. I compliment Chevron on its website. It is a clear demonstration of the fact that it understands that action needs to be taken. Indeed, the websites of most of the large oil and gas companies contain good detail about their views on carbon reduction and climate change.

Recently we saw a category 5 storm in Vanuatu effectively destroy all the infrastructure in that country. It is obviously a developing country—a country that does not have the same style of economic activity that we have. It has been so badly impacted by storms. One of the issues that is raised by climate science is that there may well be more and larger storms. We recently saw the storms off our coast that impacted Barrow Island that I discussed before. If humanity across the world does not take action on climate change, these things may happen. Indeed, the Premier has often said that one of the ways to take action on climate change is to use clean burning gas rather than more highly polluting sources of energy. That has been a regular comment from the Premier over many years. I properly acknowledge his position on that. We are very happy.

Again, if we go back to 2003, why was action on carbon dioxide contemplated for the Gorgon project? Even back then, we had a clear understanding of the impacts on the south west of Western Australia—one part of the entire world that is most severely impacted by climate change. The Water Corporation's advertisements on TV specifically refer to those issues. They refer to what happens as our climate changes and the actions we need to take. That is why carbon sequestration was high on the agenda on the Barrow Island project. It was a very important issue for the Labor Party. It was one of our key topics of conversation in the 2005 election campaign when the member for North West ran as a Labor candidate. It was one of the important issues we were campaigning on at that time. The Labor Party used the 2003 state agreement with the Chevron Gorgon joint venture as an example of its commitment to its action on climate change. I am sure that was one of the reasons the member for North West Central was so attracted to run for the Labor Party in the 2005 and, indeed, the 2008 election campaigns when these things were very important to the Labor Party and the member was an endorsed candidate, and before he ratted on the Labor Party and his supporters.

The Labor Party is happy to support this bill. As I have outlined, there is an alternative process. We are not in government; we have not negotiated and we are not criticising it, as we did with the amendments to the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. There is nothing improper about this structure. It is probably not the best way to do it, but there is nothing wrong with it. This is a state agreement, and on that basis, if we were to come to government, we would not change it, because state agreements cannot be changed unilaterally, so Chevron and its joint venture partner should be confident that any future Labor government would continue to support the arrangements contained in this bill. As I say, there is nothing improper about transferring the liability to the Crown because of the issues that I raised about how long companies last and how long the liabilities are for. The Labor Party is pleased that the commonwealth recognises that it is getting most of the benefits from the Gorgon project, and it is holding the highest amount of the liability. However, in the same way as we did on the passage through this chamber of the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, we note

that there could be another conversation with companies covered by those arrangements about how we provide for future liabilities in the geosequestration of CO<sub>2</sub>.

I thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, and I commend the bill.

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn)** [2.53 pm]: I rise to say a few words on and indicate the Labor Party's support for the Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015. There is nothing particularly new or groundbreaking in the whole process of capturing CO<sub>2</sub> and capturing carbon, because it has been chemically known since the early nineteenth century and it has been technically undertaken on a significant scale since the end of the Second World War. Taking CO<sub>2</sub> out of a gas stream is done regularly, and is certainly done regularly by oil companies around the world, and injecting CO<sub>2</sub> into depleted oil reservoirs to pump up the remaining oil in those reservoirs—sometimes mixed with water, and sometimes simply CO<sub>2</sub>, including liquid CO<sub>2</sub>—is regularly undertaken. In fact, I visited Chevron's Rangely site on the high plateau of Colorado in the United States to look at the program of injecting CO<sub>2</sub> into depleted oilfields. The program in Rangely has been underway for over 40 years, and in fact the CO<sub>2</sub>, which is used in the Rangely reservoir enhancement program, is pumped from a power station 500 miles away in another state to the high plains of the mountains and is then used by Chevron for reservoir enhancement. Therefore, the technical concept of using CO<sub>2</sub> in either a gaseous or liquid state for oil well enhancement programs is well understood.

What is relatively new and is still fairly untested around the globe is the whole process of storing liquefied CO<sub>2</sub>. The actual technical process of stripping CO<sub>2</sub> out of a coal-to-gas process, which had been used before the Second World War and certainly in South Africa where gasification of coal had been regularly undertaken in the 1960s, 1970s and into the 1980s, and the stripping of the CO<sub>2</sub> out of a gas stream is well understood. We know a lot more now than we ever did about the storage of the liquefaction of CO<sub>2</sub> stripped out of gas streams, whether it is natural gas, coal seam methane or coal gas, because of our understanding of geology and of the behaviour of liquid CO<sub>2</sub> injected under pressure into reservoirs. We also understand the behaviour of CO<sub>2</sub> injected into oil well reservoirs, which has been monitored as well.

If we look at the number of locations in which CO<sub>2</sub> injection programs have been undertaken around the world, the very first one was BP's In Salah CO<sub>2</sub> project in Algeria. It was a fairly large CO<sub>2</sub> injection program in which CO<sub>2</sub> was taken from a gas stream in the deserts of Algeria. It was a very technical project and a very challenging project given its location, and certainly the understanding of how to inject liquid CO<sub>2</sub> under pressure for the purposes of it remaining in a reservoir was learnt, I think, in a significant way in the In Salah project in Algeria. BP made that information available in various reports and at talks given at industry forums around the world, including here in Western Australia. So confident was BP at the time about the future of carbon capture and storage—that is, the capture of CO<sub>2</sub> out of a gas or coal stream, liquefaction of that CO<sub>2</sub> and the storage of that liquid CO<sub>2</sub> underground—that it was planning to go ahead with a number of projects around the globe, one of which was going to be in Kwinana.

The first project BP wanted to get underway was a carbon capture and storage program in Scotland from a gas-fired power station, using gas from the North Sea that had a high CO<sub>2</sub> content, from which it was going to strip out the CO<sub>2</sub>, liquefy it and inject it into a reservoir. The second BP project, which was proposed during Labor's term of government, was the ZeroGen project in Kwinana. I wish it had got underway, because it would have been absolutely remarkable had it succeeded. The project involved building a coal-fired power station in Kwinana using Collie coal and a gasification plant to gasify the coal and stripping plant to strip out the CO<sub>2</sub> from that gasification plant. The liquid CO<sub>2</sub> would then be transported by pipeline to sites located on the scarp south of Harvey where it was to be injected into what were seen to be safe and reliable reservoirs. Had that project initiated by BP and backed by BHP, Rio Tinto and Siemens got underway it would have been the first of its kind in the world. It would have been the first large commercial clean-coal power station that would have put in place infrastructure to contribute to the removal of CO<sub>2</sub> from most of the carbon-releasing industries on the Kwinana strip. It would have put those industries' CO<sub>2</sub> streams through the liquefaction process and transported it to the site south of Harvey for injection. That project would have delivered for Western Australia not only a clean-coal power station, but also the world's first absolutely clean industrial area with no CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. It would have been phenomenal. Unfortunately, that program, along with BP's Scottish program, did not get underway. I think that was mainly because of the cost involved. The program fell away and BP lost a fair amount of interest in geosequestration and it has moved on to other things.

Algeria was the first project to get BP's and the globe's interest. In Norway, the state-owned oil company Statoil has a project underway at Snøhvit in the very north of the country that pumps gas onshore from deep in the Arctic Ocean to a couple of LNG trains. As part of that there is a stripping process to strip CO<sub>2</sub> from that gas stream and an injection program similar to the one proposed for Barrow Island, but not with the same volumes of gas. Statoil also has an injection program on its giant Sleipner platform complex, which is right smack in the middle of the North Sea between the United Kingdom and Norwegian sector. That is a massive distribution hub for many of the North Sea gas pipelines. The enormous offshore hub has a processing plant that uses the CO<sub>2</sub> for injection and reinjection purposes in oil and gas well enhancement.

In Australia, there are a number of smaller projects at Fairview and the Callide Oxyfuel project in Queensland, but they are only demonstration projects. That leaves Barrow Island as one of the remaining CO<sub>2</sub> injection projects in the world and it is certainly the largest of its kind in the world.

**Mr M.P. Murray** interjected.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** The member for Collie–Preston indicated that there is also a demonstration project in Otway in Victoria as well. The other projects in Australia are small demonstration projects; Barrow Island is the first major commercial CO<sub>2</sub> carbon capture and storage project outside Algeria and Norway. It is certainly larger than both of the other projects that I referred to.

How did the project come about? It came about because under the Labor government from 2001–08, we pushed the issue of greenhouse mitigation very, very strongly. I have looked back at the reports produced at the time, and the “Western Australian Greenhouse Strategy”, which I was involved in, is a significant document that was to take Western Australia forward on greenhouse gas mitigation. The Premier may remember the legislation that I brought into the house in 2002–03, including the world’s first piece of legislation to allow biosequestration and the registration of carbon titles on land and for the fundability of carbon titles so that those titles could be sold. It was a world first. Later, I was a co-author of a large report on geosequestration as part of the greenhouse strategy for Western Australia. That report was taken up by the CO<sub>2</sub>CRC, which considered it a groundbreaking and innovative report from a state government promoting and encouraging the use of carbon capture and storage as a way to mitigate and reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. That is the picture I want to paint for the house into which Chevron brought the idea of a carbon capture and storage project for its gas stream that will feed into the Barrow Island complex.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Without wanting to claim any undue credit, as I said to you before, the idea to use Barrow Island was first my suggestion to Gorgon, because they would not have got federal approval. They dismissed it as highly unlikely. I give you due credit, but the idea of reinjecting carbon started to be talked about in the late 1990s. I suggested it, not as a scientist in any sense, and it was only some time later that they came back and said that they were going to look at it, because they would not have got their federal approvals either.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** That is right; but, as I say, we created the environment and encouraged Chevron to do that. The geological work was done during the period we were in government when Chevron understood a great deal more about Dupuy saline reservoir two kilometres below Barrow Island. After doing geological work, Chevron realised that the reservoir was a sound and solid structure that was capable of taking the volumes of liquid CO<sub>2</sub> that it was planning to inject into that reservoir. I am very pleased to still be in the house to see the whole project go ahead and to see, within a very short time, the CO<sub>2</sub> begin the process of being liquefied and injected into the reservoir.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** I will ensure you are at the opening.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Thank you, very much, Premier.

The member for Cannington talked about concerns that have always been expressed, particularly by environmental groups, about the long-term safety of injecting CO<sub>2</sub> into these reservoirs. Remember, there is a geological overlap between this process and fracking. The gas is stored two kilometres down in a reservoir that currently has water in it. If that reservoir were not solid, the water would not be there. It is a solid and non-porous reservoir, otherwise the water would have gone. The reservoir can hold the saline water and therefore will be able to hold the liquid CO<sub>2</sub>.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** The member for Cannington referred to the modelling that has been undertaken. I accept that the computer modelling for the storage of liquid CO<sub>2</sub> in a reservoir, such as the Dupuy reservoir, can only go up to 1 000 years; nevertheless, there is a gradual dissipation of the liquid from the various points of injection. It then starts to emulsify during that period and goes into a thicker state and the projected modelling, although it cannot be shown on the computer, shows that after time the gluggy-type liquid eventually comes to the roof of the reservoir, sticks to the roof of the reservoir and, ultimately, turns back into the limestone that it originally was.

**Mr M.P. Murray** interjected.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Yes, it becomes calcium carbonate. It turns back into what it originally was. That is basically how carbon capture and storage works, for as much as we know it works up to at least 1 000 years. In a longer term period of up to 10 000 years, it will basically turn back to its original form.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** My advisers have said that there are three layers of basalt currently in place —

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Above Dupuy’s CO<sub>2</sub>?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Yes, so it is pretty hard to get out.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Exactly, that is right. As the Premier indicated, there are three layers of basalt rock above this reservoir going right across the whole formation. Therefore, the likelihood of the CO<sub>2</sub> releasing is very small. Members should remember the CO<sub>2</sub> is a liquid. Even if it was to force its way back up under pressure for some geological reason, it would turn into a gas probably 800 metres below the surface and eventually escape. The concept itself is fantastic and I am very pleased that this piece of legislation is helping that concept come to fruition.

There are a couple of issues that I am still not quite sure about, Premier. In the Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015, 80 per cent of the liability has been accepted should there be an incident with the injection process. This 80 per cent liability has been accepted by the commonwealth through an indemnification process relating to a commonwealth act of Parliament dealing with carbon capture and storage. I would like the Premier to explain this a little further in his response to our comments. It is absolutely appropriate that the commonwealth accepts not just indemnity but also liability for this project on the basis that it is the commonwealth's CO<sub>2</sub>. Barrow Island is part of Western Australia but the gas stream comes from commonwealth waters, from which it collects commonwealth royalties and it gives Western Australia the leftovers, which is the CO<sub>2</sub> stream. As I said, this CO<sub>2</sub> is processed, liquefied and injected. The liquid CO<sub>2</sub> that is put into the Dupuy aquifer is commonwealth CO<sub>2</sub>; therefore, the commonwealth should take responsibility and accept liability should an incident occur with the injection process.

I also raise the issue of the 15-year period after which the commonwealth and the state take responsibility for the carbon capture and storage project. The issue of liability was certainly a significant point of discussion when I was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and chair of the greenhouse strategy group. Debate was happening all over the world at that time about how a company—even a company the size and the age of Chevron—can accept liability for the disposal of a product that could last as long as 10 000 years, given the fact that there has not been a company in existence for 1 000 years, unless we count the Vatican, which is the only large organisation that I know has been around for a couple of thousand years. No corporation has been around for even 1 000 years. What is a company being asked to do in taking on liability that might stretch out to 10 000 years? It is quite understandable that ultimately that liability has to fall back to the state. The point of the debate around the globe during the 2000s was: at what point does the state take responsibility and liability for a carbon capture and storage reservoir? I note that a 15-year period following the cessation of the CO<sub>2</sub> injection has been put into this legislation. I ask the Premier to explain to the house why the 15-year period was accepted. During the debate from 2001 to 2008, there were proposals that it should be a period of 50 years or 100 years on the basis that some companies have been around for that long and therefore that liability should lie with the company for as long as possible until it ultimately reverts to the state. I do not understand why the 15-year period was adopted. That was another issue.

The final issue is that there is a component that is not mentioned in this legislation that I think should have been highlighted. As proposed by this piece of legislation, the liability will fall back to the state after 15 years following cessation of the injection process and with that liability is a responsibility to continuously evaluate what is happening in the reservoir. What is happening to the CO<sub>2</sub>? Is it still safe? Is it starting to dissipate in the way in which we modelled it? Are there any geological problems or fissures associated with that saline reservoir that could cause complex problems in the future? The monitoring of that reservoir is critical because there is a responsibility that goes on for literally thousands of years. There is a cost to that. I do not know whether Chevron, as part of its concluding process of the carbon capture storage project, is obligated by the state to contribute to that monitoring process. If it is not, my view is that it should be. As an organisation, it has done very, very well out of Western Australia. Once this project is finished, it may very well shut up shop, chop up the liquefied natural gas facilities on Barrow Island to go as scrap to wherever is the cheapest place at the time to process scrap and leave one pipe sticking up with a cap on it on a fairly innocuous block in the middle of the island, with hundreds of millions of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> two kilometres underneath it, which the state has to ensure is monitored and contained in a safe manner. Chevron should contribute to that. I am not sure whether that has been negotiated as part of the current deal reflected in this legislation. It is certainly not in the legislation and I have asked the Premier to make some comments about this proposal.

Finally, while we are on the issue of Chevron and Barrow Island, I must express significant disappointment with the way in which Chevron handled itself during recent cyclone Olwyn, which resulted in fear and panic for a lot of people working on Barrow Island. The toppling over of a crane resulted in a worker having not only his legs crushed, but also one leg amputated. A significant number of workers were sleeping and living on the floor of both the dining mess area and offices. Remember, at the time the cyclone passed the island it was at only category 2. I heard about a number of people who were told to go back to their dongas to sleep as the dongas were rated to withstand a category 2 cyclone. When those workers pointed out to their supervisors and foremen the possibility that it could increase to category 3 and asked what they should do then, the response was, "Just stay where you are. We'll come and get you if it goes to category 3 or we'll ask you to make your way to a safe area in a category 3 cyclone." That was just ridiculous! If this is a reflection on how Chevron and its building contractors currently do business and manage the passing of a category 2 cyclone, God help us if

a category 4 or 5 cyclone passes or even hits that island! It is also a reflection on the way in which things are done on many offshore installations. I certainly hope that Shell takes a close look at what happened on Barrow Island for its FLNG project, *Prelude*.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston)** [3.22 pm]: I too would like to make a contribution to the Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015. I want to refer mainly to some of the history of my electorate to fill in a few gaps that I believe the member for Cockburn did not quite fill in and to show why I support this bill.

To go back in time, after some debate with then Premier Gallop, funding was given to the Collie area to look into the issue of how to expand the coal industry. At the time, issues about climate change and carbon trading were certainly very much on the cards. Out of that, the Collie coal futures fund group was formed and from there we took on several projects. Among those projects was the carbon geosequestration project. At that time the group was a bit green about the whole issue of geosequestration, but once we got a handle on what it was all about and where it quite possibly could be done, that group certainly expended some money. Having said that, some luck was on our side in the Pinjarra-cum-Harvey area, where bore holes for water had already been drilled. We were therefore able to use the logs that were already there, which saved a huge amount of money, and since then further drilling has taken place.

I am interested to hear what the member for Murray–Wellington will say on this issue, because he has opposed it the whole way along. I do not know whether his opposition is just his opinion and that of some people in his electorate, or whether it is a sou'-west issue with the attitude that we can have it in the nor'-west but we cannot have it in the sou'-west because we might upset a few people. However, to be quite honest, the process for how it is pressurised and sent down as a fluid itself has been well outlined by the member for Cockburn. Unfortunately, education of people has not been at the forefront for them to understand that it is not a gas and that if we have a bit of an earthquake, it will not all pour out into the atmosphere, which tends to be the view of many people. However, as I have said, if a drill goes down three and a half kilometres and the surface cracks down that far, we would be in a bit of bother anyway and I think that more than just the stored carbon would be up and oozing out into the air.

However, computer modelling has taken place over at Otway. The people there are lucky that there is a fault where CO<sub>2</sub> comes out of the ground naturally on one side, so they capture it there and pump it across the fault and back down the other side. A busload of about 15 people, including Shire of Harvey councillors, coal industry and Worsley Alumina people and others went over to have a look at the—I suppose—carbon factory at Otway. We travelled for quite some time on the bus and looked out of the window thinking we must be getting there soon. We were looking for a great big shed or factory, and it was disappointing, to say the least, to see that it was about the size of a large garden shed containing a couple of reasonable compressors and monitors. The whole area would not have been as big as this chamber.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Where was this?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It was at Otway in Victoria. I think Warrnambool is the closest town.

We were out in the sticks looking around and there was this garden shed with a mesh fence around it. We were a bit disappointed, to say the least, to see that the whole operation was a couple of dongas and a garden shed run by two people. However, the people in that area did not have the same problem with people's concerns about the impacts and what would happen in the event of an earthquake. All those matters had already been gone through and regurgitated, as they had been in WA. After having gone there, having been educated on the ground and having brought back that information to the Harvey shire, very little resistance was shown once the information was presented by the shire president, who I think at that stage was Peter Monagle. I am not sure who else from the Shire of Harvey went, but that information allayed people's fears.

I was therefore surprised to see the member for Murray–Wellington jump up and down and object to this much-needed project. The federal politician Nola Marino also opposed it. We therefore have this Liberal crew down south who are not quite in sync with the Liberal crew up here in Perth. I hope that they get their act together and support the changes to the Barrow Island agreement, because one of the major problems we had in the past was a lack of legislation for who owned it and who was responsible for it into the future. That was probably the biggest problem of the whole issue of geosequestration. The soundings and tests that have been done in the harbour area show that under the earth's crust is a bubble—similar to that very broad brush. The drill goes down the well through the bubble to the crust and the CO<sub>2</sub> gravitates away from the well; so, there is no problem with pushing down. With pushing all the time, gravitation can happen. From there, CO<sub>2</sub> would be able to be picked up from Kwinana because it is not very far to run a pipe through and pressurise it. Surprisingly, the number and size of pipes needed are very small because they are under high pressure and they are not over-intrusive in being carried through an area.

However, one of the things that I am very proud of out of this process was garnering \$50 million in funding from the federal government over time. It is good to see that in recent times the state government is also contributing a little, although it is jumping on the bandwagon and saying to the current federal government that we need some

more money. I hope that keeps going. I hope that in the future we will remember that carbon, as it is taken out as oil or coal or any other fossil fuel, comes from the earth. What we are doing is putting it back to where it has come from—the earth. That is one of the biggest positives that we can see out of this whole project. We are moving on. It is great to see that Chevron is doing this. There have been pump-backs previously, but not in the same category as this. I hope this all goes well, with the support of the federal and state governments.

**MR B.J. GRYLLS (Pilbara)** [3.31 pm]: I rise to make some comments on the Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015. Obviously the purpose of this bill is to consolidate in legislation the agreement with Chevron in and around the abatement of carbon. Interestingly, time has moved on from when this was a very prominent item of discussion in the wider community. That was at the time when Kevin Rudd was the Prime Minister, and carbon abatement was an important public debate.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** Are you saying that internationally, it is no longer an important public debate?

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** If the member for Gosnells would let me speak, I will talk.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** Are you saying —

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** The member is interjecting on me before I have said one sentence. If the member for Gosnells is happy for me to continue, I will. I said I find it interesting that this negotiation was done at that time. Since that time, there has been much water under the bridge in the debate around carbon abatement, but we are now in the Parliament and putting that deal into legislation.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** It is very interesting to note, member, that I saw on the telly the other day that your colleague in the background had a Chevron shirt on! I was very interested to see that Chevron shirt!

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I told him that I would not be talking to him again!

