



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2016

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 15 September 2016

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland) took the chair at 9.00 am, and read prayers.

SOUTHGATE DUNES — PRESERVATION

Petition

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [9.01 am]: I have two petitions. The first is a petition from 44 petitioners regarding the Southgate Dunes and requesting —

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 Southgates Dunes are an important part of Geraldton's environment and heritage.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to request the Department of Planning work with the City of Greater Geraldton to preserve the Southgates Dunes.

[See petition 395.]

NORTH WEST COASTAL HIGHWAY—WHITE PEAK ROAD INTERSECTION — RIGHT TURNING LANE

Petition

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [9.01 am]: I have a petition from 351 petitioners regarding the intersection of White Peak Road and North West Coastal Highway. It reads —

To the Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament Assembled—We the undersigned say that as North West Coastal Highway (NWCH) carries a high traffic volume, including large trucks and road trains. The intersection of White Peak Road and NWCH is in a dip, has limited vision, and no room for vehicles to bypass a stationary vehicle waiting to turn right against oncoming traffic.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to improve this intersection by adding right turning lane to this intersection as soon as possible.

[See petition 396.]

STOCK ROAD — MAIN ROADS LAYOUT — MODIFICATION

Petition

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [9.02 am]: I have two petitions. The first is signed in accordance with the standing orders of the house by 104 petitioners and is in the following terms —

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. We, the undersigned, say that the traffic congestion and road lay out of the major intersections between Stock Rd and Rockingham Rd that are bisected by Mayor Rd Munster is intolerable. Traffic from The Australian Marine Complex, two nearby Primary Schools and heavy haulage from Kwinana and Bibra Lake industrial estates make these intersections a danger to residents and all that use them. Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to call on the Barnett government to: Modify the Main Roads layout at Stock Rd in order to allow the new duplication of Beeliar Drive to continue over this key intersection and for the Mayor Rd and Rockingham Rd roundabout to be widened and duplicated to allow the free flow of traffic.

[See petition 397.]

HOUSING AUTHORITY TENANTS — INCOME ASSESSMENT

Petition

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [9.03 am]: The second petition conforms with the standing orders of the house and has been signed by 69 petitioners, and is in the following terms —

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, we the undersigned petitioners say that the recent decision by the National Party Minister for Housing to change the income assessment for Housing Authority tenants is a direct attack on the most vulnerable in our society. To now incorporate Centrelink and

Veterans Affairs benefits and allowances as assessable income for the purposes of paying Housing Authority rent is effectively taking away tenant's concession payments that are paid to assist with a particular situation or disability.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to call on the Barnett government to immediately reverse this grossly unfair and financially debilitating rental decision that is pushing pensioners, war veterans and the disabled into absolute poverty.

[See petition 398.]

PAPERS TABLED

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

CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL 2016 — SPEAKER'S RULING — STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

Notice of Motion

Mr B.J. Grylls (Leader of the National Party) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That this house —

- (a) recognises that the Speaker's ruling in relation to the Constitution and Electoral Amendment Bill 2016 is in conformity with the practice of the house;
- (b) acknowledges there is a public interest in having the bill debated in this house;
- (c) suspends so much of the standing orders as is necessary for the bill to be accepted from the Council and, subject to the house voting in the affirmative with an absolute majority at each stage of the bill, to proceed through its stages in the house; and
- (d) directs that the following message be sent to the Legislative Council —
 - (i) informs the Legislative Council that the Constitution and Electoral Amendment Bill 2016 forwarded from the Legislative Council to the Legislative Assembly on 8 September 2016 contains a clear appropriation which does not conform with section 46(1) of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899; and
 - (ii) nevertheless, and on the basis that the undoubted financial privileges of the Legislative Assembly are not diminished, has resolved to accept receipt of the Constitution and Electoral Amendment Bill 2016.

DEPARTMENT OF TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT — YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT — KIMBERLEY

Grievance

MS J. FARRER (Kimberley) [9.06 am]: My grievance this morning is to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. I rise this morning to speak about my great disappointment with the minister's Department of Training and Workforce Development, which seems to continue to do nothing to ensure that residents have the means to access training and gain employment in my electorate. People who are unemployed have spoken to me about their extreme frustration with agencies that have been awarded jobactive provider contracts. Numerous young people have explained to me that although they are actively doing their best to seek employment on their own, they unfortunately continue to be unsuccessful in gaining employment. They have also told me that the jobactive provider they are signed up with has not linked them with any potential employers or enrolled them to participate in any form of training, and has simply told these young people that they need to comply with the work for the dole program for at least six months. This is devastating to the self-esteem, self-worth and capacity building of our youth. They do not feel supported. This scenario is being experienced throughout the Kimberley, with many accounts being given to me by young people, especially in the Broome area. The government work for the dole provisions are causing high levels of stress and a loss of morale in communities. Not enough is being done in the region in the areas of vocational education, training and creating pathways to long-term employment for youth, and particularly Aboriginal youth. I believe that only through improved education and training opportunities and more diverse economic development will we be able to start addressing the generational disadvantages in my electorate.

The Premier's broken promises on the delivery of infrastructure, jobs, training, better health outcomes and quality education are crippling the Kimberley. As we all know, the Kimberley consists of four large shires. Just last week in these chambers, it was proven that this government has failed to deliver to the people of the East Kimberley. The Ord River irrigation scheme has failed to provide meaningful levels of training or employment to any locals in the Kimberley region. It is very disappointing that what could have been a positive and successful large-scale project in my electorate has made no encouraging impact on unemployment levels in Kununurra or the wider Kimberley region.

Adding to the government's long list of failures, it has also destroyed Kimberley TAFE. The previous regional director was given a heartless one week's notice that she was out of a job due to the amalgamation of the Kimberley and Pilbara TAFEs. The distance between Broome in the Kimberley and Port Hedland in the Pilbara does not stick in our minds. It is a six-hour drive from Port Hedland to Broome, and a lot of cost is involved for people to travel that distance alone, as well as being housed. The amalgamation process took away a lot of work for people. TAFE Aboriginal mentors and other staff lost their jobs throughout the region causing a big impact on the number and type of training programs that can be delivered. This, along with huge fee increases to all TAFE courses, has reduced the number of people choosing to participate in training.

I now look at Broome. Broome is a very big town with a great deal of potential to employ a lot of our Indigenous people when they achieve training programs, yet we do not see many young Indigenous people employed throughout the business sector or other industries. The Broome Aquaculture Centre that is run by Kimberley TAFE was built to support industry needs through training, research, production and development. The facility supports the production of marine finfish and has been crucial in the care and production of many other species—yet government support for this centre has also gone down. In addition to supporting the production of these commercially important species, the centre has also provided a critical support role for a number of aquaculture ventures—from community-based Aboriginal projects wishing to increase workforce capabilities through to commercial aquaculture ventures with specific projects requiring specialist assistance and needs. This government has now threatened to close this centre and discontinue aquaculture training in the Kimberley.

I truly fear for the future of training and workplace development within my electorate. With cuts to the regional youth justice strategy and Kimberley TAFE, and no increased funding for drug and alcohol rehabilitation or investment in existing youth centres, our young people face an uphill battle to succeed and achieve their goals. We see more and more of our young people who have become suicidal because they do not have jobs and have nothing meaningful in their lives. We have seen a higher number of Indigenous youths being imprisoned.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [9.14 am]: I thank the member for Kimberley for the grievance with respect to training in the Kimberley. I will address some of the concerns the member has raised.

I think I have expressed quite clearly in this place why we undertook the TAFE reform project. It was necessary to collapse those 11 administrative structures down to five. Doing that has freed up \$23 million for the system from year to year, which has allowed us to keep increases in TAFE fees down from zero to four per cent and allowed the state government to continue to fund all TAFE courses between 85 per cent to 100 per cent, depending on the course. For example, our foundation literacy and numeracy skills courses are free of charge to students.

The Kimberley Training Institute is the state's biggest public provider of vocational education to Aboriginal students. There are 3 500 course enrolments and 437 000 hours of publicly funded training was delivered to Aboriginal students in 2015. More than 58 per cent of all publicly funded course enrolments at the institute were undertaken by Aboriginal students last year, compared with a state average of eight per cent uptake. A significant investment has been made.

In terms of industry, the areas of study include agriculture, forestry, fishing, construction, health care and social assistance. Publicly funded course enrolments by Aboriginal students at the Kimberley Training Institute have almost doubled. Since 2008, uptake of courses by Aboriginal students through the Kimberley TAFE has increased by 93 per cent, from 1 808 enrolments in 2008 to 3 388 in 2015. The uptake in training is inconsistent with population growth in the Kimberley; the uptake of training has nearly doubled. The growth in enrolments has been particularly strong at higher levels, and this is a very, very positive outcome. Certificate III and above qualifications have increased by 94 per cent since 2008. With our Future Skills WA program we direct students to take courses that lead to employment, and more Kimberley students have taken up programs with a certificate III or higher qualification that improve employment outcomes for students who undertake that training.

In 2015, the Aboriginal students studying at the Kimberley Training Institute reported an overall satisfaction rating of 97.6 per cent, compared with 93.5 per cent for students generally. Students who engage with the Kimberley TAFE have said they have had a very positive experience and are satisfied with their learning experience. Our programs are tailored to be consistent with the "Kimberley workforce development plan 2014–2017". The Department of Training and Workforce Development and the Kimberley Development Commission engaged with businesses in the Kimberley to ensure that training delivered through the Kimberley Training Institute was consistent with industry needs for skilled workers to step into employment opportunities. The Kimberley workforce development plan will be undergoing review to put that strategy in place for the three years post 2017. The Department of Training and Workforce Development, together with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Kimberley Development Commission, collaborate with the Lombadina and Warmun communities to research and document community successes in achieving very high workforce participation rates. They have taken into consideration the role of initiatives that feed into that positive uptake of employment

participation—for example, the role of community councils, mining company contributions, local government employment practices, the very positive opportunities in the pastoral industry in the pipeline, and the employment resulting from community development projects and Aboriginal business activities. Aboriginal businesses in the Kimberley have been thriving, particularly those engaged in cultural tourism.

The West Kimberley Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre is collaborating with regional industry associations and government agencies to inform employers of the various forms of government and other support and assistance available for Aboriginal employment. The Department of Housing is also reviewing its training and employment requirements for construction and maintenance contracts for remote Kimberley communities. That is with a view to ensuring that intended employment and training opportunities are being offered to the communities—local people living locally being trained to perform the maintenance contracts within those communities. That is consistent with our Aboriginal communities reform project, in which we are trying to look at developing the local talent in the communities to be employed doing the work to keep the communities running and to provide an economic base and structure for the future, and some hope for the future, for those young children in those communities. I thought it was a very disappointing report last week from the Auditor General on the Ord project. The Ord project has delivered significant Aboriginal employment outcomes already and we see a massive future in the agricultural sector. The state government's investment has been a stimulus for economic development. There are opportunities there around fisheries, aquaculture and the Ord, and soon we will enable the Ord final agreements for the Indigenous people with respect to that project and we are very excited about that. In response to the grievance from the member for Kimberley, we will continue to focus on particularly Aboriginal youth, with our Aboriginal youth transitions employer engagement project and a range of other initiatives to ensure that Aboriginal jobseekers and young Indigenous people are provided with the training opportunities and the support that they need to go into employment and contribute to the economic development of the Kimberley. That is our purpose.

WILD DOG CELL FENCE

Grievance

DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre) [9.21 am]: I thank the Minister for Agriculture and Food for taking my grievance in and around a wild dog cell fence. Going back to 2009, I recognise you, Madam Deputy Speaker, from the history of this around the Southern Rangelands Pastoral Advisory Group and the sustainability of the pastoral industry, particularly in the southern rangelands. By the southern rangelands, I mean the area around Kalgoorlie, Kambalda and Coolgardie and a legion of pastoral leases that, historically, have been ravaged by wild dogs and the pastoralists have been driven to a situation in which virtually no sheep are being grazed in that region. The Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance—KPA—was formed in 2011. Members may remember that I have brought this issue before the Parliament previously. However, it is important now, because although the work that you did, Madam Deputy Speaker, around the sustainability of the pastoral industry showed, following a cost–benefit analysis, that a fence did not provide many benefits, because of the improvements in wool production—in fact, we can put the meat concept within that equation—the cost–benefit analysis shows that every dollar spent on a fence returns significant benefits to the industry.

Yes, there has been work done in baiting, shooting and trapping. We might win some battles, but without a barrier to keep dogs out of a specific area, we are losing the war. If we have a barrier, we can clean the dogs out of a specific area and create a cell. The cell originally started with around 16 pastoral leases. There are about nine today, because we have basically done nothing over that time and no progress has really been made, although there has been much representation to ministers and the Premier, and the recognition of a great concept—that is, the recognition of the potential to restore an industry that is on its knees because of the wild dogs and the ravages. The Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance, as I said, was convened in 2011. It put forward a project to encircle an area of around two million hectares, with the potential to re-establish 200 000 dry sheep equivalents to produce a million kilos of wool a year, and the potential of a \$75 000 turn-off of sheep from this region. The stations involved are Edjudina, Menangina, Gindalbie, Pinjin, Mt Vettors—you would know a lot of these, Madam Deputy Speaker—Woolibar, and Mt Monger. A legion of these stations are coming together under an alliance. This alliance was with 13 pastoral places in February 2011, with a memorandum of understanding and seed funding. This group put money into the game. It did a cost–benefit analysis and did all the work on a project to build a fence at \$7 579 a kilometre, including clearing costs and material. This was for a 1 200 millimetre fence to preclude dogs and therefore enable the industry to be established. I suppose it is around a funding mechanism. These pastoralists do not want a free gift; they do not want a handout. They want a mechanism and they recognise the importance of having skin in the game. Essentially, the model put forward is that government, in effect, will fund half the cost of the fence and half the interest costs of the loan. The KPA would be responsible for maintaining the fence. This would be funded through the rates it raises under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007, with matched funds from Treasury. We understand that the cost of this is around \$7.2 million. The pastoralists will put half of that in the game and require \$3.6 million as a low interest payback loan over time, in order to establish a fence, wait until they re-establish their flocks and industry for both wool and meat and to reinvigorate this industry that was once there and is no longer.

Minister, we have a very good example in Queensland. Queensland has 17 of these cells encompassing 93 pastoral leases. It has invigorated its industry because, indeed, like WA, Queensland has been ravaged and this industry was on its knees. It has breathed new life into the industry, and it is important for not only the pastoralists and the region, but also the state. Minister, this is a very good project. The concepts are good. The pastoralists are not necessarily asking for a free kick; they are asking for the ability to reintroduce an industry to make them productive again, and they have already exhibited a desire to put skin in the game. There needs to be a funding mechanism; we need to make this happen. As governments often do and should do, they do not get into the industry themselves, but they create an environment in which the industry can flourish. It is very important. This issue has been around for a long time. Queensland has 17 projects and we have not got one. The model is already there. The model is set and the business plan is set; the work has been done. We do not need to reinvent the wheel; these people know how to build a fence. They need assistance with finance to make this happen but, as I have said, it is not a grant; it is not a giveaway. They need a mechanism by which this can happen.

MR D.C. NALDER (Alfred Cove — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [9.28 am]: I thank the member for Eyre for his grievance and would like to acknowledge the hard work that he does on behalf of farming communities in his electorate. As the member would be aware, Western Australia's sheep industry, which currently runs at around 40 million sheep, makes a very valuable contribution to the state's economy by a gross value of agriculture production of \$992 million, being both meat and wool. Sheep are an integral part of mix-crop, livestock farming systems in the south west land division and some of the state's pastoral industry in the southern rangelands. Increased wild dog predation has played a major role in the declining sheep flock across Western Australia and this has exacerbated since the early 1990s. As a result, a very small number of small livestock remain in this once highly productive area. The soon-to-be-released wild dog action plan highlights how the impact of wild dogs is stifling investment in the pastoral industry and reducing confidence to capitalise on growing opportunities for meat exports to Asia, in particular. It also shows the inroads that wild dogs are making from the pastoral areas into our highly productive agricultural areas as well.

On 11 August this year, I met with the Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance, which consists of the nine pastoral stations in the goldfields referred to by the member. As he outlined, the alliance needs to raise \$7 million to build a cell fence and re-establish the sheep industry in that region. The alliance outlined to me that the fence will be the first step in a sheep industry renewal program for the goldfields. Following its establishment, the pastoralists involved intend to spend up to \$500 000 each on new stock, infrastructure and rehabilitation, as well as wild dog control. Ongoing maintenance for the fence, follow-up wild dog control and re-establishing sheep numbers will be the responsibility of the local alliance members. They believe that within five years of building the fence, the goldfields pastoral region could readily support up to 250 000 sheep again. At that meeting I suggested that if this business case could be proven up, the government could share the costs in the early stages of the project whilst a viable, long-term sheepmeat industry is re-established. I do not mind whether it is sheepmeat or wool, I think that the opportunity for either is there. The shared funding model could be in the form of a low-interest loan for a pilot cell fencing project; however, I am open to other models that could provide the same outcome. The discussion at the meeting was around the Rural Business Development Corporation and, essentially, trying to find or provide access to capital that will allow the alliance to get on and build the fence. Over time, the success with that project would enable alliance members to pay back any loans. I believe that we should make this a pilot project so that the government has some skin in the game alongside the pastoralists and shares in some of the risk. I have asked the alliance to finalise a model and bring that back to me.

I understand that on 6 and 7 October, the Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance will meet with key stakeholders to progress this matter. I will be encouraging the Department of Agriculture and Food to assist the alliance in the planning process, which will include defining the market and supply chain requirements for establishing a successful sheepmeat industry in the goldfields.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: Maybe we should go to it together.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Yes, I am more than happy to. As I said, I met with alliance members about six weeks ago and I was encouraged by the activities they have undertaken. We looked at a number of different fences that they put up in a trial to explore different heights and how it gets pinned to the ground —

Dr G.G. Jacobs: They know how to build a fence, minister.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Member for Eyre, with both of us being from out in the bush, it is interesting to note that it is not so much the wild dogs going over the fence that is a problem, but them getting underneath that the pastoralists have to deal with. They actually have to lay the net and make sure that that gets pinned so that the dogs cannot get underneath.

I am very keen to see this project get up and running. I am very keen to define a model as quickly as possible so that I can take it back through the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee and Treasury to see whether we can get the Rural Business Development Corporation to provide funding to get this up and running. There is nothing I would like more than to see a vibrant pastoral community out there again. Many of the pastoralists out

there cannot shift to cattle because it is not necessarily the region for it; therefore, without having a sheep block, there is very little they can do. It is very difficult for them, given the number of wild dogs that come from the rangelands. This government has a responsibility and an onus to support the pastoralists to get this up and going. If it is successful, the pilot project will result in a profitable sheepmeat industry, which, particularly at the moment, can take advantage of the growing demand for protein in Asia. I am very keen to support that, as well as the improvements that come from regional employment. Let us look at employment and the flowthrough for local communities from sheep versus cattle, for example; for every dollar generated, more is retained within the local community because of the local employment created from that industry. I am very keen to see this pilot project get up and running and for it to be successful. It obviously has the potential then to go right out over the Eucla region where more stations could really benefit from its success.

Again, I thank the member for this grievance and I can assure him that DAFWA will continue to support and assess the feasibility of this pilot project. I look forward to updating the member on its progress.

SOUTH WESTERN HIGHWAY — PICTON EAST

Grievance

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [9.34 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Transport. Although there has been correspondence between the minister's office and my office on this issue, I think it has been dismissed as a frivolous complaint by the minister's department. Anyway, I thank the minister very much for taking the grievance. As we know, the number of deaths on country roads is double that in the city. We need to have eyes and ears on the ground so that we know where the problems are. This grievance is a classic case in which the community has asked that a speed limit be lowered, and there are many reasons for that. One is the number of near misses and accidents in that area. Another major issue is that a bottle shop-cum-service station and a caravan park both have very close entry points on this highway, which are on a blind bend for people travelling north on the highway. People turn off the highway for that area and on the other side is a new subdivision with major industry being put in there. Although a slip-road has been put in for the subdivision development, there is nothing on the other side for people to turn into when coming from the south. The other part of the problem is that when people travelling north from Bunbury want to turn off into the caravan park, they have to park in the middle of the road on the blind bend. It is a very dangerous situation, yet the residents in that area are not asking for much. All they want is a small reduction in the speed limit, which will create very little disruption to the area but make it a lot safer, from 100 kilometres an hour to 80 kilometres an hour in that region.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Can you take your conversation outside, please?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: We must remember that the mix and match of vehicles in this area in recent times has changed dramatically due to the mid-sized industrial area that has been created and a lot of trucks at various speeds are coming in and out of that area onto the highway. One resident was recently involved in an accident. She told me that as she was trying to turn into the caravan park, she looked in the rear-view mirror and said a quick prayer before she was rammed from behind by a truck. That caravan park contains a lot of permanent residents and I do not want to see that happen again. I can recall a major accident that happened there. I was the second car to come across it but I did not stop for very long. It was obvious that there was nothing that I could do because the person in that car was dead. I do not want to see that happen again.

I do not think that due consideration has been given to the increase in the number of people and traffic movements in this area, especially with the heavy and medium-sized haulage and the mix and match of vehicles. This small request for a reduction in the speed limit should be accommodated. We could go further and say that we need a turn-off coming from the north going south—a slip lane—so that people can get into the service station and the caravan park safely. Main Roads Western Australia declined that request because it is a driveway and it must be done by the private owners. However, we must remember that this road has been there for quite some time—well before my time! It has been there for 100-odd years and the defined area has changed so much that we should be looking at it. I have written to the minister and had answers back saying that this request has been declined. I have those letters here. I just ask that we look at this matter again because the demographics have changed a lot in such a short time and I do not think that Main Roads has kept up with the requests or has an understanding of what has happened in that area.

About 25 to 30 people attended a public meeting down there. I said that I would bring this grievance to the minister and that the minister, being a reasonable person, would possibly agree to this small change. Then I said that if he does not agree, we know when the election will be held, so we can work from there. However, I am very serious about this matter. I travel in the area on a regular basis and often see near misses there. People coming home from work at Worsley will drop in to get a couple of stobbies or petrol from that area and they tend to brake late, resulting in drivers impacting or nearly running up the backside of other cars. We do not want to see further deaths in this area. It is a simple fix. It is one the community has identified. Let us face it: our job is to listen to the community and to work to address their problems. That has not happened in this case; it has just been a matter of it staying where it is. The speed limit was reduced a few years ago from 110 to 100 kilometres

an hour. Now is the time for the speed limit in that area to come down to 80 kilometres an hour, for straight-out safety reasons—no other reason. To get that response from that number of people at a midweek meeting shows how seriously people who live in that area feel about this matter. I am sure that if the people who travel through to Bunbury had been notified of the meeting, they would have turned up in their hundreds in this area. It is a major concern of mine and of the people in that area. I hope the minister is able to accommodate their request.

MR D.C. NALDER (Alfred Cove — Minister for Transport) [9.41 am]: I thank the member for Collie–Preston for his grievance. As the member pointed out, he raised with me earlier this year in May his concern about the safety of this location. Main Roads Western Australia has provided me with information on the section of South Western Highway in Picton East adjacent to Condello’s Liquor and the Waterloo Village Caravan Park. This section of South Western Highway is a 100-kilometres-an-hour speed zone. As the member pointed out, the speed limit was reduced in 2008 from 110 kilometres an hour. The traffic volume on this section of South Western Highway is around 6 100 vehicles a day, of which roughly 15 per cent are heavy vehicles. South Western Highway is moderately curved at this location. The liquor–fuel store and caravan park are located on the inside of the curve. The sight distance to and from both driveways is adequate for the current speed limit of 100 kilometres an hour. There are no slip lanes or additional line markings on the highway to identify the driveways to the liquor–fuel store and caravan park. However, there is a widened sealed shoulder along the highway to assist motorists to pass right-turning vehicles safely.

For the five-year period from January 2011 to the end of December 2015 there were two crashes recorded at the driveways in question, and both occurred in 2015. One was a rear-end crash of “hospital” severity and the other a “property damage only” severity right-angle crash. Even including the recent crash this year, such crash frequency would not normally highlight this location as being of particular concern. However, I am very aware of the concerns that residents of the caravan park and patrons of the store have for their safety when driving on this section of South Western Highway. Safety on our roads is a priority for this government. Therefore, I have requested Main Roads to undertake a road safety review of this section of South Western Highway, including access to the liquor–fuel store and caravan park. Main Roads will report back to me by November this year on the outcomes of that road safety review. I will provide the member with a copy of that report once I receive it.

HOUSING AUTHORITY — STATE HOUSING DENSITY

Grievance

MRS G.J. GODFREY (Belmont) [9.43 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Housing. In March this year I presented a grievance about state housing to Hon Terry Redman as minister representing the Minister for Housing in the lower house. I requested a concrete redevelopment plan, with targets and timelines, to reduce the absolute number of public housing stock within the precincts of the Belmont electorate identified by the Housing Authority as state housing clusters that need de-concentration.

Point of Order

Ms S.F. McGURK: Madam Deputy Speaker, could you clarify what the situation is when the minister to whom the member is grieving is not here.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am advised that the grievance can go ahead without the minister. If the minister does not come to the house by the end of the member’s grievance, it is recorded without a response.

Grievance Resumed

Mrs G.J. GODFREY: In his response, the minister advised that the Housing Authority is working on delivering urban renewal projects within the suburbs of Rivervale, Cloverdale, Belmont and Redcliffe through four different approaches. In Rivervale, it has opted for the rationalisation approach, which includes activities such as spot purchases, property refurbishments and selling current assets. In Cloverdale, the authority has chosen the redevelopment approach, which includes the demolition and/or redevelopment of assets for the retention of public housing, shared equity sales and/or full market sales. In Belmont, the approach selected was renewal, which includes all the previously mentioned activities, coupled with the option of acquiring private properties to restructure the area. In Redcliffe, the authority opted for the revitalisation approach, which includes rezoning, road realignment and upgrading of the local amenities such as parks and streetscaping.

Particularly in relation to Rivervale, the minister said that the Housing Authority was aiming for a rationalisation target of 50 properties in the next five years and 100 to 120 properties in the long term. I thought this was encouraging information, despite not agreeing with the drawn-out time frame of five years and beyond. Not long after I presented that grievance, one of my constituents came to my office in April very concerned about the letter she had received from the Housing Authority. An excerpt from the letter states —

As you may be aware, the Housing Authority is reducing its number of public housing dwellings in your immediate area through its Social Housing Investment Package.

Your property has been identified as potentially suitable for this project, with the purpose of today's visit to assess whether it will remain as social housing in the future. If your property is selected for the project, it will no longer be used for social housing and the Housing Authority will offer you another property in a suitable location.

There are a number of available support options such as financial assistance, which will be discussed if you are required to move. If your property is found to be unsuitable for the project, there will be no change, and it will remain as social housing.

With state housing being a major issue for Belmont, the social housing investment package is very important and I would greatly appreciate information that I can use to inform constituents of its progress, especially with the rationalisation approach selected to de-concentrate state housing clusters in Rivervale.

MR B.J. GRYLLES (Pilbara — Minister for Housing) [9.48 am]: I thank the member for Belmont for the grievance and for her ongoing interest in this matter. She regularly speaks to me about this issue and I use her examples when I meet with the Department of Housing and the director general because her view is shared by many, and I understand the concern.

The appropriate mix of social and affordable housing across all communities is important and is a priority for this government. I point the member for Belmont to the success the Housing Authority achieved in the recently completed New North project. This project radically changed the face of Balga, Girrawheen, Koondoola and Westminster over a 20-year period. These projects require long-term, sustained commitment from state government, local government, the private sector and the community to fund and shape a future vision for the renewed communities. This is particularly the case in places such as Belmont, Bentley and Beaconsfield in the metropolitan area and Broome, Geraldton and Albany in regional Western Australia. Because we have had success in these renewal projects, members will hear us talking more about those programs in the coming months.

The New North project was predicated on a strong public housing presence of 25 to 35 per cent of all housing in the four suburbs. This enabled the Housing Authority to take a lead role in the approach and delivery of revitalising these suburbs.

The City of Belmont has around 8.4 per cent of households as public housing—an overall ratio of around one to 11. There are pockets of high public housing density and this is largely a legacy of the “housing commission suburbs” of past decades and their long-term residents who have raised families in the community. These areas of high density are in Rivervale, Cloverdale and Redcliffe. The Housing Authority has around 1 434 households in public housing across the City of Belmont, approximately 36 per cent of whom are seniors. We are committed to addressing the appropriate mix of public housing through continued urban renewal in Belmont. This is already well underway with the social housing investment program, stock redevelopment and affordable housing programs that the member has previously been briefed on by the department.