I had some role to play in some of the negotiations with Chevron around its major developments on Barrow Island and onshore around Onslow, and that is very important for the Western Australian economy. The reason I want to contribute to the debate on this bill is my concern about some other parts of the negotiations with Chevron and what the outcome will be in the local Pilbara community. It seems that the government is continuing to play its part in facilitating Chevron to proceed with its project. Chevron wanted to make sure that the ongoing legacy of the geosequestration would not be only its problem; it wanted the federal government and the state government to be involved. The federal government and the state governments agreed to that, and that is what this bill does.

However, another part of that negotiation and agreement with Chevron was around its workforce, and around regional development and community development, and that is what I want to spend a few minutes of my time talking about today. This Parliament is being asked to ratify the arrangements that have been put in place for carbon abatement. However, we need to recognise also that Chevron, post that, requested to be relieved of some of its obligations with regard to regional development. I think that is a very poor outcome for the local community of Onslow. I hope that the Premier in his response to the second reading debate will share with the Parliament some of the reasons behind those decisions, because on face value they do not seem to be delivering the best possible outcome for the community of the Pilbara and for the future development of Onslow to support the oil and gas sector.

During the time I was Minister for Regional Development, we requested of Chevron that its operational workforce in Onslow be housed in a purpose-built, high-spec village in the town centre of Onslow, for want of a better description. We felt that this was very important. Onslow is a very small community—a little hamlet, I suppose we could say. Big projects such as this put enormous pressure on the town. Through the Pilbara Cities project, we wanted to see a long-lasting legacy from major projects such as this. It was, therefore, negotiated with Chevron at the time that it would build an operational village in Onslow. To give members an idea of what I envisaged from this, Rio Tinto has built a village in Wickham called Cajuput Villas. That is a much higher spec village than most of the donga camps that we have seen previously. It is a multistorey, apartment-type complex, with very good built form and architecture, and Onslow could have really done with the renewal that would have come with that project.

However, as time went on, there were discussions around the Chevron project running over budget and over time, and Chevron came back to the government and requested that rather than build the village in Onslow, as it had committed to do, and for which LandCorp had set aside land, it wanted to house its operational workforce in essentially the construction camp for Wheatstone, and that was agreed to by the Premier. I hope that the Premier will explain why that decision was made so that I can explain that to the people of the Pilbara. The argument put by Chevron was around its concern about the safety of its workforce because of the travelling time between the plant and the proposed village in Onslow. The member for North West Central tells me that the distance between the town and the plant is 25 kilometres. Chevron made the argument that it would be an impost on its workers if at the end of their long shift they had to be mobilised into a bus and transported back to the facility at which they would spend their hours while off shift.

Chevron agreed to build its operational village in Onslow. Chevron then came back to the government, after the fact, to argue about the safety of its workers with regard to that travel time after work. That must mean that Chevron had not addressed that safety factor for its workers when it made its original deal with government. It is very poor for Chevron to say, “In getting our approvals, we made the argument that we could do this, but, in hindsight, we would rather not do this.” I have heard no explanation from Roy Krzywosinski or the senior leadership of Chevron about how it could possibly have come about that in the hours and hours of meetings and discussions that were had with senior Chevron people. Chevron never once raised the fact that it was incredibly concerned about the safety aspects of its workers having to travel from the plant to their accommodation in Onslow. I struggle with the fact that in all the conversations that I had directly with Chevron, that issue was never raised, and it was then raised after the fact. I have respect for the Chevron senior management, so I am sure there is a good answer for that. I hope that during this debate in the Parliament today, we can get the answer to that.

The distance between Karratha and the North West Shelf project is around 25 kilometres. The workers do that drive all the time. I do that drive all the time. It is a relatively short distance in terms of travel time. But, further than that, if we are concerned about the travel time between the workplace and home for the Chevron employees in Onslow, who essentially will be picked up by bus and transported, what are we doing for all the other workers across the state who have much greater travel times? People in the member for Collie–Preston’s electorate drive the Coalfields highway all the time after their shifts.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** Just briefly, some people are driving back to Geraldton after a 12-hour night shift.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** That is right. I was going to use the example of nurses who have to travel home after a 12-hour shift. Nurses do not have a bus to pick them up and take them home. They have to find their own way home after a long shift in a highly stressful and highly challenging role. Again, I would just like someone from Chevron to explain to me how, after the fact and after the agreement, it can make the case that there is a safety issue with the travel time of its workforce.

Another unintended consequence of this is the camp that Chevron built. The Wheatstone construction camp is in the industrial area of Onslow. It is called the ANSIA—the Ashburton North Strategic Industrial Area. The idea was that the only tenant of the ANSIA during construction would be the construction workforce. That camp would then be dismantled and it would become an industrial area and industrial activities could take place there. The request by Chevron to keep its workforce in the industrial area means that people are now essentially living permanently, when they are on shift, in an industrial area in Onslow. I use the comparison of Hope Valley and Wattleup. The government is compulsorily acquiring residents’ houses in the buffer zone of the Kwinana industrial area so that clear separation can be kept between industry and residential living. One of the great challenges in the Pilbara is that we have never been too good on long-term planning. I think it is a great challenge for the future industrialisation of Onslow, for future businesses that want to establish in the ANSIA to participate in the oil and gas sector, that their application to put a noxious industry in the ANSIA now —

*Point of Order*

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** The member has made some interesting points but I think he should come back to the point of the bill.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Second reading speeches are quite wideranging, member for Gosnells. Continue, member for Pilbara.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** It has nothing to do with the bill at all.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I will respond to the point of order because I think it does have a lot to do with it. I am being asked today as the member for Pilbara to support the Barrow Island Amendment Bill, which puts in plan an agreement between the government and the company. It was agreed to during the negotiations to establish the company’s oil and gas project. I am simply reflecting on the fact that another part of that agreement has since been changed by the company. I am seeking from the Premier some answers to those changes as I make my decisions on the bill before us. I think it is entirely appropriate that I do that—to seek those answers. It is a very important part of the project and important for the residents of Onslow; not only for Onslow but also the whole Pilbara and the sensible development of the north west. We are finding right across the Pilbara that decisions made by the government to help facilitate growth, decisions that were made both by the previous Labor government and by our Liberal–National government in the Pilbara, were made for all the right reasons at the time. They were made to facilitate growth and jobs and development, but, five to 15 years later when operational workers are living in a camp in the industrial area and people who want to establish industrial practices in the industrial area find that they cannot, it is a challenging outcome. People in Port Hedland are living in the industrial area of Wedgefield at the moment. It is incredibly difficult for local government and

businesses to unscramble the egg once it has been scrambled. Now we are considering Onslow with a little hindsight. I fear that I have not yet been given a good reason why this decision has been made.

In putting these deals together, Chevron made a range of promises to the local community focused on regional development. It involved LandCorp developing a 400-lot subdivision aimed at housing residential growth. Chevron is building 100 houses on that. Essentially, that subdivision remains vacant. A very large block of land that was meant to house the new Chevron village in the middle of Onslow will remain vacant. Chevron committed to building water and power supplies for the growing community. My latest advice is there will not be much need for the water supply because a major user was to be at the new village that was to be established in Onslow. Chevron had already built a desalination plant for the construction camp in the ANSIA. Tens and tens of millions of dollars of investment had been made to underpin the regional development of Onslow, but Chevron decided for whatever reason—it has not been able to give me a good one—to walk away from that and pursue a different strategy. Chevron is entitled to request that; it is entitled to make its case for that. I would just hope that that case can be explained to me so that I can explain it to others.

I just make the point to Chevron that it made commitments in and around regional development. It has been put to me that by not building the village in Onslow as committed to in the original agreement, there is a saving of more than \$100 million to Chevron's bottom line. I understand why it would seek to save money for its bottom line from a major project like that, but I am incredibly disappointed that Chevron chose to find its savings in the project that all of its pamphlets and flyers and public discussion said would be the centrepiece of the regional development enhancement and growth of Onslow when it originally proposed the project. All of the bits that Chevron said were going to be good for Onslow do not seem to be happening.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** Guess what? They also promised an awful lot of local content but they didn't deliver that either!

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I am sure the member will talk about that as well.

It is very, very important that as a state, having gone through this massive expansion phase, we learn from those outcomes and learn what the end outcome is, as opposed to what was committed to at the beginning. We need to make sure we make good decisions around planning. We need to make sure we make good decisions around regional development so that in five to 20 years' time, we are not trying to unwind those challenges. I have no doubt that at some point the Chevron workforce being located in the ANSIA industrial area of Onslow will become a fundamental problem for growth and development. That decision will have to be revised and Chevron will have to move out. I do not know why we find ourselves in this situation of creating that challenge in the first place.

I finish my contribution by saying that that would never be allowed in Kwinana. It would never be allowed in Kwinana. The Pilbara, as it looks to grow and expand and develop, just wants to be treated the same as everywhere else. We want to be able to take advantage of the economic activity in our own backyard. We want residential growth. We want more schools and more hospitals. We want people to be able to live the wonderful lifestyle of the Pilbara. We just want to be treated like everybody else. I cannot for the life of me understand how housing a fly in, fly out workforce in the industrial area of town as defined can be a good public policy decision.

The Premier will have the opportunity in the debate to answer some of those questions. The government is doing the right thing. It made a commitment to Chevron in and around geosequestration and abatement. It is honouring that commitment. I call on Chevron—I am sure it has someone watching today's proceedings—that the Pilbara community would like it to honour its commitments to the community. Its massive project has had a big effect on employment and will deliver economic benefits to the state and the nation for many, many years to come. I would like to think that the home town of that project, being Onslow, would also be able to look like it housed two of the biggest oil and gas projects in the world. At the moment, I cannot say that. There are big, bare blocks where there was meant to be a village. It has scared off mum-and-dad investors who might have built a deli or a café or a small business to support it. Chevron has essentially told them, "If you live in town, we have a problem with your safety when travelling between the plant and town." That has put a big downturn on local investment. What should have been a wonderful opportunity for the growth of the community does not seem to be happening.

I actually think that the Premier was put in an almost impossible situation when Chevron raised the safety aspect with him. I would just hope that some commonsense can prevail and Chevron can relook at some of the commitments and decisions it has made since then and actually deliver the outcome. I believe that state and federal governments have done absolutely everything to facilitate the development of the Gorgon project on Barrow Island, a class A reserve, and the onshore Wheatstone project in Onslow. There has been an enormous effort across all government agencies to deliver that in the timeframes that Chevron needed. We had an enormous process to deliver the approvals to ensure that happened. The government has delivered to Chevron everything it needed to facilitate that project. The one thing that the Onslow community was set to receive from

that project has been pulled off the table at the last minute. If Chevron wants to be a corporate citizen that is highly regarded in Western Australia, it cannot make decisions like that.

The Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015 is an important part of that process. I look forward to hearing why some of those decisions were made by Chevron, as I consider my position on supporting the other side of the deal that facilitates the abatement of carbon in the long term.

**MR M.J. COWPER (Murray–Wellington)** [3.51 pm]: I would like to contribute to the debate on the Barrow Island Amendment Bill 2015. I am looking forward to the geosequestration of carbon at Barrow Island, because that would give us a clear idea of how the material will behave in a contemporary situation. It has been mentioned in this place that there was a plan to geosequester carbon captured from Kwinana, Alcoa's plants in Pinjarra and Wagerup, and Collie. It was to be piped to a location near Riverdale Road, which is to the north west of Harvey, and pumped into the ground 4 000 or 5 000 metres below the surface, in the Lesueur aquifer. When this project came to my notice, interestingly enough, it was labelled the Collie hub project. It was obviously looking at capturing the carbon in and around Collie, and when I made some enquiries about exactly where that was, I was told that it was south of Harvey, just north of Kemerton, which puts it solidly in the Murray–Wellington electorate. With further examination, I was able to get a more definitive location for the project. It was bordered on the south by Forestry Road, to the east by Government Road, to the north by Riverdale Road, and to the west by the South Western Highway.

Subsequently, the Lesueur aquifer was discovered to be much larger than the area that I have just described. As the project progressed, the capture area was expanded upon. It goes from the Darling fault, which, if you like, is at the foothills of the Darling Range, and runs north–south from Waroona to Bengel and across to the coast. It actually goes out into the Indian Ocean off the coast and travels north. Initially, the project was looking at a fairly small area, and it was later found to be a rather large area. This area was chosen from three locations in the south west that were examined: Perth Basin, just north of Perth; an area over the Darling Range towards York and Beverley, and Lesueur aquifer. It was finally decided that the Lesueur aquifer would be examined, which is the area I have just mentioned.

The technology used in geosequestration was developed by Halliburton way back in the 1950s. This was the use of rigs to drill very deep into the earth's crust, through the various layers, to harvest gas using various techniques, including the pumping of liquids into the ground to cause the ground to crack, releasing natural gas. This is commonly known, I believe, as fracking. Over the years, various techniques have been used, and the companies involved have become quite adept at using and directing the drill rigs. The technology that is used is very interesting and intriguing. Geosequestration is not the same as fracking, but it is born out of similar technology, discovered by Halliburton.

One question that was of concern was what was actually under the surface of the ground. I remember driving around my electorate and seeing trucks rolling out big rolls of wire. The operators were putting out microphones and doing sounding. They thumped the ground, which would send a wave through the bedrock, which enabled them to map the subsurface. They started doing that in the area that I first described. It then came to the notice of the community that the company wanted to drill a test bore. A massive drill rig was brought in from up north somewhere. It was one of very few in Australia that have the capacity to drill that deep. A test bore was drilled to see what it was like under the ground.

A local consultation committee was formed, and I was able to have a representative on it. I selected an environmental scientist who has a good understanding of the hydrology of the area and has experience in that area. The impact that these activities might have on the local farms was of great concern to the people in that area. During the course of the process of the drilling and the reports back to the committee, the committee member reported to me the circumstances attending this project. One of the reports that came back was that the Lesueur aquifer is hypersaline; it is seven times saltier than the sea.

What is unique about this project will also apply to the Barrow Island project. Where this geosequestration has occurred in other parts of the world—the member for Cockburn touched upon its use offshore from Norway in the North Sea, and it has been done in the western United States, although on a smaller scale—the CO<sub>2</sub> was actually pumped back into a voided reservoir that previously contained oil. The oil had been extracted, and CO<sub>2</sub> was pumped into the voided well. Neither Barrow Island nor the Lesueur aquifer are voids. They are, as I said, hypersaline. They are unique insofar as they have a covering of basalt, which, I understand, is much harder than granite and has certain properties that the geologists have been looking for. The member for Collie–Preston touched on the major concern for my constituents, making the point that the people of Harvey were not particularly worried about it. I can tell him that, to the contrary, they were very concerned about it. We had a number of community meetings, where people were able to listen to the representatives from the CSIRO, the University of Western Australia and others about how this would happen. A farmer even came over from the Otways, and he had a chance to speak to some of the farmers about their concerns. There were a range of concerns, not the least of which was why we would embark on a project that would potentially interfere with

arguably the most important domestic food producing area in Western Australia. I am talking about Harvey Fresh, Harvey Beef, the vast majority of our dairy industry and the Myalup coastal strip, which produces much of our vegetables. Forty per cent of our vegetables come from that area—potatoes, carrots, broccoli and the like. The concern was that pumping CO<sub>2</sub> into the ground would potentially cause the hypersaline water to come to the surface. If CO<sub>2</sub> escapes, it just goes back into the atmosphere. We know that CO<sub>2</sub> is omnipresent. As a young teenager, I conducted experiments by putting CO<sub>2</sub> into a tank and turning on the tap, which resulted in a liquid flowing out. Hopefully, it is golden and everyone can enjoy it. In this case we are concerned about CO<sub>2</sub> being put into the ground under pressure. If there is some leakage, it has the potential to push the salt water to the surface, rendering the farmers' operations virtually non-existent.

When it came to the discussion about who was responsible and who would pay, there were some grey areas that the then minister, Hon Bill Marmion, was unable to address. What will happen at Barrow Island will answer a lot of those questions that the farmers in my electorate were asking. Those questions that I was asking on their behalf will hopefully be answered by this process of putting it back into the ground.

I had the opportunity to speak in private with the member for Gosnells. He and I agreed that this will be a great debate, as we can sit down and discuss a range of issues relating to this process.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

### REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES — CLOSURE

#### *Motion*

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park)** [4.01 pm]: I move —

That the house condemns the Premier for the ongoing uncertainty, confusion and fear that he has created in remote Aboriginal communities since stating that he would close 150 remote communities and calls on the Premier to immediately —

- (a) seek to have the commonwealth government reverse or delay its decision to cease funding municipal services at remote Aboriginal communities;
- (b) clarify on what basis the government will base its decision on which communities are worthy of future government investment;
- (c) outline the baseline data that the government has collected to justify the Premier's statement that remote communities have failed; and
- (d) outline the government support that will be provided to those people currently living in remote communities to ensure that their closure will result in better social outcomes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you, perhaps more than many people in this place, travel around remote parts of Western Australia and know that they are an incredibly diverse part of Western Australia. Every Western Australian is very much defined by the size of our state and our small population. I want to make some points about remote Western Australia before I get into the specifics of the argument. It is often dominated by the debate we have heard of late about this deficit model of what is failing and what is miserable, and the selective use of statistics. I travel around remote Western Australia reasonably regularly. For the purposes of the discussion we are having today, I am largely talking about the Kimberley, but, as you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, the issue also relates to the Pilbara and the goldfields. It is more than just the Kimberley, but 80 per cent of remote communities are in the Kimberley, so it is very much a Kimberley issue.

Anyone who is familiar with the Ranger program would know about the desire for a Broome hostel, and that they have been trying to get a response from the government. The Living Change program by the Wunan Foundation in the East Kimberley is still trying to get a positive response from government and the various arts movements across remote Western Australia. I note, just by way of passing, Waringarri Aboriginal Arts in Kununurra, which is a fantastic arts centre—anyone who has been there will understand and accept the work that it does.

Last night I listened to Fred Chaney give a fantastic interview with Phillip Adams about the importance of remote Western Australia. He talked about the Social Ventures Australia report into the Mardu, which is spread across a huge area of remote Western Australia and does fantastic things and achieves fantastic outcomes. In my role as chairman of Clontarf Aboriginal College, I know that we have students from all over remote Western Australia whose parents or guardians have made the decision that their children can live on country and then be sent to Perth for their education. That is not unusual. We have seen the great work done in the Fitzroy Valley and the partnership with Wesley College in Melbourne. During the wet, those students are down in Melbourne studying and learning. During the dry, they are up on country in Yiramalay in the Fitzroy Valley with students from Melbourne learning Aboriginal culture.

Just recently we saw a fantastic announcement by Christopher Pyne—not naturally a friend of mine, I would have thought; I have never met him—about the federal government’s investment in remote schools. Today I heard the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Peter Collier, talk about literacy rates and the federal government’s significant investment in explicit direct instruction in remote schools in Mt Magnet, One Arm Point, Kunawarrtji, Punmu, Broome, Nullagine, Fitzroy Crossing, Kulkarriya, Halls Creek, Meekatharra, Carnarvon, Warralong, Strelley, Yakanarra and the Mulan community, and in Jigalong Remote Community School in Newman, Christ the King School in Lombadina and the Holy Rosary School in Derby. This is a big investment by the federal government into literacy in our remote schools. Noel Pearson was wandering around Mardu country last week already seeing some of the great success they are having in literacy. I saw some of the photos of Pearson and Brian Samson at Jigalong floating around on social media. There is a strong investment by the federal government, yet we have the state government’s desire to withdraw from remote communities. It clashes with what appears to be coming from Christopher Pyne in education anyway in respect of our remote communities.

I want to reflect for a minute on former Governor Lieutenant-General John Sanderson who did a number of reports for both the former Labor government and the current coalition government. What I liked about the Sanderson reports is that he asked, as did Fred Chaney last night on Radio National with Phillip Adams: What do we want from our regional and remote Australia? Do we want it abandoned and empty? Fred Chaney said that he would like to see a web of communities and people through the central part of our country. That is exactly what we should be aspiring to achieve. Sanderson made that point as well. I have been to a couple of the Indigenous protected area launches. We are starting to see a better understanding of the importance of remote and regional Western Australia at the federal government level.

I want to quickly reflect on how we got to where we are in this remote community debate. It goes back to a media statement made on 24 September last year. The commonwealth Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion, put out a media statement stating —

The Australian Government has reached historic agreements with the Queensland, Western Australian, Victorian and Tasmanian Governments that will see the states take on responsibility for municipal and essential services in remote Indigenous communities.

Clearly, from the report on the ABC last night, it seems that this discussion has been ongoing for a lot longer than anyone living in a remote community would realise, but Nigel Scullion talked about this historic agreement. I note that the former housing minister Bill Marmion, the member for Nedlands, came into the house after that and made the point in a brief ministerial statement that he refuted that historic agreement. He said that it was reprehensible that these communities were left that way by the federal government. The minister, the member for Nedlands, also tabled a letter that he sent to the commonwealth minister, Minister Scullion, in response, stating again that it was reprehensible for the federal government to announce an historic agreement and to walk away. I want to make a point. Nigel Scullion said—I quote again—that this agreement —

will see the states take on responsibility for municipal and essential services in remote Indigenous communities.

I accept that the federal government should not be providing that service. It is clear that this discussion has been taking place absent the involvement of Aboriginal people for quite some time. But the reality is that the commonwealth government has been in this space for decades. For the federal minister to say that he has reached agreement whereby Western Australia has agreed to take on that responsibility when clearly it had not is an egregious breach of duty by that federal minister. It is disgusting. I hope that the Leader of the National Party will contribute this afternoon. I am interested to hear how his meeting with the minister went—the minister who abandoned his responsibility by putting out this scurrilous and misleading media statement.