In May 2015, the government announced a \$560 million social housing investment package to halve the number of seniors and families with children on the priority waiting list by June 2017. From the \$560 million allocation, \$79 million worth of expenditure will be directed to urban renewal programs across the state to address areas of high public housing concentration such as those within the City of Belmont. Housing has also identified opportunities to purchase replacement public housing within the east metropolitan region to facilitate the relocation of tenants from Rivervale. This will allow up to 50 vacated properties to be sold over a three-year period, subject to housing market conditions and sales rates. Housing has progressed, and continues to progress, a range of initiatives aimed at reducing high concentrations of social housing in the City of Belmont.

In Rivervale, a total of 50 properties will be vacated, renovated and sold over a three-year period to March 2019 through the urban renewal program. To date, six properties have already been vacated and sold. Rivervale's unique social mix has led to the establishment of a diverse network of specialised support services such as seniors support, Rivervale Primary School, Belmont Aboriginal Pre-School, the Salvation Army and the Rivervale Community Centre. Many of Housing's tenants benefit from close proximity to these services. An urban renewal program in Rivervale has been initiated to address its high social housing presence, specifically around Wilson Park. I know that the member would like us to focus on that. In the first instance, Housing is targeting rationalisation of up to 50 properties in the next three years and between 100 to 120 properties in the longer term.

In Cloverdale and Rivervale, 16 underutilised public housing assets are currently being redeveloped and will return 37 new housing assets. Of the 37 dwellings, only six have been retained for public housing, 10 are being sold as shared equity affordable housing and 21 are being sold as full sale. The revenue from the sales will support the purchase of replacement public housing stock in other areas as we look to decrease the density of public housing.

In Redcliffe, the Housing Authority has been working closely with the City of Belmont on the strategic vision of the Forrestfield–Airport Link project. The final planning solution adopted by the city will dictate the options available to Housing for the redevelopment and de-concentration of its housing in Redcliffe. Housing will continue to address areas of high public housing concentration through urban renewal, progressive redevelopment and other associated housing programs. Housing’s aim is to work with local government, residents in the local community and industry to support and achieve economic and social prosperity. This includes an appropriate social mix.

I encourage all members of Parliament to bring their concerns to me as housing minister when areas of high public housing density are affecting the local community. We have legacy problems that we are trying to unwind. We know that we need to provide a safety net of public housing for the people in the community who need that but with that safety net comes the obligation of being good tenants, paying rent and looking after the property. Government policies in and around that are very important.

The member for Belmont continues to raise this issue. She has put pressure back onto the Housing Authority, which I welcome. That is the job of a member of Parliament. That pushes the Housing Authority to come up with the best possible solutions for her community. I thank the member for her grievance. I thank her for her willingness to call it like it is with regard to my agency. I give my commitment to her to work with her to make her electorate a great place to live. Public housing is an important safety net for the community but it needs to provide a positive outcome for the wider community. When legacy issues have led to it not being so positive, our urban renewal programs can hopefully begin to solve those problems.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

Fourteenth Report — “Annual Report 2015–16” — Tabling

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [9.54 am]: I present for tabling the fourteenth report of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee entitled “Annual Report 2015–16”.

[See paper 4530.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am tabling this report because our chair, Hon Margaret Quirk, the member for Girrawheen, is unavailable this morning. I commence by acknowledging the work of the committee: of course, the member for Girrawheen as our chair, who has shown great leadership; and also the other members—the member for Balcatta, the member for Vasse and the member for Collie–Preston. We have had some very vigorous debate but in the end we have produced substantial reports. The people whom I would personally like to thank the most—I know that the chair and my fellow committee members would also like to thank them—are our committee staff: the principal research officer, Dr Sarah Palmer; and the research officer, Ms Franchesca Walker. All members who sit on committees know very well the work that committee staff do. They do the real work of the committee. We attend the hearings and we may ask questions that have often been prepared by the committee staff but they do the brilliant drafting of the reports that we end up tabling and discussing in Parliament. The work that we have been blessed to receive from Dr Sarah Palmer and Ms Franchesca Walker has been outstanding. There are also all the logistics of organising hearings, arranging for witnesses to appear, getting back to witnesses, writing follow-up questions and correspondence and arranging committee travel, whether it is interstate or overseas. They have done truly outstanding work. I never want to lose our committee staff but if any prospective employers want to employ people of high quality, they can always look to committee staff, who work under immense pressure. They often work with four or five members of Parliament, who all have egos and are of different political persuasions.

Mr P. Abetz: Surprise, surprise!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, surprise, surprise. I think they do fantastic work. When they observe us in action, I wonder what they are really thinking. Being professional, they keep their own counsel. They are outstanding people. I think the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee has been blessed with the quality of committee staff that we have been associated with.

Our committee is very interesting. I think it is the only committee that is dominated by the opposition; it has a three–two composition. The other thing that is very interesting about our committee is the wideranging portfolios that we have. We are responsible for 19 portfolio areas, including Aboriginal affairs, Attorney General, child protection, citizenship and multicultural interests, community services, corrective services, culture and the arts, disability services, electoral affairs, emergency services, environment, local government, police, road safety, seniors and volunteering, sport and recreation, veterans, women’s interests and youth. That is an incredibly wideranging number of portfolios. With regard to Aboriginal affairs, I was speaking to the member for Kimberley this morning. She asked whether it was possible for me to mention a report on suicide in Indigenous communities in the West Kimberley. It was not produced by our committee. She believes that some very good recommendations were made in that report but she was concerned that they have not been put into action.

In the absence of the chair of our committee, it is appropriate that I read into *Hansard* her foreword of the annual report, which states —

ONCE again, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee has had a very productive year, tabling two inquiry reports and one agency review report and completing the evidence-gathering phase of its final inquiry for the 39th Parliament.

The Committee began the financial year with hearings for the second focus area of its inquiry into how WA Police evaluates its performance. The focus was on domestic violence, and the measures WA Police has in place to evaluate whether it is providing adequate protection to victims.

The report made eight recommendations pertaining to training of officers, GPS tracking of serious domestic violence offenders, the implementation of intermediate performance indicators, collection of demographic data related to domestic violence offences, and a domestic violence strategy specific to police.

Responding to the report, WA Police indicated some willingness to implement additional performance measures, but did not agree that it needed to update its lapsed family and domestic violence strategy. It believed the Department for Child Protection and Family Support strategy, *Freedom from Fear* (released in September 2015), was sufficient. But none of the actions in that strategy identify specific actions or responsibilities for police.

The Committee wrapped up its three-part inquiry into WA Police performance evaluation with an assessment of measures to evaluate management of police personnel. This covered recruitment, training, internal investigations, and the treatment of officers considered medically unfit to continue.

While there was a suggestion that some of the practices would be reviewed in line with the report's 13 recommendations, the response to the report did not provide great encouragement that the culture of the police service would change.

For example, WA Police did not support the use of Section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act (1984) to ensure diversity within the service, and was not prepared to find a way to provide feedback to ex-officers who apply to return to the service but are unsuccessful.

The response to findings and recommendations made in regard to officers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder is particularly disappointing.

WA Police said it was considering a proposal to recognise the service of officers dismissed on medical grounds (as per the Committee's recommendation), but stipulated that the serious injury would have to be in relation to an operational incident or attack on an employee. This would preclude sufferers of PTSD whose illness is most often induced by the accumulation of stress, rather than a single incident.

This seems to be indicative of the attitude of WA Police to PTSD in general, with officers still struggling to have their symptoms recognised, and reluctant to seek help due to the risk of stigmatisation and the potential negative impact on their careers.

I will just interrupt the foreword. It is interesting that, from recollection, the police do not collect data on police officers suffering from PTSD, which I find quite surprising. The foreword continues —

While still completing the police inquiry, the Committee followed up on an agency review with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support regarding the management of a teenager in the Department's care who had been convicted of the manslaughter of his newborn baby while in hospital.

Given some of the comments in the judge's sentencing report (which the Children's Court made available to the Committee) and some concerns from the union representing child protection workers, the Committee believed the management of the case warranted further investigation.

The report made seven findings and two recommendations. The Department for Child Protection and Family Support says it is reviewing whether it needs to strengthen its practice guidance to assist staff in assessing parental capacity to protect children from harm, and that it has recently strengthened guidelines for assessing protection of children in hospital.

This is welcome, however it is tragic that a baby had to die in these circumstances before the safety and supervision practices were reviewed.

In the final month of the financial year four members were fortunate enough to travel to Melbourne and New Zealand to see for themselves what can be achieved for at-risk youth through sports and cultural programs.

The Committee was impressed by the passion of those recreation and arts workers who were able to see the potential of young people who might otherwise be sidelined and perhaps find themselves on the wrong side of the law.

There were many examples of inspiring young men and women who had grabbed the opportunities offered to them with both hands. This gave us great hope for achieving similar outcomes in our State, pending appropriate support.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Committee Members for their ongoing support, and acknowledge the work of the Committee's staff, Dr Sarah Palmer and Ms Franchesca Walker.

That was the foreword from the chair of the committee, the member for Girrawheen. As I stated in my opening remarks, and as concluded in the foreword by the member for Girrawheen, I think as a committee we have worked well, but there have obviously been times of tension amongst the committee, which I think is a healthy, proper utilisation of the committee process to allow all points of view to be expressed. People who have not sat on committees may not realise their value. I think we need to be careful about committees being seen, often by governments, as just opportunities for oppositions trying to score cheap political points and sometimes the opposition seeing them as a process to score cheap political points. The point is that the committee system is one of the most important institutions in the parliamentary framework and it provides very valuable work that can make the role of government, and even Parliament, in Western Australia work much better. I noticed that the Education and Health Standing Committee is not dominated by the opposition, but it has produced reports that at times have been critical or questioning of government policy, and I see nothing wrong with that. I see that as the operations and obligations of committee members. I think we need to get away from government committee members seeing themselves as a safeguard or gatekeeper to any criticism of the government.

At the beginning of my contribution I mentioned the work of our committee staff, Dr Sarah Palmer and Ms Franchesca Walker, and I want to repeat that compliment and show the appreciation and acknowledgement that all committee members have in respect of the quality of their intellect, the quality of their research and writing, their work ethic and the fact that they are just incredibly nice people. They have to be incredibly nice people to deal with the five people on the committee! It has been an honour to stand here representing the member for Girrawheen, who, as we know, for the term of this Parliament has been subjected to some unfair criticism as chair of this committee. As the final weeks of this, the thirty-ninth Parliament, come to an end, this Community Development and Justice Standing Committee can be very proud of its work. Our committee staff, Dr Palmer and Ms Walker, can be particularly proud of the very hard work and high-quality research and writing that they have produced for the committee to consider and table in this Parliament.

MR C.D. HATTON (Balcatta) [10.08 am]: It is with pleasure that I stand here to add a quick comment to the delivery of the "Annual Report 2015–16" of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. As stated in the chair's foreword, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee has had a productive year, tabling two inquiry reports and one agency review report, and completing the evidence-gathering phase of its final inquiry into the thirty-ninth Parliament. The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee has responsibility for 19 portfolio areas, so that is quite extensive. In the past financial year the committee has focused on the portfolio areas of police, child protection, youth, culture and the arts, and sport and recreation. I am confident at this stage in the thirty-ninth Parliament that the committee, over the course of the reporting period of 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, with some ups and downs at times, worked cohesively towards executing the functions and powers of committees, in particular those functions and powers that relate to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. Members of Parliament, and all people, must not overlook or undermine the importance of committees, the relevance and standing of which have at times been questioned in the current political climate. The functions of a committee are to review and report to the Assembly on such things as outcomes and administration of the departments within the committee's portfolio responsibilities, annual reports of government departments laid on the table of the house, the adequacy of legislation and regulations within its jurisdiction, and any matters referred to it by the Assembly including bills, motions, petitions, votes of expenditure, other financial matters, reports or papers. That is a fairly good definition of what committees are aiming at.

In upholding committee functions and respecting their relevance and importance, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, in the period covered by this annual report, completed the inquiry into methods of evaluating Western Australian police performance, continued an agency review with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, and commenced an inquiry into building resilience and engagement for at-risk youth through sport and culture. The committee met on 29 occasions for deliberative meetings, hearings or briefings, and undertook investigative travel to Geraldton, Melbourne and New Zealand. The committee also tabled four reports, including its annual report.

In tabling the committee's tenth report, "A measure of trust: How WA Police evaluates the effectiveness of its response to family and domestic violence", and in realising the complexity of the social issues surrounding domestic and family violence, the committee raised questions about Western Australia Police key performance indicators, the movement forward of the family and domestic violence strategy 2009–11, and the relevance of the Freedom from Fear action plan 2015. Although the committee resolved that more needs to be done, it was evident that Western Australia Police is showing promising signs in adopting practices aimed in the right direction in dealing with domestic and family violence.

In the committee's eleventh report, "Red flags, white flag response? The Department for Child Protection and Family Support's management of a troubled boy with a baby", it was determined that complex issues like those surrounding domestic and family violence also surround the efforts of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and its management. However, the committee resolved that greater prevention measures and procedures within DCP could help prevent future tragic incidents occurring, and DCP has moved forward towards understanding and undertaking positive measures in supporting staff, and adolescent parents and parents-to-be.

The committee's twelfth report was titled "How do they manage? An investigation of the measures WA Police has in place to evaluate management of personnel". I am standing here confident that the findings and recommendations brought forward in that report will be beneficial to police operations in Western Australia.

In closing, I look forward to the remainder of the thirty-ninth Parliament, and the good work that this committee can do in that time. At this point I acknowledge the chair of the committee, Ms Margaret Quirk, the member for Girrawheen, and the other committee members: the deputy chair, Dr Tony Buti, the member for Armadale; Ms Libby Mettam, the member for Vasse; and Mr Mick Murray, the member for Collie–Preston. I would also like to give very special thanks to the committee's principal research officer, Dr Sarah Palmer, and research officer, Ms Franchesca Walker, for their absolute dedication and commitment to helping us present and table our reports. I look forward to working with this committee for the rest of this Parliament.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH STANDING COMMITTEE

Ninth Report — "Annual Report 2015–16" — Tabling

DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre) [10.14 am]: I present for tabling the ninth report of the Education and Health Standing Committee, titled "Annual Report 2015–16".

[See paper 4531.]

Dr G.G. JACOBS: It is a pleasure to present the annual report of the Education and Health Standing Committee—again, it is a very hardworking committee. This applies not only to the executive staff, but also to the members of Parliament who serve on the committee. In the period covered by this report we have held 27 deliberative meetings and taken evidence from 80 witnesses at 28 hearings. We conducted three inquiries and tabled two reports. We travelled to Alice Springs; Rotorua, New Zealand; and throughout the Kimberley region of Western Australia as part of our inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicides, on which we have not yet presented our final report, although it will be presented towards the end of the year.

I believe that the role of the parliamentary committee is to provide an objective assessment of matters before and of interest to the Parliament, improve the lives of people in Western Australia, and ensure value for money for taxpayers. This year, the committee concluded its inquiry into the transition and operation of services at Fiona Stanley Hospital, which is recognised as a twenty-first century state-of-the-art health facility. We saw how important it is to get the transition to a new hospital right, complete with records and staff, and to reduce risks to the health of patients. We saw how important it is to have a comprehensive discharge communication network for ongoing care. Indeed, a hospital is more than bricks and mortar.

The committee is also investigating the Department of Health's management of its centralised computing services contract. It was of interest to me that in February the Auditor General released a report on this contract, in particular how the contract was, in his words, "mismanaged" by the Department of Health, and the significant overspend that has resulted. We will present that report to the house in the coming weeks—in fact I think it is due to be presented next week—to inform the house about the details of that centralised computing services contract. It was of interest to me because of the work that the committee had previously done on information and communications technology in the commissioning of Fiona Stanley Hospital.

The committee has also commenced two new inquiries. The first is to understand the independent public schools initiative. I should say at this stage that it is not to criticise the initiative, but to learn lessons and make the system even better. No system, policy or project is absolutely perfect, and there are things that we can do to make it better. There are lessons to be learnt, and we can gain a better understanding of what independent public schools really mean. The committee explored the positive aspects of the IPS initiative and the need, if you like, to balance devolution of responsibility with providing appropriate levels of support to schools, principals and staff, and standardising reviews of school performance. Based on evidence received, consistent improvements in student outcomes are not a demonstrable result of this initiative and, indeed, the Department of Education acknowledges that improved student outcomes are not a primary objective of the reform.

The committee has also commenced a second very important inquiry, commissioned by the Parliament, into the alarming statistics for Aboriginal youth suicide in Western Australia. That inquiry was in recognition of the motion moved by the member for Kimberley to address this tragic epidemic. It has proved to be a significant amount of work, which is presently on foot. We intend to present our findings and recommendations to this place by the end of the year. The committee continues to work to address the tragic phenomenon of young Aboriginal

people surrendering their own lives, and we look forward to presenting that report and making a contribution to this very important debate in Western Australia and, indeed, nationally.

I thank the hardworking members and executive staff of the committee for working to make a difference. I would like to recognise the member for West Swan, who is the deputy chair, as well as the member for Mirrabooka, the member for Hillarys and the member for Murray–Wellington. I would like to also recognise the staff who have worked with us over this period of time. Up until November 2015, Mr Mathew Bates was our principal research officer, and Ms Alison Sharpe took over that role from 9 November 2015 to the present day. I also acknowledge research officers Mrs Alice Jones and Ms Catherine Parsons; Mr Daniel Govus was with us until December 2015. I, like the deputy chair of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, am absolutely amazed at the commitment of these people to their work. Again, they do it—as my mother would often say—with good grace. They certainly do that. They are understanding and they put up with a lot. They work hard and they are often here until quite late hours. It is nothing for Alison to say, “I’ll meet you over here at six o’clock”, or whatever. They are also committed in their own time, on weekends, because I have often rung her on the weekend on various matters. It is a life of commitment for them and I am often absolutely amazed at how they can put all that we say into a readable report that includes our findings and recommendations, and make it comprehensible and understandable. More than anything, the reports provide recommendations and findings to make a difference for the people of Western Australia.

I will continue to work on our present inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide and I thank the member for Kimberley, who has been co-opted onto the committee and was very helpful with our work in the Kimberley, looking into some matters that involved visiting Aboriginal communities. We gained some understanding around those very complex matters. The committee also attended the first ever Aboriginal suicide prevention conference in Alice Springs. The conference was organised by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project, a federally funded project that is also on foot to evaluate the effectiveness of existing suicide prevention services and programs, which is very much consistent with our terms of reference. In June, we also attended the first World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference, held in Rotorua, New Zealand. As I said, the committee continued its inquiry by visiting the Kimberley, particularly Broome, Derby and Kununurra. During that visit, the committee held hearings with representatives of state government agencies, Aboriginal organisations and suicide prevention services. It also visited and spoke with residents of remote Aboriginal communities. As I have said, we look forward to tabling the report of this inquiry later this year.

In other matters, the committee was pleased to meet with the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee of the Queensland Parliament when it visited Perth to gather information relating to several of its inquiries. It sought a meeting with the Education and Health Standing Committee to discuss its inquiries.

The committee also continues to monitor state government and industry actions in implementing the recommendations of one of our earlier reports, “The impact of FIFO work practices on mental health: Final Report”. As the government carries out the review of its work safety legislation in the resources industry, I will be very keen for the recommendations from our report to be incorporated into that draft review; it is being drafted at present. I spoke to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum; that work is also on foot and hopefully our recommendations will be incorporated, particularly those that recognise accommodation facilities as part of the workplace. We know that when FIFO workers go home, they do not go to their real home; they go to accommodation facilities, usually on tenement. We have a responsibility as a community, in industry and in government, to recognise people’s workplace accommodation. I commend the committee’s annual report to Parliament.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [10.27 am]: I also want to speak on the Education and Health Standing Committee’s “Annual Report 2015–16”. I also thank my fellow committee members, particularly the chair. The committee members have worked extremely well together. We are a group of very strong personalities on this particular committee and we manage to make each of those strong personalities shine to the benefit of the community and to focus on outcomes that are about better government and better delivery of services and, at the end of the day, a better Western Australia in terms of the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

In saying that, I want to briefly touch on a major report we put out, “IPS Report Card: The Report of the Inquiry into the Independent Public Schools initiative”. The government has completely dismissed our concerns about the two-tier system that this initiative is creating in the public education space, and that is to the detriment of the community as a whole. If we look at the make-up of that committee, it would not benefit any of the committee members to put that out there, were it not that they believed it to be the truth. The report was done in good faith with a view to gaining an outcome for the students, parents and communities of Western Australia.

In the short time I have, I would like to focus on the committee’s work on the impact of fly in, fly out practices on mental health. The committee put out its final report last year, but we have still kept an eye on FIFO workers to monitor them. As we all know in this place, the report’s primary recommendation was to foster and ensure the health of our workforce in Western Australia and the community as a whole. Recently, the chair brought in a petition about the issues around FIFO work that was signed by many people in the community.

If we all think about it, prior to the beginning of 2000, we were all concerned about the millennium bug. Although it did not eventuate, a major change in the way that we work in the mining industry did eventuate. FIFO—or fly in, fly out—had barely been heard of at the beginning of the century in 2000 when around 80 000 people in Australia were employed in the mining industry. Most mine workers and their families lived in the towns that surrounded the mines. When their families grew up, they went to local schools and became part of the community. When families decided to leave the mining towns to come down to the city or to various other places, they relocated into other industries or into industries that were associated with but not directly working on the mine sites.

A recent *Sydney Morning Herald* article by Peter Ker outlines that as the workforce increased to its peak in 2013 at around 265 000 people and 24-hour mining operations with 12-hour shifts, the number of FIFO workers increased and our dealings with FIFOs became part of our daily lexicon. At the peak of the boom, estimates are that around 100 000 people were in FIFO jobs. However, the mining industry is now declining and everyone thinks it is over. They think there is a decline in the mining industry and there will be a decline in the number of FIFO workers so we can move on because there must be some other concern somewhere else. In fact, if anything, the decline in the mining industry has made this issue much more imperative. The decline in the mining industry means that hours have been increased and rosters have been extended. Other conditions of service have been cut. For example, in the mining camps, cleaning of accommodation has been reduced. Although we may not think that is a big issue in our daily lives at our houses, if a person is living away from home, they get up, eat, then work a 12-hour shift and come back into their small accommodation of a room with an ensuite bathroom. If their cleaning has been reduced—if the bed is no longer made and certain things that they were used to that were part of making them comfortable in this existence away from their home are suddenly cut—it can have an impact on their wellbeing.

The decline in the mining boom is of concern. The highest profile example of this that Peter Ker points out came from Fortescue Metals Group. The article states that in 2015 it told its workers —

... it could no longer afford to employ them on the roster that gave them six days off after every eight days of consecutive work. Fortescue staff now work 12 hour shifts for 14 days in a row before getting seven days of respite at home.

This was despite the fact that at the end of the period when workers did that, Fortescue increased its revenue to profit again. The cost was borne by the workers. The mining boom and that aspect have decreased but the people who are being asked to bear that cost seem to be the workers.

Peter Ker's article goes on to quote Luke Baker, a former FIFO worker who now works with people's mental health. Luke states —

“Three weeks away from home was too long with the family ... the third week is when everyone is heads down, kicking stones and being angry at the world.

“It would be nice if we could get it through the heads of the bean-counters that three extra shifts a year is worth a lot less daily loss of production you get from guys being longer than two weeks on the job.”

I agree with the chair that this issue is ongoing and it still requires government attention. It requires the government to take those recommendations very seriously to make the Mines Safety and Inspection Act work. There is nothing to say that the government cannot set regulations for a code of practice on working hours. There is nothing to say that the government cannot have a code of practice in this area. Is the FIFO industry now a workplace model that the mining industry wishes to maintain? It is not just members on our committee; the member for Pilbara has been a strident advocate of regulations for FIFO work and a strident advocate of saying that people should live in regional towns. I am sure that he reflects quite a few other members' opinions in this house. If that is the case and the mining industry wants to maintain the flexibility that it believes is necessary to achieve the outcomes it wants and it believes that, to achieve those outcomes, it delivers economic benefits to Western Australia, it cannot be at the cost of the community's wellbeing or of undermining the health of workers and their families. At the end of the day, it ends up costing us.

I do not know whether any members heard 720 ABC morning radio a few days ago, but there was a discussion about this again. A gentleman wrote a Facebook post that the radio announcer read out. It talked about the fact that he had become completely disassociated and insulated from his day-to-day life because of the FIFO experience. The constant going away and living in the four walls of a donga had impacted his mental health and social wellbeing. This debate was on the radio again. It is not enough to say, as many people in our community do, that FIFO workers earn a lot of money; it is what they do. That is no longer the case. With the decline in the mining boom, the conditions have lessened and payments have decreased for FIFO workers. However, the issues around the health of FIFO workers have not. It remains an issue that this government needs to take seriously. It needs to address the problem and go back and look at the report, which was very well framed.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys) [10.37 am]: I want to carry on from my colleague who has just finished giving her little speech. I will get this out the way first of all because I do not want to run out of time; I give my initial thanks to the committee staff, Mr Mathew Bates, Ms Alison Sharpe, Mrs Alice Jones, Ms Catherine Parsons and Mr Daniel Govus. They were fantastic committee staff and they worked extremely hard—I think way over and above the call of duty. I also acknowledge my colleagues on the committee, Dr Graham Jacobs, the member for Eyre; Ms Rita Saffioti, the member for West Swan; Janine Freeman, the member for Mirrabooka; Murray Cowper, the member for Murray–Wellington; and last but not least, I hope I gave a fair contribution to the workings of the committee.

The committee had challenges along the way. Certainly, some of the challenges included when we had to take evidence about what went on at the transition to Fiona Stanley Hospital when some people lost their lives because of mix-ups between one hospital and another. There was no proper transition between Fremantle Hospital and Fiona Stanley Hospital. It was pretty traumatic for us to hear that sort of evidence, but it was very important evidence. Also, although it was not the human touch—but it could have been—we heard of the dreadful, dreadful lack of oversight of the information technology systems within Fiona Stanley. Tens of millions of dollars of public funds was absolutely wasted because there was no proper oversight of what was going on. It did not have the records it was supposed to have because, once again, there was no coordination in the IT department. I think patients were moved to Fiona Stanley Hospital too soon. The two systems should have been run in tandem then perhaps people would not have lost their lives in the transition period. That was a very, very traumatic inquiry that we carried out.

The committee then went on to the fly in, fly out inquiry. That was, once again, a very tragic inquiry, because we were dealing with the families of people who have taken their lives. The ripple effect on the family of a person who has committed suicide is enormous—it does not stop the day after the person has committed suicide; it goes on for a very long time. We are still in touch with the families of some of those people who have taken their lives. Those people will never be forgotten by their families. Suicide is a very traumatic situation. I commend the families who had the courage to come before the committee and give the evidence that they did. I know only too well that it is very difficult to talk about the loss of a loved one, and it took a tremendous amount of courage on their part.

As the member for Mirrabooka said, even though the mining boom has gone, people are still doing fly in, fly out work. If the recommendations that have been put forward by the committee are taken up by government and by the mining corporations, I think fewer people will take their lives through suicide. I believe that a lot of the problem is based around the shifts. The shifts need to be more humane. It is not a humane shift when people have four weeks on and one week off. It is not good for people to be deprived of their family members for that length of time.

I liken this to what we have seen in the federal scene. Federal members of Parliament have flown their families to a footy match in Melbourne, at great public expense, just because they will be away from their families for three weeks. FIFO workers in the mining industry are away from their families for two, three or four weeks throughout the whole of the year. My son works in the mining industry and he sees his family one week out of every three. I hope he is going to fly my daughter-in-law and my grandson up to the mine site to see him, or to watch a footy match! Some people need to take into account their responsibilities in relation to the public purse. I condemn those federal members who have abused the public purse in that way. That money would be better spent on health and education. I say that from a committee perspective and as a committee member.

The committee is currently conducting two inquiries. One of the most significant inquiries, as my colleagues have said, is the inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide. That is a very serious situation. Too many Aboriginal young people are committing suicide, and that is dreadful. The member for Kimberley is an asset to our committee in this particular aspect—no doubt about it. She is fully across the situation because of her Indigenous background and because she knows many people and has been part of many funerals of young people who have taken their lives. We as a Parliament have an obligation to do whatever we can to try to eliminate youth suicide; and, if we cannot eliminate it, at least try to reduce it.

I want to say a couple of words about the committee's report into the independent public school system. I think we did a very fair job on the report, as has been said. The report was in no way a criticism of the IPS system. In fact, I think it came out in the positive more than the negative. I want to commend in particular the chairman of our committee, Dr Graham Jacobs, the member for Eyre. We would have to go a long way to find a person in this house who has more integrity than the member for Eyre. He is a true Christian in his beliefs. He is a gentleman and a very honest person. He has conducted himself admirably as the chair of this committee. Members can criticise me whenever they like—that is fine—but I will not stand by and let anybody criticise our chairman. I have been made aware that the Minister for Education verbally abused the member for Eyre over the report that the committee handed down. I am told on good authority by various people that, two weeks later, the member for Joondalup verbally abused and attacked our chairman, Dr Graham Jacobs, in the Liberal Party room.

I think it borders on contempt of Parliament, quite frankly, when a member tries to interfere in the workings of a committee, and particularly with the chairman of a committee, in how a report is presented. It is totally unfair.

I hope someone will take notice of that, because it is absolutely wrong for anyone to do that. I suggest that the member for Joondalup probably did that on the instructions of the Minister for Education. I suggest that is almost certainly the case.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: I was called into question.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We can call it whatever we like—verbally abused; called into question. That interrogation of the committee chairman was absolutely wrong and inappropriate, and it may well be close to a contempt of Parliament. However, I will let other people decide that, because motions that I have moved in relation to contempt of Parliament do not seem to go anywhere because of the numbers on the other side of the house.

I commend, once again, the members of the committee, particularly the chairman. No matter what party we belong to—I am sure I speak on behalf of my two colleagues from the Labor Party as well—we have to say that the member for Eyre has done a tremendous job as chairman of this committee. He is a truly committed chairman of this committee, a true Christian and a jolly fine member of Parliament.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY STANDING COMMITTEE

Eighth Report — “Annual Report 2015–2016” — Tabling

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [10.46 am]: I present for tabling the eighth report of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee, titled “Annual Report 2015–2016”.

[See paper 4532.]

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow committee members, Hon Fran Logan, MLA; Hon “Tuck” Waldron, MLA; Jan Norberger, MLA; and Peter Tinley, AM, MLA, for their positive and cooperative attitude to the committee and its work. I would also like to thank our staff, principal research officer, Dr Loraine Abernethie, and research officer, Michael Burton, for their steady and professional work, and wise analysis.

The committee’s focus this year has been on innovation. It is important that the government looks to things that inhibit our state from pushing ahead in new areas and fixing them. I draw attention to a number of recommendations from the committee’s seventh report, titled “Growing WA through Innovation: The Western Australian Government’s role in fostering innovation to expand and diversify the economy”. Two of the recommendations are to promote the presence of venture capital companies in Western Australia, and sponsor a conference in Western Australia; and to introduce legislation to amend the Limited Partnerships Act to allow the formation of venture capital limited partnerships in Western Australia. Another recommendation is to develop the Technology Park at Bentley, and seriously focus on engagement between universities and research and industry at both Curtin University and the University of Western Australia. The catapult centres in the United Kingdom, one of which I visited, show us how this can be done. However, unfortunately, we do not have the level of funding that the United Kingdom has put into those centres. The other recommendations are that the government increase the funding to iPrep; and that the state government follow the governments of Victoria and New South Wales and form an industrial research and development cooperation agreement with Israel. Significantly, those things are not very expensive, and they could yield huge returns. That was a focus of the committee in that report. What I took away from this work is that Western Australia can do far more in this space and be very successful at it.

Unfortunately, the Parliament was unable to fund the committee to travel to the United Kingdom and Israel. Therefore, I decided to do that myself, using my parliamentary travel allowance. I regret that it was not possible for the committee to complete this travel with me. We could have obtained an enormous amount of useful information out of that for Western Australia. The Speaker actually told me that he needed the money for white ants in the Parliament.

Dr A.D. Buti: There are a lot of white ants in the Parliament! Don’t worry about that!

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I am a chairman of a committee that was actually white-anted by white ants! It is quite funny.

The committee is pursuing a number of small issues at the moment that will keep it busy until the end of this Parliament. Some issues that I had thought the committee might pursue were means by which we could reduce the cost of housing; the nature of the agricultural trade relationship between Western Australia and the People’s Republic of China into the future; the methodology used to allocate royalties for regions moneys across the regions; the standardisation of government department boundaries across the regions; and a strategic plan for the development of the agricultural research sector. Unfortunately, not one of these projects got there, but maybe a future committee will consider them.

Much of our time in this term was spent on looking at, firstly, the economic implications of floating liquefied natural gas, and the safety issues that sit around it. I look forward to *Prelude* arriving in our waters. However,

I note with interest that consideration is now being given to gas from both the Scarborough and Browse fields being piped to the North West Shelf gas plant rather than using FLNG. A number of my committee members, being the member for Joondalup and the member for Cockburn, pondered all along why this was not an option from the start. The fact that it is now on the table shows that in hard times, companies trim egos and budgets and relearn how to cooperate. Likewise, I live in hope that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd and Brookfield Rail can sort out an arrangement that maximises the amount of grain on rail and that Brookfield has a more realistic expectation of the return from some of its lines and accepts that it is better they are used rather than left to rot.

With gradual increases in the power of executive government and the need for government to manage intense media scrutiny, I wonder sometimes whether the work of committees is more true to the origins of Parliament. I consider being chosen as chair of this committee to be a rare privilege. I thank the committee for choosing me for this role.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [10.52 am]: I add a few words to those provided already by the Chairman of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee, the member for Geraldton. I also thank committee members for the fun we had and for their contributions to the committee work. Most importantly, I thank Dr Loraine Abernethie and Mr Michael Burton for not only the huge amount of effort they put in to make sure that the work of the committee was done on time and that people turned up at the right time in the right place, but also turning our thoughts and writings into legible, interesting and important works for tabling in Parliament and the general Western Australian public. They do an absolutely fantastic job.

The annual report shows the amount of work the committee has done this year. In a quick summary, we have had 53 briefings, 30 deliberative meetings and 30 formal evidence hearings; 65 witnesses have appeared before the committee; and two reports, 32 report findings and 18 recommendations have been tabled. As the member for Geraldton has already indicated, most of that has been around the report tabled in the house in the 2015–16 financial year—that is, the report entitled “Growing WA through Innovation: The Western Australian Government’s role in fostering innovation to expand and diversify the economy”—which investigated how WA can transform its economy from total reliance on the mining and resources sector to a broader base for job creation and industry development. The “Growing WA through Innovation” report has been very widely praised by all sectors in WA, universities, start-up companies to heavy industry players—even players in the resource sector itself—the union movement and manufacturing engineers and fabricators. All have commented to the committee on the importance of the recommendations, findings and overall tenor and direction in that document.

The committee did something that has never been done before by any committee: it presented the report findings to the general public. Individual members of the committee did a presentation to the general public and took questions from the general public on the report. Through Dr Loraine Abernethie and Michael Burton, the chair organised a public session on the presentation of the “Growing WA through Innovation” report at Bentley Technology Park in the information and communications technology centre, I think it was.

Ms S.F. McGurk: Technology Park.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It was at Technology Park, but I cannot remember the name of the exact place; I think it was the ICT centre. It was attended by 60 or 70 people on a shockingly rainy day. Nevertheless, every one of the 60 or 70 people who turned up thought the presentations by all members of the committee were great, and we had to stop the questions because we would have been there all day and we had to get back to Parliament House at 12 o’clock. No committee has ever done that before—that is, take the work it is bound to table in Parliament to the general public to show them what a committee does, how the workings of Parliament translate into public policy and allow them to question the committee on how it went about writing the report and on any of the findings and recommendations in the report. That was novel; it has never been done before and it was very well accepted.

Mr P.C. Tinley: You might even say, member, that it was innovative!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It was innovative. What can I say?

Mr R.H. Cook: People should be licensed to use the word “innovative”.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is right.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Everything is a “hub”.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I was at a technology hub presenting in an innovative way.

We cannot do that with every report, and Parliament would not expect every committee to make a public presentation, but I believe it is something that other committees should consider doing in the future—that is, to take their reports and findings to the general public to allow for public comment on them. It obviously does not change the nature of the report, because by that stage the reports are tabled in Parliament, but at least it would enable them to comment on the committee and to have feedback into the committee process. It was very worthwhile and I recommend other committees of the house do it on appropriate occasions.

Given that this is the committee's last presentation on annual reports in this term of government, I thank everybody involved in tabling previous reports of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. I believe they are extremely important for Western Australia, particularly in the creation of public and industry policy in Western Australia. Members may remember some of the controversial comments I made in this house when the committee's original report "The economic impact of floating LNG on Western Australia" was tabled. I put to the house at the time that FLNG results in no or very little benefit to the Western Australian economy because it occurs in international waters and all the tax derived goes to Canberra; not only that, it has no downstream benefits, apart from maintenance, in engineering and fabrication for Western Australian industries. Although the report was critical of the use of FLNG rather than onshore LNG processing, the irony is the *Prelude* ship is still sitting in Korea. There are rumours that there are significant problems with that particular piece of technology. We will wait and see whether the platform is set in place or not. Apparently the rumours in the industry are—it is a very small group of people globally—that there are significant problems with the technology. We will wait to see whether the reason that monster has been left sitting up there floating in the harbour in Samsung's dockyard is due simply to the current price of a barrel of oil or whether there is a significant technology problems with that huge gas processing barge and whether we will see it in Australian waters in future. I hope to see a lot more LNG and domestic gas processing onshore because that will have the most significant economic benefit to Western Australia. I hope that is the sort of technology we see in the future.

On that basis, I once again thank all members of the committee. I thank the chair for his guidance and direction to the committee. I wish all of them the best in the future.

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin) [10.58 am]: I support the tabling of the fourth annual report of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. It sets out well the program the committee has gone through over the period it has reported on and the extensive amount of work its members did in that time.

Although I joined the committee only last year, I have to say that I have been really impressed with the processes the committee went through, particularly in its major inquiry into innovation in WA. I have been on committees before and I thought that the visits, hearings and investigations were really well done and thorough. The businesses, industries and government agencies we visited were well targeted. They were extremely relevant to what we were doing, which enabled us to come up with a really good report. I personally learnt a hell of a lot in doing that report; it was extremely interesting. I have been really encouraged by the leadership of the government in that innovation area—having a Minister for Innovation, the investment of \$20 million, and also the forum held to get feedback on how to utilise that et cetera, which gained great feedback, which is really encouraging.

The member for Cockburn mentioned the forum held at Technology Park. I want to briefly mention that because I have not seen such a forum held before and I wondered how it would go. It was really successful and the feedback was good. The member for Cockburn is right: I would encourage other committees to look at such forums, but they must be for appropriate reports. In this case, it was appropriate going to Technology Park about innovation. The feedback from the people we had there was good, and I think it benefitted them and us. I noticed that our committee worked extremely well together. Having been on other committees, I was really impressed. I have to say that the knowledge of my colleagues—I joined in the committee only a bit over a year ago—particularly in some areas we covered was quite outstanding and contributed greatly to that excellent report. That knowledge was far greater than mine, that is for sure. I want to congratulate the chair, the member for Geraldton, for his leadership and direction, and the member for Cockburn—his knowledge, particularly in that area he represents in ship building, is quite exceptional. To all my other colleagues, thank you very much. To the committee's principal research officer, Loraine Abernethie, and research officer, Michael Burton, they are fantastic at what they do. I am amazed at their skills and their brains, quite frankly.

Mr P.C. Tinley: And their patience, member.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: And their patience—yes! We are still doing some good work and although there is not long to go, we have a little bit to do yet. I look forward to completing that. I am sure we will report back on that work.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [11.02 am]: I will not delay the house any longer than is absolutely necessary to echo the sentiments of the chair, deputy chair and member for Wagin on the time spent on our committee. As members in the chamber may have gleaned, it is a harmonious committee. It sought very early to understand the political cycle to ensure it made a contribution to public policy where possible and to a better, more effective government, if indeed that is where any of the committee's recommendations took it. I believe by and large it delivered that. There was always consensus. I do not think there was ever a vote—of course balanced out by the good it might have done—which was a testament to the intention of everybody to try to achieve something. The floating liquefied natural gas inquiry was criticised at some point for being premature because no industry had been established in Western Australia. However, we always said that it would be the foundation by which subsequent investigations, inquiries or interests could start from even though there was not an industry—and one is yet to be seen established off the coast of Western Australia.

As I said, this calendar year was by and large taken up with the innovation inquiry. It was always a risk considering a Senate inquiry was on foot at the same time; that is, that would be seen as just being some sort of populist approach for the committee to take. I am convinced, and I think supported by the way the report has been received, that the committee has been vindicated in its choice of going down that path. The report tabled provided very practical, deliverable and actionable opportunities for subsequent governments to consider and implement, or for general membership to understand, the nature of systems in Western Australia around this often used and now clichéd word “innovation”. As the member for Cockburn, the deputy chair, identified, the committee indeed took innovation seriously and decided that it was not good enough just to print a report and put it on the shelf, as happens with so many other reports by various committees—this deserved a better airing. We did that.

I thought the committee probably could have done a lot more to bring its work to the public eye. We found out at the public hearing session at Technology Park, the Innovation Centre WA, that most of the audience were people who provided evidence, advice and briefings to the committee. Therefore, the response from them was largely couched in the idea: thank you very much for giving us feedback for the feedback information that we gave you. Those people could have read the report and recommendations—most of them did—but they found the opportunity to talk through some of the key points on the report and make further points quite helpful. I think this is may be a way for future committees to operate. Not all committees look at things with the positive approach of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee inquiry. Some things are very political and very controversial and would not do well airing them outside the conventional means of committees. But chairs and future chairs should consider carefully modernising the process and bringing back to the house any particular variations to the way that those committees engage in public debate. Let us face it: we engage in the public debate every day in this chamber. Committees are an extension of this chamber and should be no less immune from the requirement to ensure that we are relevant to the community we serve. Going out to Technology Park and tabling the report out there in a public forum was one example. I wonder whether in the future with the use of technology that we should not engage via social media as a committee is on foot to garner further broader public comment. That takes more management and more resources—I understand that—but it is a modern world and it is an ever-changing world. Parliament should always—dare I use that other clichéd word—be “agile” in approaches adopted in future committees’ work.

Just to conclude that point, similar to other committee members, I thank Dr Loraine Abernethie, our principal research officer, and Michael Burton, research officer. The Abernethie–Burton show kept us on track, particularly in travel and organising evidence. As anybody who has been on a committee knows, such staff are vital to the operation of a committee and the quality of the work. I do not think any committee member would want the truth be told that they read every piece of evidence, read over every brief report and every transcript of every committee hearing for fear of being called a liar.

Mr F.M. Logan: Every single word and comma!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Every single word, the member for Cockburn said he read! The committee staff are fundamentally important to it.

My final point relates to committee accommodation. For nearly I think 20 years, the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly have occupied leased buildings outside the precincts of the Parliament of Western Australia. I am advised by the Parliamentary Services Department that the in globo cost of running those two leased buildings off-site, including the maintenance, is nearly \$3 million a year. We went through a long period of trying to extract ourselves from a lease on St Georges Terrace for ministerial offices for staff to occupy Dumas House, which is wholly taxpayer-owned accommodation. When we talk about offset cost of \$3 million or thereabouts or its equivalent over that time for two buildings outside Parliament, I wonder whether it is not time that we apply that funding, that opportunity, to a better concentrated facility within the campus here on the Parliament. I just wanted to make that comment and to start the conversation, because it is controversial: politicians spending money on politicians, which is the way it is typically viewed in the public domain, is never easy, but it is something that really deserves our contemplation as we continue to make this Parliament relevant to the future and maintain its sovereignty.

UNIVERSITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Third Reading

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [11.09 am]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [11.10 am]: The Universities Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 is legislation that the universities have wanted. I thank the government for agreeing to the amendments on the student guilds’ 50 per cent annual amenities and service fees. The guilds made their point clear on that. This bill will allow universities greater freedom in exploring commercial activities. In the modern society they are going to have to

because of less reliance on government or public funding. That is very important. However, the point was made in various speeches in the second reading debate and by the Premier himself that university education is much more than just instruction in a classroom; it is the whole university experience. I am a former academic and a student of many universities. I am the only member of my family who went to university, but I made up for the lack of university education of my siblings; I have a degree for each of them! I have studied at four different universities, two in Australia and two overseas. I worry about the trend in Australia, at least, for people to receive lectures online. The University of Adelaide in South Australia has removed all face-to-face lectures—it is all done online now—but it is increasing tutorials. If the tutorials are structured properly and they are small-class tutorials, maybe the university can get away with online lecturing. However, I know that at the University of Western Australia some tutes have 30 or 40 people. That is not a tute in my opinion. I know we cannot adopt the Oxford–Cambridge model of two or three people in a tute, but a tute should have no more than 10 people. I do worry about this. I tried to fight it when I was a lecturer by not putting my lectures online. However, in the end the system defeated me and I think it is basically compulsory now for all mandatory courses at universities to go online. That is a real worry.

Another point the Premier made, with which I concur, is that it is a whole of university experience. In America and the United Kingdom students go away from home for university: they go to another city or another state. Perhaps in the United States it is changing a little because of the cost of university courses and it is cheaper for a student to be educated at a public university in their state. Generally, however, people move away. They live away from home, often on the college campus, and they receive a very enriched experience. We have to be careful; we are limited in what we can do as a Parliament, but I am really concerned about the way university education is moving.

I have one final point: the member for Victoria Park said that he would like to see universities in Western Australia engage more in public debate. In the US academics are often sought out for public comment and they drive the public policy debate. That does not seem to happen in Western Australia to the same extent. I commend the bill to the house and I thank the Premier for the way the bill was handled.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [11.11 am] — in reply: I simply thank members opposite for their support of the Universities Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. It covers a range of areas. As the member just said, the universities have wanted this legislation for many years. It will give them greater flexibility to operate as universities. It was a good debate and I thank members.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

LOAN BILL 2016

Second Reading

Resumed from 25 August.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.14 am]: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on the Loan Bill 2016. I hasten to start by saying that I am not the lead speaker for the opposition. I assure members that 30 minutes will be ample time to speak on the issues I wish to cover today. I observe that this is a general debate so I will comment on some of the issues in the health system, but also touch on some local issues in Kwinana. Obviously this bill is about paying our doctors, nurses, teachers and police and giving the authority to government to seek funds in order to meet its bills. This is a particularly time-driven debate. I note from the comments by the member for Victoria Park that we have but a few days in which to rescue the government from its current fiscal crisis.

It is a crisis: it is a crisis that is made by a government that has been the beneficiary of one of the largest revenue streams in the life of any government in Western Australia. However, at the same time the government, despite the fact that it is the recipient of record revenue, is also responsible for destroying the integrity of the books. It has driven up state debt and I believe it will peak at around \$40 billion. This year alone the budget has a deficit of over \$3 billion. I think the public has the right to ask: where did it all go wrong?

Mr M.H. Taylor interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: I thank the member for Bateman for that interjection. We have always known what was going to happen with the GST. There are no surprises around where the state's share of the GST was going to go. When the Liberal government signed up to the GST deal way back when, the formulas, the way these things were treated and the fiscal equalisation process was well known to all. There has been no revenue shock other than the decline around royalties. It should be no surprise that the iron ore price has fluctuations. Although the government might want to say that it did not anticipate the wild swings of that, while it is happy to celebrate and spend with the upswings, it should also prepare and understand that with every upswing of a price in a particular commodity, there will always be some retreat from that, be it settling or otherwise. The government cannot come

to this place and say that it did not know it was going to receive such a small proportion of the GST because that was always one of the great knowns of the state's finances. The government cannot say that it never anticipated that the price of iron ore would drop, because we always knew that the good times were not going to roll on forever and that contingencies should have been put in place to protect the state's finances. However, more importantly, the government should have spent money cognisant of the reality that there would always be a settling of the iron ore price. None of those things took place. The government spent like drunken sailors and simply ignored the advice that would have been coming from Treasury and Finance that it could not continue to spend as though the GST arrangements were not in place and it could not lock in long-term spending programs based on a high iron ore price.

We have this unusual duality that although the state was the recipient of record revenue, it is now confronting a situation in which it is looking at record debt and deficits.

A similar contradiction takes place with the health budget. It has grown from around \$4.8 billion when this government first came in to reach around \$8.5 billion, which is an extraordinary increase in health expenditure. It has gone from around 26 per cent of the overall budget and will reach just a smidgen short of 30 per cent.

Dr M.D. Nahan: That is the recurrent side.

Mr R.H. COOK: That is the recurrent side of the health budget, yes.

This will be the biggest challenge to our health system that we will have to confront for a generation. The problem with any health system if we are to commit to the idea of universal health care—that is, people have access and the opportunity to receive health services on the basis of their need rather than their capacity to pay for them—is there will always have to be a balance between a state's capacity to provide services and the services we want to see in our community. No-one wants to have to queue for emergency department services, no-one wants to have to wait for elective surgery and no-one wants to be inconvenienced when accessing those services. They want them to be local, so they want health care where they live when they need it, and they want it free of charge. Indeed, I think that is an important principle for any democratic society to hold uppermost, but that at all times has to be balanced against the capacity of the state to pay. The problem of this government in the provision of health services and the spending of more of the budget on health is an important aspect. I join the noble college of Ministers for Health and shadow Ministers for Health who love to see government spend more on health, but obviously that needs to be tempered with the state's capacity to pay and, at the end of the day, that has to be done efficiently. If we say we cannot spend an infinite amount of money on health services, we have to fairly and squarely have in our line of sight the efficiency of the health system so we can maximise the health services available, given the amount of money society is prepared to pay.

One of the great changes that took place under the Nicola Roxon or Rudd government healthcare reforms was the introduction of activity-based funding for health budgets. There was no great revolution about that. South Australia was already doing it and I remember our Minister for Health at the time saying that we were moving towards that.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Victoria started in 1995.

Mr R.H. COOK: Indeed; I thank the Treasurer.

I think there were plans already afoot in WA to do that stuff anyway. The Roxon reforms were an important step in the evolution of budgetary management.

Dr M.D. Nahan: The important thing is that they started funding commonwealth grants on that basis, which is really important, because all the states essentially have moved to that.

Mr R.H. COOK: That enabled a natural platform for judging health department performance and people could compare the price for a tonsillectomy at, say, Rockingham General Hospital with that of a similar hospital in another part of Western Australia, allowing, of course, for the cost implications of distance and other localised issues. Activity-based funding provided that important cost element called the weighted average unit cost for health care, which enables us to compare health jurisdictions across the nation. When activity-based funding started in about 2012–13 or 2013–14 in Western Australia, the weighted average unit cost for providing health care was around 12 per cent north of the national average or what was called the national efficient price. Western Australia was about 12 per cent more expensive than the national efficient price. That was obviously a concern for the Department of Treasury and it was a concern for the Department of Health as well. Just reflecting on those dates, it must have been the 2012–13 budget when it first came in.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes, it was 2012–13, but I think it was fully implemented in 2013–14.

Mr R.H. COOK: We were 12 per cent north of the national efficient price, so a deal was struck between the Department of Treasury and the Department of Health that that gap between the national efficient price and the WA weighted average unit costs would be considered to be the community services subsidy. That was to be a subsidy from the Department of Treasury, or from consolidated revenue, to the Department of Health while the

Department of Health got its act together under the guidance of the Minister for Health—so while the department drove down the cost of health care in Western Australia to meet that weighted average unit price. It was agreed that those two curves would converge over time to the point at which WA met the national efficient price and therefore the community service subsidy would no longer be required.

What happened over the coming years is really the kernel of the problems that we have in Western Australia. The director general of the Department of Health, Dr David Russell-Weisz, advises that one of the key components of the cost of delivering health care in Western Australia is the cost of labour. Once we had the large pay rise given to the nurses during the caretaker period of the 2013 election and the subsequent flow-on from that—namely, the 12 per cent pay rise to the people covered under the enterprise bargaining agreement negotiated by the Australian Medical Association and the subsequent EBA negotiated by the Health Services Union—the weighted average unit price skyrocketed in Western Australia. To add insult to injury, at the same time, hospitals became more efficient in health jurisdictions in other parts of Australia, so actually the national efficient price was reducing. In the meantime, there was the spectacle of the weighted average unit cost in Western Australia increasing. Now under this budget the weighted average unit cost is 18 per cent higher than the national efficient price. Although we can point to the health budget and say that it is good that such a large amount of money is being spent on the delivery of health services, looking more closely at the situation we see that Western Australian hospitals are not gaining the efficiencies they need to and, despite increases of expenditure, value for money for the WA taxpayer is not being delivered. Until the weighted average unit cost in Western Australia can be driven down—that is, until our health services become more efficient—ever-increasing amounts will continue to be spent on our health services, because they are in part driven by the demand from our population, and we will continue to see ever-increasing amounts of our budget spent on health care. The challenge for this government and future governments is to try to get these spending regimes under control. In addition to that, it would be okay to be spending \$8 billion on health care if the systems were working perfectly, staff had the resources they needed and patients were getting the services they needed. The problem is that the metrics or indicators of the healthcare system present a very different situation. Elective surgery figures speak volumes about the capacity of the health system to meet the needs of patients. Surgery patients are divided between those who need surgery now, because they have an acute disease or significant injury, and those patients who might need surgery in the future, because they might have a niggling pain, or require a joint replacement or something like that. There are those whose cases are urgent and those that are not so urgent. It is a very interesting indicator of our health system's capacity to cope with demand. One of the issues that the Barnett government came into power on the back of was campaigning strongly on the issue of elective surgery waitlists. The Minister for Health campaigned strongly on that point, and probably got a fair bundle of votes as a result.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.H. COOK: Although elective surgery numbers sat at around 12 000 at the time the Barnett government took office, at the last look—I will come shortly to what the last look actually looks like, and I am glad the Minister for Health is now in the chamber for this part of the presentation—the elective surgery waitlist numbers were somewhere north of 19 000. Back in 2008, when the government first came to power, patients experienced a median waiting time of 1.9 months; nowadays that number is between 2.7 and 2.8 months. I am sorry I cannot bring more up-to-date numbers to the chamber, because for some reason the government over the past month and a half has stopped publishing its monthly elective surgery waitlist figures. I admit we are probably a fairly small group, but people, such as me, who watch these things know that about midway through each month the government publishes the monthly waitlist results for the previous month. It is interesting that a waitlist report has not been published since about mid-July. That was for the June waitlist, and now we are waiting on the government's report on the July waitlist results at a time, midway through September, when we should be expecting the August results to be coming through. I am not sure why the government is reluctant to publish those numbers, but we will be watching with great attention.

The other aspect of elective surgery is the waiting to wait list. The previous Minister for Health, the member for Dawesville, made great mileage of that in the campaign for the last election. He said that the government would publish the waiting to wait list reports, which would be an important part of his open and transparent government. I use the term “open and transparent” with some reluctance, because this government has been anything but open and transparent in its performance. We have not seen a waiting to wait list report since the one that gave the figures for July to December 2015. This is another report that the government, for some reason, continues to withhold from the attention of the public. I am sure the minister is paying great attention to the needs of patients waiting for pain-relieving surgery, and I am sure that there is nothing necessarily untoward in those reports, but it makes us wonder why he is being so reluctant to allow the public access to the reports.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The waiting time is more relevant than the actual numbers on the waiting lists.

Mr R.H. COOK: That is right, and that is why I made the observation that the median waiting time when the government was first elected was about 1.8 or 1.9 months, I think, and now it sits at about 2.7 or 2.8 months. More patients are waiting than ever before, and those patients are waiting longer than ever before, and that is a concern.

Mr J.H.D. Day: More treatment is being provided than ever before, so what all that means is that demand has been going up substantially.

Mr R.H. COOK: That is an issue about which the Treasurer and I have been engaging during this debate. The health budget is a difficult beast to manage. Activity-based funding has provided us with a level of transparency to see how we compare with other jurisdictions. I made some comments about activity-based funding and the weighted average unit cost in Western Australia, which, as the minister is aware, has increased significantly compared with other jurisdictions as against the national efficient pricing. That is one of the minister's challenges. We have to meet growing demand from an ageing population. The minister has more cash than any other Minister for Health in the history of this state to do that with.

Mr J.H.D. Day: And there is more demand than ever before and, as you say, the costs have increased substantially. All that adds up to a major challenge, but more is being done than ever before, and generally at a very high standard.

Mr R.H. COOK: Absolutely, at a very high standard. We are blessed, I think, with one of the most talented and committed health workforces of any in the world.

Ms S.F. McGurk: Some of the sites are very poor, such as Fremantle Hospital.

Mr R.H. COOK: I think that is right, member for Fremantle.

In the last few moments I have to speak today, I want to touch on some issues that are of acute concern in my electorate of Kwinana. Every outer suburban electorate is struggling with the provision of social and economic infrastructure. Of particular concern is that we know that young families are choosing to live in these outer suburban communities at a rate higher than I have ever seen. I am very proud and privileged to be able to represent the people of Baldivis, a population that is growing at a most extraordinary rate. The suburb of Baldivis is like the ocean—never turn your back on it, because the moment you do, there is a whole new subdivision. Keeping track of the growth in that area is very difficult indeed. It is one of the reasons we now have a whole new electorate of Baldivis, which will be contested by a very able candidate from the Labor Party by the name of Terry Whitby—I am sorry, Reece Whitby.