I have noted the response of the former minister, the member for Nedlands, and I am coming to the first point of my motion. Bereft of what to do—because how does one engage a federal government that puts out such rubbish?—I wrote to Warren Mundine and every member of the national Indigenous Advisory Council and made the point that their role is to advise and that they need to be part of this conversation. I made the point that anyone can accept that it is odd that this service provision is provided by the commonwealth government, but the reality is it does and it has done so for a long time, and it is negligent of the commonwealth to simply say, “We’re off. In two years we are out of here. Here is \$90 million.” I have made the point that I have no problem with the deadline. It is obvious that deadlines crystallise the minds, but it is clear that the state government, as Graeme Campbell, the president of the Shire of Broome, pointed out today, has been caught with its pants down, even though the state Department of Aboriginal Affairs clearly had a report about this in 2011. The state government was standing there stunned about this decision.

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Wait, minister. I said to Mr Mundine and the members of the national Indigenous Advisory Council that they needed to start to advocate on this issue and that it would not be unreasonable for a five-year

time frame. That would allow the state to respond sensibly, but not with the statement that “we are closing 150 communities because they are awash with sexually transmitted diseases” that we have seen from the Premier. We need a proper, rational conversation and fair consultation with Aboriginal people that brings them in to be part of this, and not to dictate from Perth in, I think, September or October last year. We are still waiting to this day for a consultation process. To this day we are waiting for a basis upon which the Premier stood in this Parliament and said that those communities had failed. We are still waiting. We have heard the different arguments raised by the Premier. I make the point that he has made the judgement—guilty—and is now running around trying to present the argument. It is an utterly unfair way to treat people living in remote communities.

What did we see, despite the reprehensible rhetoric from the member for Nedlands and despite his critique of the historic agreement in the media statement from Nigel Scullion? Two weeks ago when the Premier met with Nigel Scullion up here, in a media conference afterwards—I got the recording from a journalist who was kind enough to give it to me—a question was put to the Premier about the funding cuts to remote communities. The Premier replied that he did not discuss it to any great extent. Everywhere we turn we see the Premier critiquing the commonwealth, on any issue involving support to Western Australia or funding, yet on this issue, there is silence. That is what the Premier said. He is now digging himself further into a hole by trying to construct the argument around failure and explaining why he has declared the Aboriginal people in remote communities to be guilty. He is now presenting the argument.

In the first question I put to the Premier about this matter on 12 November, I asked him on what basis he would decide which particular communities would be closed. He made the point —

... the commonwealth took the decision to cease its funding for essential services to remote Aboriginal communities.

He went on to say that the commonwealth did that because it has vacated the territory; it has walked away. In the *Halls Creek Herald* of 5 November, a week earlier, the Premier is quoted as stating —

Unfortunately because the Commonwealth has now left the field, as you know, I think the numbers of communities across the Kimberly and Pilbara will reduce significantly but I think we've got to concentrate on the larger ones to make sure they can be sustainable.

Again, on 27 November, the Premier said in a PerthNow article by Kara Vickery, “Coffee with Colin: Premier Colin Barnett on women in public life, GST, Aboriginal communities”, the Premier stated this of his decision to close remote communities —

And it's been precipitated by the Commonwealth withdrawing funding for essential services like water and power. Both the Commonwealth and the State had contributed \$30m a year each. The State will continue with its \$30m but we no longer have the Commonwealth \$30m so something has to change.

The argument from the Premier very early on was that this was a funding issue: \$30 million a year has been taken from the commonwealth government and we cannot afford to top that up. I note as an aside the delicious irony in that, bearing in mind that the Premier has received \$24 billion in mining royalties during his time as Premier.

I then heard the Premier on the radio and in Parliament talk about a community that was costing the government \$85 000 per head. He was continuing the argument that it was a result of the finances and that it is unrealistic to expect government to continue to support communities at a certain level. He referred to a community that costs \$85 000 per person for the provision of municipal and essential services. I asked the Premier on 20 November last year which community that was. He responded —

I made that point at the time, that I would not name the community, and I will not name the community, because I am not going to do what perhaps the opposition thinks I might be doing or what they seem to be doing; I am not going to wander around and target communities and tell them, “You will be closed.”

The reality is that that community that he was critiquing at \$85 000 per person was a community that he had already closed—Oombulgurri. In answer to a question on notice from 18 February this year, it was Oombulgurri. He closed a community and continues to critique the broader Aboriginal population for the expense of that community. How is there any respect in that process?

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I am looking forward to the Leader of the National Party's response, because I think that he has an interesting and key role to play in the cabinet, because the Premier has nailed his colours to the mast. I think that the role of the Leader of the National Party and that of the National Party are very important. I said at the time that, at a billion dollars a year, royalties for regions has a very important role to play to get a proper considered outcome, and I think the Leader of the National Party agreed with that.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I think he agreed with that. When I was asked about something that the Leader of the National Party had said in an interview on, I think, the last sitting day of last year when he talked about this, I was very positive about it. I note that there clearly has been a difference of opinion between him and the Premier, and that is no doubt playing and working its way through the system. I hope the Leader of the National Party wins the argument because, given the Premier's rhetoric and defamatory statements in here about Aboriginal people, he cannot do it. The government will not be able to pull this off without engaging Aboriginal people and the Aboriginal leadership of the Kimberley. It will not be able to do that. It is as simple as that. I have no doubt that the Premier is getting advice from the bureaucracy that he cannot just close down those communities. The first comment I noted in response to our eloquent and Churchillian Prime Minister's "lifestyle choices" statement was from the Kalgoorlie–Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry. I think it was Hugh Gallagher who critiqued that statement. I know the member for Kalgoorlie shares that view. All the shires in the Kimberley share the same view as the Kimberley and District Chamber of Commerce. I hope that the Leader of the National Party can exercise some influence in this matter because it is very important for not only Aboriginal people, but also the broader community.

I now want to go to where Mr Barnett has chosen to take this discussion—that is, the use of the issue of sexually transmitted diseases.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman):** The member for Victoria Park has the call.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! The member for Victoria Park has the floor. Leader of the National Party, it started over there, and if you would like me to call you for trying to point out how I should chair, I will be happy to do that. It started over there and it will stop now. The member for Victoria Park has the call.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The latest rhetoric from the Premier is around gonorrhoea. I know what has happened here: the Premier has moved away from the cost issue because it was starting to look like an argument that was not quite presentable enough. He went where he went when he has under political pressure over James Price Point. That is where he is now. I understand this; I know where it is going. The Premier said to the Minister for Health or one of his staffers, "I need a statistic—a shocking statistic." There is no doubt shocking statistics can be found. The Premier came in the here last Thursday, 19 March, and said —

In 2013, there were 39 cases of gonorrhoea in Aboriginal children.

...

These 39 cases were in children aged from 10 to 14. We are seeing sexually transmitted diseases in children aged from 10 to 14. How many cases of gonorrhoea are there in the wider community? There are none—not a single case.

That is what the Premier said. Today, he put a bunch of qualifications around that, but on the day that there was a large protest at the front of Parliament House by concerned Aboriginal people, the Premier stood in this place and said that! Government members' leader said that. He went straight to those statistics. I thought that gonorrhoea is a reportable infection and this is something that we can check. I note that today the Premier continued with his gonorrhoea rhetoric. As an aside, on Thursday, I put a question without notice to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the upper house—it is quite rare for a question without notice in the upper house. What did the minister say? He stated —

Regarding the specific cases of gonorrhoea, no, I am not familiar with where those cases are.

It is clearly not an issue that has been raised at cabinet subcommittee level; this is just a little debating point that the Premier thought he would use. The Premier said today that he was talking about the Kimberley. We have known for years and years that rates of gonorrhoea infection in the Kimberley have been higher than is the case in the rest of the state. That is not new information. I have not heard the Premier mention his concern about this issue before—not once. I have sat in this chamber for seven Premier's Statements, and not once have I heard him talk about this issue.

The Department of Health website has all the statistics on every sexually transmitted disease imaginable it seems. I looked at the statistics for gonorrhoea specifically in the Aboriginal community, but also in the Kimberley. For each of the years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2013–14—the most recent comparison—the rates of gonorrhoea in the Kimberley and Aboriginal populations are without a doubt higher than is the case elsewhere. It is interesting that since 2006, the rate of gonorrhoea in Aboriginal people has declined remarkably. In 2006, the age-standardised rate per 100 000 was 1 600 in the Aboriginal community. By 2012, this had dropped to 550. I can only imagine that is a significant success for the health community in reducing the rate of gonorrhoea in the Aboriginal community. Yes, it is higher than elsewhere, and I accept that, but gonorrhoea is not only in the Aboriginal community; it is in the wider community. Last Thursday, the Premier said —

How many cases of gonorrhoea are there in the wider community? There are none—not a single case.

He said that there was not a single case of gonorrhoea either in the age group of 10 to 14-year-olds that he was talking about or across the community. There was no recognition from the Premier that although the rate of infection is still high for Aboriginal people, it is coming down remarkably. I turn to other areas. The great southern, member for Albany, has had some significant spikes. In other areas of Western Australia, the rate of infection is going up significantly. Colleagues will remember that I quoted in question time the most recent comparison on the website between 2013, the year the Premier quoted, and 2014. The website states —

The gonorrhoea notification rate decreased by 19% among Aboriginal people and increased by 47% among non-Aboriginal people, resulting in a lower rate ratio compared to the previous 12-month period.

Aboriginal people are having more success reducing gonorrhoea infection rates than the non-Aboriginal community. Yes, the rates are higher than elsewhere. We know and accept that. We have probably known about that for decades—certainly as far back as the records I can get on the Department of Health website.

The argument for closing communities cannot be about money, because the community with the figures the Premier keeps rolling out has been closed. He closed Oombulgurri. The closures cannot be about the rate of gonorrhoea infection, because the government is having some success reducing that rate. The Premier made the point that no-one else in the community suffers from this other than Aboriginal people. It was just outrageous.

I thought: okay; I will pursue every little argument the Premier raises because he has declared the communities guilty, and now he is trying to present the case for the jury—but the case keeps changing, which is infuriating. I asked the Premier: of the 39 cases of gonorrhoea he talked about—today, we found out he was talking only about the Kimberley—how many were in remote communities and were they all in remotes? The Premier is using that argument to justify the closure or remotes. Were all those cases in remotes? Yesterday, I got this answer to a question in the upper house; I quote —

The figure of 39 cases of gonorrhoea in 2013 for Aboriginal children aged from 10 to 14 years compared with none for non-Aboriginal children is for the Kimberley region. This data has been provided by the Department of Health. There is difficulty in distinguishing cases residing in remote communities versus townships in remote regions because, from the point of view of the sexually transmitted infections notification data, people who live in small or remote communities often have their addresses recorded as the nearest town—for example, via Fitzroy Crossing, via Halls Creek et cetera—or a post office box number based in the post office of the nearest township. Also, some populations move frequently between towns and small communities, so a given address on the case report form does not necessarily constitute the location where they spend most of their time.

That answer means, friends, that the Premier has no idea how many of those 39 cases of gonorrhoea reported in 2013 for the 10 to 14-year age group in the Kimberley came from remote communities. Did they all come from Broome or from Halls Creek? Was it half and half? Members' guesses are as good as mine, because the Premier does not know. Colleagues, that is the basis upon which the Premier is making this decision. No doubt, as the jury keeps hearing the arguments, at some point there will be other things added to that. It is not about gonorrhoea; it cannot be, because it makes no sense for it to be about gonorrhoea.

The other reason I know this argument will fail is that there is literally no coordination between federal and state governments—zero. The federal minister said exactly the opposite of what the government is saying. Nigel Scullion is quoted on the ABC website as saying last Friday, after his meeting with the Leader of the National Party, the following —

‘I met with one of the ministers from the West Australian Government yesterday and made it very clear that a sit down with the mob is well overdue,’ ...

They’re not closing communities. That would be really useful to tell them, that would be a really useful thing to tell them at the moment.

‘The West Australian Government plans to sit down with every single community and talk about the long-term viability and talk about where they need to make investments and in what communities.

...

‘There’s a 150 communities who have absolutely no chance of being shut down.

The federal minister said that. Christopher Pyne apparently agrees with that view because he is investing in direct instruction and explicit direct instruction in remote communities across Western Australia. The state Minister for Aboriginal Affairs made the point today that the communities will be fully consulted before they are closed. What is going on? If the government cannot get the federal government to agree on the future of the Kimberley, what is going on? We can talk about the Mitchell Plateau and all sorts of things.

We are talking about the people who live in the Kimberley community. The federal government is saying a completely different thing from what this government is saying. It does not give me much confidence that the deadline of mid-next year is going to produce a positive outcome. As further evidence of the lack of coordination, consultation, involvement with or respect for Aboriginal people from the federal government and the state governments, I look at where the money has gone. The announcement last week about where money from the Indigenous advancement strategy will go is wreaking havoc across Australia. All members will be familiar with June Oscar and the Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre. Members opposite are nodding their heads. They do brilliant work—exactly the work that apparently the Premier has expressed a worry about. The centre looks after mothers and newborns. It is focused on early childhood development and health. It is organisations such as June Oscar's that have achieved a significant decline in the rates of gonorrhoea. I am absolutely sure it is part of the important flow of information and support. What has the Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre put up with over the last little while? By way of background, it was part of the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, which established 38 children and family centres across Australia. We have a few of them here in Western Australia, and Marninwarntikura was one of them. Federal support for that agreement ceased on 30 June 2014. In WA, the state government has twice rolled over unspent funds on a six-monthly basis to enable it to keep operating until 30 June this year. Marninwarntikura has no idea what is happening post-30 June this year. Do members know why? It is because the federal government did not give the centre any money—not a jot of federal funding. Marninwarntikura is one of the most successful providers of services that directly deals with health outcomes for Aboriginal people and children. Its funding is guaranteed until 30 June by the state government, but it has been abandoned by the federal government. If this government cannot coordinate funding with its federal colleagues, this policy will fail. If the Leader of the National Party cannot get the Premier back into some form of respectful dialogue with remote communities, this will fail. My view is that the Premier has gone too far. The best thing we can hope for is that the Premier does not utter another word in this area. I am directing my speech very much to the Leader of the National Party; I am pinning my hopes on him. After seeing the Liberal Party leadership completely embarrass itself by what it has done, I am looking now to the National Party for leadership.

Several members interjected.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I get a feeling from the Leader of the National Party from our discussions that he understands the damage that has been done by the Premier in this space. I am interested in this leaked document because clearly, despite the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Peter Collier, saying that nothing has been done and the government has no idea about the framework upon which it will decide which communities will close, his department received a document from the federal government back in 2011, so clearly work has been done on this. I have looked at the list of communities and it is perhaps a desktop study by the federal government because some of those communities are not communities as such and some of them get zero support from government as it is, so I am curious about what the federal government has done. But, clearly, something has been happening at a state and federal level.

I went to the Kimberley last year and again early this year and, still, no-one has been spoken to. The one thing I agree with the dopey federal minister about is that the government should get out there and speak to people. The problem that the Premier has got is that he has cruelled the water, so we will not get a sensible dialogue or Aboriginal people feeling they are a valuable part of this conversation. I still find what Hon Peter Collier said today amusing. He said, "We will speak to them before we close them." Maybe it was a Freudian slip, but he was reported as saying that local government consultations had not yet started but that he had assured the sector they will be involved in the implementation. I mean—duh! When they are being closed down, the communities will be involved. This is not the way to go about public policy. There will not be any savings to government; it will not save one cent, by the way.

I will conclude, as I do not want to go on forever. I want to hear some members of the government, particularly the Leader of the National Party, who went and met the federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion—hopefully it was a fruitful conversation. I will conclude with a couple of quotes. As members know, I like to hold the Premier to statements that he made when he was on this side of the house. It is a fairly standard operating procedure for oppositions. We try to hold the government to the standards it demanded when its members sat on this side of the house. It is always interesting when members make the move from the opposition benches to government benches. I have never moved from here to there; I have only moved from government to opposition. I have never made that move, but it has been very interesting to watch. I have been very critical of the Premier in a number of different spaces. I read the Premier's contribution to debate on the Reserves (Reserve 43131) Bill 2003. This debate related to the closure of the Swan Valley Nyungah Community Aboriginal Corporation camp and debate during consideration in detail was a reasonably heated discussion. I will quote a couple of points made by Mr Barnett, who was then the Leader of the Opposition. On 3 June 2003, referring to the people at the Nyungah camp, Mr Barnett stated —

To move them out and scatter them around the metropolitan area may place those children at even greater risk and in more danger than they are now. That is the sort of legitimate question that members of this Parliament can ask. Has it been decided to close the site immediately or to move the people out gradually? The professionals, the law enforcement agencies and the members, the supporters and the people who have associated with and have a knowledge of the community—both past and present—all have the common message: The kids are at risk and they have been abused, which is totally unacceptable, but it does not allow for a simplistic solution. We are dealing with 35 or 50 people in this camp and the best way of assisting them might be to leave them where they are.

Mr Barnett went on to say —

They might have been abused—probably the majority of them have been—but the camp might be the one piece of stability left in their lives —

This is the Premier, colleagues. Later in that debate he went on to make another point, and I have not raised this point in my public commentary, except in response to the use by the Premier of the gonorrhoea statistics for Aboriginal people. I got those statistics in order to make a comparison. I will continue to quote *Hansard* of 2003 in which the Premier said —

The people in that community happen to be Aboriginal; they have dark skins. They will have lost their rights. The application of this is racially based. There are many other examples of abuse of children, often within the one family. If, for example, the Premier were made aware of a case in which a white father was abusing, say, his daughter, would he confiscate the property? —

Or in this case, close the community —

No. The Premier should not shake his head.

Mr Barnett went on to say —

As horrendous as the abuse of and the crimes against children are—there is no dispute about that —

No-one disputes that and that is why it is always a difficult point on which to challenge a rampaging Premier who throws those statistics around incorrectly. Mr Barnett also stated —

In this case legislation against an Aboriginal community is to be put in place that has not been put in place against other individuals, institutions or organisations, when again there have been examples of abuse of children.

...

My point is simply that this action against the abuse of children has one thing that distinguishes it from any other action against the abuse of children, and that is a racial connotation, because it happens to be an Aboriginal community.

He went on to talk about the commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act. I say to the Premier, who I am very disappointed to say has not been in the chamber at all —

**Dr K.D. Hames:** He was.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** No. He came in here, tried to interject, I did not want to take that interjection, and he stormed out in high dudgeon. That was the involvement of the Premier during this debate, for the record. That was what the Premier said in 2003.

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister for Health, that does not invite you to interject.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The Premier stood over there and made comments about gonorrhoea and Aboriginal people. He is continually moving the goalposts upon which communities are deemed by him to have failed. What is the standard? It is now time to provide some clarity, because we are seeing this issue in the media. I am getting calls from people asking me, “Warralong’s had its water cut off. Is the government moving in?” I have to say, “No, I don’t know.” Communities are moving around. They are angry. They are fearful. They do not know what their future is. The government has to give people some certainty. All government members know that. I accept that the government has to cajole the federal government, although the Premier not uttering a word to the minister the other week was extraordinary. He has to get the federal government to re-engage and extend the time frame by a couple of years to allow a more sensible discussion and debate to occur. Clarify the basis for the government’s decision. What is the basis of the decision? We have a federal government report, we have a couple of different arguments run by the Premier and we have heard Peter Collier refer today to literacy, despite the fact that the federal government has invested significantly in literacy in remote communities. What is it? How do these communities convince the Premier that they are worthy of investment? Outline the baseline data that the government has collected to justify the statement that these communities have failed.

The government will have to prove that once services to communities have been withdrawn or the communities have been closed—whichever way the government defines it—the people in those communities will thrive better than they are currently. If the government is going to do this, how will it prove it has been a success? The government did not do it with Oombulgurri, by the way. I asked a question in the house. Zip! The government just closed it. No baseline data was taken. The government needs to outline the government support that will be provided to those people currently living in remote communities to ensure that the closures will result in better social outcomes.

I was listening to Fred Chaney being interviewed last night on ABC Radio National. He made the point that the government is saying that it will all happen next year and that the government is saying that it is okay because we have a year. He said that without huge investment—huge investment—in housing, schools, health facilities, programs and services, the closures will create a worse outcome. This is a guy who has been around a while. I think he knows what he is talking about. I remind members again that the initial argument of the Premier was his need for some budget savings.

Colleagues, no-one who talks about the outrageous conditions of remote communities is saying that they are middle class Perth. No-one is saying that we cannot do better. However, we cannot say, “We’re closing you, there are too many STIs and you are too expensive”, without some explanation and without speaking to Aboriginal people.

I conclude with this comment. When the Aboriginal people in the Kimberley through the Kimberley Land Council signed on to the Browse Basin gas deal, the Premier said —

“In my view, it’s the most significant act of self-determination by Aboriginal people in Australian history, ...

That is what the Premier said. Self-determination, colleagues, involves a two-way dialogue. Self-determination cannot just be on the Premier’s terms. Self-determination, as the Premier is apparently committed to, involves a respectful conversation with Aboriginal people. That has not happened. I implore all members, particularly the Leader of the National Party, because I see him as the one opportunity here, to reset this dialogue with the remote communities of Western Australia and to participate in a much more respectful conversation than has taken place today.

**DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Minister for Health)** [4.45 pm]: I thank the member for Victoria Park for those comments. He made some critically important points in his speech. One is that there is fear out there in the community. Sadly, that view that people have formed—for whatever reason they have formed it—is wrong. Secondly, there is great fear. I was talking recently to an Aboriginal person from Geraldton about comments in the community that he has heard. It is terribly sad to see elderly women from remote communities crying and asking, “Are we one of the communities that are going to be closed down?” Similarly, member for Victoria Park, I heard people from Yandeyarra earlier at the rally outside Parliament House saying, “Are we going to be closed down?” I say to the member for Victoria Park now that no communities are going to be closed down as a result of the change in federal funding. I will say that again. Even in the light of what Minister Collier said, no Aboriginal community in this state will be closed down as a result of the reduction in funding from the commonwealth government. I want to make that very clear. The trick is getting that message out that the member for Victoria Park says we have to get out to those communities, because the people in the communities that we as a state government have been funding for years and years are scared that they will close down. The communities at Yandeyarra and Jigalong where we put in swimming pools are scared that they might be one of the communities closed down. That is not the case. When we talk about small communities, remember that a couple of communities in the Kimberley comprise two people. There is one person in Bygnunn—I do not know how to pronounce that; two people in Carnot Springs near Broome; and two people in Djulburr in Broome. There are communities such as those that, although they will not be closed down, it is true that their funding will be cut. Why will their funding be cut? I will go back through the history of the time when I was Minister for Indigenous Affairs. We had a so-called list of 48.

**Mr D.J. Kelly** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** I am not accepting interjections.

**Mr D.J. Kelly** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! I ensured that the member for Victoria Park could speak in relative silence. I would like that for the Minister for Health.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members! Direct your comments to me, Minister for Health.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Yes, and I hope that members opposite will do the same.

There are communities of only two or three people. I will give some of the statistics. Members keep talking about 270-plus communities, but a lot of them are only seasonal communities. There are 205 permanent Aboriginal communities in this state. Of those, 143 have 30 or fewer people; 113 have 25 or fewer; 63 have 10 or fewer; 28 have five or fewer; and 62 have 31 or more. Relevant to those statistics is the fact that we had a list of 48 communities that the state government agreed with the commonwealth to support. We changed that when I was the minister. We reached a memorandum of understanding with the government of the day that we as a state government would take on responsibility for more and more of those communities. In fact, it was the member for Victoria Park's father who negotiated that deal with the commonwealth. We agreed that we would take over responsibility for those communities, provided that the federal government, which was responsible for them, upgraded its services and put in decent power, sewerage and so on and so forth. Then we as a state government agreed to take on the ongoing management. When I came back into government, after the Labor Party had been in government for seven years, that list had gone up to just over 100 communities. The figure was established for remote communities with a permanent population of 50 or greater that had a health system, an education system, power, water, sewerage and so on. In between that time and in the time of this government as well, the state government has taken over the management of some communities that have fewer than 50 people—some even with 25 people. That is because some of those communities are extremely good communities and they got away from the humbug of the town. I remember presenting a Tidy Towns award just outside Fitzroy. It was a fantastic little community of people. They had painted all the rocks and had amazing flowers in a garden. We gave them a Tidy Towns award because they wanted to get away from the alcohol problem in Fitzroy.

The federal government was responsible for these very small communities and had what it called the homeland policy. I think that was under Bob Hawke, but I am not sure. Under that policy, the government encouraged people to go from whatever town they lived in and back to country, and the government supplied housing and support services to enable them to do that. We said to the federal government at the time, "We think that is the wrong thing to do, because the bigger communities are the ones that can provide the health and education and have the potential to provide jobs for the kids; so don't come back to us in the future for money to fund those communities." What happened just recently? The federal government said that it will not fund those communities anymore.

Members opposite have talked about how there was a long period of negotiation. I am sure they remember that it was not this government that the commonwealth government was negotiating with. The previous commonwealth government—the Rudd government—had made the decision that it would fund local government to provide all those municipal services. There was a close-off date. However, that date was extended by a year and then by another year, because the federal government could not reach agreement with the local governments. I remember that the council of the City of Broome said to the federal government at the time, "How the hell are we going to do this? We have got 50 or 60 Aboriginal communities. How on earth, with the funding that you are giving us, which is nowhere near enough, are we going to do that?" That was the negotiations. Then suddenly, lo and behold, the new federal government came along—I am strongly critical of it for doing this—and said, "We're not doing this anymore. We're out of here. Here's 90 million bucks for one year. Take it or leave it." The member for Victoria Park read out a letter that said that it had been negotiated with the government. I was not involved, I have to say, but my understanding is that that is a load of rubbish.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** It was, "Take it or leave it. We're not doing this anymore. You can either have nothing, or we'll give you 90 million bucks." So, we said, "Bloody hell, we'll take the \$90 million, but you're totally wrong in doing this." I have said that over and over again, and I have said that publicly a number of times. We are now left holding the baby and will have to work out how we will manage all these communities. Some of these communities are far too small to support the provision of education and health services and create job opportunities. How are we going to do that? That is the huge difficulty that we face. We are not going to go out to those communities and say they are going to be closed. We are going to say, in a negotiated way, that we will not be able to continue their funding, because as a state we do not have the money to fund those smaller communities.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** So it is all about funding?

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** It is largely about funding, but it is also about providing opportunities.

Several members interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Members should talk to my former policy officer, Neville Collard. I am sure members remember him. He was living in the south west, outside the town, on a native reserve, in squalor, with beds in the dirt. It is much better than that now, but, in his day, that is what it was like. They closed down that community and forced them to come to the town. He said that was the saving of him; that was the making of him. All his family felt the same way. His brother did the Welcome to Country at the function here at

Parliament House last night. They got to know the white kids and worked with them. He became a police officer. It provided him with great opportunities. However, that is not always the case. A great example is Billard, just outside of—help me, member for Kimberley—Beagle Bay.

Several members interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** She did not help me!

**Ms J. Farrer:** I can't read your mind!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** That is where it is. They had some suicides there, as I remember, about three or four years ago. They moved out there to get away from some of the humbug in town.

**Ms J. Farrer:** Billard.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Yes; that is what I said. Some of those communities are like that. I am pretty sure those communities are the ones that are getting state government support. I know that Billard is getting state government support. However, we cannot go down to a community of three, four or five people. Members heard what I said. There are 28 communities that have only five people, or even fewer—only one or two. The state government cannot continue to support those communities. Those people have houses and they have somewhere to stay. If they want to stay in those communities, they are perfectly welcome to stay there. But they will no longer be able to do that with state government support. In some ways, it is like pensioners who decide to live in a caravan somewhere. They provide their own power and their own water. They still get commonwealth benefits, and they continue to live in those communities. A lot of pensioners live in a farmhouse and provide their own power and water and other services. That is what will happen to those communities, unless they want to move.

The member for Victoria Park talked about the Minister for Regional Development. That will be his job. His job will be to talk to those communities and see what they want to do. If they want to move, either to a town base or to the nearest regional Aboriginal community, they will need a lot of support. They will need a house and they will need assistance in moving across. That is where we have to look at the funding that might be available through royalties for regions to try to create opportunities for those people who want to move. So, please help us, member for Kimberley. I know that it is to her political advantage to have all those Aboriginal communities think that this government is a load of rubbish. But this is too important an issue for those people. So, please help us to tell the people in those communities that they will not be closed down. They will be supported if they want to move to somewhere where they can get health services and where their kids can get an education and the opportunity to get a job.

The comments that have been made, I think, have distorted the picture of what is happening. Members opposite have significantly assisted in creating that impression.

Several members interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** They have.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman):** Minister for Health, you have the floor, but if you invite interjections —

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Blame me, Madam Acting Speaker! I can wear the blame.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Deputy Speaker, you have the floor. Sorry; Deputy Premier.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Thank you! I have been promoted!

The reality is that we have a job of work to do. The critical importance of that job is to stop people in Aboriginal communities from being frightened, particularly those communities that were never in the group that would ever be considered for their funding to be taken away. For a huge number of communities, there is no chance that their funding will be taken away. We already provide funding to those communities for local government services. The Western Australian taxpayers pay for that. The \$90 million that has been taken away was used to fund all the little communities. I ask members opposite to please not go out to the big communities and say that the state government is going to take away their funding, because that is just not true.

A member of the media—who was in the press gallery earlier, but is not now—asked me out at the front of Parliament why we are closing communities, and I said, “Why are you saying that? You know it's not true, because I've told you personally it's not true, the minister has told them personally it's not true, and we have never, ever stated that it is true.” I reiterate that we are not closing Aboriginal communities as part of this program. We are not doing that. We will be working with those communities that are too small to be viable in their own right, and if they want to move to where their kids can get a better education and get a job, we will help them to do that. That is not to say, member for Victoria Park, that I think big is better. I know of many smaller communities that are actually the best communities in which to live, including the one that I spoke of earlier that is just outside Fitzroy—I wish I could remember its name—in which there is no alcohol and there is

a great community of family groups working and living together in peace and harmony. That is the sort of place that we definitely want to be promoting, even if the education opportunities are not great. I can tell members that in Balgo, the education opportunities are not great either, and there are issues in the town, as the member knows, particularly with ganja and alcohol, that are severely disrupting the community. There are also different skin groups. I think in Balgo there are three or four different skin groups, and there is often conflict between those groups. So that is not necessarily the best place for a child to be.

We need to talk with the people and work out where families want to go. We can see whether they want to go to town, perhaps, and help find accommodation within the town. If they stay where they are, some might be able, depending on the size of the community, to have state funds continued to give them support if that community can prove it has opportunities for the future for its kids in that location. I suspect that some of the little communities with two, three, four or five people were told, “Sorry, guys. Keep the house, enjoy staying there, but from now on you need to look after yourselves if you don’t want to go somewhere else where the government can support you.”

I hope I have made the government’s position clear and I look forward to the comments of the Leader of the National Party and the Minister for Regional Development because I know that he shares the same views that I have. Hopefully, we can get out into those communities and have that dialogue the member is talking about. I accept the member’s statement that that dialogue has been significantly lacking. I accept the member’s dialogue that people out there are scared, and I accept that our government has a very serious responsibility to get out and do something about it.

**MS J. FARRER (Kimberley)** [5.01 pm]: I would also like to contribute to this motion about the closure of communities. I stand here as the member for Kimberley and most importantly as an Aboriginal woman—a Gidja leader strong in my culture. There is a lot of confusion about this issue. I was home on the weekend and people asked me all sorts of questions. Because I am in Parliament, they tend to think that we all know what the government has planned for the closure of communities. There are a lot of angry people out there. The federal government states that it provided four years’ worth of funding in the one-off payment to the state, which is the \$90 million that the minister talked about. However, this government stated last year that it would start closing communities over the next two years. Did that two-year time frame start when this government made the announcement in November 2014? We really need answers to these questions, and when I say “we”, I am talking about the whole of the Kimberley community. People need to plan their lives and know where they are going to live. There are problems with some families who have started moving; they have moved to the Northern Territory and they have kids going to school somewhere else. They have been told that they cannot get any more funding for their kids because they have moved from one state to another. These issues need to be addressed.

The state government has still not commenced any meaningful consultation with Aboriginal people. Does the Premier intend to travel to the Kimberley this year to discuss this issue? The people would like to know whether he is going to go up there and sit down and talk to them. On 19 March, the Premier stated that he did not want to meet Aboriginal leaders and community members to have such discussions. I believe that as a Parliament, all members should be working towards this; after all, we are the people from this country. We all need to know where our destination lies. When will that happen? What does that consultation process look like? The minister talked about some of these families wanting to move off communities. A lot of these people do not want to move off communities; they want to stay there because it is part of their traditional country. All they want is the best for their children. People such as the minister, the Leader of the National Party, the Leader of the Labor Party, the Premier and all the other members need to sit down and talk to these people or talk to some of their leaders. A lot of these people do not know what discussions take place and what goes on here in Parliament. This government has caused widespread anger, particularly for people currently living in remote communities and regional areas. We just heard that the Minister for Child Protection will be travelling to the Dampier Peninsula on 10 April. Does Irene know about that? Irene is a long-time friend of the minister’s and I spoke to her and she does not know what is going on. What is the agenda for that meeting? What will the meeting structure look like? Have the right bodies for these communities been contacted and made aware of this meeting? Irene is one leader of the community on the peninsula; she sits on the Aboriginal Lands Trust board and she is not aware of what is going to happen with her community. She needs to know. Living in communities helps us to fulfil our cultural obligations of looking after land, plants and animals and passing on traditional cultural practices to our future generations because that is the only education that our kids will understand. The comments from both Tony Abbott and Colin Barnett show the extreme ignorance of the Liberal government towards the importance of maintaining and strengthening Aboriginal culture, heritage practices, and responsibilities.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Peter Abetz)**: Members, can we have a bit of silence, please.

**Ms J. FARRER**: Last week in this chamber, the Premier made accusations that 39 children in the Kimberley between the ages of 10 to 14 years had sexually transmitted infections. How many charges have been laid in relation to these allegations of child sexual abuse in the Kimberley?

A 2010 internal government document from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs categorised 192 communities as unsustainable. Of course they are unsustainable! The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has the principle that if a person wants to advance or do something with their land, they must have authorisation from the minister. Who holds that portfolio? The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs does. None of the people out there—I know because I am one of them—have that support. That should be part of the consultation process. Still today the non-Indigenous Minister for Aboriginal Affairs claims that the government has no assessment framework to determine which communities will be closed. That is all untrue! When will this government provide me with honest information so that I can take it back to my people up in the Kimberley? I am not going to sit by and let the Premier or the minister make wild accusations against Aboriginal people.

Let us have a conversation about how we can make communities thrive and be viable. We need to be open and transparent. There should be transparent communication between the government and community members. After all, we are people. Why is that so difficult for this government to do? I hope that every member is listening to what I am saying because this is important for our people in the Kimberley. The Liberal government's policies and practices continue to reduce the traditional rights, access to land and security of title that are essential to enable Aboriginal Australians to fully exercise their economic, social and cultural rights. We have been sitting in the back for years because we have not been able to do a lot about those issues. WA Labor believes in the advancement, maintenance, protection, respect and recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage. WA Labor believes that it is important that all Australians recognise the contribution of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal culture to the Australian way of life. I know that there are a lot of people in this chamber, whether they are from the Liberal Party or the Labor Party, who know what I am talking about. I know that some members are sympathetic to what is happening, but Aboriginal people need to hear these members' voices. We need to know that this Parliament is here to support us in our fight. We need to know what we can do with the support and consultation of all parties concerned in Parliament. We all need to put our heads together to talk about how we can overcome this. I think that is the best thing that this Parliament can do. Thank you.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood — Leader of the National Party)** [5.09 pm]: I thank the member for Victoria Park for bringing on this debate. It is a really important issue. I thank also the member for Kimberley for her contribution. I want to pick up a number of issues first and set the scene for discussion that is more appropriate to remote communities than some of the accusations that have been made and some of the issues that have come to the fore. This comes on the back of the point made by the member for Victoria Park about investment and government support. I think he floated the figure of something like \$20 billion that the government is getting in royalties, yet it has not dealt with this issue—or chooses not to deal with this issue. I want to talk about the investment that this government has made into the Aboriginal communities. It is substantial, particularly in regional areas and particularly through royalties for regions. Some \$350 million worth of projects directly benefit Aboriginal people or directly include Aboriginal economic development outcomes. This is significant investment. The sum of \$10 million has been invested in Aboriginal community critical response areas. An issue that the member for Victoria Park has been raising is that of governance and leadership programs, and \$2.3 million has been invested in this area to support the building of governance outcomes in Aboriginal communities so that they can deliver better outcomes for themselves. Remote Indigenous health clinics have benefited from \$22.2 million worth of investment. I actually opened two of those—one in Mulan and one in Billiluna.

**Ms J. Farrer:** I was there.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** That is right; the member for Kimberley was there. They are fantastic clinics, and another example of significant investment into those communities where it is needed. They were not the only two, as the member well knows; there were another three. Again, this was royalties for regions investment that demonstrates this government's support of key issues that occur in those areas, giving the most isolated parts of Western Australia a chance to achieve better health outcomes than they would have had before. There has been an investment of \$1.6 million for the Edge of Nowhere Thriving Communities project, which was about securing access to fresh food and education to improve health and prevent lifestyle-related chronic illnesses in remote communities in the Kimberley. There has been \$15.9 million for the north west drug and alcohol program for the Kimberley and Pilbara because of the increased demands and challenges. This is another significant investment. The Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council, supporting Aboriginal tourism, has been supported by royalties for regions investment. There has been \$13 million for Indigenous visitor hostels in Kalgoorlie and Derby. I know that the member for Kimberley has a lot of passion about supporting a similar project in Broome. I have spoken to her about that, and it has my support; it is really important. The government has a record of significant investments in hostel accommodation. As I understand, although I have not seen it yet, the Derby project is outstanding and working particularly well. Kimberley Aboriginal community housing has benefited to the tune of \$15 million, and \$220 million has been invested in the Ord–East Kimberley project. I see two members nodding their heads, because I know that they have commented that they thought it was a waste of money. I know that when Kimberley Agricultural Investment was clearing the land for the Ord irrigation

expansion, about six or seven of the bulldozer drivers in the clearing project were Aboriginal people who got training out of the Ord project, having been directly involved in the job.

Several members interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** The previous Acting Speaker was very strict in stopping our side from interjecting, and I ask for you to do the same, Mr Acting Speaker.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** Yes, I have just called on the member for Warnbro to desist, and I would insist on that.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** We have made substantial investment. Some of that has been in direct support of Aboriginal communities and Indigenous-related matters, and some has been less direct. An example of that is the Ord–East Kimberley project and also the Water for Food project that the Minister for Water is rolling out through the Mowanjum community. These are examples of the government engaging in the economic development opportunities that some of those regions present, particularly the Kimberley. Again I highlight that there is —

**Mr M.P. Murray** interjected.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Let me finish.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Collie–Preston, I call on you to desist. I called on all members to desist. The member has made it very clear that he is not willing to take interjections. I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** We have fundamentally rebuilt Fitzroy Crossing. If we look at the projects that have happened in Fitzroy Crossing, compared with what it used to be, we can see that it has been fundamentally rebuilt in this term of government. We have seen investments into better health for Fitzroy kids through the Western Australian Country Health Service, the courthouse replacement, the Fitzroy Crossing footpaths, streets and amenities—a whole range of things that have fundamentally changed the face of Fitzroy Crossing, in comparison with what it was five or six years ago. There have also been investments into Halls Creek, and support for the Warmun community after the flood. We had to relocate a whole community to deal with it, and that was challenging. I am making this point because the member for Victoria Park, who has put this motion up, made the point that something like \$20 billion has come in in royalties, and what is the government doing about it? I am making the point that it is not being dismissed; there are significant investments; we are listening to the issues up there; and we are trying to address a whole range of challenges.

I think the member for Kimberley highlighted the importance of investment, and the importance of taking a bipartisan approach. I mentioned to the Minister for Health a few years ago when he was Aboriginal affairs minister that it would be good to have two Aboriginal affairs ministers in Western Australia—a Liberal one and a Labor one—who would come together, sit outside of the cabinet and set a plan for moving forward, so that they correctly take the politics out of the challenge. Unfortunately, that is not something that can come to pass.

I do not want to harp on this, but I want to make the point because part of the argument that the member for Victoria Park made went to the heart of the credibility of this government and the investments that we have been making. I want to go back to 27 March 2006, and an article in *The West Australian*. Members will remember when Steve Pennells, as a correspondent—the member for Kimberley will be aware of this—exposed all the challenges in Halls Creek. I want to read some quotes from that article. One was from Hon Tom Stephens, who was an upper house member at the time. The article states —

MLC Tom Stephens said his government had been aware of the high incidence of abuse in the Kimberley but suffered from policy paralysis.

The government suffered from policy paralysis in 2006. Mr Stephens went on to say —

“At no point in our history have we ever been in a situation of being so morally culpable as a government”

The article also states —

Labor MLA Carol Martin described the rate of sexually transmitted diseases in Kimberley children as another form of genocide.

It was hugely challenging to all of us. Another comment made by Carol Martin was that it was clear that the government had failed the Kimberley people. At the time, the Western Australian government was also swimming in budget surpluses. I make the point back to the member for Victoria Park. With all the royalties coming in—I just laid out a number of investments this government has made, including through royalties for

regions—at that time significant investments could have been made, and one community significantly broke down. A follow-up story on 2 December 2006 reads —

The stories forced government ministers and senior department chiefs to fly into the town for a series of crisis meetings and the revelations prompted an outcry from backbenchers and former health bureaucrats who admitted they knew of the problem but had been hampered by “policy paralysis” over the political powder keg of Aboriginal health and child sex abuse.

I think things have substantially improved since then, but I want to make the point that the opposition can hardly stand on the high moral ground with that history. I think the government has made significant investments, but as the member for Kimberley and the member for Victoria Park both rightly pointed out, we always need to do better.

I now come to the remote Aboriginal communities, and I think this point is really important. A subcommittee of cabinet was formed in this current term of government. When we took office after the 2013 election, the Premier asked this group what were some of the things that we should be doing in this term of government. Brendon Grylls at that time said that we should set up a subcommittee of cabinet focused on Indigenous issues and Aboriginal communities. That is actually what happened when we first came to government. That has been progressing on the challenges and the issues that we have laid out. I want to make a couple of comments to back up the Minister for Health’s comments. There will be no sudden changes in this space at all. This issue will be worked through very carefully in strong consultation with Aboriginal leaders, and that has started; it is only the start. I have been to a couple of meetings in Broome. The Department of Regional Development has had a number of meetings across the Kimberley in particular. I have had a chance to go to Canberra to meet with the federal minister, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Alan Tudge, who is involved in the federal government’s responses to these communities, Warren Truss and Ken Wyatt, the member for Hasluck, to talk about a range of issues. Consultation is really important.

I make the point as the Leader of the National Party that I, with my party colleagues, will support change only if we have a viable plan that significantly improves the outcomes for residents of remote Aboriginal communities and town-based reserves that has the support of Aboriginal leaders. That is fundamental. It is important that when we make future investments, they are conditional on access to services, better education outcomes and better employment opportunities. The consistent position—it has been through successive governments—is that relative to Western Australians overall, relative to Aboriginal people across Western Australia and relative to Aboriginal people who reside in regional towns, Aboriginal residents in remote communities are less likely to have a year 12 qualification, they are less likely to have a post-secondary qualification, they are less likely to have a job, they are far more likely to have personal income of less than \$400 a week, they are far more likely to live in a house with seven or more people, they are far more likely to live in an overcrowded house and they are far less likely to own their own home. That to me is absolutely unacceptable.