Mr M.H. Taylor: Who is Terry Whitby?

Mr R.H. COOK: Terry was an old mate of mine. He was a commissioner for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission from the Pilbara. He was a wonderful bloke. We will wait for another debate on that. He passed away a couple of years ago, which was very sad. He was just one of those larger-than-life characters who trod the earth in those days when we were privileged to have some of the most extraordinary Aboriginal leaders. However, that will wait for another day.

I want to talk about the issue of schools in my electorate. We know from last night's debate that, under Labor, an average of six new primary schools were built each year and that that figure has fallen to an average of about three schools a year under the current government. I know that just about all the government's efforts are ploughed into my area, in Baldivis and other areas.

Dr M.D. Nahan: And up north too.

Mr R.H. COOK: If the government wants to build something up north, I suppose that is okay, but I want to talk about Wandu primary school. Wandu primary school will be a school immediately south of Aubin Grove Primary School. Aubin Grove is the biggest primary school in Western Australia, with over 1 100 students. It is like one of those parts of metropolitan areas in developing cities; I do not want to call them slums, but it has so many demountables or transportables, it is sort of like it is its own city. It is a huge school and highly congested.

Dr M.D. Nahan: In 1995, three primary schools in my electorate had over 1 100 kids. The one that was the largest is now down to about 500.

Mr R.H. COOK: Yes, and I think that is about the level we want for a primary school, Treasurer.

We obviously want these schools to be developed. Currently, I have a whole bunch of families living in the Wandu area who will send their kids to Wandu primary school. They are in the Honeywood subdivision. At the moment those parents have kids in Aubin Grove Primary School, but because of delays in developing Wandu primary school, these families face the invidious situation of having one child at Aubin Grove Primary School and another child going to preprimary and kindy classes at the emerging Wandu primary school. If this school had been developed just 12 months earlier, a lot of these situations would have been alleviated. A lot of these families are now facing a situation in which their kids are going to be split; they will have one kid in preprimary in Aubin Grove and another kid in, say, grade 1 or 2 at Aubin Grove, and now the kid in grade 1 or 2 will have to stay at Aubin Grove and, to add insult to injury, the kid in preprimary will be forced to go to Wandu primary school. Although these parents will continue to have kids in a government primary school, the kids are going to be divided between two schools and that is not good enough. If that is not bad enough, the parents were not told until July this year that their kids would face this situation, which was already too late for the parents to enrol their kids in one of the small private primary schools, such as St Vincent's Catholic Primary School in Kwinana.

We have held a couple of community meetings to plead with Department of Education officials to allow kids to stay together if they already have siblings going to Aubin Grove Primary School, and those requests have been denied. Obviously, the parents wish the government would fast-track the building of Wandri primary school so that it can accommodate kids in other age groups—grade 1 or grade 2, or whatever—but, of course, that also has been denied. We even have a situation in which the kids of one family are undergoing therapy for a range of conditions, one of which presents as acute anxiety when the siblings are kept apart. It is incredibly important for these families that these kids stay together. One would have thought that any government that had compassion and care for its citizens would allow those kids to stay together at Aubin Grove. I know there are a lot of kids at Aubin Grove—there is over 1 100—but surely the government can see a case in point here, where kids are suffering great anxiety at the prospect of being kept apart. They should be allowed to stay together. The Department of Education should at least take a case-by-case approach and be sensitive to the needs of these kids and their families.

These parents have done nothing wrong; they moved into a suburb that they were told would have a new primary school, but because this government has not had a strong enough building program, their kids will now be forced apart and their families will have to do a double school run for as long as they are in primary school. That is not good enough, and I think the government should do better. It should treat the residents of Honeywood and Wandri with greater respect and it should have built the school sooner, but since it did not build the school sooner, it should at least provide options for those families while they try to deal with the situation of their kids being split between two schools.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [11.44 am]: I rise to speak to the Loan Bill 2016. Before I get into the detail of what I want to say about the Loan Bill and the finances of the state, I want to make a couple of comments about my electorate and about a couple of people in particular.

The first person I would like to acknowledge is the late Vincent Pental. Vince was the brother of the late Phil Pental, a long-term member of this house for the seat of South Perth. Vince passed away whilst occupying the position of president of the Perth Football Club. Vince was an extraordinarily strong leader of our club, the Perth Demons, and brought a strong sense of business acumen to his role. Indeed, he was fundamental to the decision by the West Coast Eagles to relocate their base to Lathlain Park, and secured the support of both federal and state governments in aiding that move and allowing the Town of Victoria Park to provide a range of community facilities. That work has now started.

Vince was at every game, very loud in his support of the Demons. I share Vince's love for the Demons and perhaps the frustration at how we have gone over the last—well, most of my lifetime, to be frank. Vince was always there, letting his views be known about his love of the Demons and also his views about umpires who may or may not have made appropriate decisions on the field. Vince has left the club's balance sheet in a very strong position; he was a very strong leader. I offer my condolences to his entire family, particularly to Kerrie-Ann, who works at the club. I will miss Vince at the club; he was always incredibly welcoming and was a huge figure there for such a long time, having served on the board in two separate stints. There was a huge crowd at his funeral at Karrakatta, which reflects the impact he had on not only the Perth Football Club but also the broader community in a long career as a businessman.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz): Just before you proceed, are you the lead speaker?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Sorry, I am; yes.

The second person I would like to acknowledge in my electorate is Peter Stewart. Peter is alive! He is a wonderful local guy. Anyone who knows Victoria Park will be familiar with the Christian Centre for Social Action on Albany Highway, not far from my office. Peter has worked there as a volunteer for decades. He has been involved in a number of charity roles in respect of East Timor —

Ms S.F. McGurk: Member, Peter Stewart helped recruit me to politics.

Mr B.S. WYATT: As the member for Fremantle just pointed out, Peter helped recruit her to politics, which I think says everything about Peter. Peter is an amazing guy who has devoted a huge part of his life to people less fortunate—by and large, homeless people in Victoria Park—without pay. He and his wife, Marya, and their family have committed themselves to an incredible community service, not only to the community of Victoria Park but also more broadly. I mention Peter now because I understand the owner of the Christian Centre for Social Action is getting on in years and is hoping to resolve his estate, I guess, while he still can. Peter's health also means that he can no longer keep the Christian centre going. We will be celebrating his work locally, but I want to put on the record my wholehearted thanks to Peter and his wife, Marya, who have provided the community of Victoria Park with love and compassion for people who otherwise find it very difficult to find love, compassion and support. One of the fixtures in my diary has always been to serve the Boxing Day breakfast with Peter at the Christian centre to people who otherwise would not have a place to stay or a place to eat. I am very, very proud to call Peter and Marya close friends, and I wish them all the best. We will celebrate locally what Peter has done in Victoria Park over a long period.

Moving on to the Loan Bill 2016, I guess this is a common speech now. In the life of the Barnett government, loan bills are introduced and we debate them. As I pointed out, and I will point out again with every other loan bill—the opposition will not oppose the Loan Bill. We see it as an important part of the budget process. The government needs to manage its finances. We have been, and will continue to be, very critical of how the government has managed its finances. That is why the government is now introducing its fourth loan bill. It will bring to a total of \$23 billion the amount that the Barnett government has sought and been authorised to borrow since 2009. Interestingly, of course, what is different about this bill is that we are about to run out of money. At the end of October, apparently we will run out of money unless this legislation is passed through this Parliament. That is unique. Members can go back and look at the last six loan bills since 1999. There were loan bills in 1999 and 2003. The first one was for \$260 million and the second one was for \$250 million. Since then, after the member for Cottesloe became Premier, the figures increased dramatically. In 2009, it was \$8.3 billion; in 2012, \$5 billion; and in 2015—just last year—it was \$8 billion, which had a \$1.5 billion reserve; it was effectively a buffer. The government has now introduced for debate a loan bill for \$1.7 billion to get us through until 30 June 2017. I remind the house that last year when we debated the loan bill to give the Treasurer the authority to borrow a further \$8 billion, it was to see us through until 30 June 2017 with a \$1.5 billion buffer. We now have a further \$1.7 billion loan bill to get us through to exactly the same time—30 June 2017—with a buffer of \$1.2 billion, from memory. Of the \$1.7 billion—the Treasurer may correct me if I am wrong—\$500 million is for an extra spend and \$1.2 billion a reserve. Of the \$1.2 billion reserve, \$700 million is for potential revenue writedowns that may come in unexpectedly, and another \$500 million for unforeseen spend. Is that right?

Dr M.D. Nahan: We do not expect any variations from that. We have not identified any revenue falls or expenditure, but that is a rough guess from Treasury, yes.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The \$1.5 billion buffer from last year's \$8 billion authority will shortly be gone and of the \$1.7 billion that this loan bill authorises, \$1.2 billion will be a buffer. It is clear that whoever forms government after the 2017 election, I dare say that one of the very first things that government will do is to bring in yet another loan bill, subject to the movements in our revenue that happen from time to time. Bear in mind that this loan bill will get us through to 30 June 2017, and a new government, regardless of its political colour, will turn its mind to this in 2017.

I want to put a series of dates on the record that I think reflect why we are here debating a loan bill before the government runs out of money at the end of October 2017. The dates are: 23 September 2006, 27 April 2010, 14 April 2010, 12 June 2012, 7 July 2012, 10 March 2014 and 17 March 2014. They are the dates upon which a new Treasurer was sworn in during the life of the Barnett government. As members can tell, there have been a few. The member for Riverton is, in one stint, the longest serving Treasurer. If I add all of Mr Buswell's stints as Treasurer, he is still beating the member for Riverton.

Dr M.D. Nahan: That was just two stints, right?

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is right; he had two stints. Mr Buswell's first stint was one year and 216 days and his second stint was one year and 246 days. These figures might be a couple of days out now but, the member for Riverton's stint has been two years and 178 days. I congratulate the member for Riverton for surviving the longest of those seven swearing-ins of different Treasurers over the course of the Barnett government!

Dr M.D. Nahan: You have to admit that your friend Christian Porter resigned to go to a different place.

Mr B.S. WYATT: What I found funny about Mr Porter resigning was that I watched him stand there and give his budget speech, but he resigned before he saw the budget pass through the house. He basically gave his speech in which he announced that in 2011–12 net debt would peak at \$23 billion. Then he thought, "My job here is done; I quit" and he went off to stand for federal Parliament! Shortly thereafter, the current Treasurer's 2015–16 budget also announced that net debt would peak at \$36 billion. Of course, that has now been abandoned and we are now looking at net debt of just over \$40 billion and we will see what the midyear review says about that. It is interesting that up until the Barnett government's seven changes of Treasurer, we can go back many years and find that the position of Treasurer was a solid position in government. Eric Ripper was Treasurer for seven years and 220 days, which was just shy of Richard Court, who had it for seven years and 360 days. Until Eric Ripper, all the Premiers held the position of Treasurer.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I think he was the shadow Treasurer throughout the Court government.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Who, Eric?

Ms R. Saffioti: No.

Dr M.D. Nahan: No? Was he not the shadow Treasurer during the Court government?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes.

Ms R. Saffioti: No. It was for one year before that. I remember—don't worry; that is another story.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Either way, looking back—I thank the Parliamentary Library for this work—Eric was the first to be a standalone Treasurer and the position was not also held by the Premier of the day. I have the information all the way back to the end of the Second World War and it looks like it was always held by the Premier of the day. I do not know whether there were separate finance ministers as well, but it looks like the Premier of the day was always the Treasurer. Richard Court, Carmen Lawrence, Peter Dowding, Brian Burke, Ray O'Connor, Sir Charles Court and John Tonkin all seem to have been Premiers of the day who were Treasurers.

To be frank, and I have commented on this at great length, the Barnett government has played musical chairs with Treasurers. I have been through the longest span for a Treasurer; and the shortest span, of course, was the Premier himself—in the three incarnations he has been Treasurer—when he was Treasurer for a lengthy seven days! That was back in 2014 before he handed it over to the member for Riverton in March 2014.

The point I make is not just an interesting historical analysis, but it is probably the reason that we have had, particularly in the first term of the Barnett government, such ad hoc financial management. It has not stuck to a financial plan. It has made a range of changes around wages policy, and a \$20 billion net debt cap and fiscal action plans et cetera have been announced, but the work has certainly not gone in to ensure that the plans have been met. That is why I was very pleased to read, although I was not surprised, on 22 August this year—last month—a very astute analysis by Shane Wright of *The West Australian* who analyses finances with quite some interest from his perch in the eastern states. I want to quote a couple of paragraphs of Shane Wright's article. He reflects, in particular, on the complaints that the government has made around the GST return. I will make some comments about that in a minute. Wright quoted Mr Porter's budget speech, which stated —

“The projected decline in Western Australia's share of national GST revenue over coming years, from 7.4 per cent in 2011–12 to an unsustainable 3.5 per cent by 2014–15, represents a major structural challenge in managing the State's finances,” ...

...

“The State Government will continue to actively pursue a more equitable and sustainable GST-sharing arrangement, including through the Review of the GST Distribution recently announced by the Prime Minister.”

Shane Wright goes on to point out —

The choice was made then to channel the Government's efforts into a political solution.

I keep making the point that the view has always been that the government has spent the money it wished it had, not the money it actually had—hence the fourth loan bill of the Barnett government, which is the bill that we are debating today. As Shane Wright also points out, despite the fact that every single statement of risk in the budget each year and in the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* has specifically pointed out the likely decline in the GST—indeed, to levels much lower than we have got to—the government has assumed that there will be a political fix along the way, and that has given it the excuse to continue its spending without worrying about the rate of that spend. The reason the opposition has been so critical of the government is that, yes, we understand that the GST has plummeted because of the dramatic decrease in the revenue from iron ore royalties. I do not recall, and I have gone back to search *Hansard*, any complaints from the Premier when iron ore revenue was on the way up and the GST was strong. I cannot find any complaints about that. The complaints started on the back end, unfortunately, not on the way up.

That brings me inevitably to the proposal by the government to introduce a mining tax on Rio and BHP. The Leader of the National Party said that will bring in over \$7 billion in revenue to enable the government to continue spending. The Leader of the National Party has made the point that we do not have a debt problem. I have heard his speeches about that. The reason for this proposed tax is to enable the government to continue spending. He said also that some of the revenue from that tax will go towards increasing the payroll tax threshold to a particular level. I do not know what that will cost. However, let us be very clear. The proposal by the Leader of the National Party can only equal more and more taxes. As the president of the WA Liberal Party has pointed out in today's *The West Australian*, and as has been reported by almost every media outlet, GST revenues are eventually redistributed. That has also been confirmed by the Leader of the National Party himself. Therefore, yes, we will get a short-term sugar fix. I go back to a comment by Hon Eric Ripper, who called this jam-jar economics. We will get a short-term revenue fix, which Mr Grylls proposes to lock in on the spend side on payroll tax cuts. However, when the revenue is redistributed, the government will be faced with the situation that it will need to increase another tax to fill the hole that has been created by its mining tax proposal. Therefore, it is not a solution, because it will create another problem three years down the track.

The problem has always been that the government does not believe in the forward estimates. The Premier does not say much anymore, but we all remember that whenever the Premier has been asked a question about the forward estimates, he has said, “The forward estimates never come. Don't worry about them. It's not relevant.”

However, the problem is that the forward estimates are relevant, because they are a guide to what our revenue is doing. We are part of a fiscal federation. The Commonwealth Grants Commission is not new. The way in which the Commonwealth Grants Commission redistributes GST revenue is well known to the government. Therefore, until we start to look at the state's finances in their entirety, we will continue down the path of the Liberal government with the jam-jar economics that Hon Eric Ripper used to talk about. Hon Eric Ripper was right. I remember the conversation that he had with Troy Buswell, in one of his incarnations as Treasurer, about the Future Fund. Mr Buswell understood the problem with that. It is that the government is effectively trying to silo its revenue into different pots, without understanding that eventually it will be redistributed. Mr Buswell made the point—sitting right there in the middle of this place—that if we get \$1 billion of revenue today, we can worry later about what will happen in the future. That is why the government needs to pay attention to its forward estimates. That is why the government needs to pay attention to what Treasury says about what the GST is doing. The government cannot assume that there will be a political fix to the GST and spend accordingly. That is why Shane Wright, to come back to that article in August this year, concluded his article with —

For too many years the Barnett Government has sought to hide its own fiscal shortcomings by pointing the finger at Canberra and the “faceless” bureaucrats at the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Those fiscal shortcomings, however, are contained in the Barnett Government's own Budgets for all to see.

They are all there. There was nothing surprising about what the GST was doing. The government knew exactly what it was doing. However, it assumed that somewhere along the way, it would be fixed.

Interestingly, in the Treasurer's response yesterday to the question that I asked about the Loan Bill, he alluded to the Bell Group legislation. I think the Treasurer was hoping that the Bell legislation would survive its High Court challenge and he would be able to grab a pot of money that would mean that he might not have needed the Loan Bill as urgently as he does. As the public servants in the Department of Treasury who briefed the opposition about that legislation pointed out, it would not affect the forward estimates around spend. We knew all this. However, the government waited and waited anyway.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I made the point that it would not eliminate the need for the Loan Bill, but it would have a potentially material impact on the magnitude of the Loan Bill.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Okay. So, the government relied on the hope that the Bell bill would generate revenue for the state and, hopefully, push out the timing of the Loan Bill to a time that would be less embarrassing for the government, I dare say, in the final weeks of this term of the Parliament, bearing in mind that the Loan Bill still has to make its way through the upper house.

I want to continue my comments on the GST, and I make these comments every time I get the opportunity. Treasury is very good at predicting our GST revenue each budget year. It is very good at predicting the difference between our budgeted GST revenue versus our actual GST revenue. I understand that we are still waiting on some final figures for 2015–16, but from the most up-to-date figures that I can get out of the Treasury documents, Treasury pretty much gets it right—it nails it. In 2008–09, the difference was just under two per cent of total revenue. In 2009–10, it was just over one per cent of total revenue. In 2010–11 and 2011–12, it was less than half a per cent of total revenue. In 2012–13 and 2013–14, it was just over one per cent of total revenue. In 2014–15, it was nearly two and a half per cent of total revenue. In 2015–16, it is about one per cent of total revenue. The point is that the fluctuations in actual GST versus budgeted GST are minuscule. Indeed, over that period of time, the sum value of those differences was nearly \$400 million in the positive for Western Australia.

We all accept the problem with the equalisation of royalties and the GST. We all accept that has had a diabolical result for Western Australian. However, as Shane Wright points out in this article, when Treasury says that the GST will decline to 3.5 per cent, we cannot then say that is okay, because we are going to assume a political outcome that means that we can continue with the spend. However, that is what the Leader of the National Party has done. Despite the arguments that the Leader of the National Party raised against the federal Labor government's minerals resource rent tax, the Leader of the National Party has said—economic genius that he is—“I'm going to introduce a mining tax at the bottom of the cycle, because I can't stop spending. I need to be able to spend.” That is what it is all about. However, the Leader of the National Party does not have the answer to the inevitable problem that after that sugar rush, and after these payroll tax cuts have been made, the redistribution will happen, and, because of the philosophy of this government, it will need to increase taxes again to enable it to resolve the financial mess that it has got itself into.

The government's position on the mining tax is identical to the government's position on selling Western Power. In this year's budget speech the Treasurer stated —

In addition, Mr Speaker, I am announcing today that the Government proposes the sale of:

- Western Power; and
- Horizon Power's transmission and distribution assets in the Pilbara.

The proceeds will be used to reduce debt and to fund future infrastructure. A final decision to sell these assets will not be made until after the next election.

That is exactly the same position the government has taken on a mining tax. On the sale of Western Power, we have some ministers who are keen on it, and some who are not, in particular the Premier. On the mining tax, we have some ministers who are keen on it, and some who are not, but that will be resolved after the election. The only way to resolve it in the affirmative, of course, is to return the government. That is what Hon Norman Moore is worried about. I understand Hon Norman Moore, president of the Liberal Party, cannot bring himself to say, “You’ve got to support the Labor position of outlawing this and say you’re not going to do it.” Hon Norman Moore has said that the Liberal Party needs to do what Labor has done already—that is, say that it will not form government with the National Party. The Liberal Party needs to say the same. Even the editorial of *The West Australian* could not quite bring itself to acknowledge that Labor has already done that, saying that it will not form government with the National Party.

Ms R. Saffioti: It appears we are.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It appears we are. The only way that we will get a mining tax, like the only way we will sell Western Power, is if the government is returned—that is, the National and Liberal Parties are returned in the wonderfully united spirit that they currently are in.

That brings me to another point. I was interested to hear the notice of motion the Leader the National Party gave today. I remind people playing at home that Mr Grylls, the member for Pilbara, sits in cabinet. He is part of the government, yet today he gave notice of a motion to suspend standing orders on the next day of sitting. He will move to suspend standing orders, which is usually, again for those watching at home, the role of the opposition when it wants to raise an issue for debate, for which the Leader of the House, the Minister for Health, will reluctantly give us three or four minutes to debate the issue. A cabinet member, a member of the government, will seek to suspend standing orders—against the government he is a part of. The reason he wants to do that is that, in the true style of Bjelke-Petersen, he wants a couple more conservative MPs in here. Do not think it is some sort of high-minded attempt for the protection of democracy. It is self-interest at its most optimal. It is a member of the government seeking to suspend standing orders, against the government, to ensure that there are two more conservative politicians in the lower house. Unsurprisingly, yesterday the Speaker ruled that the legislation that passed through the upper house out of order because it effectively included an appropriation. Of course, bringing in a couple of MPs will have a cost—unsurprisingly.

Ms R. Saffioti: Especially conservative ones.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, especially conservative ones. It is very, very expensive, as we have seen.

Mr M. McGowan: Well, you have got to pay for that stuff that goes around the cars, and to pull that off.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is right.

I not only am surprised that a member of the cabinet, the government, is seeking to suspend standing orders, against the government—that did surprise me—but also want to know whether this is in the usual course of events. I could not recall anything like this happening in my time here—I may have forgotten—so I asked the clerks, who are always very good with their advice, and learnt that the precedent upon which this is based goes back to December 2003, when the Legislative Assembly, in message 158 from the Legislative Assembly to the upper house on 16 December 2003, stated —

The Legislative Assembly —

- (a) informs the Legislative Council that the *Corruption and Crime Commission Amendment and Repeal Bill 2003*, forwarded from the Legislative Council to the Legislative Assembly, contained in section 148 a clear appropriation provision contrary to the provisions of section 46(1) of the *Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899*; and
- (b) asks the Legislative Council to ensure that it strictly observes this section in relation to all future Bills.

The member for Hillarys spoke on that motion. Unsurprisingly, the member for Hillarys, as a defender of the Constitution, was not happy that the government of the day sought to do that. The other person who defended the Constitution at that time was the member for Cottesloe, unsurprisingly.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Really!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I knew the member for Hillarys would be surprised about that. The member for Cottesloe, of course the now Premier, at the time got up in high dudgeon at the attempt by the then government to subvert the Constitution of Western Australia, in particular section 46(1). The Premier, who was then Leader of the Opposition, in the debate that ensued on 16 December 2003, stated —

I just want to make a few comments. The motion should be opposed. I want to restate some issues and react to some of the arguments made by the Leader of the House.

Who was then John Kobelke —

First, I place again on the record that we are talking about the Western Australian Constitution; in fact, we are referring to section 46(1) of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899, which reads —

Bills appropriating revenue or moneys, or imposing taxation, shall not originate in the Legislative Council;

Section 46(1) of the Constitution is quite clear: a Bill appropriating money cannot originate in the Legislative Council.

The member for Pilbara will be seeking to say, regardless of section 46(1) of the Constitution, that we should say that all is okay in the Council and let the Assembly decide it in any event. That will mean there will be no normal process for legislation; it will just come through—it will not lie in the house—and we deal with it there and then. I agree with what the Premier said in 2003.

Mr R.F. Johnson: The Nationals are here now.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have lost my place now, member for Hillarys. The member for Cottesloe stated at that time —

That matters because, as the member for South Perth said, —

That was Mr Pental at the time —

section 46 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act is the one part of the Constitution that distinguishes between this House and the upper House. It says that the Assembly is the House in which the Government is formed and from which money can be appropriated. Section 46 gives this House executive power, which, by custom and convention, forms Cabinets and Governments and determines Premiers. It is the distinguishing feature. If we go along with whatever motion the Leader of the House moves to try to get around this, we will compromise this House.

The Leader of the Opposition at the time, the member for Cottesloe, concluded —

I believe this is a serious mistake. It weakens our parliamentary system and our adherence to our constitutional arrangements. I believe the Government is doing the wrong thing. There are other solutions. As the member for South Perth said —

He went on to talk about that because the upper house was about to rise.

The member for Cottesloe, the now Premier, made the point that members should not try to subvert the Constitution of Western Australia because a mistake had been made in the other place and that, as a result, members had found themselves embarrassed when the Speaker overruled the legislation. That is what the member for Pilbara's motion, which I assume will be debated next week, will seek to do. I hope the Premier sticks to the position he took last time when this issue arose in 2003, wherein he saw an attempt to subvert the operations of this house and the operation of the Constitution, because only this house can appropriate money or initiate legislation that appropriates money or introduces taxation. I hope the Leader of the House relays those views to the Premier. I know he will have a similar view to the Premier. I know the member for Hillarys' view because he said something similar in that debate in 2003. It is something that this house should pay close attention to, because if we do it with this bill, why not any other?

Mr R.F. Johnson: It's shonky.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It is shonky. Thank you, member for Hillarys.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I just wonder whether the Leader of the House will show the same resolve in opposing the suspension of standing orders for this shonky deal as he has done in other suspension of standing orders motions.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am sure he will. I am confident he will, member for Hillarys. I think it would be embarrassing for the Leader of the House to do other than agree with this shonky attempt by the National Party to get a couple more conservative MPs in here in that true Bjelke-Petersen style of bringing in more people from conservative country to hold on to power, and to do whatever they can.

Mr V.A. Catania: Are you saying regional places don't count?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Vince Catania lives closer to the CBD than I do, Madam Acting Speaker. He is carrying on about being a regional member. Honestly, every single time I hear from Mr Catania —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The last time I saw Mr Catania, I remember —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I remember —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Members! Member for North West Central, you will be called if you keep screaming out across the chamber. That is enough.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Enough! You need to direct your comments through me.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will, Madam Acting Speaker. The member for North West Central, who lives in north-west Perth, gets agitated by these things. I remember his agitation when he railed against Sunday trading, and then, much to my surprise, I saw him around that time in Victoria Park shopping happily at Coles on a Sunday. He did not seem to be too angry to be shopping on that Sunday. The member for North West Central has always had an interesting style: when is he regional and when is he not? The point being —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Member, I will call you! That is not okay. The member has not said anything inciteful. He has invited no interjections. He has not gone outside parliamentary privilege. Member, go ahead.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Thank you Madam Acting Speaker for that derogatory comment about the quality of my speech. I thought I had said many insightful things.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Would you like me to rethink that?

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is okay. I do not seek to dissent from your commentary, Madam Acting Speaker, but you are probably right. There is nothing insightful about what I have said about the member for North West Central—you are quite correct.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I know what you mean.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The Leader of the House knows what I mean; nothing controversial is perhaps what the Leader of the House —

The ACTING SPEAKER: I think nothing outside of parliamentary language was used.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am running out of my 25 minutes of time. I will come back to the Loan Bill 2016. No doubt the Leader of the House is off to relay my views to the Premier right now.

Mr R.F. Johnson: He is talking to a powerbroker behind the Chair.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I cannot see who that is.

Mr R.F. Johnson: The Minister for Education—the numbers man.

Ms R. Saffioti: Have you got the numbers yet, John?

Mr J.H.D. Day: I hope not.

Mr M. McGowan: In a surprise move, the Liberal Party has voted for John Day.

Mr B.S. WYATT: But would it be a surprise? I do not think it would be a surprise.

Mr M. McGowan: He is a dark horse.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, that is right. A member does not last long as the Leader of the House without a bit of rat cunning—absolutely. In fact, I feel it in my bones that next week the member for Cottesloe may move to a different position. Leader of the House, I feel it in my bones that the member for Cottesloe may move to the backbench. I do not know why that is Madam Acting Speaker. Perhaps it is the furtive movements of Liberal Party members around this place at the moment.