One of the things that I found really encouraging during my short time engaging with the Broome community, the Yaru people, the Kimberley Land Council, an alliance of land councils and some other individuals who play leadership roles in some of the other communities, was that all of them—this is the feedback I have had from regional government that is engaged in different areas—said that the current position is unacceptable. I agree that the current status of remote Aboriginal communities and town-based reserves is unacceptable. If we accept that, we need to look for an opportunity for change. The other thing that was said—I use their words, not mine—is that there is a preparedness to share the risk in the opportunities that might present in moving forward. I repeat: what is there now is unacceptable and there is a preparedness to share some risk to be able to move the issue forward. I thought there was a sense of courageousness in the people I spoke to; they are quite aggressive about going down a pathway that improves those outcomes. I do not think any of us on this side of the house or on the other side of the house over the last number of decades can stand on high ground as far as some of these outcomes are concerned. We need to work very carefully and collectively to try to find a way to move forward. I think there is an alignment out there now. I know that the members for Victoria Park and Kimberley might have been disappointed with how I opened my commentary. The member for Victoria Park, in particular, and also the member for Kimberley have the capacity to show leadership on this issue.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Well, they have and do. I am also talking about a lot of significant leaders across these communities—people such as Fred Chaney and Fiona Stanley. All these people make comments about these issues. We have an alignment now that has not been there before. There is a preparedness to look at things such as welfare reform and strategies for change where we have failed in the past. Let us face it, the history in this area is not good. I think there is an alignment there now. Ian Trust is another leader. He is committed to looking at new opportunities, welfare reform and the like—things that are now in the political or the public debate about these sorts of issues that give us a chance to move forward.

I want to make the statement again that I will support change only if we have a viable plan that significantly improves the outcome for people in these communities and that has the support of Aboriginal leaders. We will not be able to progress anything that improves outcomes unless we have the support of those Aboriginal leaders within those communities. I also say that in my view it is not about money. If we talk about the \$30 million that the federal government withdrew, in the scheme of how much money gets invested just in remote Aboriginal communities and town-based reserves, it is a pittance. This is not about money; it is about getting better outcomes. It is also not about the forced closure of communities. I am pleased that the member for Victoria Park is back in the chamber. I know he might have been disappointed with my opening comments. I think it is really important that he hears my view about how we can try to take this issue forward. It is not about money and the forced closure of communities; it is about getting better outcomes. In being brave enough to tackle the strategy of moving forward, a lot of leaders in those Aboriginal communities, including the member for Victoria Park, have a greater preparedness than we had before to get some planning right and get those better outcomes. It is about choice and opportunity. If I have anything to do with it, I want to see a clearly articulated plan that has the support of Aboriginal leaders and that allows people to pursue opportunities and make choices. The only way forward will be with a plan. It will not happen without the support of Aboriginal leaders. I am starting a role myself, and my agency will be engaged at a level at which I hope we can come up with a plan and support a plan from a whole of state government level that can make a difference.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I have committed to use royalties for regions funds to support a better outcome. I will not support royalties for regions funds being used to simply backfill what was pulled out, which holds the status quo. The feedback from the people I have spoken to so far are saying that the status quo is unacceptable. If we start from the premise of the status quo being unacceptable, we know we need to make investments to make a difference. I put on the table, obviously through our government processes, that royalties for regions funds will support and improve the outcomes but will not be used to backfill what the federal government has withdrawn. There are some risks in trying to take this forward. There is a risk that the discussion may be hijacked by misinformation —

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Let me make the point that I think there is a risk that a level of public commentary, misinformation and misunderstanding could lead to the issue being hijacked. What happens when that happens? We go back to the status quo and we finish up with what we had before, which, from my small bit of engagement with and small amount of time that I have spent talking to Aboriginal people, they have said is unacceptable.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** Do you think the Premier's commentary on this has been unhelpful?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The Premier will be accountable for his commentary and I will be accountable for mine. I am the Leader of the National Party in an alliance government. I will be accountable.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** Members, we do not want unnecessary interjections. The person who has the call made it very clear that he was not entertaining your interjection, member for Kwinana, so please desist.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I will be accountable for my comments—absolutely. I think there is a risk when there is a lot of goodwill out there now from Aboriginal leaders, broader leaders in the community and also leaders at a national level. I am trying to engage with some of those. I have already done so to try to support —

**Mr R.H. Cook:** Have you engaged with the Premier?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Of course I am talking to people around the subcommittee table. I am on the cabinet subcommittee.

I make the point that we should proceed with some caution, because I do not want a community of 400 people, which in my view does not have the opportunities and which does not have the chance of having the opportunities as the broader community, in 10 years' time becoming a community of 800 facing the same issues. I do not want that to happen. I want us to look at issues of mobility. One of the things that has been fed back is that some generation Y, the younger people, have the scope, capacity and the support to be mobile. Some of the commentary coming out of northern Queensland, which Noel Pearson has been pushing, is about something called "orbiting", whereby young people go out and engage in the economy and then come back to the community and their homeland. There are strategies available out there, and I am told via the feedback I have received that because of the nature of the young people out there we can put up opportunities and make changes that will, hopefully, make a difference.

I have also been asked what if the outcome is worse than what we have now. Again, that is a do-nothing approach; I do not accept that. I do not accept a do-nothing approach, because if we are afraid of the outcome of this situation being worse than it is now, we will never embark on a path of change that improves the outcomes for people. There is risk in this. In the past, everyone who has tried a better pathway has faced risk. It is challenging. It was fantastic to hear a preparedness to share that risk, certainly among the people I have spoken to. There are a few little things coming out. I am cautious about talking about my views, and I will tell members why: it would do injustice to a level of consultative engagement. If I talk to people and try to ground-truth it, that is the view I want to take. If I put out my view of the world, it is not ground-truthed or calibrated against people who live in those communities and Aboriginal leaders. One of the things that came out from one of the Aboriginal people that the Department of Regional Development spoke to—it might not be the view of others—was that there are 70 temporary seasonal remote communities; that is, they are going out there and coming back. That is the number that I have been given. I was told that if we sort out the tenure issue—this is the point that the member for Kimberley made—and we come up with an answer to tenure and ownership, all government services can be taken away and they will deal with it. I do not know whether that position is shared by other people or whether the people who are part of those seasonal communities have a view on that position. However, straightaway we have something that gives me the potential to sink my teeth into. If that view is supported, 70 of the 272 seasonal communities may be able to sort out a tenure issue and the government can pull away. I do not know whether that is the right outcome, but I am saying that we are engaged in a process to ground truth those views. That did not come from me; it came from some of the people we have spoken to so far. I worry that the opportunity will get hijacked. I do not want to see the communities become twice as big as they are now with the same issues. It is not acceptable to do nothing. It is not acceptable to fear an outcome that will be worse than it is now.

I want to make a couple of closing comments before I finish. The first relates to the Kimberley. I know that Aboriginal and remote communities go into the Pilbara, the goldfields and the lands, but something that has come through in the development of the Kimberley blueprint is that unless we address the issue of engagement in the economy of the Kimberley this issue will be a showstopper to the economic development of the Kimberley region. If the projections work out and we take the Water for Food project to its natural end, we have full-blown engagement in the Ord and the Kimberley, further development of the Fitzroy Valley with agricultural opportunities on some pastoral leases that are Aboriginal owned and some that are not, a workforce will be needed. If we do not sort out these issues, it will be a showstopper to the economic development of the Kimberley. That in itself is a driver, amongst the other issues of trying to seek some better outcomes. I restate for the third time that, as the Leader of the National Party and someone who is playing a role in this and is playing a senior role in government, I will support change only if a viable plan significantly improves the outcomes for remote Aboriginal communities and town-based reserves, and only if it has the support of the leaders of the Aboriginal community.

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale)** [5.35 pm]: It was interesting to listen to the contribution of the Leader of the National Party. I believe his speech improved as he continued, and if he had had his time again I think he might not have started the way he did.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Let us move on.

The Leader of the National Party mentioned that the history of Indigenous affairs for all political parties in this state has not been good, and there is much truth to that. However, the problem is that we are in danger of repeating that sordid history—a history in which the state has controlled Indigenous people and where they should live. We have a history of taking complete control over Indigenous people because we think we know better.

The Leader of the National Party also mentioned the statistics on children who live in Indigenous communities, and their education and employment opportunities et cetera. There is no doubt that is true, but it is also true in other communities. The Leader of the National Party would be aware of the imbalance between the city and the country in employment and educational opportunities—full stop. One could argue that part of the impetus for royalties for regions was to try to fix that imbalance. We did not seek to close down those communities or remove people from those towns; we tried to fix the issue. That is what we should be doing in this case. Yes, this issue was brought about by the federal government, but what was the instant reaction of the Premier? It was to close down the communities. Rather than trying to work out the problem, or speaking to the Indigenous people and their communities about how to work around this situation, what did the Premier say last year? He said the government is going to close down the communities. Last year, he said that he was closing the communities because the federal government was pulling out its funding. As far as I was aware, that was still the position until last week.

On Thursday, the Premier brought in the issue of sexually transmitted diseases. That was a disgraceful performance by the Premier. It is interesting that neither the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party nor the Leader of the National Party supported the comments of the Premier, in which he sought to denigrate Indigenous

people last Thursday. The member for Victoria Park, in his questions to the Premier, has put very well the misleading statements of the Premier. The Premier today said that he inadvertently forgot to mention it was the Kimberley. The Premier is a smart man and is one of the best political operators in this state. He did not inadvertently forget to mention the Kimberley. I know that the Leader of the National Party would never stoop to that level, and I hope that the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party would never stoop to that level.

As I said, communities in the regions, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, have for many years been at a disadvantage compared to the city. To its credit, the National Party—we would say in certain instances to the credit of the Labor Party—would go in and try to fix it; it would not go into a community and try to close it and tell them to move on. Farmers have a particular relationship with their farm and with their land. In some instances it might be spiritual; it is definitely economic. Farmers have a very close economic and often intergenerational relationship with their land. What do members think it is for Aboriginal people? Their connection to the land is everything. The member for Kimberley will tell members about the significance of land to Indigenous people. The land is their religion, their spirituality, their history and their culture. Even more so, it is legally recognised under our system of common law. The Mabo decision was all about the connection Indigenous people have to their land. It was not about land rights. Land rights are about governments instigating legislation to award rights to land. Native title, as recognised under the Mabo decision, was recognition that Indigenous people had rights to property before white men came to this land. To retain that right, Indigenous people have to retain their connection to the land. If we remove Indigenous people from their land, they are vulnerable to losing their native title rights. People do not have to always maintain a physical connection to the land, but there has to be a connection to the land. If the government forcibly removes Indigenous people from their land, they run the danger of losing their right to native title. That was the problem for the stolen generations. This is possibly history repeating, members of the National Party. The stolen generations were forcibly removed from their lands and their families, because we thought it would be better for them. Of course, history has shown us that it was not better for them. Yes, there is the odd exception of people who did very well—but at what price? Indigenous people should not have to be removed from their families to receive an education. Many Indigenous people go to boarding and private schools—schools in Melbourne et cetera—but that is done in consultation with families; it is not forced on them.

I think many members in this house are confused about the reason for the closure of Indigenous communities. It started as a financial reason when the federal government pulled the plug on funding. Then the Premier last week brought up the issue of sexually transmitted diseases. What is the reason for the closures? If we are confused, how do members think Indigenous people in Indigenous communities feel? They have no idea why they are under threat of removal.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Member, can I say, you still haven't accepted my point. They are not under threat of removal.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I honestly do not believe that because the Premier has stated that communities will be closed. The minister should look in *Hansard* and see what the Premier said. He said the communities will be closed. Last Thursday, the Premier said the government will close communities because of sexually transmitted diseases. I cannot believe it. The Leader of the National Party had meetings up in the Kimberley. Good on him—he went to the Kimberley, unlike the Premier who has refused to meet Indigenous leaders. It is not a figment of our imaginations that these remote communities will close. The Western Australian government—the Premier no less—has stated that they will close. The Premier may be trying to backtrack now, but that is what he stated—and it is in print. We did not start the conversation about the closure of Indigenous communities.

The Minister for Health and the Leader of the National Party mentioned that having big communities may not be the way to go and that sometimes smaller communities are better. For instance, Balgo is a larger community, and in some ways that community is not functioning as well as the smaller communities. This issue is not necessarily that they are small communities. If there are problems, let us try to fix them. In the end, there may be the situation that it is not possible to fix a community, but let us give it a go. Let us not start off like the Premier stating that we will close the communities; let us see what we can do. In many remote communities, as I know many National Party members realise, there is long-distance education by air —

**Ms J. Farrer:** It is the School of the Air.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Yes—the School of the Air. Why not look at education alternatives, rather than going back to the historical way we have always decided issues on Aboriginal affairs: we know better and we will control where Aboriginal people live. How can we do that? How can we do that, especially when the High Court has recognised that Aboriginal people have rights to their land? We would not think of moving a farmer away from their land. We would not think about moving someone who lives in Armadale away from their land. The National Party leader mentioned some of the education statistics in Aboriginal communities. There are some pretty bad statistics in some of the schools in my electorate, too. We will not close those schools down and move people away; we are not going to move them to Cottesloe. Maybe we will move them to Cottesloe. How about that! Maybe they will get a better education. How silly! Let us try to fix those communities.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** Member, your time has expired.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I am surprised actually; something has gone wrong. Continue, member, and we will get it sorted.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I will seek an extension as a safeguard.

[Member's time extended.]

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I have an article written by Natalie Cromb in which she refers to the Kimberley Land Council chairman, Anthony Watson, who expressed great disappointment at the Premier's announcement of the closure of remote Aboriginal communities after the announcement of the cessation of federal government funding. I quote —

“It illustrates that the Government did not give thought to the social and cultural implications that such closures would have, not only on the directly affected communities, but the metropolitan communities too”

I think the Leader of the National Party may have alluded to the following questions: Where will the people who are removed from their communities go? What announcement has the government made about additional housing? What additional housing has been built? What funds have been allocated for additional housing? Which communities will these people be moved to? Where will the members of the closed communities live? Will they receive relocation assistance? Will the community be able to move together or will it be split up? That is what happened to members of the stolen generation—families and communities were split up and people went 40 or 50 years before they could link up with family members, and in some cases never linked up with family members.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** Who said anything about moving people?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** If a community is to be closed, member for Geraldton, I presume the people in that community will be moved somewhere.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** We are talking about moving services from places where people go for only a month or two.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** No, we are not.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** That is what I took from the Minister for Health.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The member is not right. Did the member for Geraldton not listen to the member for Kimberley? Maybe the member needs to have a discussion with the member for Kimberley. I think the Leader of the National Party talked about the Noel Pearson program in which some people were moving around, but a lot of Aboriginal people stay within the community area 24/7, 12 months of the year.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** You are trying to create this picture that somehow it is the stolen generation recreated and that we are going to take trucks in there to cart these people away.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I never mentioned trucks, but I will leave that for the member's commentary. If the member wants to get up and speak, he should do so.

I believe the Premier was invited to meet the Aboriginal land councils, but he refused the invitation. I do not think I am creating that impression, member for Geraldton; this is coming from the Kimberley Land Council and the people the member for Kimberley is dealing with—not me.

Natalie Cromb's article quotes the chairman of the Kimberley Land Council, Anthony Watson, as saying —

“We have not been told which communities are being targeted or why, we haven't even been provided with a criteria to clarify the basis of decisions being made”

The article continues —

There was hope given in the form of a suggestion by Terry Redman, regional development minister, that the “Royalties for Regions” fund could be used to support 274 remote communities threatened with closure after the Federal Government announced their plans for closure.

I do not know whether that is true, but this report is out. The Premier has since quashed this hope by saying that Mr Redman was misunderstood and funds will be used for more appropriate investments such as power generation or water supply systems to regional, not remote, areas.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** Just before Christmas I made the comment that I supported using royalties for regions funds—I think I used the word “reform”—to support reform in this space. I have never made the commitment that it would backfill the funding the federal government withdrew. There was a little misreporting of that. My starting position was always that.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Thank you for that. The article continues —

Dispersals and forced assimilation looks a little different in 2015, as it comes under the guise of “funding” limits, but it is the same net result; Indigenous people forced from their homes with no choice but to assimilate into another community. This is, frankly, all we can expect under a government that is simply a group of puppets for multinational corporations —

I will not continue with that.

The fact is that forced closure of Aboriginal communities is, unfortunately, repeating history because the government is forcing people to move from their lands. Where is the guarantee that the whole community will be able to move together to a new area?

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I am saying they’re not.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The Minister for Health is saying that, but when the Premier comes in and gives a categorical assurance in this Parliament that that will not happen, the opposition will believe it. The Premier started this last November—it was not the opposition! It was not the member for Victoria Park, the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Kimberley who said that they would close Aboriginal communities; it was the Premier of Western Australia. Now the Minister for Health is saying that the government will not close them. It is confusing. The government said it would close communities because of funding issues. That was the commentary last November and over Christmas. If the government was not going to close Indigenous communities, why was the Leader of the National Party holding meetings in the Kimberley about the closure of Aboriginal communities? Why did the Prime Minister go on radio or TV recently saying, “Well, you can’t expect to keep these communities open; it’s a lifestyle choice.” It was a despicable choice of words, I must say, and it is despicable when people do not have these choices about their connection to land, to their identity and to culture.

The government told us the reason was funding and then it was child abuse, followed by better education et cetera. Let us fix those things. Let us give these people the best opportunities. We do not have to remove these communities in order for that to happen. As the Leader of the National Party stated, he is concerned about the tone of debate that is being generated, and rightly so. He should be worried, as the opposition is worried. How can the tone be any better when the Premier of Western Australia stood in this Parliament last Thursday and stated that sexually transmitted diseases are occurring only among Aboriginal people? It was a despicable, disgraceful act. In my four and a half years in this place, I am hard pressed to remember a more despicable piece of commentary denigrating a whole community. May I add that yesterday in Parliament, in answer to a question, the Premier stated —

It will be this government, the Liberal–National government, that will do more than the former Labor government ever did to improve the condition of Aboriginal people. We will not run away from the facts.

That was followed by an interjection.

If Mr Barnett does not actually present the facts, it is a bit hard to run away from them. The point I want to highlight follows, when the Premier’s stated —

What we are seeing opposite is a big part of the problem—denial. They are in denial.

What an absolute disgrace, when the member for Victoria Park and the member for Kimberley are members of the opposition, to say that we are the problem. How are we the problem? Were we the federal government that decided to withdraw funding from Indigenous communities? Were we the Premier who decided he would close Aboriginal communities? The Leader of the Opposition did not say that he would close Aboriginal communities. The opposition spokesperson on Indigenous affairs did not say that he would close the communities. How is the opposition the problem? The problem is being generated by the Premier. It is very hard, Leader of the National Party, to have a proper conversation, a dialogue and a rational debate on this issue when we have the Leader of the Government, Leader of the Liberal Party and Premier of Western Australia denigrating Indigenous people by his comments about sexually transmitted diseases. It is absolutely disgraceful.

Maybe if the member for Geraldton looked at the history of the stolen generation, he might see the linkage and that it could possibly be repeated if there is forced closure of Aboriginal communities; he might then understand the situation. It might even be better if he could spend just half an hour with the member for Kimberley. Let us try to have a rational debate about this, but I fear whether that is possible when we have a Premier who seeks to score political points and denigrates the Aboriginal community.

**MS A.R. MITCHELL (Kingsley — Parliamentary Secretary)** [5.58 pm]: I rise to speak because I believe that it is important that debate on this very important issue has the emotion taken out of it and that some sensitivity is put into it. I commend the Minister for Health on his words about taking the fear out of this process, because the longer we keep fear in the process the worse it will be. I commend the Leader of the National Party because he

sensed the opportunity to do this. I also wish to speak about the opportunities that may arise, which have not arisen for quite a while because of the situations that have occurred. There is no doubt in my mind that all of us in this chamber have the same intent: improved outcomes for Aboriginal people. How we go about that will make a difference. Those are the things we need to focus on. We need to accept that there are ways to do things and situations that will need to occur, but we need to do those things through a sensitive and cooperative approach in a non-political atmosphere so that we can achieve what we are trying to achieve.

It was very distressing when the federal government decided to withdraw those funds—I think everyone feels the same—but it has probably achieved something. I recall the days when there was duplication of resources. People could go into a community and find that the commonwealth was doing something along the same line.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**Ms A.R. MITCHELL:** That might have been the intent, but it was not happening on the ground.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** What was happening on the ground was that federal money was funding resources.

**Ms A.R. MITCHELL:** But other state departments were also getting money and doing things as well. The member for Cockburn is perhaps talking about something else and not what I am talking about.

There was duplication of resources and lack of communication. Often the right hand did not know what the left hand was doing. The Aboriginal Affairs Cabinet Sub-committee was mentioned earlier, and I congratulate the cabinet on the formation of this subcommittee, because even within state government agencies quite often there was a lack of communication—that is probably still the case in some instances, but I am sure it has improved. There was a lack of communication between agencies and probably a duplication of programs, resources and things such as that. It is very difficult for people in the communities. Everyone feels as though they are doing the right thing, but they are not necessarily achieving their intended outcomes.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz):** Members, there are too many conversations occurring. Can we have a little shush.

**Ms A.R. MITCHELL:** I think that the formation of the Aboriginal Affairs Cabinet Sub-committee will reduce those issues that have occurred in state government agencies. The commonwealth will still be in the field, but it will do things differently. Collectively, this opportunity will give us a chance to do something. Often it takes a situation to create the opportunity for things to change. As has been stated by the Leader of the National Party and our Minister for Health, I believe this is an opportunity and in the right atmosphere and the right environment we can make a difference. There is no doubt that this government is very keen to work with the communities, the leaders and the Aboriginal people to empower them. We have all seen over many years that we do not go in and do it for them or tell them what will happen. Members in this place have said that people have not been involved and communities will be closed and all those sorts of things. One of the things I have learnt in my life is not to rush in and do things. We need to make sure that we have the framework right and that we understand where the formations will come from and how things work together before we start communications. At the moment we have an atmosphere of fear, because people have not had the information; it is being prepared.