Dr M.D. Nahan: It sounds like gout.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have not had gout yet—maybe in the fullness of time.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Clearly, the member for Victoria Park does not have anything to say about the Loan Bill. As the alternative Treasurer, he probably should have something to say about the state of the finances.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I am sure that Madam Acting Speaker is well aware—she has been here long enough to know and so has the member for North West Central—that the debate on the Loan Bill can be wide-ranging and about anything to do with a member's electorate or otherwise. All the things that the member for Victoria Park has said so far have had monetary implications.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member. Had you not interrupted, that would have been my response to the member for North West Central's point of order. This is a general debate, but I remind the member for Victoria Park that it should relate to the money bill—sorry, the appropriation bill.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.S. WYATT: I think you just contradicted yourself, Madam Acting Speaker, but that is okay.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am reminding you —

Mr B.S. WYATT: That it is a general debate—that is right. I could talk about, for example, the footy fixtures at East Victoria Park football club. I could talk about whatever I like, but I have been talking about useful things like the gerrymandering attempt by the National Party, its flawed tax policies of governance, the big spending that the National Party seeks to impose in government that, no doubt, if re-elected, it will do, and, of course, responding to interjections from the member for North West Central. That is all that I have been doing in the 40 minutes that I have been on my feet.

Mr V.A. Catania: Tell us about your financial plan.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will tell members what is not a financial plan: introducing a job-busting policy that increases tax at the bottom of the cycle, despite every single member during the debate on the minerals resource rent tax from federal Labor saying that it is a sovereign risk and that capital will fly from Western Australia. What do the geniuses do at the bottom of the cycle? They increase the mining tax. The genius of the member for North West Central and the National Party is that they want to destroy jobs in other electorates.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, I call you for the first time! You are not to interject on the member on his feet unless you ask him to accept an interjection. I am sorry that you do not like what is been said, but it often happens in the house.

Mr B.S. WYATT: That is the response from the National Party: let us destroy jobs in the electorates that we represent —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member! I call you for the second time.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The response is to destroy jobs in the electorates that they represent, not where they live, and to bring in more revenue for three years to implement a permanent spend. What happens after three years? I guess we get another tax and another tax, because that seems to be the response of the government.

Mr V.A. Catania: What is your response?

Mr B.S. WYATT: It is not to destroy jobs. Our focus is on jobs. Labor is committed to increasing jobs, not destroying them, member for North West Central. The member is keen on creating a couple more jobs in this house, which is why the Leader of the National Party is moving to suspend standing orders against the government in which he sits—that is what is going on now.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: He will create two more jobs in a couple of electorate offices. Once all the jobs have been destroyed in the Pilbara, which is what the National Party will do, it will say that it is okay because its policy is to have two more members of Parliament in the lower house: “You can relax Western Australia. We have got it covered.” That is the economic genius of the National Party.

I have not finished with some comments I made last week on the Ord River scheme. Nowhere is it more apparent the way in which the National Party spends money than the money it has spent on the Ord. There was no planning, no business case, no costing and no capacity to measure the socio-economic benefits of the \$400 million that was spent, and the National Party wants to spend more. The problem is—this is where I was critical of those seven changes to the position of Treasurer—that it is up to the grown-ups in government to hold the clowns to account, which has simply not been done. The National Party has treated royalties for regions money as its own, and it cannot do that. I was interested in the National Party’s response when we debated the Auditor General’s report on the Ord–East Kimberley development project, which was not an attack from Labor but a report. The National Party’s response was that the government would abolish the project: “You have to vote for us or royalties for regions will be abolished.” The problem is that the National Party has always treated that money as its own; a private little slush fund for the National Party and not public money to be used efficiently and effectively in regional Western Australia—that is the reality. This is why the government has had those sorts of spends where it has not the slightest idea of the resultant social benefits. As the Auditor General pointed out in his findings —

Socio-economic outcomes have not yet been realised, have not been measured, and there are no plans to do so

The report states that there were no detailed costings, a lack of detailed planning, bad governance arrangements, and that the project took longer and cost more. It is a damning report. I remind Liberal Party members that they

have to hold these clowns to account because they have gone off the reservation; that is the government's job. The government cannot now support them when they come in here to suspend standing orders against you, Leader of the House, which is what they are seeking to do even though they are members of government.

I want to make some comments about an interesting report I read today, which is another good example of how the government could have done some good things with the \$500 million it spent on the Ord project. Today I noted that the Public Sector Commission tabled its annual report for 2015–16. I am always interested in the Public Sector Commission's report because it gives a helicopter view of what is going on in the public service and the workforce profile, which can be found at page 17. Interestingly, there have been some positive changes. The representation of people with a disability is up from three per cent in 2014–15 to five per cent in 2015–16. The number of women in management is increasing and so too are the number of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

I was surprised to see a couple of interesting charts. Representation of people aged 24 years and under in the public sector declined from 28 per cent to 22.9 per cent, which is curious because members may recall the workforce renewal policy being all about the government trying to move on older people for younger people. It does not seem to have worked.

Similarly, representation of Aboriginal Australians has declined significantly from 28.8 per cent to 19.1 per cent between 2014–15 and 2015–16. That is a significant decline. I cannot tell members the real numbers, but, either way, there has been a significant drop in the number of Aboriginal people employed in the public service. Bearing in mind that the hope of the “roadmap for reform”, I think it is called, that the Minister for Regional Development is leading in government to bring more Aboriginal people into employment, the government may need to ask the directors general or the Public Sector Commissioner what is going on internally within the broader public service that has resulted in that decline in Aboriginal people being employed in the public sector.

I often quote the member for Cottesloe. I like to quote the member for Cottesloe, because he said things over a long parliamentary career that he has never implemented or stood by whilst in government. Perhaps the most common speech that I have quoted from the member for Cottesloe—indeed the member for Cottesloe said that this was his first substantial speech in Parliament—was his speech on 28 August 1991 on a motion to establish a select committee on state debt. The member for Cottesloe made this point right towards the end of his speech —

Only by running Budgets on a surplus basis can we hope to reduce our debt over time. ... we need a change in policy in the way in which we operate our State Budget. We need to shift the financing of non-income generating assets away from debt finance and into finance from current revenues. That is the socially responsible thing to do, it is the economically responsible thing to do, and for this generation it is a fair thing to do for the coming generation.

The problem of course is that, although the Premier was quite correct, it is not an approach he adopted while in government, as he effectively financed all non-income-generating assets from debt finances. That is what he did. The growth in net debt on the state's balance sheet has grown the most in the general government sector. It is not in the utilities and not in the income-generating assets of the state, but in the general government sector. That is why we have seen the pressure on recurrent spend, because if a hospital is built, it is no good until it is filled with doctors, nurses and other staff to deliver services at that hospital. That is the point the member for Cottesloe made way back in 1991. Unfortunately, his ambivalence about the broader financial environment he finds himself in, and has found himself in over nearly eight years in power, has led him to ignore where the finances are heading. The good times were there. The forward estimates were there to be ignored, despite the fact that Treasury pointed out in every single statement of risks in the budget papers that the government's goods and services tax is declining and its iron ore revenue may come off. What we do know—I pointed this out earlier—is that Treasury always gets pretty much right what GST revenue will be each budget year. There has never been a budget shock from the budget GST of each year. We know what we will get. Yes, it is declining, but that is why Treasury was screaming at the government saying it has to pay attention to this as its revenue is still increasing, even though its GST is declining. The government cannot assume a political fix in the forward estimates down the track and keep spending on the basis that the political fix will come. That is where we have ended up. The assumption around the political fix meant that the Barnett government spent the revenue it wished it had, not the revenue it actually had.

That is why we now have these crazy ideas coming from the National Party that will create nothing more than a financial problem three years after implementation. Anyone who has an understanding of how the finances work understands that you cannot look at each budget year; you have to look at the direction it is taking, and what is likely to happen in year four and five after a revenue decision in year one. Despite the fact that the National Party has been part of this government for the entire time it has been in government, it is acting as though it is a newcomer to the debate trying to find what its members call “a solution” to the finances. It is not a solution to the finances. That is understood by anybody following this debate. The commentary today from the president of the Liberal Party indicates that he understands the problems that that will create. The debate around

the minerals resource rent tax indicates that Western Australians are fairly well educated about what happens to the mining sector if the government seeks to increase taxation. We saw that play out quite dramatically when the federal Labor Party sought to implement the MRRT—including being attacked quite strongly by National Party members! Now as the cycle dips much lower than it was when the MRRT was being debated, apparently that tax is the solution. The Nationals propose an inefficient tax that would probably wipe out the advantage that our miners have in respect of shipping costs versus those for Brazil. I say that without any knowledge of all the details of what Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton ship for—but I dare say it will probably wipe out the advantage.

Dr M.D. Nahan: The shipping costs from Brazil have come way down with new ships coming in; I think they are called Valemax.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The big ones.

Dr M.D. Nahan: There is no difference. That is important itself.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Correct. I think the Treasurer is agreeing with me in that exchange. Suddenly, Brazil with a different quality ore —

Dr M.D. Nahan: Higher quality.

Mr B.S. WYATT: A higher quality ore—that is right. Suddenly the advantage we had around shipping costs would be wiped out by the National Party's proposal. That is the reality. Rio and BHP will make their arguments. My interest is the impact on jobs. The proposed tax will be devastating for jobs and for those flow-on contracts in areas such as the Pilbara. In fact, today's *The Australian* had a release from the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations that highlighted all the Aboriginal organisations that received significant contracts from the business community. Unsurprisingly, of course, the largest ones are from the mining sector. That is where the pressure point would be if we, as a Parliament, and the Liberal–National government seek to implement that mining tax. That is the reality. We can sometimes have a simplistic debate about finances and come up with a great new you-beaut idea, but we must understand the impact of that proposal on not just industry, but the actual finances. That is bearing in mind that the Leader of the National Party has said he wants to spend that money on a tax cut on the payroll tax threshold—that is, once that money is redistributed, there will be a hole. I do not think the Leader of the National Party said it will be a three-year tax cut and then it will come back to normal. I have not heard him say that. That is the reality. We have to have some sense to this debate; otherwise, there will be more of these loan bills and the figures will continue to bump around the \$5 billion, \$6 billion or \$7 billion loan bills that have been characteristic of this government. That is the reality.

Earlier in my speech today, I was critical of how the government brought the Loan Bill 2016 on at the very last minute. It knew in May when the budget was tabled that this would be required. We waited, and waited, and waited—and here we are, according to the Treasurer, running out of money at the end of October debating the Loan Bill 2016 in the death throes of the parliamentary schedule for this term of government. It is not the way to handle the finances, and it is not the way to attempt to deliver a coherent set of services for the people of Western Australia.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [12.38 pm]: What an extraordinary debate on the Loan Bill 2016 we have before us. It is a bill to borrow \$1.7 billion. If we do not borrow that money, it is not as though a project cannot be built or some capital works cannot be undertaken. If we do not approve this bill, teachers, nurses and police officers cannot be paid. Government would stop. I believe it is the first time in the state's history that we have brought in an emergency loan bill, as I said, not for the borrowings for capital works, but for the recurrent spending of government. If we do not pass this bill, we cannot pay our public servants. This should have been brought in at the time of the budget. In a sense, it is an appropriation bill. The government came in with the May budget. If the anticipated \$500 million that urgently needs to be injected in this financial year—money we do not have—was predicted in the budget, it should have been brought in then. We passed the appropriation bill and it is obvious that we passed it without appropriating the necessary funds. The Loan Bill should have been debated at the time of the budget. The government requires \$1.7 billion with only 45 days left. The countdown is on. The government could have brought in the bill before the parliamentary break or straight after, but it has not; it has left it to this time, and if this bill is not passed in 45 days, the entire government will stop. It is very similar to what happens in the United States sometimes when there is a government shutdown because the necessary legislation was not passed.

What is happening today shows us exactly where this government is at—it is a rabble; it is all over the place. There is increasing unemployment; more people have lost their jobs in the past month. The unemployment rate has stayed at 6.3 per cent, but there are 6 600 fewer people employed, and it is the twentieth month in a row that full-time employment has fallen. The government should focus on jobs and financial management, but the Constitution and Electoral Amendment Bill 2016 to increase the number of people in this place by two is the only job creation plan of this government and its members. The only plan this government has brought in today to address the issue of unemployment is to create places for two extra members of Parliament who it hopes will be on the conservative side. It is an extraordinary turn of events. It shows—if the past few months have not

shown it—that the whole system of government and cabinet has collapsed. There has been a lot of speculation about the Premier’s future, and I think I agree with the member for Victoria Park that it is looking like next week might be his last week. He is sitting there training his hopeful successor every day—training and training—so hopefully he can get her up to scratch. The Minister for Transport is still being undermined by the Premier’s office on a daily basis. It is a bizarre set of circumstances. The Leader of the National Party is on a bizarre tangent of trying to kill economic confidence in WA. That is what he is doing. The speculation about this mining tax is impacting community confidence. The Premier has allowed the Leader of the National Party to go off on this bizarre tangent on the basis, I think, that the National Party supports the privatisation of Western Power—I think that is why the deal was done. The government is sacrificing economic confidence, job creation and financial management because it cannot govern. It is a strange set of circumstances when we are sitting here trying to understand what the government is doing on a daily basis. Today a motion was moved in this place to suspend standing orders so that the government can bring a bill into this place to allow more expenditure and create two new seats in Parliament. How desperate is this government to cling to power? It is power at all costs. The government will rubbish anything to cling on to power.

Dr A.D. Buti: And sell Western Power too.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: And sacrifice Western Power along the way.

There has been an extraordinary turn of events today. There is a rising number of unemployed people and the unemployment rate has not changed because the participation rate fell slightly. There is an emergency Loan Bill before Parliament because the government will not be able to pay people from 1 November if it does not pass the bill, and a senior government minister walked in with a bill to create seats for two extra politicians. That is the scenario that the state has before it today under this government.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: They even botched that up. They didn’t know that money bills had to start here.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Liberal Party supported it in the upper house even though it created expenditure and it is unconstitutional for bills that incur expenditure on the consolidated fund to originate in the upper house, which is exactly what this bill would do. The Liberal Party supported it.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I would be very surprised if it went before the Liberal Party room and they supported it—very surprised. I would say that almost certainly it would not have gone before the party room.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not know how that party room operates. The backbench has all drunk the Kool Aid and thinks everything is fantastic. The backbenchers of the Liberal Party believe every decision taken by this government is 100 per cent perfect. They are never critical and never lobby for anything in their electorates, because whatever they get is good enough for them; it is as simple as that. Whatever they get is good enough for them and jeez, aren’t they good. That is pretty much the subject of every speech they stand up and give. They never fight for anything. All they do is sit there saying, “We’re all really good. Sure we had that bit of polling, but the Premier said that that was push polling, so we’re fine.” As I have always said, the Premier has created “Barnett World”, the parallel universe—possibly a bit like Douglas Adams’ *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*—where he has invited all his colleagues to be and where they are all living happily.

Mr V.A. Catania: That is what happened in 2008 under Carpenter.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is that when you were out there trying to work with Brian Burke on every matter possible? Honestly, member for North West Central, you were sucking up to anyone you could. That is what you have always done; that is what you always do.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He brought all of Brian Burke’s colleagues to see me, I remember that.

Mr V.A. Catania: What was that, member?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Your interaction with Brian Burke. Everyone knows how close you were.

Mr V.A. Catania: Just like the member for Cannington and other members sitting around.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I recall some of your conduct from some of my colleagues currently.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Member, seriously?

Mr V.A. Catania: What about your contacts and your conduct ripping off taxpayers?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: You are just, you know —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for North West Central and member for West Swan, just give me a second. Member for West Swan, you need to address your comments through me, and if you do not want to get interjections, do not bait the member for North West Central. Member for North West Central, you are on two calls and I am really happy to give you a third to get rid of you if you need me to, but please stop interjecting.

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr A.D. BUTI: I believe that the member for North West Central made an aspersion against the member for West Swan that went to her character. It was a very serious aspersion that I think he should withdraw. He knows what he said.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): I am sorry, member, I did not hear it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I do not want to repeat it because it is disgraceful, but he should withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am sorry, I did not hear it. Member for West Swan, did you hear something?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I did not quite hear it either.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Can we just go on with the debate please.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We know the character of the member for North West Central.

This Liberal–National government has increased unemployment in the state. The reason it has to introduce a bill to create seats for more members of Parliament is that it has not been successful in regional WA in creating employment opportunities. Why are the Nationals losing seats? It is because there are fewer people in regional WA; its whole policy has failed. The SuperTowns policy, which was meant to create these thriving towns, has failed. Does it actually exist? The National Party has proportionately lost people in regional WA under its governance; that is the reality. If that was not the case, there would not have been a seat redistribution from regional Western Australia to the metropolitan area. Under the Liberal–National government, the National Party has lost its share of the population of regional WA. Otherwise, the Nationals would not have lost a member of Parliament from regional Western Australia. They have not been able to develop the economic policies and the opportunities in regional WA to keep people there and attract people there. That is a fact. That is why the Nationals are trying to add two members, because they know that their policies do not keep the share of population in regional Western Australia.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 6155.]

BALGA JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB — GWENDA WILLMOTT*Statement by Member for Mirrabooka*

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [12.50 pm]: On the weekend, I attended the Balga Junior Football Club trophy presentation. One very special woman there, the current president Gwenda Willmott, was recognised for her good work by the parents and kids as she steps down from her role after 17 years. Gwenda's passion and commitment to the club and players was recognised in 2011 as a WA Football Volunteer of the Year finalist for the Subiaco district. In 2013 Gwenda was awarded the Stirling Star Valued Volunteer for her tireless work with the club. Gwenda is not one to mince words, but she was very humble when her history at the club was read out to the parents and children attending. Gwenda thanked the many people who she worked with at the club, including her husband Ron, since she first attended with him and her young son Aaron, as a player, over 20 years ago in 1993. Gwenda's modesty did not reflect the hard work at the Balga Bombers and other clubs in the area, where she took on multiple roles throughout her many years' involvement, ensuring that the canteen ran smoothly, the committee was cohesive and the equipment was up to standard. Gwenda has also taken roles of Auskick co-ordinator, registrar, property manager and amateurs' committee member. She recognised the talent and commitment of players through a president's trophy. She ensured that the Balga Bombers and, prior to that, the Northern Cobras, celebrated the influence of Aboriginal players in Aussie rules through the district dreaming round. Gwenda has also embraced the diversity of cultural heritage that is part of Balga and worked with the Edmund Rice Lions to ensure kids from newly arrived Australian families had opportunities to learn and share in the football passion dear to Gwenda's heart. External honours illustrate Gwenda's valued contribution, and she is viewed with fondness by her fellow committee members.

HIGH WYCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL — ATHLETICS CARNIVAL*Statement by Member for Forrestfield*

MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield) [12.52 pm]: On Friday, 2 September 2016, I attended the High Wycombe Primary School athletics carnival. Being a former deputy principal at a high school, I always envied the athletics carnivals put on by primary schools due to the great parent involvement they could leverage. High Wycombe Primary School was no different. There was a great turnout from parents, grandparents, family and friends and students all participated in a great carnival, and the wet weather held off for the day. The P&C used the day to fundraise, with the president of the P&C, Mrs Sandra Devine, spearheading the fundraising throughout the carnival. Sandra and her team should be congratulated on their efforts of raising \$1 000 on the day. It was

a pleasure to join local pharmacist Steve Lewis, who is also a school council member, in presenting prizes on behalf of the P&C. Furthermore, as a school council representative, I and other council members were invited by school principal Rick Walters to present champion boy and girl awards for various year groups. Congratulations to all the winners and runners-up on a great result, and of course to all students who participated in the events throughout the carnival.

While I am talking about High Wycombe Primary School, I also welcome the announcement by the Minister for Education today that, as of 2017, it will join the ranks of independent public schools. Having been on the school council for several years now, I know this has been an ambition for the school—one it has now achieved—and I wish it every success in implementing its new IPS status next year. I also make an extra special mention of Rick Walters and Sandra Devine who did the presentation on behalf of the school community, and obviously did a sterling job.

WEST AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE— GRAND FINAL

Statement by Member for Fremantle

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle) [12.53 pm]: This weekend an important football team, South Fremantle, will play an important match and I want to take this opportunity to let the team know that it has friends in this house who will be hoping for a win to redeem what has been a rough season in my neck of the woods. I do not pretend to have any particular football expertise or pedigree of involvement in football, but I know a good community when I see one, and I have been impressed with the Bulldogs' passion for their sport, their rich history, their track record on fostering Indigenous talent and, of course, their team colours.

The club was formed in some haste at a meeting held in April 1900 at the old Club Hotel, where the Orient Hotel now stands. Haste was needed because the once invincible Fremantle Football Club was in debt and disarray. The new season was only a month away. It was unthinkable that sport-mad Fremantle would not be represented when the season started in May, so a plan was hatched. The old club would simply be abandoned and a new one formed in its place. The Bulldogs were born. Today the challenges of the club have changed but they are challenges nevertheless. Our West Australian Football League teams are working hard to secure their place in the current century. The East and South Fremantle clubs have taken the difficult but necessary decision to co-locate at Fremantle Oval, but they will need support and the Dockers will need to do the right thing and get out of the way. But this weekend the Bulldogs' sights are firmly set on sorting out Peel Thunder. We will be barracking them along.

WA EDUCATION AWARDS

Statement by Member for Southern River

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [12.54 pm]: I rise to speak briefly about three outstanding educators who serve my community in the electorate of Southern River. These three people are among the 42 finalists for the prestigious WA Education Awards this year. The first is Mr Ted Nastasi, who is the long-term principal of Caladenia Primary School in Canning Vale. Under his leadership, this school of around 800 students is a place where students know they are loved and valued, and this provides an environment in which they all can flourish and give of their very best. By modelling a real love and care for students and his staff, the school has become a most sought-after school in Canning Vale. The second is Mrs Everal Pearse, principal of Southern River College. A former student of the school when it was still known as Gosnells Senior High School, she took up her position as principal in 2011 and has provided outstanding leadership to the school. Although the school still faces some challenges given the demographic from which it draws its student population, Mrs Pearse has established links with the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, Toll Group, Curtin University and Engineering WA—to name just a few—with the result that a number of students have chosen to attend the school even though they are not from within the catchment zone of the school. Finally, I mention Anita Piccioni, a first-year teacher at Canning Vale College. Her dedication, commitment and professionalism have caught the eye of the school community—so much so that she is now a finalist for the Beginning Teacher of the Year Award. These three people are among the many teachers and support staff that give our schools such a good reputation. I salute you all.

DANIEL MORCOMBE FOUNDATION

Statement by Member for Maylands

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [12.56 pm]: The Daniel Morcombe Foundation, which is committed to keeping kids safe, was established by parents Bruce and Denise Morcombe in 2005 after their 13-year-old son, Daniel, was abducted and murdered in December 2003. The foundation is a lasting legacy to Daniel and has two main aims: to educate kids on how to stay safe in a physical and online environment, and to support young victims of crime.

My friend Dave Whitnell is a Western Australian ambassador for the Daniel Morcombe Foundation. Dave was a central figure in the eight years of complex, covert police investigations that resulted in the arrest, charging and successful conviction of the man who murdered Daniel. Dave says that the investigation took him to a very dark place and he feels compelled to help promote child safety in our community.

Day for Daniel, on 28 October, is a national strategy to raise awareness of child safety and protection. It encourages schools, kindergartens, businesses and community groups to take action and conduct child safety activities in their communities. People can find out how to be involved by going online and accessing Keeping Kids Safe resource kits, which include videos, information, activities and links to games. I encourage everyone to wear red on 28 October to advocate child safety and protection. Children's safety is everyone's business.

BALLINYOO BRIDGE — SHIRE OF MURCHISON

Statement by Member for North West Central

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [12.57 pm]: On Saturday, 10 October, 200 people attended a ceremony at which I officially opened the new Ballinyoo Bridge in the Shire of Murchison, 75 kilometres south of Murchison Settlement. Construction of the new \$5.5 million bridge was supported by a \$4.27 million royalties for regions investment. The bridge will greatly improve accessibility to the settlement and the surrounding region. The old crossing was built in 1929 and the Ballinyoo Bridge serves as a lifeline for communities, industry and emerging services.

The new bridge is an above-water level crossing and it will benefit local communities through the provision of safe and convenient transport infrastructure. As a result, there is a significant increase in the scope for tourism opportunities in the area by providing an alternative route within the Gascoyne Murchison Outback Pathways. No longer will the area be impassable because of flood, and no longer will the communities in the surrounding area be isolated for months on end. Well done to the Shire of Murchison, which has worked on this project for more than 40 years. It has finally been delivered by royalties for regions. I want to congratulate past and present councils for making this happen in a very short space of time, since royalties for regions has been around. Congratulations to the shire, and congratulations to the community of the Murchison.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL 2016 —
SPEAKER'S RULING — STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

677. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Premier:

Prior to asking my question, on behalf of the member for Cockburn, I acknowledge the students from Mater Christi Catholic Primary School in Yangebup who are in the gallery today.

I refer to the Leader of the National Party introducing into the house this morning a notice of motion to suspend standing orders and breach established parliamentary processes to pass a constitutional amendment bill.

- (1) Is this not a direct breach of the Liberal Party's alliance agreement not to introduce laws without cabinet approval?
- (2) After this breach and other major policy differences, will the Premier now dissolve the alliance government?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

(1)–(2) In your dreams!

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The bill introduced into the Legislative Council by the National Party was a private member's bill—it was not a government bill; it was not a bill that was endorsed by cabinet—as the National Party is entitled to do.

Mr M. McGowan: They're doing it again.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: As it is entitled to. Any member or any group can introduce a bill, but it is not a government bill.

Mr M. McGowan: Who's introducing it in here?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Anyone can seek to introduce it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is not a coalition. Part of the alliance agreement is that there can be differing policies and, indeed, that can be taken, as the National Party has —

Mr M. McGowan: Did it go through cabinet?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No; I just said that. It is not a government bill.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I just explained to the Leader of the Opposition that it is not a government bill.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a private member's bill that was introduced by the National Party. It does not have the support of the government, it does not have the support of the Liberal Party and therefore we do not —

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Although it might have merit and the point is whether there should be more members of Parliament, that is something that I think should be considered during the next term of government because in any case, the National Party's bill concerns not the 2017 election, but the 2021 election. There should be a proper, formal process to consider whether the size of this house should be extended by two members. I have some sympathy for that in the sense that we would be failing our state if we became under-represented in country areas. The prosperity and wealth of Western Australia comes from regional WA, so there is some public sympathy for the point that was raised. But this is not a government bill; it has not gone through cabinet. It is not a bill that the Liberal Party will be joining with the National Party —

Mr M. McGowan: But it breached the alliance agreement.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Leader of the Opposition does not have the alliance agreement; I have it and he does not—that is the difference!

CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL 2016 —
SPEAKER'S RULING — STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

678. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. How much longer will the Premier put up with the National Party doing things like this and making his government look stupid?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Liberal Party could technically govern in its own right—we could. It would be difficult, but we could.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: After the 1996 election when Richard Court was Premier, the Liberal Party could have governed in its own right. On both occasions, we chose to govern in partnership with the National Party, as we have ever since the formation of the Liberal Party in the postwar years. In the future, we will continue to govern in partnership with the National Party.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There may be differences. There have always been differences of —

Mr M. McGowan: Differences!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes, there may be. There were differences in the 1990s.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: But the truth is in the 1990s it was a good government. This government has been incredibly successful for Western Australia across every single portfolio. We can have differences and we can have differing policies but we govern as an alliance. We will continue to do so and we hope to do so if we are successful at the next election.

PARKS FOR PEOPLE PROGRAM — DISCOVER WA APP

679. Mr M.J. COWPER to the Minister for Environment:

Before I ask my question, I acknowledge the year 9–10 Hale Hockey ladies who are here today as guests of the member for Dawesville.

I was pleased to see that the minister recently announced a new smart phone app to promote nature-based tourism in our state. Could the minister please explain how this new app works and why it is so important?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for the question. The DISCOVER WA parks app was developed as part of this government’s Parks for People program. We are particularly proud of this program. Under the Liberal–National government, the Parks for People program has been developed and delivered on the ethos that parks should be accessible for all Western Australians and they should be encouraged to experience our national parks and conservation areas. On one hand, the program will promote local tourism and grow the local tourism industry off the back of the natural wonders in this state. Parks for People has been very successful in playing a role in that. There is also another very important part of the ethos behind Parks for People. In the era of an increasingly urbanised generation of kids growing up, it will ensure that the next generation of Western Australians has the opportunity to and is encouraged to experience our conservation estate. In experiencing our conservation estate, as they grow up—as many members in this house would have had the opportunity to do so—the next generation will also then understand why it is important to look after our conservation estate into the future. That equally applies to the many, many new Western Australians who have arrived here in recent years.

This is where apps such as DISCOVER WA come in. It particularly targets the tech-savvy amongst us, including the younger generation who may be into gaming on their phones. The Minister for Innovation will be right across it; he is probably downloading the app right now. The member for Hillarys might struggle with it a little bit.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. JACOB: For the tech-savvy amongst us, this app is a really good way to engage with the up-and-coming generation in this state.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Mr A.P. JACOB: It will engage with —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Mr A.P. JACOB: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We often say that part of the concern with young people growing up in Western Australia is their attraction to screens and the gaming culture that exists. It is great that technology has advanced to this point. We are using that technology to get out and promote our unique environment in Western Australia. We are using it as a way to encourage people who are tech-savvy and people who are perhaps younger who have not had the chance to get out into Western Australia’s nature and enjoy our facilities. When they get out there, people will see visitor facilities to the standard of which we have never seen in Western Australia, such as the lookout in Torndirrup National Park down at The Gap in Albany, and the 450 new caravanning and camping bays that we are delivering along with new camp kitchens, toilets and other facilities. There are also facilities such as Granite Skywalk in Porongurup National Park and the new lookout that will be going into Kalbarri National Park.

LORD MAYOR OF PERTH — CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION REPORT

680. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Local Government:

I refer to the minister’s reluctance to monitor and provide information on the progress of the case of the City of Perth Lord Mayor that is to be dealt with by the State Administrative Tribunal.

- (1) Is the minister aware that the Lord Mayor has publicly endorsed his Liberal Party colleague by providing signage opportunities for the Liberal member throughout the seat of Perth?
- (2) Does this not now create a significant conflict of interest for the Liberal government that is in charge of overseeing the case against the Lord Mayor whilst, at the same time, it is receiving endorsement and resources from her free of charge?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

- (1) I thank the member for the question. No, I was not aware.
- (2) No. As I stated yesterday, Mr Speaker—as a lawyer, you will understand this more than anyone else—the situation unfolded with the Lord Mayor and the report. The director general of the Department of Local Government and Communities has instructed the State Solicitor’s Office to prosecute the case on behalf of the department. It is now in the State Administrative Tribunal. Any other matters to do with the Lord Mayor and her personal operations are nothing to do with me as the minister—full stop.

LORD MAYOR OF PERTH — CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION REPORT

681. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Local Government:

I have a supplementary question. Since yesterday's question, the minister has not bothered to find out the progress of the State Administrative Tribunal case. Does the minister concede that there is a conflict of interest that seriously prejudices objective consideration of this matter?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

Not at all. As I stated yesterday, it is not in my hands as the Minister for Local Government. It is now in front of the State Administrative Tribunal. That is where the member's question should be. The case will be listed when it is going in front of a judge. It has nothing to do with me, that process. It is out of my hands, and rightly so.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

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

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I can only restate that the State Administrative Tribunal takes care of this process. It has nothing to do with me, and rightly so. The minister should not be getting involved in this process at all.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: The act is quite clear. The Department of Local Government takes care through the director general, and she is instructed through the State Solicitor. It is in front of a judge right now in the State Administrative Tribunal. That is where it will be, and that process will go through its proper course.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough!

PUBLIC SECTOR — WAGES POLICY

682. Mr P. ABETZ to the Treasurer:

Can the Treasurer please update the house on the success of the Liberal–National government's wages policy?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

I want to thank the member for the question. Over the last eight years—in fact, over the last 10 years—one of the biggest challenges that successive governments have faced is controlling wages and salary growth in the public sector. When we came into government, it was growing at over 12 per cent. There were pushes behind it, because we were a very fast growing state and we needed to get a large number of people into the public sector—teachers, nurses, doctors, whatever—and we had to pay wages to lure them into the public sector, indeed from overseas and interstate. It was the challenge of a booming economy.

In our first term, average expenditure growth was about 7.3 per cent. We have now, from this year over the forward estimates, brought average annual expenditure growth back down to 2.4 per cent, which is the lowest in almost 30 years in some cases. That has not been achieved easily. We have been able to do that without any forced redundancies. We continue to pay the highest wages in the nation for most comparable services and to provide the best frontline services in any state in the nation. We have done it through some voluntary redundancies—no forced redundancies in the general government sector; all voluntary—and with almost all voluntary offers oversubscribed.

We have done it by first pegging wages at inflation. In each case, Treasury overestimated inflation and gave real wage increases. The commentators were saying we could not do it and would not do it, and we did it in all cases. In February this year, we tightened it to 1.5 per cent. We are achieving that in the negotiations so far. That was at the time less than inflation, but my guess was that in this inflationary world, inflation would go down below 1.5 per cent, and it is there now. We have done it through workforce renewal. We have done it through efficiency dividends. It has been a long haul. I am pleased to say that the member for Vic Park, the shadow Treasurer, supports that.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Victoria Park.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Victoria Park; excuse me. He was asked on ABC, I believe, what he would do if he was not going to sell assets and how he would deal with the debt that he described. He said, according to my notes —

We've now seen in the last 12 months —

It has actually been three years, but nonetheless I take it —

recurrent expenditure growth come down to a more sustainable level — it has to be kept that way for the next term or two, and if you do that, you know what you'll see? Large operating surpluses delivered and debt repaid.

That is their strategy.

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I am just reading your colleague's statements.

There are a couple of assumptions underlying that. First, can they do it? According to the policies of members opposite, they will not. I quote —

WA Labor will:

... immediately review the current government's ... wages policy; and

Increase wages—that is what they are saying.

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Members opposite do not like the truth, do they! This is their manifesto to the electorate. They are out there promising to increase wages, and their economic and fiscal plan is to copy me!

Point of Order

Mr B.S. WYATT: Could the Treasurer confirm that he will run out of money in 45 days?

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, I call you to order for the first time. That is not a point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: I am not going to argue with you, member for Victoria Park. I call you to order for the second time.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the first time. Treasurer, you were asked a question. Please get on to answer the question.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We have over the last three or four years done the hard yards on controlling expenditure.

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I am just reading your previous doctrine!

The SPEAKER: We are getting nowhere. Treasurer.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Member for Victoria Park, we have now seen in the last 12 months recurrent expenditure growth come down to more sustainable levels. So, what was the screaming for? Why were members opposite screaming? Their policy going forward over the next four years is to copy me.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, if you want to have a rest, carry on.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The problem is the member for Victoria Park's colleagues do not support him.

The SPEAKER: I want a quick answer to the question on wages.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The member for Victoria Park's colleagues do not support him. In the Labor Party's manifesto, it has gone out to the unions and promised them large wage increases —

WA Labor will:

I think that is members opposite —

... immediately review the current government's public sector wages policy; and

... properly fund wage increases ...

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Did members opposite not read this? They just handed it out.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the second time; member for Kwinana, for the first time; and member for Pilbara, for the first time. We are not making very good progress today.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It states, "properly fund wage increases". In order to copy me, member for Victoria Park, you have to have your team committed to it, you have to work hard and you have to deliver it. Given your track record when last in government, and given what we hear on a daily basis of you wailing for more expenditure, that is an impossible task. I wish you luck if you ever get into government, but you are going to be on your lonesome.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, I have been very lenient with you. Make a decision.

LAND FORCES 2016 EXPO

683. Mr P.C. TINLEY to the Minister for State Development:

I refer to the Land Forces 2016 expo held in Adelaide last week—a leading defence expo for the Australia and Indo-Pacific region—and the Treasurer’s claim on Tuesday, “We are putting our investment in defence”.

- (1) Why was Western Australia not represented at this expo?
- (2) Why is the minister not fighting for Western Australian jobs in this sector, as other state governments are doing?

Mr W.R. MARMION replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Willagee. There is a united front with all ministers involved in this area—the Treasurer, the Minister for Commerce and, indeed, the Minister for State Development as well.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Kwinana!

Mr W.R. MARMION: Also, the Minister for Lands, who looks after LandCorp. The Australian Marine Complex is our principal facility. AMC is run out of the Minister for Commerce’s portfolio. My Department of State Development is very supportive. Indeed, there is a united front in terms of making sure that we deliver —

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Willagee!

Mr W.R. MARMION: A lot of work and jobs are being created at the Henderson facility.

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

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

LAND FORCES 2016 EXPO

684. Mr P.C. TINLEY to the Minister for State Development

I have a supplementary question. Minister, 460 businesses attended that expo and the New Zealand, Tasmanian, Victorian, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australian governments all had departmental and government representation at this expo. Why were we not represented?

Mr W.R. MARMION replied:

There are expos all around the world. My staff —

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

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

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

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

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn, for the second time.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, for the first time.

Mr W.R. MARMION: We do not attend every expo in the world.

TOURISM — VISITORS

685. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Tourism:

Can the Minister for Tourism update the house on the recent tourism figures that show more people than ever are choosing to holiday at home?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for Vasse. Her electorate is one of the most significant, if not the most significant, destination for tourists in this state. It is true that the tourism industry is growing strongly in this state. Employment in it is up to 97 000 people and it is experiencing strong and consistent growth. A number of measures have been taken right across government. We just heard the Minister for Environment talk about the government’s investment in national parks and attractions. That has been important. We have seen major changes to the City of Perth, such as Elizabeth Quay and the stadium; Yagan Square will be coming on. All of

that is important. The private sector is also investing very heavily in hotels after years without any major hotel development in this state. It is also true that while international tourism is increasing—I think it will grow very strongly in coming years—more Australians, particularly Western Australians, are choosing to holiday at home. That has been helped by a lower Australian dollar, as tends to occur, but also there is more to see and to do in this state than there was in previous years.

The figures released last week by Tourism Research Australia show that for intrastate visitors in Western Australia, the growth in this state was 17 per cent last year. That is a massive growth in intrastate tourism when compared with the national growth of six per cent. If we look interstate, there has also been an 18 per cent growth in interstate visitors to Western Australia. Exceptional growth rates are being experienced. Also, if we add day trips, which are important—people may go to Rottnest, Mandurah or wherever for the day—that has grown 10 per cent in the last year. We are seeing strong growth in that area.

Last week Western Australia was the host of Corroboree Asia 2016. More than 300 travel agents throughout Asia, particularly from China but all major Asian countries, were here. Most of those travel agents had never been to Australia, let alone to Western Australia, and the impact was profound, and the knowledge, therefore, of what is going on is important. We take for granted what this state has to offer. One comment relayed to me was from a young Korean travel agent, who inquired generally about why the skies are so blue, something that we take for granted that is not taken for granted by others.

I congratulate the tourism industry. I think the investment across the board has been really quite profound. People talk about diversifying our economy; we are seeing it. The changes in tourism are not something that has just occurred. It was the decision by this government long ago, when we came in, to do projects like the stadium and Elizabeth Quay, to finish off Indian Ocean Road and so on, and to promote investment in hotels. It is paying big dividends for this state and big dividends for employment in this state.

ASSET SALES — KEYSTART — LOAN BOOK

686. Mr B.S. WYATT to the Treasurer:

I refer to the Treasurer's 2015–16 budget speech in which he announced the securitisation of part of the Keystart loan book and to his comments in June 2015 that banks have expressed a great deal of interest.

- (1) Has the government received final bids for the Keystart loan book; and, if so, how many bids have been received?
- (2) When will the securitisation process conclude?
- (3) Will the government require legislation to pass the Parliament to effect the securitisation process?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

Thanks for the question.

- (1)–(3) Keystart is a major institution of the state government, which essentially pays for the deposit of lower income people to get houses. The standard deposit rate for a bank is between 20 and 30 per cent—I believe it has gone up—and Keystart requires about two per cent. It is also integral to the Housing Authority's various activities to promote homeownership. It has grown rapidly. We pegged it at \$5 billion. It grew up towards that and, in fact, demand was going to make it exceed that. It really had a boost right after the global financial crisis in 2009–10 when the banks pulled out of the low end of the housing market. It grew up very significantly. We announced a policy, as the member indicated, to not so much securitise, but in equity placement.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Quota–yield securitisation.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We have gone out to the market for it. I cannot remember how many institutions bid the first time. We shortlisted that to three. Keystart's board, with Treasury participation, is looking at that. They have whittled it down to one preferred candidate. They are still negotiating some aspects of it. I expect that to be brought to cabinet soon. It will not require parliamentary legislation; it is a decision up to the business of Keystart, which by the way is a fully own subsidiary of the Department of Housing. It will be, I believe, in the vicinity of \$1.4 billion. It will only reduce gross debt, not net debt.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Would you like me to ask a supplementary?

The SPEAKER: You have broken the mould, member for Victoria Park!

SENIORS CARD

687. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Seniors and Volunteering:

Can the Minister for Seniors and Volunteering outline how seniors in my electorate are being supported by the Liberal–National government?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for his question. He is a very strong supporter of seniors in his community. As at 27 July this year, WA Seniors Card holders would have received a cost-of-living payment in their bank accounts to the tune of \$128 per couple and \$85 per single person. WA is the only state in Australia that gives a cash payment to WA Seniors Card holders thought Australia. I acknowledge that the South Australian Labor government changed its local government rebate to a cost-of-living rebate and followed us in that process this year.

More importantly, 370 000 Western Australian seniors have the most generous Seniors Card in Australia. They have just over \$1 000 dollars of value per card. No other state comes near WA.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: No other state comes close to what our Seniors Card can hold. Of course, with that card, there is a discount on water rates, and I just talked about local government rates. More importantly, just added last year was a photo ID card. It is something very simple for seniors. The member for Kingsley, as parliamentary secretary, raised this matter with me back in 2009. We have actually put that through the process now so that seniors who do not have a passport, driver's licence or photo ID and need to have photo ID to get certain medications or even a parcel from the post office have that. That is now part of the concession process and they can access a photo ID card to help them out.

Of course, the most amazing thing is that WA Seniors Card holders have taken advantage of free public transport since we brought that in in 2009—53 million trips, which is absolutely fantastic—through the Minister for Transport. We also extended it last year to off-peak travel. It gives seniors the opportunity to travel around this state, but more importantly they can use their Seniors Card as well. On top of that is also the grandparents support scheme. Again, WA is the only state in Australia that recognises grandcarers in our community with a payment of \$250 towards looking after grandchildren. It is very important to acknowledge the great work our grandcarers do and we recognise them for the fantastic job they do in our community.

When I raised the issue of local government rates, I was very shocked when the member for Forrestfield informed me that the Shire of Kalamunda was charging a \$15 processing fee to access a discount when using a commonwealth pension card or WA Seniors Card. After the quick work of the member for Forrestfield, we got in touch with the Shire of Kalamunda. Neither the Local Government Act nor the rates and charges legislation allows for that, so it has had to withdraw that charge. What concerned me about that is that the president of the shire was the former member for Forrestfield. The only thing I can say is that seniors in Western Australia should be very concerned if the Labor Party gets into government especially if they are going to put a \$15 surcharge on seniors for using their WA Seniors Card.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, the member for Midland always goes to great lengths to tell us we are not to call members by their first names, so it is not Mike and Tony and the rest—remember that.

EAST PERTH POWER STATION — REDEVELOPMENT

688. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the East Perth power station site and the continuing delays in its redevelopment reportedly due to Western Power infrastructure.

- (1) As the minister responsible for both aspects of this issue, did the minister raise this when the East Perth power station was first included in the first 20 asset sales program way back in 2014?
- (2) Why was this issue not resolved by Western Power and associated agencies, including the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, prior to this government's glitzy expression-of-interest advertising campaign?
- (3) Why are the companies that were told a successful proponent would be selected by the end of last year not being updated on the progress of their bids?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

- (1)–(3) Everyone knows the East Perth power station. Next to it is a massive set of essential transmission and other facilities for Western Power. If the old power station is removed for alternative use, Western Power would incur very substantial relocation costs because of the lack of alternative sites, the extent of the equipment and, of course, the need to duplicate it. We thought it was a valuable asset. I understand that people had approached government repeatedly over the years—I think the previous government was going to turn it into a \$500 million museum—so we looked for and received a number of expressions of interest, some of which were referred to in the paper today. The simple fact is that we were not going to sell it if it was not worthwhile. The money from people wanting to buy it had to pay

for not only the value of the site, but also the relocation of Western Power's facilities, which is a cost to state, and we watch those things closely. The simple fact is that the bidders did not bid a sufficient amount, in our mind, to sell the thing and incur the cost of relocating Western Power's facilities. I might add that Western Power is a regulated monopoly. It cannot spend money outside the Economic Regulation Authority's approval, and because that asset or those infrastructures are suitable, the regulator will not allow Western Power to recover that in the regulated asset base, and the state would have to compensate it for that.

Mr M. McGowan: So nothing is going to happen.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: If the Leader of the Opposition knows somebody who will pay enough for that facility to give a warrant for sale plus replace Western Power's very expensive assets, let me know.

EAST PERTH POWER STATION — REDEVELOPMENT

689. Mr M. McGOWAN to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister confirm that, therefore, nothing will happen on that site, even though the government advertised it as part of its first 20 asset sales in 2014; and why are the companies that were told a successful proponent would be selected by the end of last year not being updated on the progress of their bids?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

We always made it clear that we were going to explore the sale. Whether we sold it was dependent upon the value. We are not going to give it away. We went out and got a lot of expressions of interest. We expected better value but we did not get it. Part of the retention value was that they had to not only give us value for the old station, but also more than compensate us for the transfer of Western Power's assets. That is just good fiscal management. We never indicated that we were going to give it away or subsidise the transfer of it, and that is good management.

POLICE — CRIME RATES — GERALDTON

690. Mr I.C. BLAYNEY to the Minister for Police:

Can the minister please advise the house on what progress police have made in reducing the volume of crime in Geraldton?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Geraldton for this question and his close monitoring of the activities of our police officers in Geraldton. As the member for Geraldton is well aware, like most parts of the state, Geraldton has its suburban pockets that have some social challenges. Like everywhere else across the state, it certainly has pockets where there are issues with criminal activity, substance abuse, drug dealing and those sorts of activities. Earlier this year, as the member for Geraldton is well aware, from our growth program of 1 050 additional police officers and auxiliary officers by 2017, we have taken 25 officers and given additional resources to Geraldton. Those officers have been working very closely with the Geraldton police volume crime team. They ran a fantastic campaign over 12 days.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The member for Girrawheen does not care about what happens with police officers. She continually interjects and speaks over me.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I have been pretty lenient on you. You have been cutting in quite a bit today.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Those hardworking officers at the Geraldton —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Those hardworking police officers in Geraldton, who deserve to have some recognition in this place, have that opportunity at this moment in time, member for Girrawheen. I hope that the member listens. They ran a volume crime campaign over 12 days, and they used the information that they had received from members of the community, who have a great partnership with police in Geraldton. Out of that, police focused on one particular suspect who had been responsible for multiple burglaries. From that, they initiated an additional nine search warrants, and from those search warrants, they have now charged 11 people with 84 offences, ranging from drug possession to firearms charges, burglary charges, stealing charges and also fraud. Those offenders will no doubt come before the courts. As a result of our strong platform, our three strikes burglary legislation, some of them are likely to face mandatory penalties as a result of their criminal activity.

I would like to congratulate the Geraldton policing team, and, indeed, all our hardworking police officers across the state, for the great job that they do. They can be assured of continued support from the Liberal–National government in that law and order space. They can also be assured that we will not unravel the Frontline 2020 model, which gives us additional resources to deploy to the front line.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We will not be sacking the commissioner or telling him how to do his job. We will continue to support police officers with the tools and resources that they need to make an impact on volume crime in places like Geraldton.

COMMUNITY-BASED CHILDCARE CENTRES — ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT

691. Ms S.F. McGURK to the Minister for Women’s Interests:

I refer to the Committee for Perth’s report, “Filling the Pool”, on Western Australia’s wide and persistent gender pay gap, which identified the lack of suitable and affordable child care as a key block to women’s full participation in the labour market. What is the Minister for Women’s Interests doing to reverse the cuts to accommodation support for 32 community-based childcare centres that threaten to push up fees for thousands of families or force those centres to close?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

Although I have an active interest in this matter as Minister for Women’s Interests, the question should have been more appropriately directed to the Minister for Local Government; Community Services.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As Minister for Women’s Interests, I can answer this question because I take an active interest in the availability of childcare places in Western Australia for working women. Yes, the member is right: the Committee for Perth’s “Filling the Pool” report identified that one of the key inhibitors to women participating in the workforce in Western Australia is access to affordable and convenient childcare facilities. The issue to which the member referred affects around 33 childcare centres across the state. Western Australia has 1 137 childcare centres across Western Australia, and 33 centres are affected.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Fremantle, I call you to order for the first time. You have asked a question; let the minister answer it.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Effectively, back in the 1980s when there was a significant lack of available childcare in Western Australia, the Department of Local Government and Communities entered into leasing arrangements with some of the local governments around the state to provide peppercorn leases to childcare facilities in certain areas to try to get some capacity in the childcare market.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Fremantle!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The Department of Local Government and Communities is the regulator of childcare centres. It has looked at this arrangement and determined that being the regulator of childcare centres, subsidising childcare centres through this arrangement is not appropriate. As a result, it is now moving into negotiations with the childcare facilities and the local governments involved to have the childcare facilities enter into the leasing arrangement directly with the owner of the facility, rather than having the Department of Local Government and Communities as the intermediary. It is entirely appropriate. The childcare facilities will not be closed. The funding arrangements that they have with the government will remain.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The subsidies to work around \$1.4 million will still flow to those centres. What will happen is that the centres will have a leasing arrangement with the owner of the venue they operate within, not with the Department of Local Government and Communities as an intermediary between those venue holders.

COMMUNITY-BASED CHILDCARE CENTRES — ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT

692. Ms S.F. McGURK to the Minister for Women’s Interests:

I have a supplementary question. Why is the minister standing by and doing nothing against these attacks to community-based child care?

Several members interjected.

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

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

The member for Fremantle's supplementary question just goes to prove that she did not listen to one skerrick of my answer. I have answered the question. I am not standing by being idle; I have been working with the Minister for Local Government; Community Services and will continue to do so.

FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

693. Mr M.H. TAYLOR to the Minister for Mental Health:

I understand that last Friday was Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day. Can the minister please advise the house what the Liberal–National government is doing to reduce the incidence of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL replied:

I thank the member for Bateman for his question. Yes, I certainly am pleased to talk about Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day, which was last Friday. In fact, it is an annual day. I do not know whether some members have worked out that it is held on the ninth day of the ninth month each year, because, obviously, that is relevant to the length of a pregnancy and it is very important that, through that process, a woman does not partake of alcohol—preferably before becoming pregnant, definitely during pregnancy, and certainly while breastfeeding as well. A day such as that day is important because it highlights the importance of the mother looking after the baby and ensuring that that child has a very good start in life.

As we all know, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder is a lifelong condition, and it has become quite an issue in many of our Aboriginal communities. But, please, let us be reassured that this is not an Aboriginal problem. It is a problem throughout our society, but Western Australia has featured prominently in this because of the wonderful work we have done with the Telethon Kids Institute, particularly in the Fitzroy Valley, in determining how we can deal with it. It is something that has happened over recent years. Now we have a diagnostic tool, thanks to the Telethon Kids Institute, but for many years there was no way of diagnosing foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. It was sort of assumed after everything else was checked out. That is not a great way to manage a medical condition.

Of course, we have a group now who are not children anymore. Many of them have become young adults, and still this condition is relatively unknown. What often happens with these people is that they find themselves getting into a life of crime—I will not say through no fault of their own, but their ability to have logic, to listen and to work through things is impaired. At the same time, they have cognitive disorders and difficulty with their behaviour—it can become quite spontaneous and uncontrolled—and in many ways they have difficulty fitting into society. We have these children and young people. I know a couple of families—I am sorry that the member for Kimberley is not here—in Fitzroy. The grandparents took on the care of their grandchildren because of the issues that the parents had. Friends of mine, Mamajee and Jeff, said to me that they took them on quite willingly; and not just one, but often two or three in a family. Their oldest grandson is 18, 19 or 20 now. He is a big boy, and it is very difficult for Mamajee, who is an older woman now, to deal with that. We have a lot of issues that we still need to deal with relating to FASD. It is something that we intend to do and on which we are doing some more. In 2015, we ran a campaign, particularly in the Kimberley area. We used that very effective Aboriginal actor Mary G. There was a great response to that. Nine out of 10 women could then identify that drinking alcohol before pregnancy, during pregnancy or breastfeeding was not a good idea. We have now put in some more money through the Mental Health Commission, and we have Mary G back on board. We will go out again to make sure that we reinforce the work that has been done previously to help Aboriginal people in the Kimberley and the Pilbara to ensure that they know that this is not the way to go. In the meantime, of course, we have a lot of work to do across the board with FASD. It is an issue right across our society, in not only regional areas, but also metropolitan areas, and we will continue to work on that. I thank the Telethon Kids Institute for the wonderful work that it does, and the Mental Health Commissioner for supporting this initiative.

ENVIRONMENT — COCKBURN SOUND — DISCHARGE

Question on Notice 5252 — Supplementary Information

MR A.P. JACOB (Ocean Reef — Minister for Environment) [2.45 pm]: I rise under standing order 82A to provide further advice to the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Stuffed it up, have you?

Mr A.P. JACOB: No!

The SPEAKER: That is enough!

Mr A.P. JACOB: On 8 September 2016, the Leader of Opposition rose under standing order 80(2) to ask why a response had not been given to Legislative Assembly question on notice 5252. The answer to this question was entered into *Hansard* on Tuesday, 10 May 2016. However, due to an IT issue, it did not appear on the Parliament website and I am advised that this issue has now been addressed.

LOAN BILL 2016*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [2.46 pm]: I am continuing the remarks I made before lunch. We saw why the government needs a \$1.7 billion loan bill. We saw it during question time, when the Treasurer mocked the Labor Party for wanting to properly fund expenditure. The Treasurer thought that it was absolute craziness to try to properly fund expenditure. That is what he said. He went on the attack and said, “How dare the Labor Party have a policy that means we properly fund expenditure”; that is, our revenue matches our expenditure. This government has not properly funded anything; it has just borrowed —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is like an episode of *Toy Story* sometimes in here!

The SPEAKER: Thank you; through the Chair, member for West Swan.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The idea that we would properly fund anything is a shock to the Treasurer, because his idea of funding is borrowing, and for the first time in the state’s history we are borrowing for wages. Labor wants to fund our wages from our revenue—crazy! I know the Treasurer thinks that is a crazy concept because he likes borrowing for wages. The Treasurer does not believe in properly funding expenditure. He went on the attack today, saying, “How dare the Labor Party properly fund its initiatives.” This is how we have seen it: the Treasurer tries to attack the Labor Party on financial management when he has 45 days left to go; otherwise the lights will turn off. We would not be able to pay our electricity bill. This is the situation the government has got us into. The power station is another example, again through question time. The government does not look at—I hate to say the words, “the big picture”—the whole picture of its expenditure on initiatives. The government went to sell a power station site, and the power facilities—these are the current power facilities as opposed to the unused East Perth power station—would somehow have to be relocated. Taxpayers would have to pay for that through the whole process. Now the government is wondering why it does not make any financial sense. Instead, maybe the government should have looked at different options. After eight years of government, it has not been able to proceed even with that. The only asset the government has sold is the Perth Market Authority and it had a negative impact on the state’s finances. Government members stand up and talk about their financial credibility when the government has record debt and a record deficit, and it will run out of money in 45 days because it has mismanaged the finances so badly. It then goes on the attack because the Labor Party wants to properly fund its expenditure. I know that properly funding anything is not something that this government, particularly the Liberal Party, wants to do; it does not want to properly fund anything.

I want to go through some of the other reasons that we are here today. There was an article in the paper stating—I do not normally quote the paper—that the government is good at spending, but not investing; and that the spending process is enough. It is fine that the government spends. All the government looks at is what it spends; it does not look at the long-term impact of its expenditure. The classic case is the Perth Stadium decision. When the Labor Party was in power, it looked at the whole issue of stadia in WA and considered a rectangular stadium, a football stadium and all the other implications of making decisions on the future of sporting facilities. The Labor Party understood that there had to be a comprehensive outcome for the WA community. This government made a decision on nib Stadium, with expenditure of about \$100 million, plus ongoing subsidies and the payout that had to be made to Allia Venue Management. It made the decision about the new Perth Stadium at Burswood, a stadium that is probably costing \$1.7 billion.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Don’t go; stay away.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The way the government is going to price things, no-one will be able to afford to go!