It is important that those situations are worked out and that the framework and work are done through that whole process so that we can minimise the fear and concerns and be constructive. But there is no way that this government would go into communities without having discussions with the leaders and the people to make sure that a collective process is worked out for how best to serve our Aboriginal people—not the Aboriginal people but our Aboriginal people. We are part of that process and we will facilitate that process, but it will be very much based on Aboriginal people in their communities. I, like other members, have been to some Aboriginal communities, of which I am very proud. I was very pleased to see what has been achieved and was very grateful to the people for their hard work. This government will do as much as it can to support those people and those communities.

Likewise, I am sure that many members know Aboriginal people who are very concerned about what is occurring in some Aboriginal areas, just as I am, as a white person, very concerned about what is happening with a lot of white people. Some members and I have been in a community that was not so nice; it was not something of which any of us were proud. We know that the people in that community were probably not proud of it either. Quite often we will sit with people—invariably it is the women—who say, “How do we get out of this situation? Can you help us? Can you give us some ways of improving this, because it’s our children, it’s our grandchildren, it’s our families? This is not what we want, but we actually don’t know how to make a difference. We don’t know how to turn things around now.” It is in these situations, when we can give the community the support it needs, that we can make a difference.

Fitzroy Valley has been mentioned a couple of times. There is no doubt that the community there is one of the shining lights of the area—certainly, the community in the Fitzroy Crossing town site and some of the communities outside. However, the process needs to be worked through. It is a process that we need to work through with the leaders and the people in those communities. That needs and takes time. We need to also work

with the local governments, because they will be part of the process. It is not something that we do lightly. It is not a matter of having to race out and cross off people and close off things, because this is not about closure; this is about improving the life of Aboriginal people and what they can achieve in their life and in their environment.

People have talked about many areas of concern. I am concerned about the standard of education. I am excited that perhaps there are ways in which we can create job opportunities so that Aboriginal people can be employed, but at the same time there has to be good, basic education. I know, and I am sure other people in this chamber know, of local companies that would love to employ Aboriginal people but often find it difficult because some Aboriginal people do not have the basic numeracy, literacy and education standards required to bring them into those job opportunities. It is a critical factor. That problem is not just in communities—I will accept that—but it seems to be highlighted in communities.

I have some statistics with me but I do not necessarily want to read them out. However, areas need to be addressed, and addressed very specifically and rather quickly. At the same time, unfortunately, the number of children in care is much higher in Aboriginal communities. It is not something of which we are proud. We do not aim to take children away from Aboriginal families. In fact, we try to keep them with Aboriginal families. However, there is concern about that, and I know that Aboriginal people are worried about their children. They are worried about how their families are going. Concentrated and real effort has been tried and been successful in some locations. Unfortunately, those services have either not been offered or not been taken up in a number of locations, often because community leaders do not see their value. There has been many a difficulty in finding people who can and will make a difference. In this case we will make a significant difference within communities and in regional areas. We recognise and are very conscious of that connection to land. It is unique to our peoples and we are very cognisant of that. Nobody will take people off their lands without leaving them with access to it. It is important that we realise and understand and it is important that we listen to the issues around culture, heritage, their history and their lands. We are very cognisant of that. I am certainly heartened to learn about what is going on quietly within government—not necessarily telling everyone all that is going on—about the things that we will be able to achieve, and we will be doing it with Aboriginal people.

At the moment, emotive words in conversations such as “closure”, “fear” and those sorts of words are very unfortunate. The Minister for Health mentioned that several times, and highlighted over and over that these words are not going to help us. These words are not a problem for us, but they will cause an ongoing problem for and will impact on our Aboriginal people.

This is a chance—I will not say a chance in a lifetime but it is probably a chance in my lifetime—to make a real difference. I think that we all accept that there is a situation here. I see it as an opportunity. I certainly hope that members opposite see it as an opportunity. It is very important that we make the most of this situation, because such a situation does not come around all that often. As the Leader of the National Party said, working collectively with leaders of the Aboriginal people and members opposite, this situation can really achieve results for the Aboriginal people in remote areas of our state. We are all proud of this state; it has its own unique circumstances of distance and other aspects. But this is an opportunity. Let us treat it as an opportunity; let us make the most of this opportunity; and let us do it in a very sensitive and non-emotive way so that we keep our Aboriginal people close to us and work with them to get great outcomes.

**MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition)** [6.07 pm]: I congratulate the member for Victoria Park for moving this motion. It is very well worded and has some very sensible suggestions about a major issue for thousands of Western Australian citizens—the most voiceless and disadvantaged people in Western Australian, and perhaps the whole country, who are being treated absolutely shamefully by the federal and state governments.

I was walking through the Supreme Court Gardens on Saturday after the march by the service people who served in Afghanistan in the recent operations there. I met a group of Aboriginal women from the Kimberley who recognised me, and the first thing they said to me was, “What’s happening to our homes?” They come from a community in Fitzroy Valley and have no idea what the future holds for them; however, they know that it is potentially very dim. This motion calls for clarity and certainty to ensure that there is some communication with people whose lives will be impacted by these decisions of the state and federal governments. Surely they deserve that. Surely they do not deserve this outrageous rhetoric that I have been hearing from people—such as the outrageous rhetoric of the Premier out the front of the building last week, and his rhetoric in this place, which essentially people like Josie Farrer, the member for Kimberley, see, with some just cause, as an assault on all Aboriginal people. They do not deserve that. They have it tough enough already.

I will go back to the beginning. The Prime Minister has announced that a funding arrangement that is recognised and that has been in place since 1968 to provide core services—water, power, perhaps some road grading, and perhaps some education—to these most remote communities will be ripped up. The Prime Minister decided that. That agreement between the commonwealth and the states has been in place since 1968. The Prime Minister unilaterally decided that he would rip up that agreement. The Prime Minister was elected on the basis that he would be—this is what he said—the best Prime Minister for Indigenous Australians ever.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** The Indigenous Prime Minister!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Indigenous Prime Minister is what he called himself. He then ripped up an agreement that has been in place for the best part of 50 years to provide essential services to the most remote disadvantaged communities in Australia. I think some of the people, like Warren Mundine and Noel Pearson—in particular Warren Mundine—were sucked in. However, suddenly they realised, “Hell; maybe this guy isn’t the guy we thought he was going to be.” Perhaps they had an epiphany and realised that Tony Abbott is not the friend of Indigenous Australia that he said he was going to be. I hope they have learnt an important lesson; if they have, they have certainly learnt it the hard way.

Tony Abbott ripped up that agreement. Senator Nigel Scullion came to the state government and said, “We are going to give you two years’ funding, \$90 million, and after that you will have to make your own way.” What did the state government do? It did a few things. First of all, members might recall that last year, the Premier started complaining about this in some statements that he made in this house. He said that the state had big problems with the commonwealth government about this. He said in this place that this would be a difficult issue to deal with. He actually complained about it, initially. What then happened is that the state took the money and ran. The state government said, “We will take the two years’ funding, and we will not fight.” That is totally contrary to what the state did when it came to Gonski, when it came to the National Disability Insurance Scheme —

**Mr F.M. Logan:** And the GST.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Yes, and the GST. The state government took a totally different viewpoint on this issue from the approach that it took on those other issues. The state said, “We will take the money and run.” It should have stood and fought. It should have said, “No, we are not accepting that.” That is what the state should have done. The state government did not do that. It took the money and ran. This is the first time that I can remember in recent times—I suspect this example will be repeated more often—that the state has just rolled over on an issue as important as this one. First of all, last year, the Premier said it was going to be a big problem. I heard the Premier say that in this place. He was right. His tone was to object to what the commonwealth was doing. But he then took the money and ran, without fighting.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** That is not true.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The state did not fight. South Australia fought.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** How do you know? You weren’t at COAG.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The state fought on Gonski, it fought on the NDIS and it fought on Kevin Rudd’s health funding agreement. It went out there and it stood up to the commonwealth. Sometimes, I think that was contrary to the state’s interests. The commonwealth tried to give us more money for education, but the government fought it on it; the state took on the commonwealth. However, on this one, the state did not do that. The Premier said, “How do I know?” I did not see the Premier doing press conferences. I did not see the Premier standing out the front of Parliament House in Canberra and fighting. That is what the Premier should have done. He had a meeting with Senator Scullion recently, and he did not even raise it, he said. So, the Premier elected not to do that. But then the state’s rhetoric changed. Initially, last year, it was, “We do not like what is happening.” It then became, “We had no choice. We had to accept the money.” Then, in the last couple of weeks, the rhetoric changed completely. Maybe the Premier could have gone to Indigenous Western Australians and said, “We cannot afford to pay the \$45 million a year, or thereabouts.” If the Premier had said that, people would have argued and said, “Why can’t you do that when you are able to fund your priorities elsewhere?” Maybe the government could have done that. At least it would have been an understandable argument if the state had said, “The commonwealth is cutting the funding and we cannot afford to put the funding back in.” Maybe the government could have argued that. But it did not do that. It converted it into an argument around Aboriginal kids and the abuse of Aboriginal kids, without any proper analysis around that.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Are you in denial about that?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I was in this Parliament when the Gordon inquiry happened 10 years ago and all those police stations were put into Aboriginal communities, 20 or so. I was here in Parliament when that happened. I was here when mandatory reporting was put in place. I saw the Gordon inquiry report. I saw Geoff Gallop on the day he read the report of the Gordon inquiry. I went to his house, and he was visibly shaken by that report. He put resources into that matter. But he had a report with justification behind what he wanted to do. The Premier is just saying that the government will withdraw funding for 150 or 170 Indigenous communities, without any justification as to the communities in which the Premier is claiming these events are taking place. I know for a fact that some of the smaller communities from which resources will be withdrawn were established because people wanted to get away from the big communities where the problems were. The Premier is saying we will close the small communities, and we will send those people back to those big communities. It makes no rational sense for that to be the argument. The Premier has created a straw man. Everyone of course has great

sympathy for Indigenous kids and women who are bashed or physically or sexually abused. Of course there is no right-thinking person in this country who does not have respect for that. But do not subsequently create that as the argument and imply to people like the member for Kimberley that all of her people are responsible for this. If the Premier wants to do something about that issue, do something about that issue. The Premier should not just say he is going to close all those communities and use that as a post facto justification for a funding cut. That is unfair to those communities. If people left the larger communities and established the smaller ones 40 or 50 years ago because they wanted to escape grog or abuse or conflict, how are we helping the situation by closing down those smaller communities and sending those people back to the larger communities? How is the Premier helping those smaller communities and those children that he is talking about by making them fringe dwellers in Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Hedland or Kununurra? How does that help? It does not help. Tony Abbott, who grew up on the north shore of Sydney, would not have one clue about those communities.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Do you go and spend a week a year in those communities?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** First, he did not spend a week.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** He has for years.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** No, he did not. Secondly, I would have gone to more Indigenous communities in my lifetime, and, also, I grew up in a country town with lots of Indigenous kids. I know a lot about it. I grew up with Indigenous children. As I said, I saw Geoff Gallop on the day he read the report of the Gordon inquiry into how Susan Taylor was treated at the Swan Valley Nyungah camp. I remember it well.

Those communities are there. We are dealing with people whose lives are being thrown into turmoil by what is going on today. It is not a lifestyle choice for them. Their families have lived in those communities for many generations. I think the way this has been handled has been tricky. The justifications are post the decision. I think the Premier should have been honest with the people when he stood out the front of Parliament House and said —

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** I was.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Premier said—I heard it the way the Premier wanted it to be interpreted—“No-one is going to be forced from their homes.” If I heard that when I was standing in that crowd, I would have thought: What is all this about? Why are we rallying here? Why are we angry? Then we came in here afterwards and asked the Premier the question: will those communities continue to have basic municipal services that every other Western Australia community gets? The answer was no, they are not going to have those basic services. When the Premier says that no-one will be forced from their homes, that is fine—so when people are living in a town that experiences 47-degree heat, and they get no water, power, roads, education or health services, they are free to continue living there. It is completely disingenuous to say that to those people out there. The Premier should have been honest. If his reason is that the government cannot afford it, he should go out and tell them that. If the Premier’s reason is that he is not prepared to take the money from royalties for regions and spend it on those communities, he should go and tell them that. He should be honest, and not come up with these justifications that do not have any thought or analysis behind them. If the government identifies communities, as the Gordon inquiry did, that are places of despotism, dysfunction and horrible treatment of children, he should go and deal with them, but do not lump the people in every community together just because they happen to have been born Aboriginal.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Last week you called me a racist; are you going to do that again?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Why has the Premier not listened to what I was saying? Why does he not listen to what some of his ministers have said?

**Mr C.J. Barnett** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I did not say that to the Premier; he is verballing me again.

**Mr C.J. Barnett** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I have not called the Premier a racist. When did I say that? The Premier says things that have no facts behind them. I did not say that. It is a pretty big allegation to make.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Do you deny it?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am denying that I said that. I am denying absolutely that I said that. It is a pretty big allegation to make—just to throw it across the chamber that somebody called the Premier that, when I did not.

This motion, carefully drafted, says that the government needs to look at these matters carefully and deal with individuals as individuals, not as an entire group, and it needs to deal with communities as communities, not as an entire group. As I said, and I want to repeat it, if there is a dysfunctional community out there that exhibits the behaviour that the Premier is referring to, fine, he should deal with it—but do not say that 170 communities are all guilty of it, and therefore we are closing them. That is the way this is being interpreted.

I will just close on this. These are the most disempowered and disadvantaged people, without any of the opportunities that we have had in life, and we are treating them like this. We did a eulogy the other day to Malcolm Fraser. Despite his patrician upbringing, he saw it and he understood, as did Gough Whitlam. They both saw that sometimes there is an obligation to people, and there is probably not that many votes in it, because the state, the country and the community should be bigger than this.

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [6.25 pm]: I will start by commending some of the members for their contributions to this debate. The comments by the members for Victoria Park and Kimberley were an outstanding analysis of this issue, but I also want to commend the Minister for Health and the Leader of the National Party for their contributions, notwithstanding the Leader of the National Party's propensity to lapse into dorothea dixie numbers from royalties for regions funding this, this and this.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** The point was made by the member for Victoria Park at the beginning of this debate that there was something like \$20 billion worth of royalties, and he asked what we are doing about. The point was made that there was a lack of investment from this government, and that is what I was responding to.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Okay, fair enough. I respect the member's right to be able to talk about his government's record in this area. There will be debate in history about whether the opposition did enough when it was in office, or whether the government has done enough, and all that sort of stuff. I understand that, but I think the second part of the member's speech was very good, and it was a really useful contribution to the debate—as was that of the Minister for Health, who put this in the sort of context in which we would like to see this debate take place. But, of course, that is not the context in which this debate is taking place. The background to this debate is about money and resources, and that is the great pity of it. This debate, and this policy situation, has occurred because the commonwealth withdrew from the long-standing arrangement between the state and federal governments of working together to fund a lot of these remote communities.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** The subcommittee of cabinet was put in place before the commonwealth decision to withdraw resources. The commitment to look at better outcomes for these areas and making decisions around how government policy should be set came well before any decision by the federal government to withdraw funds.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I acknowledge the goodwill that the member brings to this debate.

On 17 February, the Premier stood up in this place and said —

In response to the commonwealth's withdrawal of funding for remote communities, the government's priority is to focus on how to provide opportunities for people, particularly young people, in remote Aboriginal communities.

It was “in response to”, not as a sideline or as an unrelated consequence. The Premier went on to say —

This will require changes to how and where the government invests its resources. For some communities in which children are not cared for—or worse, in danger—job opportunities are scarce and health care is minimal, essential services will not continue to be provided by the state government.

There is the context for this debate. I accept that this may be an issue that the government has focused on in the past and that the government has policy aspirations that go beyond the closure of communities, but there is the context for this particular debate—that is, the dimension of this debate is about resources, not communities, and the extent to which the government is prepared to fund these communities. The Minister for Health said that we simply cannot afford to take up the slack—that is, to make up for what the federal Liberal government has so cruelly done, which is to withdraw funding from these communities. That is an honest assessment, I accept that, but it is an assessment that therefore this falls down the list of priorities. This is about costs and finances. The issues around concepts of child safety, sexually transmitted diseases, conflict, criminal behaviour and drug abuse are all subsequent to that context. Let us be honest about this debate. This is about resources, priorities and political commitment. I accept the reluctance of the National Party to simply allow the feds to cost-shift to the states. It is not a valid policy response, but this is the circumstance that they have been dealt.

The Premier very unhelpfully drew the issue of sexually transmitted diseases into this debate. As a result of that, as the Minister for Health observed, we may have lost the opportunity to have a proper debate about this. As the Minister for Health also observed, people are scared. The clear message from both the mainstream and the Aboriginal community is that remote communities will be shut down. To retrieve that situation—I do not know how the government will do so—from these careless remarks and inappropriate policy dimension or context will be nigh impossible. As the Leader of the Opposition said, this is a community that is perhaps the most disempowered, disengaged and disadvantaged in our community. To pretend that this community can somehow see through the nuance of the debate, through the misrepresentation of health statistics and through the remarks that the Premier made to the rally the other day that this does not mean that communities will be shut down is quite simply unrealistic.

The Aboriginal community has a history of dispossession and dislocation. People were taken from their country historically, either dispossessed by pastoralists who moved them off country once the issue of equal pay came to light or, ultimately, were moved into townships for a range of reasons. Poverty and dispossession is one of those reasons. The opportunity to live back on country was important in reconnecting with their culture and their land.

It is incumbent on us not to compound the problems of the historical mistakes that we have made. It is incumbent on us to move beyond that dimension of the debate about “us doing to them” and move forward in a way which, as the member for Victoria Park observed in the context of the agreement with Chevron, provides self-determination. That cannot happen from the basis of a debate around which people are characterised as having endemic sexually transmitted diseases, dysfunctional communities and hopeless cases that we have quite simply given up on. As the Minister for Health said, many communities are thriving and doing very well, thank you very much. We have to move forward in a manner that allows communities to be consulted with, to be respected and to value their culture.

A senior Labor member of Parliament once said to me, “You cannot expect Aboriginal people to thrive in a community until they can participate in the economy. You cannot expect people to sit in remote communities because they simply cannot participate in the economy. Therefore, their lives will be hopeless.” That does two things. First, it undervalues or devalues the concept of people living on their lands continuing to observe a culture that is many thousands of years old that does not of itself enrich us as a community. Second, it also demonstrates quite clearly what this is about. As you know, Mr Acting Speaker, economics is about the distribution of resources and about things that we value. If we do not value people observing their culture, carrying on their lives in culture, caring for country and undertaking activities, which is about caring for country, we cannot allow them to participate in the economy. We have said in the past, “Your culture is meaningless to us. It is of no value to us. Therefore, that will not be represented in our economic system.” I hear right throughout this place and right throughout our community that we value the Aboriginal community, Aboriginal culture and heritage and we see it as an important and distinctive part of our broader national identity.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** And then we do nothing about it.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** As the member for Cockburn interjects, we do nothing about it. We have an economic system that does not value either of those dimensions of our national identity. As a result of that, of course people cannot participate in the economy.

To reflect what the Minister for Health said, we have to move beyond that and have a different discussion.

I am drawn to an article in the *Medical Journal of Australia* in 2009, which refers to the health dimensions of people living on country and how important they are in the way people thrive in their communities. It states that there is an economic dimension to this as well. The article states —

Pressure to centralise remote Indigenous populations and services into townships has increased despite evidence suggesting this would lead to worse health outcomes. Depopulation of remote areas has contributed to ecological degradation through the decline of Indigenous land management; introduced weeds, animals and wildfires now damage landscapes unchecked by the dislocated owners. Indigenous Australians have long asserted the importance of their enduring relationship to ancestral lands and seas.

This article is trying to say that, as the Minister for Health said, we have to move beyond the current debate, which is simply about how we are going to provide water, sanitation and power in Aboriginal communities, and say to those Aboriginal communities, “How can we help you continue to thrive and how can we continue to be partners in your ongoing living culture?” In the health context, the article quotes the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council and its strategic framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in 2004. As set out in the article, it states —

*For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples health does not just entail the freedom of the individual from sickness but requires support for healthy and interdependent relationships between families, communities, land, sea and spirit. The focus must be on spiritual, cultural, emotional and social well-being as well as physical health.*

That is part of the discussion we should be having. How did we get to the point now at which people feel that their lives and lifestyle will be threatened and their community shut down, all off the back of some crass health statistics spouted by the Premier in this place? The Premier said that we have accused him of being a racist. We do not accuse him of being a racist, but this is a racist debate because Aboriginal people are not accepted as a distinct community—a community that has very distinct cultural and heritage values—and as communities that have different needs from each other because they are very diverse communities. We want this debate to move beyond the crass political pointscoreing that there has been to date. That has driven the outrage and the fear in the community. I dare say that that is what drove the member for Victoria Park to be expelled from this place last week and the member for Kimberley to walk out of the chamber in disgust. It is in that context that we drill down around a question of resources, and we justify that question of resources around the hysterical, nonsensical

and, quite frankly, offensive use of health statistics to prop up a position. As the Leader of the Opposition said, if this is about resources, let us be honest about it and have that honest discussion. But it has not been. It has been turned into a hysterical mess. As a result, I do not know how it can be retrieved.

If we are to create sustainable communities, we have to go beyond this current debate of what simply is health, sanitation, power and education for communities. If we are to go to a discussion about sustainable communities, it has to be about how we can respect people's culture and continue to value that culture in a way that allows people to participate in the economy while observing their cultural heritage. However, we cannot do that through the prism of the crass and rank debate that has been generated in this place in the last couple of weeks trying to justify a question of resources around issues such as sexually transmitted diseases, drug abuse and criminal behaviour. Quite frankly, I suspect the "R" word is drifting dreadfully close to the people who are using that sort of language in this place.

Anyone who comes into government in Western Australia will always face the challenge of how best to assist one of the oldest cultures on earth to continue to sustain its way of life in a way that makes sense to its community. We cannot ask people to simply uproot and leave their communities; it is where they live, it is their country. Their country is where they live and we must respect that in the same way that we respect farmers and small communities in the wheatbelt and we respect other cultures across the world and their land and heritage.

I commend the member for Victoria Park for bringing this motion to this place. I also commend the Minister for Health and the Leader of the National Party for trying to provide some form of refuge to those on this side of the debate and maintaining some dignity when faced with the arguments waged by the Premier on their behalf. I think they have gone a long way to retrieve their dignity today. I note, with regret, that when the Premier re-joined the debate, it degenerated once again. If the government is to carry this matter forward so that it is not set up as an international pariah for driving people off their country, the government has to continue to debate the matter in this particular way and it has to disassociate itself from the arguments raised by the Premier. However, let us not forget that he raises them on behalf of government members. We have to move forward in a manner that allows people to be properly consulted so that they are given the right to negotiate and have proper, informed consent. To do that, we have to move beyond the prism of simple resources, crass quoting and misrepresentation of health statistics.

**MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn)** [6.42 pm]: I will not be as generous as the member for Kwinana in my contribution to this debate on the motion. First of all, I ask the Minister for Health, how much funding from the federal government are we talking about?

**Dr K.D. Hames:** You are better off asking the Leader of the National Party. Do you know the exact number?

**Mr D.T. Redman:** Withdrawn?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Yes, the amount per annum.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** It includes some capital, but the \$30 million was the MUNS funding, plus some others, so \$40 million to \$50 million a year.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** That is my understanding also. The Leader of the National Party has said that it is between \$40 million and \$50 million a year, and that would probably be correct on the basis of the commonwealth government.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** We have about 18 months' worth of that resource left in investment.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** That is right. The commonwealth, then, is saying, here is \$90 million for two years. One would assume that it was \$45 million per annum, or thereabouts, in terms of the commonwealth funding.

Members should be reminded that I speak on this matter not only as the member for Cockburn, but also as a former Minister for Housing, responsible for the commonwealth–state agreement and responsible for overseeing a lot of the work, investment and services put into remote communities. I travelled to those remote communities to ensure that that was carried out properly, as have the Leader of the National Party and the Minister for Health, and that is the reason I want to make a contribution to this debate.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, this agreement has been in place since 1968; it is a bilateral agreement. It has gone through a number of different formats and called a number of things over that time, but it is effectively a bilateral agreement from which the commonwealth has walked away. This motion calls on the Western Australian government to stand up to the commonwealth and calls for the reinstatement of that funding—funding that in one form or another has been there since 1968. The Leader of the National Party talked about the contribution of the Liberal–National government to remote communities prior to this funding being cut, and he tried to argue that the commonwealth's action was not the trigger point for that. I am afraid it was. There is no doubt at all that the Liberal–National government was committed to remote communities prior to this commonwealth action. In fact, on 30 June 2010, the then Minister for Housing, who I assume was

Mr Bill Marmion, the member for Nedlands, committed to building 75 houses in remote Aboriginal communities—some of the same remote Aboriginal communities that will see their services cut.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** No.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Yes.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** I do not think that is true.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** There is the list of the communities. Remember, I have just referred to a statement made in this house by the then Minister for Housing, the member for Nedlands, to the Leader of the Opposition indicating that 75 houses were to be built in remote communities in Western Australia, and he listed the communities. The Minister for Health said that they are not the communities listed as unsustainable that will have their services removed. I find it quite interesting that the Minister for Health said that so quickly. Today the ABC put on its website a leaked document from the federal government showing a hit list of remote communities from as early as 2010 that the federal government had provided to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs for its comments on whether those communities were sustainable. Those communities were reviewed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and later a hit list was drawn up. I find it interesting that the Minister for Health was saying that the communities mentioned in 2010 were not going to be shut down, yet information has come to hand that a Western Australian government department had a hit list that lined up communities for possible removal of services.

I will go on to talk about the types of negotiations that have been taking place between the state and federal governments. Effectively, the state argued with the federal government that there would be a single-source service provider for those communities; therefore, all the funding should come through the state, and then the Department of Housing, or whoever, should take that service over. Clearly, that will not be the case. Apparently, that list of possible unsustainable communities lines up with the 150 communities indicated by the Premier.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** You have to remember that the commonwealth has withdrawn funds from the communities it funds. Where we build houses, they are the communities that we fund.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I know it has been a long time since the Minister for Health was the Minister for Housing, but he should remember how it works. The commonwealth puts in a certain amount of money, which is two-thirds of the value of the resources. One-third is put in by the state. Something that has been overlooked in this debate is that the community puts money in also. The Minister for Health should remember that whether that money is collected by way of chuck-in money or through electricity or water meters, the community pays for that. There are three sources of funding. There is commonwealth funding, which makes up two-thirds of the resource funding, one-third is contributed by the government of Western Australia and then, of course, there is the money that is paid for by Aboriginal people. That money may well come from community development employment projects or some welfare benefits or it may come from the fact that they work, as some Indigenous people work in the Argyle diamond mine and others. That is where the funding comes from. That has been completely overlooked in this debate.

The other point that seems to have been overlooked in this debate, particularly by the government, is why people live in these remote communities in the first place. The Minister for Health said that it has been happening over a number of years; people have been moving from where they were first dumped around major regional towns of Western Australia after the clearing policies of various governments pushed people off their land for the pastoral industry. They have gradually moved back. The Minister for Health said in his comments that they had moved because of the effects of alcoholism, drugs, gambling and humbug in those communities. There is a series of reasons. However, the Minister for Health did not refer to the most critical reason why people are moving back—they are moving home. They are moving back to their country. That is their home, remember. That is where they and their relations and their family have links going back tens of thousands of years. Their relationship with the country is still not clearly understood by whitefellas. Whitefellas who have been in this country for three or four generations still do not understand the relationship between Aboriginal people and their country. I do not know whether they do not understand because they just do not want to know about it or because they have never been exposed to it, but they still struggle to understand the relationship between Aboriginal people and their obligations to that land. That is the reason they are there, and when they had an opportunity to move back to country, they took it. The services followed. Some services, as the member for Victoria Park knows, are not provided to the very small family communities. The Minister for Health knows this. They do not get any services at all; they simply live by themselves in various parts of the Kimberley in Western Australia. Others are in larger communities that have grown even bigger over time since the move back to country program started. That is the reason they are there.

What I find to be absolutely disingenuous in this argument—it was referred to by the Leader of the Opposition—is when statements are made, either in this house or outside on the steps of Parliament House, that the government is not closing these communities and it is not forcing these people off their land, as our forefathers did. That is just not true. The funding has stopped, and the Minister for Health and the Leader of the

National Party know, as they have both been Minister for Housing, as have I, that that funding pays for the fuel to the power stations, repairs to the electricity system, the power to the pumps to run the sewerage system, clean water and road infrastructure in those communities. Other funding for health and education comes from other sources, as the Minister for Health knows. That is where that money goes. If that funding is cut and the government blames the commonwealth and does not take it on for breaking a bilateral agreement, obviously the members of those communities will not be able to live there. The government is not walking in and telling people in those communities that they can no longer live there. Basically, the government is giving them no option to live there, because there will be no water, sewerage, electricity or grading of roads to get in there in the first place. Effectively, the government is shutting those communities, but it is doing it by removing all infrastructure from those communities. I find that despicable, because the government is not telling that to those communities and it is not being spoken of in here. The member for Kingsley called this an opportunity! What planet is she on? How can cutting off the infrastructure to 150 remote communities be called an opportunity? It is unbelievable that this is happening in 2015.

I refer to the member for Victoria Park and the member for Kimberley. Members should remember that by far and away most of the communities that will be impacted are in the member for Kimberley's seat. When those members say that this is a repeat of history, it is a repeat of history. Those people, who moved back to their country because of a 40 000 and 50 000-year association with their country, are once again being pushed off country because the government is cutting off infrastructure and, basically, they will be living on the outskirts of places such as Kununurra, Port Hedland, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Broome. Anyone who has been to Broome in the last couple of years will know the problems in Broome from the influx of people from communities further into the Kimberley. Members need only talk to members of the local shire there and they will tell members all about it, if they do not know. This policy will significantly increase those numbers because the people who live in those communities will no longer be able to live there because there will be no infrastructure.

Let us look at who is behind this policy, at who is supporting it and who agrees with it. Of course, there is Tony Abbott, who calls living out in those communities looking after country a lifestyle choice. Tony Seabrook, head of the WA Pastoralists and Graziers Association said —

“There's no future, it's not integrating them into our society and we're too frightened to step up and help them.

He says, “You've got to be integrated into our society.” I remember people saying that in the 1950s and 1960s!

There is also the Premier, the Liberal Party and Alan Jones. We are not too sure where the National Party stands on this. Who opposes the closures? Of course, there is the entire Indigenous community across the whole of Australia, WA Labor and federal Labor. Virtually every church in the whole of Australia and a wide and influential range of Western Australians absolutely oppose this. That is just in Western Australia, and that opposition is growing day by day.

What we are seeing here is disgraceful. The closure of these communities—let us call it what it is—is being done without any consultation whatsoever. The worst part is that the majority of those communities are in the electorate of the member for Kimberley and she has not even been consulted. It is an absolute disgrace.

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier)** [6.59 pm]: I have been listening to this debate. When I spoke to the crowd outside the Parliament last Thursday, I made it clear that what I said would not be popular. That proved to be the case. It is so easy to come in here and talk about the good parts of Aboriginal communities, and there are many good parts; I agree with that. It is so easy to say the nice and politically acceptable comments. That is so easy. That has been the problem for decades. Everyone wants to make the comfortable, politically correct point. What I said as Premier of this state is that I will not resile from my responsibility as Premier to address some of these issues. It will not win me one vote or one friend, but I can tell members that we might save the lives of some young Aboriginal children. That is what we might do. I do not care if it offends members opposite. They can call me racist as they did last Thursday—go for your life! It will not hurt me one bit. I will look after and do all I can with this government to improve the conditions of Aboriginal people.

**Mr M. McGowan:** I hope you're not talking about me.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** You yelled it across the chamber!

**Mr M. McGowan** interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I do not care, because that is part of the problem. The opposition politicises the issue and tries to take the high moral ground and the like, but it fails to address the issue.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

**FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2015**

*Appropriations*

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

*House adjourned at 7.00 pm*

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### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

#### MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT'S PORTFOLIO — SENIOR EXECUTIVES — VEHICLES

**3364. Mr M. McGowan to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to motor vehicles provided to senior executives above Level 9.1 or equivalent (including all classes and divisions above Level 9.1 or equivalent), and I ask as at 1 February 2015, for each agency, department, commission or government trading enterprise within the Minister's portfolio of responsibilities, what is:

- (a) the name of the executive or office-holder provided with a motor vehicle;
- (b) the title or position of the executive or office-holder provided with a motor vehicle;
- (c) the agency or department in which the executive or office-holder works;
- (d) what is the make and model of the motor vehicle;
- (e) is the vehicle leased or has it been purchased;
- (f) if purchased, what was the cost of purchasing the motor vehicle; and
- (g) if leased, what are the monthly lease costs of the vehicle?

**Mr D.C. Nalder replied:**

Department of Transport

- (a)–(g) R Waldo, Director General, Department of Transport, Land Rover Freelander 2, leased, not applicable, \$744.72
- N Lyhne, Managing Director Transport Services, Department of Transport, Land Rover Freelander 2, leased, not applicable, \$724.67
- G Doyle, A/Managing Director Policy, Planning and Investment, Department of Transport, Honda Accord, leased, not applicable, \$705.14
- A King, Driver and Vehicle Services General Manager, Department of Transport, Hyundai i40 Elite, leased, not applicable, \$610.18
- R Buchholz, Marine Safety General Manager, Department of Transport, Toyota Camry, leased, not applicable, \$136.42
- S Jenkins, Coastal Infrastructure General Manager, Department of Transport, Holden Commodore Sportswagon, leased, not applicable, \$441.06
- B Hughes, Executive Director Transport Strategy and Reform, Department of Transport, Volkswagen Tiguan, leased, not applicable, \$418.08
- S Beyer, Executive Director Integrated Transport Planning, Department of Transport, Alfa Romeo Giulietta, leased, not applicable, \$404.26
- P Parolo, Executive Director Ports and Maritime, Department of Transport, Mazda6, leased, not applicable, \$616.07
- R Burrows, Director Rail Safety, Department of Transport, Holden Commodore, leased, not applicable, \$755.73
- C Wallace, Executive Director Major Transport Projects, Department of Transport, Volkswagen Jetta, leased, not applicable, \$577.26
- J Nikitas, Director Revenue Management and Business Support, Department of Transport, Volkswagen Jetta, leased, not applicable, \$549.30
- A Lee, Director Strategy Policy and Governance, Department of Transport, Hyundai i40, leased, not applicable, \$469.33
- P Ollerenshaw, Regional Services General Manager, Department of Transport, Mazda CX-5, leased, not applicable, \$587.74
- F Knobel, Executive Director People and Organisational Development, Department of Transport, Subaru Liberty, leased, not applicable, \$298.58
- K Martin, Executive Director Investment and Finance Coordination, Department of Transport, Volkswagen Golf, leased, not applicable, \$564.10

A de Rozario, General Manager Passenger Services, Department of Transport, Mazda 3, leased, not applicable, \$383.64

A Butcher, Director Customer Service Delivery, Department of Transport, Hyundai i40, leased, not applicable, \$455.70

K Wang, Director Office of the Director General, Department of Transport, Subaru Outback, leased, not applicable, \$456.62

T Carriero, Director Business Systems and Technology, Department of Transport, Mazda CX-5 MAXX, leased, not applicable, \$685.78

D O'Reilly, Executive Director Corporate Services, Department of Transport, Renault Koleos, leased, not applicable, \$458.27

#### Main Roads Western Australia and Office of Road Safety

(a)–(g) S Troughton, Managing Director of Main Roads, Main Roads Western Australia, Ford G Series, leased, not applicable, \$276.30

I Cameron, Executive Director Officer of Road Safety, Office of Road Safety, Volkswagen Passat, leased, not applicable, \$753.39

L Coci, Executive Director Infrastructure Directorate, Main Roads Western Australia, Holden Commodore, leased, not applicable, \$210.83

J Erceg, Executive Director Regional Service, Main Roads Western Australia, Hyundai Sante Fe, leased, not applicable, \$609.33

D Morgan, Executive Director Planning and Technical Services, Main Roads Western Australia, Ford G Series, leased, not applicable, \$126.04

D Snook, Executive Director Road Network Services, Main Roads Western Australia, Ford G Series, leased, not applicable, \$474.68

P Woronzow, Executive Director Finance and Commercial Services, Main Roads Western Australia, Kia Sorrento, leased, not applicable, \$453.26

J Anderson, Director Network Management, Main Roads Western Australia, Mitsubishi Pajero, leased, not applicable, \$271.93

B Belstead, Director South West Operations, Main Roads Western Australia, Toyota Aurion, leased, not applicable, \$212.72

T Earl, Director Network Operations, Main Roads Western Australia, Subaru Liberty, leased, not applicable, \$490.04

P Felix, acting Executive Director Organisational Development, Main Roads Western Australia, Honda Accord Euro, leased, not applicable, \$424.24

M Lodge, Director Major Projects, Main Roads Western Australia, Hyundai i40, leased, not applicable, \$418.95

P Sewell, Director Regional Operations, Main Roads Western Australia, Hyundai Sante Fe, leased, not applicable, \$673.11

B Stopic, Director Program Management, Main Roads Western Australia, Hyundai i30CW, leased, not applicable, \$197.67

N Walton, Director Strategy and Communications, Main Roads Western Australia, Mazda CX5 Maxx, leased, not applicable, \$411.67

#### Public Transport Authority

(a)–(g) R Hamilton, Executive Director Major Projects, Public Transport Authority, Toyota Landcruiser Prado, leased, not applicable, \$439.83

D Browne, Executive Director Safety and Strategy, Public Transport Authority, Subaru Liberty, leased, not applicable, \$443.42

S Gilmartin, Project Director, Public Transport Authority, Hyundai I45, leased, not applicable, \$693.58

R Wales, General Manager Network and Infrastructure, Public Transport Authority, Toyota Camry, leased, not applicable, \$693.73

T Macdougall, Strategic Manager Infrastructure Systems, Public Transport Authority, Toyota Camry, leased, not applicable, \$724.35

A Cartledge, Director Infrastructure Services, Public Transport Authority, Peugeot 508, leased, not applicable, \$752.48

R Seman, Principal Project Director Forrestfield–Airport Link, Public Transport Authority, Mazda 6, leased, not applicable, \$761.17

A Lubicz-Zaorski, Project Director — Stadium, Public Transport Authority, Mazda CX-5, leased, not applicable, \$782.81

J Kiss, General Counsel, Public Transport Authority, VW Jetta, leased, not applicable, \$796.91

L Beyers, Electrical Engineering Manager, Public Transport Authority, Hyundai Santa Fe, leased, not applicable, \$799.39

E Gearon, Operations Manager Transperth Train Operations, Public Transport Authority, Mazda CX-5, leased, not applicable, \$805.49

M Collins, Railway Operations Coordinator Manager, Public Transport Authority, VW Jetta, leased, not applicable, \$814.46

P Italiano, General Manager Transperth Train Operations, Public Transport Authority, Mazda 6, leased, not applicable, \$824.22

S Furmedge, Director Security Services, Public Transport Authority, Mitsubishi Pajero, leased, not applicable, \$839.07

K Kirk, Executive Director Finance and Contracts, Public Transport Authority, Subaru Liberty, leased, not applicable, \$856.85

T Woolerson, General Manager Transwa, Public Transport Authority, VW Tiguan, leased, not applicable, \$891.24

B Appleby, Executive Director People and Organisational Development, Public Transport Authority, Holden Commodore Sportswagon, leased, not applicable, \$927.40

K Chidley, Manager Program and Projects Management, Public Transport Authority, Honda CR-V, leased, not applicable, \$949.61

M Martinovich, Executive Director Infrastructure Planning and Land Services, Public Transport Authority, Subaru Liberty, leased, not applicable, \$987.33

M Burgess, Managing Director, Public Transport Authority, Holden Calais Sportswagon, leased, not applicable, \$1 048.25

R Davies, Manager Track and Structures, Public Transport Authority, Toyota Landcruiser Prado, leased, not applicable, \$1 072.93

D Thomas, Deputy Principal Project Director Forrestfield–Airport Link, Public Transport Authority, Hyundai Santa Fe, leased, not applicable, \$1 118.23

M White, Executive Director Transperth Regional and School Bus Services, Public Transport Authority, VW Tiguan, leased, not applicable, \$1 163.97

#### Fremantle Port Authority

(a)–(g) S Davey, Deputy Harbour Master, Fremantle Port Authority, Subaru Forester, leased, not applicable, \$560.78

P Johnson, Manager Electrical Services, Fremantle Port Authority, Subaru Forester, leased, not applicable, \$826.06

M Pearce, Manager Bulk Business, Fremantle Port Authority, Kia Optima, leased, not applicable, \$841.92

A de Vos, Manager External Affairs, Fremantle Port Authority, Subaru Forester, leased, not applicable, \$627.97

D Vallini, Manager Engineering Services, Fremantle Port Authority, Holden Cruz, leased, not applicable, \$421.98

A Coates, Manager Business and Port Planning, Fremantle Port Authority, Subaru XV, leased, not applicable, \$602.36

R Collett, Manager Human Resources, Fremantle Port Authority, Subaru Liberty, leased, not applicable, \$786.00

G Stephens, Senior Manager Trade and Business Development, Fremantle Port Authority, Volkswagen Passat, leased, not applicable, \$898.76

T Haria, Chief Financial Officer/General Manager Commercial and Corporate Services, Fremantle Port Authority, Subaru Forester, leased, not applicable, \$989.02

S Wade, General Manager Asset and Infrastructure Maintenance, Fremantle Port Authority, Mazda CX5, leased, not applicable, \$726.99

A Gray, Harbour Master/General Manager Port Operations, Fremantle Port Authority, Volkswagen Passat, leased, not applicable, \$1 058.31

G Valenti, General Manager Strategy and Planning, Fremantle Port Authority, Peugeot 508, leased, not applicable, \$895.34

D Brindal, Manager Logistics, Fremantle Port Authority, Volkswagen Passat, leased, not applicable, \$676.87

C Leatt-Hayter, Chief Executive Officer, Fremantle Port Authority, Volkswagen Passat, leased, not applicable, \$1 231.98

#### Kimberley Ports Authority

(a)–(g) V Bangia, Harbour Master, Kimberley Ports Authority, Nissan Navara, purchased, \$35 851, not applicable

T Hungerford-Morgan, Deputy Harbour Master, Kimberley Ports Authority, Nissan Navara, purchased, \$29 044, not applicable

M Gower, Operations Superintendent, Kimberley Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, purchased, \$24 458, not applicable

V Main, HSE Coordinator, Kimberley Ports Authority, Nissan Navara, purchased, \$29 112, not applicable

S Baker, Engineer, Kimberley Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, purchased, \$29 251, not applicable

#### Mid West Ports Authority

(a)–(g) P Klein, Chief Executive Officer, Mid West Ports Authority, Nissan Pathfinder, purchased, \$59 670, not applicable

#### Pilbara Ports Authority

(a)–(g) K Bylund, Commercial Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Holden Commodore, leased, not applicable, \$944.36

K Businoska, Lands Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Holden Commodore, leased, not applicable, \$971.22

A Puri, Commercial Trade Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Aurion, purchased, \$36 705, not applicable

P King, Director Port Development, Pilbara Ports Authority, Holden Captiva, purchased, \$35 877, not applicable

W Farrow, Strategic Asset Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Holden Captiva, leased, not applicable, \$732.89

T Usman, Engineering Services Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, purchased, \$62 544, not applicable

B Orr, Maintenance Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, purchased, \$59 776 (less \$45 000 trade-in), not applicable