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough, thank you.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough, Premier. Let us keep going, Member for West Swan

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It will cost \$1.7 billion plus the ongoing subsidies and expenditure. Then there are the other complications about the future of the existing football stadium and the WACA ground. The government would have thought that at the frontend it would try to get the complete package—some framework to work towards. The outcome will now cost taxpayers probably over \$2 billion when it all flushes through—the cost of Perth Stadium, nib Stadium, the WACA redevelopments and the future of Subiaco oval. All those things will cost potentially more than \$2 billion. People have this idea it is okay that the government is spending money, but we have to look at the outcome. It is the same with the Ord River project. The government spent money, but what was the outcome?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough! Members! Premier! We do not want a side debate.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I remember asking the Department of Housing up there how many Indigenous people were employed in government jobs looking after the maintenance of housing. Do members know what I was told? There were none. The government can talk all it likes, but when there was real ability to get local sustainable jobs —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Lands, one; member for Bassendean, one.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I went there and asked questions, particularly about jobs in the community.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I asked about long-term job prospects in areas like housing and maintenance, given the expenditure up there, and the department told me that there were no Indigenous workers there. There you go, minister.

The government thinks it is okay to run the state's finances into the ground to such an extent that it needs to borrow a further \$1.7 billion to get through the rest of this financial year. As I said, anyone can spend money, but the government has to make decisions about maximising the outcome and getting some return, whether it is a policy return through social, environmental or economic outcomes. That has been a failure of this government. We saw this again with the Treasurer espousing the government's management of this state. He said there had never been a cost overrun and there had never been anything that was late. The Perth Children's Hospital was meant to open last December. We still do not know where the lead in the water is coming from. There has been delay after delay and additional costs incurred as a result of those delays. The car park is a prime example; it costs \$500 000 a month for an empty car park. There is this idea that that is cheaper than if the government had built and managed the car park itself. The government is paying that operator \$500 000 a month. Taxpayers have paid for the car park.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier believes that any analysis of expenditure is boring, or is it just me? The Premier is pleasant as always.

The SPEAKER: Through the Chair. Carry on.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I cannot wait till he goes. I do not care who the Liberal Party puts in—anyone but that negative, nasty, carping, bitter, angry person.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, keep going through the Chair.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I would have thought he would be slightly happy. He has been Premier for eight years. I thought he would have got over the chip on his shoulder that he got in the Liberal Party when he was battling Doug Shave. I thought he would have got over that, but he never got over it and he is still taking that out on anybody he can find.

The government's idea is that paying \$500 000 a month for an empty car park is somehow a good deal. I do not quite understand how that can be a good deal for the state when taxpayers funded the car park.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Don't you understand that it is part of the bigger contract?

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister for Health.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I understand that the government signed a contract that obligated the state's taxpayers to pay \$500 000 for a car park regardless of whether the hospital was ready or not. That is what I understand and that is what has been proven. For the Treasurer to say that the government has never blown the budget on any project and that they have all been finished on time is, again, a complete mistruth and a misleading of this house. The Ord-East Kimberley report was tabled last week. What should have been, as I recall, a two-year \$400 million project ended up being a seven-year \$500 million project. That is a cost and time blowout if ever I have seen one. What are the returns? The government does not care. The government has never cared about the outcome; all it has cared about is the expenditure. The government has never cared whether the money could have been better spent. As I said, I have been to the Kimberley to look at the Ord project. I was disappointed with the local employment opportunities, given the hundreds of millions of state taxpayer dollars going into the project. I went to a dinner. I will not go through it, because it was one of the most bizarre dinners I have ever attended, with some of the things that the then minister, the member for Pilbara, was talking about and the songs that were sung that night. It struck me that that project was a bizarre expenditure of money in which the process of spending out-valued any outcome. If the government pours \$300 million into any project, it will create some jobs, but are there enough sustainable jobs to justify the expenditure and what is the outcome for agriculture?

I represent the Swan Valley, which is an agricultural precinct, and all this government does is impose higher costs, more land tax and higher electricity charges. It has done nothing to support local growers in what has been historically a very productive region.

I turn to Elizabeth Quay. The government built it, but what is the outcome? Are people coming to WA because of Elizabeth Quay? The Premier said that three million Western Australians have visited Elizabeth Quay. How is that determined? Was it by mobile phone numbers and towers?

Mr J.H.D. Day: Have you been there?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes; I have done so many press conferences near that failed water park that my mobile phone has probably triggered about 30 visits!

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Treasurer, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I went there. I took my six-year-old daughter to the playground that the minister said was safe. She came back all cut and bruised because the place was not finished. I have never said that before, minister, but it was not finished. The government advertised it and then had to shut it down because it was not finished. Yes, I did go there to have a look in the first weeks, but I have been down there trying to understand how the government spent \$12 million building a water park that was not safe for children. As I said, the way the government calculates visitation—the number of mobile phone numbers collected by the receiving spots—means my mobile phone would have been picked up a number of times. The hundreds of workers the government has had back and forth trying to fix the water park would have been picked up. People driving past would have been picked up.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister stands up and says that three million —

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mirrabooka!

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member would have been recorded as a visitor; that is what would have happened.

The government said that three million Western Australians visited there. What is our population? The government is saying that every person, including my 91-year-old father and my entire family, has been to that park. It is absolutely misleading.

The government is focused just on spending, not on outcomes. It has always been easier to spend in government—and, basically, in the household. Everyone loves to spend; we all love it! But we have to try to get some outcomes. When we are in charge of taxpayers' money, we have to look at the longer term impact. In many of these spending decisions, the whole cost has not been looked at. One example is the stadia. Looking at all the continuing construction and other costs of the stadia in front of us, can we see how to make a package that is going to make financial sense? The government invested in one—nib Stadium. It spent \$1.7 billion on Perth Stadium. There are issues with the WACA that need to be sorted out over the next six months, and then, of course, there is the existing Subiaco Oval. There are maintenance issues. The government has taken over nib Stadium because of cost issues. It paid out, ultimately, about \$11 million to Allia Venue Management. The ongoing annual subsidy for the stadium, as far as we know, will be about \$60 million from the state budget. There are costs upon costs upon costs for contracts entered into.

The cabinet has completely broken down. The Premier is coaching the Deputy Premier, and the rest of you guys are just running around. I do not know what government members are doing, but there is no consistent, coherent government. On a day when there are more people unemployed in WA, the Leader of the National Party thinks the matter of urgency is a bill to create two new members of Parliament in this place. The jobs plan of this government is creating two new members of Parliament! Why does it have to do that? It is because, under the National Party, the share of people living in regional WA compared with Perth has dropped. Under the National Party, there has been a movement of a proportion of people living in regional WA to the city. That movement shows a complete failure of its policies and that it has not invested in good economic opportunities or created sustainable industries.

As I said, I am going to go through all the projects. Some of the associated IT costs at Fiona Stanley Hospital continue to be a factor in the Department of Health. We have talked about the new Perth Children's Hospital, Elizabeth Quay and NorthLink WA. All these issues affect the budget and the amount of borrowing that is needed. There is anticipated revenue in the forward estimates from land sales. Those land sales are not being achieved and, as a result, the state's finances continue to deteriorate.

My last comments will be on the mining tax from the National Party. The National Party and its leader are going out and saying that his mining tax will help sort out WA's financial problems. It shows why, under a Premier who does not believe in forward estimates and a Leader of the National Party who does not believe in any sort of sustainable financing, we are hitting debt levels of over \$30 billion this year. The idea that we would tax large mining companies at this point, at the bottom of the boom, which, under the current GST redistribution formula, would see 90 per cent of that redistributed in the next three years, shows us just how idiotic that policy is. The government is completely unable to control the National Party, but it is willing to take its numbers in this house. It has complete disregard for the fact that the policy would be damaging not only if it were to be implemented, but also because of the uncertainty and confidence factors in the economy. The National Party is continuing to undermine what is a very low business sentiment out there. It continues to drive insecurity and uncertainty in the wider economy. The Treasurer is completely oblivious to it all. Yesterday, he could not work out whether we were building 56 railcars over the next 10 years or 50 times six railcars over the next 10 years. He is completely oblivious to it; he makes it up as he goes along and cannot sit down and work out the detail. For someone who commented and criticised as much as he has to not understand the full implications of his spending decisions is, I think, one of the biggest shocks to everyone in this place.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [3.06 pm]: I rise to contribute to the debate on the Loan Bill 2016 that the Treasurer has introduced into this house. When the Treasurer was the executive director of the Institute of Public Affairs, did he ever imagine that he would become a parliamentarian and a Treasurer and would be introducing a loan bill in order to ensure that the government does not shut down? I am sure that he never, in his wildest dreams, would have thought that he would be the Treasurer of a government unable to manage its financial and economic affairs.

Before I get on to the economic management of this government, there are some other matters I would like to raise. I am wearing the South Fremantle scarf. The member for Fremantle is wearing a more modern, trendier version of the scarf than I am. She did a fantastic 90-second today—probably the best 90-second statement in the six-odd years I have been in Parliament—wishing South Fremantle the best of luck this weekend against the Dockers reserves, which is Peel Thunder. Before I leave that point, there is a really serious issue in the football industry; that is, the Dockers and the West Coast Eagles using Peel Football Club and East Perth Football Club as their feeder clubs. I do not think it has worked for East Perth or Peel, even though I know Peel may well win this weekend because of its strength, but I do not think it is good for the WAFL or that the Dockers or Eagles need that. Let us move on to more important issues.

Before I talk more about the need for this Loan Bill, last night the government voted down a private member's bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition aimed at fighting domestic and family violence. Shame on this government for deciding to vote down the Criminal Laws (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2016. The Deputy Premier; Minister for Police said that we needed to work in a bipartisan way to tackle family and domestic violence, but voted down a bill that she offered no criticism of at all and, in fact, contained clauses that were similar to or the same as clauses introduced by the Attorney General in the other place last night. One of those is Saori's law. Last Saturday when the Attorney General held a press conference to announce that the government was going to introduce legislation to implement Saori's law, he was reminded that in 2012 the Leader of the Opposition introduced a bill to amend section 281 of the Criminal Code to provide for a maximum imprisonment of 20 years for convictions that have a family or domestic violence element to them. It was called Saori's law in honour of Saori Jones who was brutally murdered by her husband, who is now free.

At that time the Attorney General said that it was mischievous and populist of the opposition to introduce this bill. When this was put to him at the press conference last Saturday, he replied that he had said that at the time because it was related to only one case. It is surprising that he would say that, because it was not related to only one case. When Hon Eric Ripper was still Leader of the Opposition, he received a petition on the need to change this law, and a number of advocates and support groups for victims of domestic violence stated that a number of people were being convicted under section 281 for domestic and family violence, which was what it was never intended to be used for. In his second reading speech yesterday in the other place, the Attorney General said —

Although the circumstances that gave rise to section 281 were the so-called "one-punch homicides" in the context of drunken assaults in public houses, the offence has also been charged in circumstances in which the assault has been committed in the course of family violence. Lack of sufficient evidence that would support a conviction for murder or manslaughter has obliged prosecuting authorities to charge under section 281 in several cases of violence in a domestic setting resulting in the death of the victim.

It was not just one case. A few years back, the Attorney General tabled in the other place a review of section 281 that discussed the community disquiet that this section was being used in a domestic and family violence scenario. Shame on the government for voting down a bill that could have passed through this house. It could have even moved amendments to strengthen the bill and introduce some of the clauses that have been introduced in the other place. As the Attorney General said last Saturday, it is unlikely that his bill will pass both Houses of Parliament before Parliament is prorogued for the election. The Deputy Premier talked about a bipartisan approach to tackling family and domestic violence, but the government was put to the test last night, and it failed miserably.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I suggested that the government take the clauses in the bill that was introduced yesterday by the Attorney General and put them in the opposition's bill, which is a very good bill, and then we could guarantee that that bill would go through both houses by the end of this year. Now, the Attorney General and the government know that there is very little chance of that bill getting through, unless we sit for an extra couple of weeks, which I would advocate. We are getting up in the middle of November; we will be getting up in August soon, if we are not careful. Let's sit till the middle of December if we have to, and pass this very important bill.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Although, if there is to be a new Leader of the Liberal Party, the government may not want that leader to be questioned as Premier in Parliament.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I am told that that is very likely to happen. Notwithstanding that, surely we as a Parliament have a much bigger obligation to the people of Western Australia, particularly those people who are victims of domestic violence and are being killed.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is exactly right, member for Hillarys.

It is interesting that, today, in answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition about a motion to suspend standing orders next week to debate the National Party's quest to have two extra members, the Premier replied that that had not been discussed by the Liberal Party. I assume that the Liberal Party is not supportive, but the Premier's response was that that is the National Party's view. The Leader of the National Party, the member for Pilbara, is a cabinet minister. He cannot come into the chamber and introduce private members' bills. Technically, he probably can, but that is not the way government works. I would like the Premier, the Treasurer or anyone else on the other side to tell me when cabinet ministers have come into this, or any other parliamentary chamber in Australia, and introduced private members' bills that have not been endorsed by cabinet. It is quite amazing that National Party ministers believe that they can enjoy the benefits of being ministers but do not have to show the discipline to be ministers.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I wonder how the member for South Perth and some of his colleagues, such as the member for Belmont, can stand by and allow the ill-disciplined and selfish approach of National Party cabinet ministers to continue.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey: I haven't got five degrees, like you, so are you asking me my opinion on that?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Belmont does not need to have any degrees at all to know that that is surely not right. I think she knows deep down that it is not right. At this stage, as the Premier said, the Liberal Party could govern in its own right, although traditionally it has not done that. There are three members on the other side who could be ministers, who would not be introducing private members' bills that have not gone through the party room or the cabinet process.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Absolutely.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is absolutely disgraceful. I do not know why the Premier does not call it out.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Because he's weak.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That may be the reason, member for Bassendean. I do not know why the Treasurer does not call it out.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Where do the Liberals in the upper house think they are coming from? We know who is leading them—Hon Peter Collier—but where are they coming from when —

Point of Order

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I think the member for Armadale has the floor, not the member for Hillarys. He is going on and on and on.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Member for Hillarys, the Treasurer is on his feet. I gather that was a point of order, Treasurer, but I do not think it falls within the standing orders.

Debate Resumed

[Member's time extended.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Let us move on now to the reason that we have this bill before the house. It is due to the economic mismanagement of this government. It motivated me to write a little paper. I am more than willing to give this paper to the Treasurer afterwards.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I already have it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: You already have it? That is great.

Dr M.D. Nahan: You write well. I don't agree with you, but you write well.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you for that compliment; I really appreciate it. I will read out some parts of this paper, if I may. It is titled "Western Australian Economy: Where Did All The Money Go?" It is unusual for me to read verbatim from a paper, but as I wrote the paper, I feel that I can read from it. I would love to be able to table it, but I know that I cannot do so.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You could seek leave to table it for the rest of this day's sitting.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Could I now? That might be a bit of an ego trip, so I had better not. The paper reads —

It was inevitable that one of the greatest mining booms this state has ever seen would end. A competent state government would have foreseen that and prepared for such a situation. But, the Liberal National state government ...

This is not in the paper, but I point out that it is a Liberal–National state government. It is a coalition; it is not an alliance. The government might use the word "alliance", but it is a coalition, and it is about time the major party of that coalition held the minor party to account, but it does not.

Mr J.E. McGrath: If it was a coalition, we'd share the party room, but we don't. We have separate rooms.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But the government is a coalition, and so is the cabinet. I know I am moving away from the paper here, but I cannot help it. We do not have a situation in which people can be cabinet ministers one minute and not cabinet ministers the next, but that in effect is what is happening. The whole issue of cabinet solidarity is that all members of the cabinet agree with the cabinet's position. That is why cabinet ministers resign on matters of principle, because they cannot bring themselves to agree with the cabinet.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is right. The paper continues —

And so, when the predictable end arrived, they had not planned for it. Now it wants the people to shoulder the load of the \$4 billion dollar budget deficit with which, in its incompetence, it has burdened them.

The West Australian Senator and Federal Minister for Employment, the Hon Michaelia Cash recently asserted that, "the Western Australian economy is a transitioning economy. We have gone from that intensive investment in the mining construction phase and we are easing into a diversified economy and you see more jobs created in the retail and services sectors."

But, we are not seeing more jobs created overall. On the contrary, Dr Andrew Charlton, former economics advisor to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, recently told the ABC, "Western Australia is going backwards very significantly and has conditions that you would describe at a state level as being consistent with a deep recession." A seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 6.3% paints a broad picture of the inevitable human cost of that deep recession. Too often though, the personal human costs are hidden.

No one can explain away this decline by describing the West Australian economy as "transitioning," as Senator Cash tried to do. A transition from one economic "phase" to another phase does not happen without there being an agent of change. And, the agent of change must have a plan. The Liberal National State Government did not and does not have one. Without a plan, we do not have transition; we have collapse.

Without developing a plan, the state government squandered a decade of rising commodity prices, fuelled by strong resources demand from Asia. When it should have been planning, it misspent the wealth that twenty-four quarters of unprecedented economic growth gifted it. It sat on its hands, complacent, as it watched employment, business investment and population grow, never to end, or so it thought. When it did end, the government realised in dismay, that 6.3% of its workforce had no job.

What is more, when one describes the money we owe as government debt; it conceals the fact that economic prudence is not an end in itself. Economic prudence is a means to an end. It means having money, which good government needs to create a just and stable community in which every person can reach their full potential. That is the end to which the Labor Party aspires. In contrast, the Liberal National State Government has been on an imprudent spending spree.

It might want to talk about its commitment to infrastructure since it came to office in 2008 and yes it has completed some important new constructions. But, infrastructure is not defined just by the physical presence of the structure. It includes too the facilities and systems that ensure efficient functioning. The litany of structural and operational problems that have plagued the new Perth Children's Hospital and the Fiona Stanley Hospital are testament to complacency, which has led to delays and budget overruns.

Combine this with a plethora of broken promises and backtracked election commitments and it is little wonder that the electorate has lost confidence in its government.

As previously noted the WA economy is not “transitioning”; rather our state economy is free falling. Moreover, we are not “easing into a diversified economy” where job creation in the retail and service sectors will replace those of the mining construction boom. Job creation in these sectors very much depends upon enduring employment in the traditional pillars of the West Australian economy — mining and housing construction, which stimulates consumer demand for goods and services. To di —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Diversify.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, diversify.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Are you sure you wrote that?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is easier to write than to say! The paper continues —

To diversify the economy, there needs to be a plan to do so; this government does not have such a plan.

The escalating human costs of this avoidable disaster are increasingly evident, in employment, wages and income, and housing. This includes new home construction, homeowner lending, and owner occupied approvals (as opposed to investment lending). These are the sectors that show the very human face of any downturn, and these same indicators; already at the lowest levels on record, continue to fall.

Let us look at some of the statistics, which bear out how the government has failed. The paper continues —

Employment

In July 2016, WA’s seasonally adjusted jobless rate rose to 6.3%, the second highest among all States and Territories ...

...

The number of full-time jobs in the state has now fallen for 19 consecutive months.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Twenty months.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It would be 20 months, yes. The paper continues —

At the end of the March 2016 quarter 12.4% of West Australians were working less than the hours they wanted or needed ... This is more than double the rate of 5.6% a decade previously.

...

Wages, income, and earnings

As one would expect, deteriorating employment leads to slowing wages growth (for example at a rate below inflation). At its worst, wages fall. In Western Australia, wages have been falling overall since 2014 ...

...

Construction (including housing)

On the 24th of August, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released national and state data on the value of construction work done for the June quarter of 2016. Across Australia, there was a seasonally-adjusted 3.7% fall in total construction activity over the quarter ... But look at what is driving this national decline. In that same quarter, Western Australia suffered a huge \$2.3 billion (23%) drop in total industry and home construction activity. It will get worse, with the winding up of the two largest resource projects — Gorgon and Wheatstone LNG.

...

Housing construction has fallen, and continues to fall, sharply. The number of new home approvals in June 2016 were 32% lower than June 2015. More alarming, first homeowner grant applications, already at their lowest levels in a decade, were 54% lower in June 2016 ...

Those are some pretty startling figures.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Yes, the applications have slowed, but in the 2015–16 year, there were record housing starts—almost 30 000 housing starts per year. After that, you’d expect applications to slow, particularly with population growth.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I take the Treasurer’s point that there has been a great rise, so if there is a drop, it is going to be a faster drop, but that is a problem.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I recognise this. It’s a statement of fact, but if you go to the high of those peaks, they cannot continue at that level.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes. The paper continues —

In 2014, Western Australia's economy performed better than any other state —

Which I think goes to the point the Treasurer made —

or territory in Australia.

Dr M.D. Nahan: It did for 10 years prior to that, too.

Dr A.D. BUTI: This is my point. My critique is that the government has not planned for the inevitable end to that; that is my critique. The paper continues —

According to the *July 2014 CommSec State & Territory Economic Performance Report*, a quarterly report which measures economic performance through analysis of eight key indicators, Western Australia lead the way on retail trade and housing finance and placed second on economic growth and construction work. The state was also ranked third on business investment, population growth, and dwelling starts.

Less than two years later, Western Australia's economy is now the second worst performing in Australia. Only Tasmania is doing worse ... Our State is not only contracting but —

I would argue —

is in a recession.

The only indicator that looks good is the gross value of WA's iron ore exports to both the Gross State Product (GSP) of Western Australia and that of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation.

But, GSP is not the ideal measure of what is happening to West Australians at the coalfaces of work and housing. The employment and wealth generating stages of the mining construction boom have faded and the price per tonne of iron ore languishes around 30% of its 2012 peak. What is more, the benefits from the extraction of ore and its export to China flow through to the Commonwealth, through corporate tax, income tax and other Commonwealth receipts. Although Western Australia directly benefits from royalties levied on the mining of our state's natural resources, royalties decrease as the price obtained per tonne drops.

Hence State Final Demand (SFD), a measure of all WA production, wages, income, sales of goods and so on but excluding exports, is —

Arguably —

a better indicator of growth or recession.

If one looks at state final demand since the second quarter of 2013, it has gone negative, and that is a real worry. The paper continues —

It is unavoidable and in fact, irresponsible to claim that WA is anything but mired in a deep recession, that has not yet bottomed out. It may get far worse before turning.

I will give the Treasurer this; obviously, as a Treasurer, one has to be careful what one says to not make a bad situation even worse, but I think reality is also necessary and we cannot gloss over what has happened and the reasons that things have happened. The paper continues —

Of course, Western Australia is a mining state and, it would be churlish to suggest the state government should be held responsible for the forces of supply and demand that have ended the mining construction boom. But —

And this is to the nub of my argument —

it must be held responsible for incompetence, bordering on negligence, for failing to acknowledge a boom built upon fixed asset construction has a beginning and an end; and for failing to plan for it.

It has failed to produce prudent forecasts of Chinese demand for ore. It has not considered adequately the key determinants of demand. These include the level and growth rate of China's urbanisation, projected make up and growth of GDP, the ratio of services to construction and manufacturing. A responsible administration would have done so, and planned cautiously.

The state government has the full resources of the West Australian Treasury at its disposal to help it with planning. Yet, it has either failed to acknowledge, or not understood, the risks associated with pinning the state's future on a single commodity exported to a single market. Also, the Liberal National government has failed to acknowledge that at stake was the welfare of its 2.6 million citizens.

The issue with the 2014 state budget was that the government was predicating an iron ore price of \$122.70 a tonne.

It predicted only marginal falls, with the price settling in the forward estimates to 2017–18. Based on this illusion, royalty income would continue to grow, and the party would go on and on.

Reality dawned just six months later when the same government released the Mid-Year Financial Projections Statements. This revealed a \$1.6 billion downgrade in budget revenues in 2014–15, and an unprecedented \$5 billion downgrade over the forward estimates period (2014–15 to 2017–18).

...

Overall, these data show that the state government has failed to prepare Western Australia adequately for the challenges of life after the boom. But, this negligence in not planning for even the slightest ‘downturn’ is just part of this travesty of economic judgment.

Even more astounding has been the government’s complete failure to manage its own finances. Either so entirely deluded, or completely incapable of asking itself “what if”, there was never any chance of drafting a Plan B to constrain runaway spending if and only if the worst case scenario became reality. After all, no-one likes a party pooper.

Because we have had that lack of planning, I suppose plan B is what we have before the house now—the Loan Bill. Continuing —

The Barnett Government’s unsustainable spending has brought net state debt to an estimated \$33.8 billion this financial year. Or put in terms more meaningful to all West Australians at the coalface, a debt of \$13,000 for every man, woman and child in this state. But this travesty does not end at \$33.8 billion. By 2018–19—only 24 months away—net debt will have risen to \$40 billion.

The state government refuses to own up to its incompetent economic management and poor long-term planning. Instead, it tries to shift the blame to Western Australia’s reduced share of the GST —

As I think everyone does, I acknowledge that that is an issue —

and falling commodity prices for the state’s appalling financial position. Treasurer Mike Nahan tried to explain this year’s depressing state budget with a ... comment reported in *WA Today*. “I’m not blaming anyone, but our source of revenue across the board, including a drop in GST and iron ore has seen revenue drop by 22%. Tell me how would you deal with that?”

It is up to the Treasurer to tell us how he would deal with that. Further —

The answer to that, surely, must be that a competent government does not wait until the inevitable happens before it addresses the problem. You plan for it. You adjust your spending commitments.

A competent government does not do the easy thing by coming back to the house and trying to introduce a loan bill. Time is running out and I will not have time —

Mr D.J. Kelly: Sadly!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Sadly, time is running out because it is such a riveting paper and I know that everyone is really interested in listening to it. In the first half of the paper, I think I really pointed out my thesis and I think the data reflects that this government has not planned for the inevitable end to the boom. As the Treasurer said, when things are going up quickly, they will not continue to go up quickly. There will be a downturn. The government had the responsibility to plan for that downturn. The data does not show, and I have not seen any policies that show, that the government planned for that downturn. It has planned for this Loan Bill. I know that the Treasurer—a man with a PhD—would realise that it is not the most appropriate way to try to deal with the situation we find ourselves in. The paper includes a quote from shadow Treasurer, Ben Wyatt, regarding the Treasurer’s rhetorical question. This is the shadow Treasurer’s response —

“The Liberal Party has delivered us into this financial mess, not the federal government, not the Commonwealth Grants Commission, not America, not China; it has been the Liberal government”.

The shadow Treasurer follows that comment with this damning indictment of the state government’s spending —

The state government, he said, was guilty of “operating on the assumption that the commodity prices were going to stick around at record high levels for a lot longer than anybody thought”.

The paper also includes a comment made by the member for Willagee, but I may run out of time. That would be a shame because it is a very good quote. Peter Tinley states —

“The state now has the worst set of books it has ever seen and the worst set of finances of any Australian jurisdiction ever in the history of this country. We also have the highest level of gross and recurrent debt and the deficit is running at an inordinate \$3 billion-plus. That cannot be sustained by this government and, on the current estimates, certainly cannot be repaid, at least not by the next generation”.

If this Loan Bill is not passed, the government will shut down. The Treasurer knows that we cannot contemplate that, obviously, but we should not be in this mess. Proper planning of the inevitable downturn would have ensured that this did not happen.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [3.37 pm]: I rise to make a contribution on the Loan Bill 2016. Where can I start, really? This government and this Treasurer have brought a bill to the house to allow the government to borrow another \$1.7 billion to simply pay wages. If Parliament does not pass this bill in 45 days, government in Western Australia will shut down. What an appalling circumstance we find ourselves in. For a government that has been in office for eight years during a period of unprecedented growth and wealth, where do we find ourselves? We find ourselves in a position in which the state government has squandered the benefits of the mining boom that we experienced in Western Australia. It is even worse that the government has no plan to deal with this situation, other than to borrow more money. Why does the government have no plan? It is because the government is dysfunctional. Why do I say that? We have had a lot of discussion about whether there is a Liberal–National coalition, an alliance government or whatever we call it; I do not really care whether we call it an alliance or a coalition. What troubles me is that the government does not have a cabinet that can sit around the table, have a reasonable discussion about the state of Western Australia’s economy and finances, and come up with decisions about what to do about them.

At one end of the table sits the Liberal Party and the cabinet ministers who are all fighting amongst themselves. There is the Premier who is desperate to keep his job because his pride does not allow him to leave the job and then there is a bunch of other cabinet ministers who believe they should be in the Premier’s position and who are fighting with the Premier. Amongst that lot is the Treasurer, who despite his many failings, the obvious of which is this Loan Bill, and who the rest of the party knows is absolutely unelectable as Premier, believes he is entitled to be Premier. He wants to be Premier. Then there is the Minister for Transport, who despite all evidence—I wonder whether the member for Bateman would agree with me on this—has a grossly inflated view of his own ability yet for some reason he thinks he is the natural heir to the Premier. He is out there scurrying around trying to make the case to be Premier. Then there is the member for Jandakot who despite all rhyme and reason thinks he is the candidate for the job. Those three Liberal Party cabinet ministers are all hovering around waiting for the Premier to fall on his sword. Then we have the Deputy Premier, the member for Scarborough, who surprisingly seems quite happy when she is in the chamber. She quite often has a smile on her face and given the state of the government, I wonder why. I think the reason the Deputy Premier is so happy is she believes that every day the Premier has a bad day she is one day closer to being installed by the Premier as his successor. The Deputy Premier likes it when the Premier has a bad day because she knows that if the Premier falls, she is the Premier’s pick to replace him. She also knows that being installed as the Premier by the Premier when he falls on his sword is her only chance of becoming Premier, because there is no chance after the election that the boys club in the Liberal Party will ever install her. At least four Liberal cabinet members are all hovering around waiting for the Premier to fall on his sword. No wonder Liberal ministers cannot sit around the cabinet table and have a civil conversation about the state of the Western Australian economy and what should be done about it, because they are all fighting amongst themselves.