M Kuzminski, Director Finance, Pilbara Ports Authority, Mazda 6, leased, not applicable, \$889.43

A Thavasi, ICT Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Holden Captiva, leased, not applicable, \$766.34

D Burgess, Finance Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Holden Colorado, leased, not applicable, \$729.58

M Marion, Finance Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Prado, purchased, \$79 824 (less \$45 000 trade-in), not applicable

D Miles, Director Human Resources, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Prado, purchased, \$97 733 (less \$55 000 trade in), not applicable

L Strydom, Marine Operations Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Isuzu MU-X, leased, not applicable, \$1 061.10

J Giles, Landside Operations Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, leased, not applicable, \$940.57

A Hays, Deputy Harbour Master, Pilbara Ports Authority, Isuzu D-Max, leased, not applicable, \$903.97

J Finch, General Manager Operations, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Prado, purchased, \$97 703 (less \$52 000 trade in), not applicable

G Giblett, Harbour Master, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Prado, purchased, \$79 968 (less \$38 000 trade-in), not applicable

F Schlack, Dredging Master, Pilbara Ports Authority, Mazda Cx-7, purchased, \$38 748, not applicable

M Fernandes, Harbour Master (Regional Ports), Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, purchased, \$61 319 (less \$24 000 trade-in) not applicable

M Minogue, Deputy Harbour Master, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, purchased, \$58 210 (less \$35 000 trade-in), not applicable

R Paris, General Manager Risk and Governance, Pilbara Ports Authority, Volkswagen Golf VII, leased, not applicable, \$1 103.73

A Hughes, Manager Enterprise Risk, Pilbara Ports Authority, Holden Captiva, leased, not applicable, \$673.18

B Parker, A/Environmental and Heritage Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, leased, not applicable, \$949.58

C Harrowing, Health and Safety Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, leased, not applicable, \$1 067.23

R Barrett, Director Corporate and Government Affairs, Pilbara Ports Authority, Mazda 6, leased, not applicable, \$834.30

B Kitchen, Director Environment and Heritage, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Prado, purchased, \$66 679, not applicable

W Young, Environment and Heritage Manager, Pilbara Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux, purchased, \$61 485 (less \$35 000 trade-in), not applicable

#### Southern Ports Authority

(a)–(g) M Cole, Maintenance Manager, Southern Ports Authority, Toyota Hilux SR Crew Cab Tray Back, purchased, \$29 991, not applicable

R Liley, A/Chief Operating Officer/Harbour Master, Southern Ports Authority, Ford Territory Wagon, purchased, \$34 845, not applicable

R Sub, Marine Pilot, Southern Ports Authority, Ford Falcon XT Sedan, purchased, \$30 863, not applicable

V Turner, Marine Pilot, Southern Ports Authority, Ford Kuga, purchased, \$31 318, not applicable

C Rogers, Marine Pilot, Southern Ports Authority, Toyota Kluger Wagon, purchased, \$45 450, not applicable

K Wheeler, Manager Projects and Engineering, Southern Ports Authority, Holden Colorado Ute, purchased, \$31 667, not applicable

D Lantry, Port superintendent, Southern Ports Authority, Isuzu M-UX, purchased, \$44 790, not applicable

M Beaton, Commercial Manager, Southern Ports Authority, Toyota Kluger V6 wagon, purchased, \$48 250, not applicable

D Gordon, HSE Manager, Southern Ports Authority, Subaru Forester, purchased, \$28 563, not applicable

B Granville, Chief Executive Officer, Southern Ports Authority, Mazda CX9, purchased, \$37 329, not applicable

K Schellack, Chief Executive Officer, Southern Ports Authority, Mazda CX9, purchased, \$55 400, not applicable

MINISTER FOR POLICE'S PORTFOLIOS — SENIOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS — ACTING OR TEMPORARY

**3425. Mr M. McGowan to the Minister for Police; Road Safety; Training and Workforce Development; Women's Interests:**

- (1) As at 17 February 2015, how many positions above Level 9.1 or equivalent, are being filled by persons in an acting or temporary capacity within each agency, department, commission or government trading enterprise within the Minister's portfolio responsibilities?
- (2) When identifying those organisations and figures in (1), will the Minister separately identify how many Director General or head of agency positions are being filled in an acting or temporary capacity as at 17 February 2015?
- (3) For those Director General or head of agency positions outlined in (2), how long has the position been filled by a person in an acting or temporary position?

**Mrs L.M. Harvey replied:**

Western Australia Police

- (1) Seven
- (2)–(3) Not applicable

Office of Road Safety

The Office of Road Safety is administratively supported as part of main Roads WA and as such the response will be included in the MRWA response under the Minister for Transport.

Department of Training and Workforce Development

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Central Institute of Technology

- (1) One
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Challenger Institute of Technology

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

C Y O'Connor Institute

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Durack Institute of Technology

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Goldfields Institute of Technology

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Great Southern Institute of Technology

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Kimberley Training Institute

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Pilbara Institute

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Polytechnic West

- (1) One
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

South West Institute of Technology

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

West Coast Institute of Training

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice no. 3430.

Department of Education Services

The Department of Education Services is accountable to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development for supporting the Training Accreditation Council. For its other functions the Department is accountable to the Minister for Education. The Department of Education Services is included in the response to the question from the Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Electoral Affairs.

Building Construction Industry Training Fund

- (1) Nil
- (2)–(3) Not applicable

Department of Local Government and Communities

Women's Interests is administratively supported as part of the Department of Local Government and Communities and, as such, the response will be included in the Department of Local Government and Communities' response under the Minister for Local Government; Community Services; Seniors and Volunteering; Youth.

## WATER — WATER RESTRICTIONS — NONCOMPLIANCE INVESTIGATIONS

**3466. Mr D.J. Kelly to the Minister for Water:**

- (1) For each of the years: 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013, and 2014, how many full-time equivalents were employed to investigate complaints regarding non-compliance with water restrictions?
- (2) For each of the years: 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013, and 2014, how many complaints regarding non-compliance with water restrictions were investigated?
- (3) For each of the years: 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013, and 2014, how many fines and /or warnings were issued following investigations into non-compliance with water restrictions?

**Ms M.J. Davies replied:**Aqwest

- |     |           |       |
|-----|-----------|-------|
| (1) | 2008–2010 | 0.05  |
|     | 2011–2014 | 0.025 |
| (2) | 2008      | 225   |
|     | 2009      | 201   |
|     | 2010      | 239   |
|     | 2011      | 74    |
|     | 2012      | 117   |
|     | 2013      | 68    |
|     | 2014      | 86    |
| (3) | 2008      | 155   |
|     | 2009      | 138   |

2010	162
2011	52
2012	70
2013	48
2014	69

Busselton Water

(1)	2008–2014	0.03
(2)	2008	39
	2009	38
	2010	42
	2011	46
	2012	44
	2013	11
	2014	55
(3)	2008	39
	2009	38
	2010	42
	2011	46
	2012	44
	2013	11
	2014	55

Department of Water

(1)	2008–2014	1
	2008–June 2010	Nil
	2010–2011	1 096
	2011–2012	460
	2012–2013	539
	2013–2014	346
(3)	2007–2008	1 257
	2008–2009	811
	2009–2010	626
	2010–2011	1 292
	2011–2012	324
	2012–2013	401
	2013–2014	388

Water Corporation

(1)	2008	12
	2009	12
	2010	11
	2011	11
	2012	11
	2013	12
	2014	12

(2)	2008	6 529
	2009	4 964
	2010	9 130
	2011	9 641
	2012	6 603
	2013	6 024
	2014	5 593
(3)	2008	15 314
	2009	9 706
	2010	12 543
	2011	17 754
	2012	12 821
	2013	12 810
	2014	11 740

TREASURER — GARY GRAY — LNG TRAIN

**3598. Mr W.J. Johnston to the Treasurer:**

I refer to your statement to Parliament on 17 February 2015 that Labor in power, under pressure from Gary Gray, was convinced that it was too expensive to design an LNG train in Australia, and I ask:

- (a) who informed you that Mr Gray pressured the Labor Government; and
- (b) what is the nature of the pressure that you say Mr Gray placed on the Labor Government?

**Dr M.D. Nahan replied:**

- (a) Mr Gray.
- (b) Woodside, where Mr Gray worked as a Senior Executive responsible for Corporate Affairs, lobbied the Government heavily to remove the requirement to manufacture the LNG train in Australia given the high cost.

STATE TRAINING PROVIDERS — COURSE FEES — LIMITS

**3608. Mr F.M. Logan to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:**

For both the 2013 and 2014 school years, what percentage of course fees at State Training Providers were levied at the annual maximum fee limit?

**Mrs L.M. Harvey replied:**

Prior to 2014, semester based caps applied to course fees. Under FutureSkills WA, course fee caps are now applied on an annual basis.

In Semester 1 2013, 26 per cent of students were charged course fees that reached the capped amount for their enrolments.

In Semester 2 2013, 22 per cent of students were charged course fees that reached the capped amount for their enrolments.

Validated VET enrolment data from the full-year 2014 collection will not be available until late March 2015.

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — WALLADAR SANDALWOOD ROAD TRAINS

**3622. Ms M.M. Quirk to the Minister for Forestry:**

- (1) How many times have Forest Products Commission staff given permission to Walladar (Sandalwood contractors) to drive their road trains on Walling Rock Station roads and the Menzies–Sandstone Shire road after heavy rain since 2009?
- (2) If such permission was granted in writing, can a copy of that correspondence be provided?
- (3) How many incident reports has the Forest Products Commission written against Walladar for driving their road trains on the Walling Rock Station roads and the Menzies–Sandstone roads after heavy rains since 2009?

- (4) If such reports were written, can you please provide a copy of the same?
- (5) Which Forest Products Commission staff authorised the road maintenance on the Kurrajong Gorge Road on Walling Rock Station between September and December 2014?
- (6) How was this road maintenance contract awarded, to who and at what cost?
- (7) Which Forest Products Commission employee inspected the Kurrajong Gorge Road on Walling Rock Station in January 2015, and what qualifications did this person have in road maintenance and are you able to provide a copy of his/her written report?
- (8) Will the Forest Products Commission cease using road trains on the Kurrajong Road on the Walling Rock Station when the road is in ill-repair, and if so, will it authorise repair of the road?
- (9) Why is the Sandalwood Manager based in Harvey and not in Kalgoorlie where the sandalwood operations are located?

**Ms M.J. Davies replied:**

- (1) Nil
- (2) Not applicable
- (3) One
- (4) [See tabled paper no 2755.]
- (5) The road maintenance was authorised by the Forest Products Commission's (FPC) Senior Forester and the Operations Officer, Sandalwood Branch.
- (6) The road maintenance work was completed by Walladar Enterprises. The work was awarded through a competitive process. The cost was approximately \$16 000.
- (7) The inspection was undertaken by FPC's Operations Officer, Sandalwood Branch. This officer has experience in forestry road construction and maintenance. Written reports are not required for routine road inspections such as this one.
- (8) Not applicable
- (9) The Sandalwood Manager is responsible for the overall management of sandalwood operations throughout the State including export markets and liaison with customers. The FPC's Senior Forester based in Kalgoorlie is responsible for the coordination of FPC's sandalwood field operations.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING — VACANT PROPERTIES — CANNINGTON ELECTORATE

**3623. Mr W.J. Johnston to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:**

How many Department of Housing houses and units were vacant in each of the following suburbs as at 1 January 2015:

- (a) Cannington;
- (b) East Cannington;
- (c) Beckenham;
- (d) Queens Park;
- (e) Wilson;
- (f) Lynwood;
- (g) Langford; and
- (h) Ferndale?

**Mr D.T. Redman replied:**

The Department of Housing advises:

- (a) 2
- (b) Nil
- (c) 2
- (d) 1
- (e) 9
- (f) Nil

- (g) 1  
(h) 1

## CORRECTIVE SERVICES — TABLED PAPER NO 2616

**3624. Mr W.J. Johnston to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I refer to tabled paper number 2616, that the Minister asserted was from the Labor Party, and I ask:

- (a) who gave the Minister this document;  
(b) given that tabled paper number 2616 has no logo, watermark or other insignia of the Labor Party, how did the Minister confirm the document's provenance;  
(c) is tabled paper number 2616 part of a longer document, and if so, how many pages are there in the complete document; and  
(d) if the Tabled Paper is part of a longer document, will the Minister table the complete document?

**Mr J.M. Francis replied:**

- (a)–(d) Annual Reports for 2006–07 and 2007–08 confirm that double bunking was being used to increase bed capacity:

*"...various strategies have been implemented to accommodate the additional numbers, including double bunking of prisoners in cells."* page 43 2005/06 DCS Annual Report

*"Double Bunking is also being need to increase bed capacity. As at 30 June 2007 616 multi- occupancy cells were in use across the State."* page 31 2006/07 DCS Annual Report.

*"Finalise installation of 272 ligature free bunk beds at Acacia, Hakea and Casuarina prisons."* page 26 of 2007/08 DCS Annual Report.

This clearly shows that the introduction of bunk beds was supported under the Carpenter Labor Government.

## MENTAL HEALTH — ALIVE AND KICKING GOALS PROJECT — BROOME

**3628. Ms J. Farrer to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Mental Health:**

I refer to the 'Alive and Kicking Goals' suicide prevention project based in Broome and ask:

- (a) how many people has Alive and Kicking Goals assisted since its establishment;  
(b) how much funding did the Government provide to the program for the following years: 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014;  
(c) will the Government continue funding this program after 30 June 2015; and  
(d) how much funding will the Government provide to the program for the years 2015 and 2016?

**Ms A.R. Mitchell replied:**

- (a) The 'Alive and Kicking Goals' project for the two (2) years July 2012–June 2014 report that approximately 2 450 youth attended either suicide prevention workshops, training including Mental Health First Aid and/or community youth events.  
(b) The WA Country Health Service provided the following funding under the WA Footprints to Better Health Strategy for the Alive and Kicking Goals suicide prevention program:

Funding year	Funding amount
2010–11	\$519 365
2011–12	\$535 983
2012–13	\$535 983
2013–14	\$535 983
2014–15	\$550 187

The Mental Health Commission (MHC) does not provide direct funding to the 'Alive and Kicking Goals' (AKG) project. AKG is funded by the West Australian Country Health Service.

In 2013–14, the MHC provided non recurrent funding of \$20 000 to the Blackdog Institute to support the partnership with AKG, for the development of the content of *ibobbly*, an app trialled and designed to improve mental health and reduce suicidal thoughts in Aboriginal youth.

In 2014–15, the MHC provided approximately \$17 000 to the Shire of Derby West Kimberley, in collaboration with AKG, to deliver four cultural weekend camps in Broome for young Indigenous people affected by suicide.

- (c)–(d) State Government Funding for the continuation of the Footprints to Better Health program is currently being considered as part of the 2015–16 Budget process.

**CORRECTIVE SERVICES — REPORT — KIMBERLEY JUVENILE JUSTICE**

**3631. Ms J. Farrer to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I refer to the report I laid upon the table in September 2014, regarding Kimberley Alternative Juvenile Justice, and ask:

- (a) has the Minister finished reading the report;
- (b) which of the 19 recommendations within the report has the Minister implemented; and
- (c) which of the 19 recommendations does the Minister intend to implement?

**Mr J.M. Francis replied:**

- (a)–(c) The Kimberley Juvenile Justice — Improving the Current Juvenile Justice System report is being considered by the Department of Corrective Services and the Youth Justice Board. Departmental representatives and Board members met with Ms Josie Farrer MLA on 11 March 2015 and Dr John Boulton on 6 March 2015. I hope to provide a response to the Member shortly.

**BROOME PRISON — PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

**3632. Ms J. Farrer to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I refer to the Broome Regional Prison facility and ask:

- (a) what is the current purpose of the Broome Regional Prison;
- (b) what are the functions that Broome Regional Prison offer that differ from the Derby West Kimberley Regional Prison;
- (c) why doesn't the Derby West Kimberley Regional Prison provide these functions;
- (d) what suggestions have been put forward as to the future of the Broome Regional Prison Facility and by who;
- (e) what does the Minister intend to do with the Prison and when; and
- (f) has the Minister consulted people in Broome and surrounding communities including the Yawuru people?

**Mr J.M. Francis replied:**

The Department of Corrective Services advises:

- (a) Broome Regional Prison (BRP) is a minimum security prison, and has facility to house maximum and medium security prisoners on a short-term basis. BRP is the custodial entry-point for prisoners received from Broome Police Watch House and the Broome Court system which is the primary court precinct in the region. BRP also holds prisoners requiring temporary accommodation in Broome for reasons including the facilitation of rehabilitative visits, inter-prison transfers or medical treatment at Broome Hospital. The muster at Broome Regional Prison as at 12/03/15 is 42.
- (b) West Kimberley Regional Prison (WGRP) is a medium security prison. It is responsible for the management of Broome Regional Prison annexe and the Wyndham Work Camp. It provides security and rehabilitative services to prisoners within the region, including receipt and assessment processes; targeted employment and training opportunities; offender treatment programs and specialised community support services. The muster at WGRP as at 12/3/15 is 149.
- (c) Not Applicable
- (d)–(e) As part of the estates population management strategy, merits of options, including projected growth in offender cohorts, are being drafted for Ministerial consideration.
- (f) There has been no public consultation to date in relation to future options for the Broome Regional Prison.

## CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — YOUTH — BROOME

**3633. Ms J. Farrer to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I refer to the rate of youth crime in the Kimberley and ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware of an increase of youth crime in Broome and in particular have you heard the of 'the bill boys';
- (b) what programs are currently offered in Broome for at risk youth between the hours of 5 p.m. and 6 a.m.; and
- (c) if there are currently no programs in place, during the specific time period in question (b), what steps has the Department made to ensure there is adequate funding and resources to provide a much needed service to the community of Broome?

**Mr J.M. Francis replied:**

- (a) Please refer this part of the question to the Minister for Police.
- (b) West Kimberley Regional Youth Justice Services (WKRYJS) currently facilitates or provides funding for 3 services for at risk youth between the hours of 5pm and 6 am.

WKRYJS have partnered with other agencies including the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS), Western Australia Police (WAPOL) and Broome Police and Citizen's Youth Club (PCYC) and provide staff to facilitate a further 3 services during these hours.

These initiatives and programs are designed to target young people who are at risk of offending and/or who have a high street presence and increase school attendance. The current programs are —

Basketball at the Broome Youth Hub (runs Monday 6pm–8pm)

Mechanics program facilitated by WKRYJS Youth Support Officer (runs Tuesday 4pm–7pm)

Chilling Space program at Broome Youth Hub (runs Saturday 6pm–10pm)

HYPE outreach program (runs Friday and Saturday nights 5.30pm–2am)

Community Engagement BBQ Events (runs Thursdays 3pm–7pm)

PCYC Speedway program (runs every second Saturday 5pm–11pm)

- (c) Not applicable

## CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — BROOME

**3635. Ms J. Farrer to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's response to my Question Without Notice No. 877, asked on 11 November 2014, regarding Broome violence and antisocial behaviour, and ask:

- (a) has the Premier met with the Broome Shire, Yawuru and/or other Broome based organisations to discuss possible solutions surrounding this issue, and if so, with who and on what date did you meet;
- (b) what is the Premier's proposed solution to the ongoing violence and antisocial behaviour in Broome; and
- (c) aside from discussions regarding the construction of a shelter or hostel, what else has the Premier done to combat and improve the situation in Broome?

**Mr C.J. Barnett replied:**

- (a) No, however both the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and WA Police continue to work with key stakeholders on the matter.

- (b)–(c) The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has coordinated a taskforce whose membership includes a range of State Government departments, the Federal Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Shire of Broome, Non-Government Organisations and Yawuru Traditional Owners. The Taskforce is working towards —

the development of a proposal for a Short Stay Accommodation Facility in Broome;

the establishment of a temporary camp in Broome;

investigating the possibility of conducting a regional conference for significant Aboriginal organisations to come together to discuss and identify strategies to address the issues of itinerant campers across the Kimberley;

identifying means of restricting alcohol access to those who have exhibited socially dysfunctional behaviour as a result of excessive alcohol consumption; and

exploring social development and resolving longer term issues with the behaviour of itinerant campers.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs provides funding for the Kullari community patrol in Broome which is run by the Mamabalanjin Aboriginal Corporation. Aboriginal community patrols are largely an Aboriginal community initiative staffed by Aboriginal people who use their cultural authority to intervene, mediate and, where possible, resolve potentially dangerous or disruptive situations in public places. In the 2013–2014 financial year Kullari patrol recorded 17 850 client contacts in Broome. WA Police has been working successfully with the Kullari patrol and has been moving intoxicated people out of areas of high risk.

#### KUNUNURRA COURTHOUSE — CONSTRUCTION

**3637. Ms J. Farrer to the Minister for Finance:**

I refer to the recent construction of the new courthouse in Kununurra, and I ask:

- (a) which company was awarded the contract to build;
- (b) how many local people were employed;
- (c) how many traineeships and apprentice positions were provided throughout the project; and
- (d) how many Aboriginal people were employed during the construction?

**Mr W.R. Marmion replied:**

The Department of Finance advises:

- (a) Cooper and Oxley Builders WA Pty Ltd
- (b) 20 local people were employed.
- (c) Eight traineeships and apprentice positions were provided (via various subcontractors/suppliers).
- (d) Eight Aboriginal people were employed during construction.

#### MINISTERS OF THE CROWN — MEDIA TRAINING

**3714. Mr M. McGowan to the Premier; Minister for State Development; Science:**

I refer to the provision of media training for the Premier during the period 10 March 2014 to date, and ask:

- (a) did the Premier receive media training by any paid, external service provider during this period;
- (b) if yes to (a), what was the name of the media training provider; and
- (c) if yes to (a), what was the amount paid to each media training provider outlined at (b)?

**Mr C.J. Barnett replied:**

- (a) No
  - (b)–(c) Not applicable
-