As well as Liberal Party cabinet members fighting amongst themselves, at the other end of the table National Party members are fighting amongst themselves. The member for Pilbara, against all credible evidence, has great faith in his own ability and is running his own show. Then there is the member for Warren–Blackwood, the man he deposed, sitting in the background, seething. The National Party, in disarray, has come out with an economic plan that is really just a plan to tax the mining industry, and is completely at odds, apparently, with the economic views of the Liberal Party. In a cabinet of only 17 people there are at least five Liberals who want to be Premier and a whole bunch of Nationals, three of whom the Liberal despise. Is it any wonder that the Western Australian economy is in the state it is in? Whether it is called an alliance or a coalition, the cabinet is completely incapable of sitting down and coming up with a plan to get the state’s economy back on the rails. That is what really worries me. Not only is the state of the books, the economy and the unemployment rate in terrible shape, but also the cabinet is completely dysfunctional. So many of them want the top job but they cannot bear to sit in a room with each other and make a decision. Every time a contentious issue arises, the Nationals just walk out, apparently under the agreement that they have that allows them to step out of the cabinet process.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr D.J. KELLY: I was going through my concern that not only is the budget in a state of disarray, but also the cabinet is incapable of sitting in the same room to come up with a plan. Four or five Liberal ministers are fighting amongst themselves to get the Premier’s job. National Party members are like rats deserting a sinking ship and they are plotting their own course. After eight years of enjoying the benefits of being in government, their plan is to run away and distance themselves from the government and to try to pretend that they had nothing to do with creating the circumstances we find ourselves in. Whether it is called an alliance or a coalition, what really concerns me is that we do not have a cabinet with ministers who can sit around the table, make decisions and come up with a plan. This government is wracked by cabinet ministers who basically have

deserted the Premier. What does that say about the Premier? It shows how weak his position is. In any other government in any Westminster system around the world, confronted with this situation, the Premier at the very least would have sacked the Minister for Transport and sacked the three members of the National Party in the cabinet. He has not done that, not because he does not want to but because he knows that would be a further demonstration of how dysfunctional this government is.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey: Who challenged Eric Ripper?

Mr D.J. KELLY: What did you say, member for Belmont?

Mr P.T. Miles interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I asked the member for Belmont what she said.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey: I asked who challenged Eric Ripper?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Where is Wally? I do not know what the member is talking about. I do not understand the relevance of the interjection.

The Premier's weakness is demonstrated by the fact that he did not sack the transport minister and he has not sacked National Party members from the cabinet for their disloyalty. He cannot do that because he knows it would be a further indication of disarray in the government; instead, he sticks his head in the sand.

Point of Order

Mr P.T. MILES: I refer to the relevance of the debate. The member for Bassendean is not even referring to the Loan Bill 2016. He is talking about party politics.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton): Thank you, member. This is the second reading debate, which allows quite a broad discussion, but the member has a point: the member still needs to be relevant to the bill before the house.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.J. KELLY: With respect, if the member for Wanneroo had been listening to my speech, he would have understood that my point is that the perilous state of the finances, as demonstrated by this Loan Bill, is a direct result of the dysfunctional cabinet in Western Australia. If cabinet could actually work—sit down in the same room, make decisions and come up with a plan—we may not be in a position of the government coming in here on a regular basis to ask to borrow so much money. Member for Wanneroo, the government cannot have a plan if it does not have a cabinet that can sit down and make a decision.

One could point to countless projects that demonstrate how appallingly this government has managed the finances. I will mention a couple. Just last week the Auditor General issued a report on the Ord River scheme. Half a billion dollars of taxpayers' money was spent on that scheme, and the Auditor General said that there was no business plan to justify that level of expenditure. The response from members opposite was that there were great benefits to the state. The Auditor General also said in his report that the social benefits from that project were not apparent; they simply were not there. I do not understand why government members are not ashamed of the way in which they have administered that project. People in regional areas want economic growth, development and government support, but they also want that money spent efficiently and properly. They do not want that money wasted —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central!

Mr D.J. KELLY: I think that the member for North West Central was a member of the government when that project started.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, through the Chair, please. Otherwise, debate will descend into interjections across the chamber.

Mr D.J. KELLY: People in regional areas want government expenditure on programs and development, but they want that money spent efficiently, as does anyone else. People in regional areas do not say, "Yes, we want government spending. We don't care how the money is spent, just as long as it's spent. We are happy if it's just spent somewhere." That is not what they say. They want to see things achieved. They do not want the money spent willy-nilly. The Auditor General's report on the Ord River scheme is damning—this is not coming from the Labor Party. No business case was made prior to that money being spent. Members opposite were elected in 2008 and the Auditor General said there was an attitude of, "Let's just get on with it". There was no planning and no business case. The government just spent half a billion dollars of taxpayer's money because it thought it was a good idea. It is an absolute disgrace. Every time not enough money is spent on hospitals, schools or roads in regional areas, we can point to the half-billion dollars spent on the Ord River scheme that could have been more suitably and productively spent on those projects. The former Leader of the National Party, in defence of

that scheme, said when he got a briefing from the Auditor General, “I asked the Auditor General: is it the case that there were no social benefits or is it the case that we just have not measured them so we do not know that they are there?” He claims that the Auditor General said that the benefits may have been there, but they were just not measured. I find it extraordinary that the former Leader of the National Party took comfort from the statement. The Auditor General said it is not that the benefits were not there; it is just that we could not see and prove that they were there. That is an extraordinary thing from which to take comfort.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.J. KELLY: The National Party and the Treasurer are hoping that there might have been benefits from that allocation of a half-billion dollars of taxpayers’ money. They cannot prove that they are there or point to them, but they just might be there. That project is staggering in its scale—a half-billion dollars has been spent on it—but it is just one of the examples of how poorly this government goes about doing its business. The other project that jumps out at us is the Perth Freight Link—the \$2 billion road to nowhere. It was not in last year’s state budget. It was dreamt up on the back of an envelope by federal members of the Liberal Party, and now it is a project the government is completely wedded to, even though, after spending \$2 billion, the link will not actually get to the port of Fremantle. The small matter of how the link gets from the opposite side of the river into the port is something that has been glossed over and the government will work that out X number of dollars later. That is just another example of how badly this government goes about its business, and why we are back here in Parliament with a bill from this Treasurer to enable him to borrow an extra \$1.7 billion.

I now will talk about a couple of other areas in which this government is also failing in its capital expenditure. Part of the NorthLink WA project that upgrades or widens Tonkin Highway between Guildford Road and Reid Highway has been started. I think it has cost over \$1 billion, but the planning and consultation with the local community on that project has been sadly lacking. Although one of the schools is technically in the electorate of Morley, most of the students at that school actually come from my electorate of Bassendean. That school was completely ignored in the planning of the NorthLink project. An underpass goes under Tonkin Highway and allows parents to park their cars in a carpark on the eastern side of Tonkin Highway before taking a short walk through the underpass to get to the school on the other side. In the original planning of the NorthLink project, that underpass was going to disappear altogether. How ridiculous! All those students were expected to be driven along Morley Drive and across Tonkin Highway to get to the school. The community was outraged. Channel Nine and a few other media outlets went down there, and, after some negotiations, we got a commitment from the government that the underpass will stay. However, the Minister for Transport has refused to budge from removing the 80-bay car park on the eastern side of Tonkin Highway. As I said, originally the underpass was going to go. We have now got that back, but the 80-bay car park will go. Originally there was going to be no car bays on that side. The Minister for Transport then said there would be 12, and then he said there would be 20. That is what they have done: a new car park with 20 bays has been built. How the minister thinks parents are going to utilise a 20-bay car park in lieu of an 80-bay car park, I do not know. I have written to the minister a couple of times on this issue, with no satisfactory response. I raised the issue during, I think, the budget debate. The Minister for Transport was in the chamber at the time and claimed he had not got any letters from me or had not seen them. The next day there were calls to my electorate office trying to get copies of my letters, and so those letters were provided, but I still have not got a response from the Minister for Transport on this issue. As well as the car park issue associated with the NorthLink WA project, very close to where that car park was is a street called Abbey Street, which was used by residents to access Morley Drive. Abbey Street has now become a cul-de-sac, so to access Morley Drive residents now have to use Hamersley Avenue and then turn right onto Beechboro Road and right again into Morley Drive. As members can imagine, that is very difficult in peak hour; in fact, it is dangerous—it is an accident waiting to happen. I have raised that issue on several occasions with the Minister for Transport. I have tabled in this house a petition with almost 300 signatures calling on the government to reopen Abbey Street or to find some other solution to allow those residents to get out of their suburb and access Morley Drive, and eventually Tonkin Highway, safely. Again, I have had no response at all from the Minister for Transport. This is a \$1 billion project that was planned with no regard whatsoever for Hampton Park Primary School and absolutely no regard for people who live in streets such as Abbey Street, Hamersley Avenue or Ivanhoe Street. No regard has been given to how those residents will access Morley Drive and ultimately Tonkin Highway. As a result, the government has created a very unsafe circumstance. I am talking about safety, and I remember that I may have raised this issue during the budget debate, but I also raised it either last week or the week before in debate on the road safety bill. It seemed to me that it was fine for the government to pass legislation supposedly to make our roads safer, but if it is spending \$1 billion on a project such as the NorthLink project and effectively is creating an accident waiting to happen, it is wasting that money. It is not delivering the project in the way the community would expect.

I also raise another project that the government is pursuing in my electorate. In a fashion, through the WA Planning Commission, the government is currently seeking to rezone some land from public open space to residential. This land is adjacent to Kiara College, which used to be Lockridge Senior High School. That land is currently used by Kiara College to operate its farm school. Kiara College is one of only two high schools in the

metropolitan area that have a farm school program. It is very successful and the school regularly wins prizes at the Perth Royal Show. It is a very well regarded program run by Kiara College. The college only has a lease arrangement with the WAPC on the land. For years the college has been asking that the government transfer the land from the WAPC to the education department so it has security of tenure and it can plan. It cannot plan and engage with industry if it does not have certainty that it will be able to operate in the future. This issue came to a head for two reasons. First, the government decided to build a disability justice centre on part of that land, which was a terrible idea. Second, it decided to rezone all the land as residential and only offer the school three hectares to operate the farm school on a continuing lease arrangement. Locating a disability justice centre next to a high school is a stupid decision and beyond belief. Thankfully, the government has now backed down on that decision, but the proposal to rezone all that land to residential still remains. The school has since been negotiating with the government and I understand that it has now been offered eight hectares of land instead of three hectares. But the school really needs a minimum of 12 hectares of land if that farm school is to operate, and it needs the land to be permanently transferred to the education department and not on a lease arrangement so that the school can get on and plan what it does into the future, knowing it has security of tenure. The Premier is even on record as saying that he thought that the land had been transferred to the school. Successive education ministers have made positive statements about giving Kiara College security of tenure, but it has never been done. I urge the government to give the school the security of tenure over the land it needs, which is 12 hectares, so it to can develop a very successful farm program. It is unique in the metropolitan area in that the land is immediately adjacent to the school, and it is one of only two schools to have a program at all. The government should give Kiara College the certainty it needs to get on and manage its farm school program.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [4.08 pm]: I rise to speak on the Loan Bill 2016. While my phone screen is still fixed on it, I want to refer to something I found when I was reading the “Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million” released by the government, and that I think is a good context to start my contribution to the debate on the Loan Bill. The Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan states that the Carter’s and Skippers Row wetlands in Bayswater, which are currently the subject of a lot of debate and some very contentious decisions, are part of the three per cent of the Swan coastal plain remnant bushland that is not protected as a conservation reserve in the government’s Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan. That was probably the start of the problem. If these wetlands were protected, I would not be making yet another contribution to the house about the state of these wetlands and the fragile position we find ourselves in trying to protect them. I want to start by again thanking the generous support of No Houses in Wetlands and the crew that volunteers tirelessly to protect the urban wetlands in the city, and that is particularly interested in protecting the wetlands around the Bayswater and Maylands area. Recently in this house I raised the prospect that when the WA Planning Commission made decisions about granting subdivision rights and clearing rights to application 152768, which is commonly referred to as the Skippers Row development and the Carter’s block development, to approve residential subdivision of those two wetlands, it was acting on flawed information, misinformation and incorrect information. That is evidenced by some of the documentation that has been released under freedom of information. I want to go through the key issues that have come to light. I assume the WA Planning Commission, and I hope the minister or minister’s office, will at least read my speech in *Hansard* on this subject and get some guidance about what the community has uncovered.

The first issue is the environmental report that the owners of the land submitted in support of their subdivision. I quoted the number earlier. I want to talk about this in the context of the environmental report prepared by 360 Environmental on 9 July 2015. That was done specifically to support the subdivision application at lots 6–10 Leake Street. It is despite the fact that the report by 360 Environmental was purposely restricted to investigate a grassed area—not the wetlands—owned by one of the proponents of this application. It was submitted to the WA Planning Commission in support of a joint application across lots 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 14. Members can immediately see the problem: if we have an environmental report commissioned by the owners in support of their application, that is all fine, but it only really looked at the grassland in this wetlands. It is the only environmental report, as far as I can tell—I would be happy to be dissuaded or persuaded otherwise—supplied in support of this application to the WA Planning Commission in order for it to make a determination on the subdivision. I find that extraordinary and deeply concerning. The 360 Environmental report advised that the sum total of vegetation destruction on that block would be the removal of and/or pruning of several native trees and shrubs. That sounds deceptively simple really—the removal or pruning of several trees and shrubs. I challenge anybody who goes out to the wetlands to have a look at what has been done and compare that recommendation with what has happened on the ground. It is a stark contrast to the preliminary site works done on 12 and 13 July that have destroyed up to 50 mature trees, including trees in the wetland. That 360 report was not expected to address the impact on flora and fauna in the adjacent wetland, Carter’s wetland, and the 360 Environmental report bears no resemblance to the expert reports received about the site. I will talk a little about them in a minute. The sum total of environmental impact referred to in the proponent’s report states —

... native *Melalueca* species along the north-western boundary and one or two introduced ... trees along the southern boundary. The proposed development may necessitate removal and/or pruning of several native trees and shrubs. The vast majority of the site consisted of introduced grasses.

That is probably quite right considering they only looked at the grassed area, not the wetlands. The report did not identify the impact of the development on protected species under the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 in Carter's wetland; for instance, the rainbow bee-eater. Perhaps as a consequence, there were no conditions in the WA Planning Commission approval related to flora or fauna or the taking of flora and fauna on that site on 12 and 13 of July when the bulldozers moved in.

Of greater concern is a serious oversight that the application did not correctly describe the environmental destruction that would occur on that site as a result of the work. That is completely contradictory advice to the advice the Department of Parks and Wildlife gave to the City of Bayswater earlier when this application was being discussed. Based on the Department of Parks and Wildlife advice received directly about the Skippers Row development in Bayswater, the City of Bayswater recommended against the development. The City of Bayswater took on the advice from the Department of Parks and Wildlife, rivers and estuarine division, dated 1 October 2015, when it expressed serious reservations about the subdivision proposed in relation to its impact on the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary. I find it extremely concerning that this same department representing the Western Australian community and taxpayers went on to advise the Planning Commission that it then had no objection to the development, but made not one reference to the flora and fauna in the wetlands.

If that is not enough to make the Minister for Environment sit up and take notice and the Minister for Planning to consider what work she can do to solve this problem, I do not know what is. But let me go on. The third issue is in fact the geo-survey report conducted on the Carter-owned land, subject to application way back in 2010. That recorded high levels of asbestos on the site. I will read directly from that report and tell members what that report states. This report went to councillors at the City of Bayswater on 21 September 2010. It was to help them consider whether the City of Bayswater was intending to buy that land. It states, in part —

The selling agent also advised that since the July report —

That is, the July 2010 report to council —

there have been two interested parties ...

The first prospective purchaser spent some money to develop a geotechnical report, and since that report was completed, elected to not proceed with the offer.

The council was advised that the geotech reports on the site revealed —

- (a) the site has a high level of Dieldrin;
- (b) the site has a high level of asbestos; and
- (c) the site has acidic soil.

We have also been advised that the remediation process would take up to three years —

That is the reason the purchaser withdrew their offer.

I want to make quite sure that is in *Hansard*, because that is information that came from an FOI from the City of Bayswater in relation to all its considerations about purchasing this land. Indeed, that is pretty clearly one of the reasons it would not have purchased it back then, because of what was being pointed to as contamination on that land.

I should also just talk about the fact that the site is currently—well, we thought it was—being investigated by the Department of Environmental Protection, because a “form 1”, as it is known, was lodged back on 29 July. I am only initiated fairly recently into this language. Any member of the public can lodge a form 1, which is used when somebody suspects that a site is contaminated, to the Department of Environment Regulation. When a person is told by a government department that a form can be lodged about a suspicious site that may be contaminated, one could be forgiven for thinking that something might happen! Why encourage the public to lodge a form if nothing happens? There is no process related to lodging this form. It seems, though, that that is exactly what happened. I want to go on in a bit of detail. The person who lodged the form has spoken to the department several times trying to work out what has happened to the form 1 that was lodged on 29 July.

On or about 1 August 2016, the Department of Environment Regulation requested the City of Bayswater supply a copy of the 2010 geotechnical survey report. That is the one that I just read out. The contents in *Hansard* were taken from that report. That request was made by the Department of Environment Regulation to the City of Bayswater. So far, the department has received nothing. The first of August was more than a month ago. The Department of Environment Regulation tells us that is the case because the original report was not commissioned by the owner of the land; it was commissioned by somebody who thought they might want to buy the land. I get that; I understand that. People cannot wait two months for something to happen. The department should have done more to pursue this. Why does the department not insist upon receiving a copy of this report? I hope that some action can be taken to support the department in trying to get a copy of that report so it can see what the problem is with this contaminated site.

The words of the community in telling me about this are salient. An email states —

When putting in a Form 1, it is reasonable for a member of the public to assume that there will be an investigation of the site by DER. It is reasonable for a member of the public to assume that DER will determine whether or not the site is contaminated, through doing its own survey and sampling, or that DER would have the power to obtain the necessary documents ...

We have questioned many people in this whole debate around the Bayswater wetlands destruction. When we have questioned government employees about why there is such inaction around this, it is as though they are all singing from the same song sheet because they say, “We have no resources to do that. We have no money. We cannot, for instance, reassess the urban wetlands in the Swan River because we do not have the money to do that.” The Department of Environment Regulation is waiting for a report from somewhere about something, but it does not know if it will contain any information. If the department does not get a report, will it whiz out and do the sampling? No—it tells us it is not able to do any sampling. It is not able to do anything because it does not have the resources to do anything.

Mr M.H. Taylor: We need a Labor government!

Ms L.L. BAKER: If this Loan Bill passes, I hope it is the very first thing on the Treasurer’s agenda, compliments of the planning minister’s pursuit of this issue. It would be very, very beneficial if the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Environment simply stepped up to the plate and tried to get the resources to do something about this. If asbestos was indeed dumped on this land and the block is now being disturbed so significantly, I can tell members that the water that washes through that wetland is flowing directly into the Swan River. That cannot be good—along with the dieldrin that goes with it. Neither of those things can be good.

Let me go back to the issue I was talking about in relation to the geotechnical report. We know the department is not investigating whether the site is contaminated. It is trying to get some information to see if it can do anything, without any money. Everything suggests that none of the contamination was mentioned when subdivision plans were submitted. There does not appear to have been any disclosure that the site had high levels of asbestos. There does not appear to have been any disclosure that originally a report was done that showed dieldrin and asbestos contamination on that site. As we know, the pre-works were done. There is now about three metres of rubble on an urban wetland.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: That site was interfered with without any protective measures being taken. We understand from pollution experts that contamination is only a threat to a wetland functioning if that site is disturbed.

The final issue is the failure of this state government to do anything about planning laws and regulations that might in any way protect our coastal wetlands. As I started my presentation this afternoon, it is quite clear to me that the “Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million” does not consider this particular wetland as part of its conservation area. That is deeply disturbing. It is a huge disappointment to my constituents. I can only imagine—no, I cannot; I should put it a different way. I cannot imagine what the Minister for Environment does about these kinds of issues. He sat here on three separate occasions and took absolutely no notice of the issues that were raised. I have taken particular time to focus only on the issues. I have not attacked the man, as the case is. It is time for the gloves to come off. How often has the member for Maylands raised these issues in this house and been completely ignored by a Minister for Environment who has no concept of protecting urban wetlands? Instead, the minister chooses to shout across the chamber at the shadow Minister for Environment. That is his choice; he can do that. He clearly does not want to take on these issues. He clearly is not interested in our coastal wetlands. For the disdain and flippancy with which he treats my community, I will read directly from a comment given to me —

It is extremely disappointing that the Minister for the Environment has been dealing with the communities concerns regarding protection of our wetlands so flippantly and with such disregard for the significant questions that the Bayswater wetlands issue raises with respect to the ability of his Departments to represent the interests of the wider community when it comes to our natural resources. Every person in every environment related Department working on this application, that we have spoken to, has said the same thing. We don’t have the resources to investigate. And the community doesn’t have the ability to appeal WAPC decisions. So where does this leave us in relation to protecting our environmental assets for the future in a City with rapidly increasing housing density?

It is clear that the only place children are ever going to see flora and fauna will be in the few remaining wetlands that have at least been covered as a conservation wetland, not the mid-level wetland that the Bayswater wetland has been classified as.

At this juncture I have had enough of the environment minister completely ignoring the community when it comes to this. I have had enough of coming into this house and discussing the Bayswater wetlands and the disastrous impact that this has had on the flora and fauna in Western Australia, particularly the flora and fauna along the Swan River and the many protected species on it. I have had enough of the ignorance and disdain with

which the Minister for Environment continues to treat the urban wetlands and the people from my electorate who support it. I really hope that he continues to display his ignorance of all things to do with the environment in relation to this urban wetland because my community is on to him! My community is absolutely aware of the minister's attitude and his inability to effect any kind of outcome for the urban wetlands in Bayswater. I will continue to speak in this house about this, and pursue the interests of my community. Quite frankly, not to do so would be to be as ignorant, disdainful and disrespectful to my community as the Minister for Environment has shown he can be. I have had enough of this ignorance. It is time for the Minister for Environment to get off his behind and do something about urban wetlands, particularly those in Bayswater. There are more wetlands than just those in Bayswater. There is the Beeliar wetland and the wetland at Hazelmere. We just have to turn on the news on any station during the week to hear someone speaking out about desecration and development going on in a wetland without appropriate checks and balances. How is it possible that the Western Australian Planning Commission was permitted to make a decision about bulldozing this wetland apparently without any kind of contemporary assessment of the environmental impact? How can this government allow that to happen? It is absolutely shameful.

I have just a few minutes left. This is the most important issue that has arisen in my electorate over the past eight weeks, which is why I have spent time describing the latest instalment of this debacle. Before I close, I would like to mention a couple of other issues. Firstly, there are several other wetlands in my electorate. One of them is Bardon Park, which is a bit further up the river. Bardon Park abuts one block owned by the City of Bayswater and two others owned by the Western Australian Planning Commission. Here again we see an obfuscation of responsibility. When I wrote to explain the weed infestation and the need for weed control in that area, I was told that the land is very dense and very wet, and to just kill the weeds on the WAPC land is not an effective solution, as the infestation will reappear. I was told that the WA Planning Commission has previously sought a joint approach with the City of Bayswater and the adjoining landowner without success, and the WAPC has reverted to a containment program on its land, with the aim of preventing further weed build-up from occurring. That is simply not good enough. It is simply shutting the door and saying, "We can't do anything, just bring out the glyphosate"—or whatever is used to kill these infestations—and moving on.

Rather than admitting defeat, would it not be better to invest in building some community support, such as a friends of the riverbank group or a local community group that could be encouraged to get involved and do some work to manage the weeds? It has happened in other areas, such as the Baigup wetland in my electorate, which has done very well and has benefited from the work of the friends of Baigup, who have done a great job keeping the weeds down. They also tackle the infestation from animals that should not be there as well as flora that should not be there, such as watsonia and blackberry. They do a fantastic job. I suspect that Bardon Park would do well to have a friends of Bardon Park group, supported by the riverbank guardians program, helping fund weed control and revegetation. The dollar that is invested in this goes a very long way, as we all know when we see friends groups in our communities. They do an amazing amount of work with a very small resource impost on the government. I will be encouraging the Minister for Planning to think very carefully about whether she can support a friends group to do some work in Bardon Park to manage the weed problems.

There are many other issues that I could raise in my electorate, but before my time runs out I want to mention the Maylands Peninsula Primary School. That school approached the Department of Education last year to let it know that the school numbers were going to be pretty high, and that the present layout of the school meant that small children would have to walk a very long way to get to the toilets. They are a long way across the campus. The Maylands Peninsula Primary School asked the department to investigate whether it could have two transportable toilet blocks to cater for the small children in the interim, while the school was dealing with these extra numbers. The school also put in for a couple of extra transportable classrooms because, as we all know, infrastructure spend by the government in the Maylands electorate has been restricted, and does not allow for that much development. I call on the Minister for Education to reconsider whether he can see his way clear to put transportable toilet blocks into the Maylands Peninsula Primary School, which would help the little kids immeasurably. It would mean that they do not have to go all the way across the school campus to find a bit of relief. They would have a much more accessible and safe place.

Before I sit down, I want to put in a very big ask for John Forrest Senior High School. This high school is probably the second oldest high school in the state now, and it really needs some help. There is asbestos on the property, and a number of investigations have been carried out. I think, at this stage of the game, the acting principal is using the school's own funds to try to solve the asbestos problem, because she has had no luck with the Department of Education. We have been rejected every time we have approached the department to talk about the asbestos. The other issue about John Forrest is that it is a specialist school for music but the performing arts centre is simply not there. It is a gymnasium, full of smelly socks and that lovely smell of 50 years of lots of kids doing gym in a gymnasium. It is not my idea of a performing arts centre. Down the road, Mount Lawley Senior High School—which is clearly not in my electorate; it is clearly in the Speaker's electorate; a Liberal Party electorate—has had much more spent on it, including a performing arts centre.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey: We haven't got one of those.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I am quite sure that the member for Belmont's electorate probably does not, but she is not on her feet at the moment; I am.

John Forrest, as a specialist school in music, really needs investment from the government in a performing arts centre. If that is put in the context of the structure plan for Morley, 10 000 additional individuals are expected to be residing in the Morley area, and the John Forrest catchment, within the next 10 years. If that happens, where are all these kids going to go to school? John Forrest will not have the capacity to take the extra children. Without basic infrastructure support, the school will not be able to keep its high academic standing, and keep producing extraordinary children, with extraordinary teachers and an extraordinary administration group. We need to see some tender loving care for an old school, and some respect for the children who go to the school and take advantage of a great public education system in Western Australia.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [4.39 pm]: It is a pleasure to rise late on Thursday afternoon to make a contribution to the debate on the Loan Bill 2016. It is the third, or the fourth, whatever we are up to. There are so many iterations that I cannot possibly keep count, nor can I keep count of the cost. As always, these general debates, particularly loan bill debates and contributions in response to budget speeches, give us the opportunity to range around from local to national to international issues and I invariably run out of time before I have dealt with the issues I think are most intimately felt by all of us in our various electorates, and the various issues that are different from electorate to electorate.

I start with a heartfelt thankyou to a particular group in my electorate. I would like to say a great thankyou to Gary Allen, who established a little community group that members will never read about in *The West Australian* or hear about, but which does outstanding work at a very local level. Gary established what we now know as Cooby Cares, which was founded in the suburb of Coolbellup. It provides support for those in great need. He is supported by several local people who are very active in their community: Jane Burnett; the Coolbellup Community School chaplain, Jane Snare; and Allison Loo, who is another active member in both the school community and the community at large. These people have been instrumental in creating one of the best examples of service to the community that I have ever seen. They routinely go out with a vehicle and trailer to collect household goods, clothes and non-perishable food items, and redistribute them in the Coolbellup, Bibra Lake, North Lake and South Lake communities for families in need. They have been doing that for months now, so it is the least I can do to stand up in this place and say that the community of Western Australia, via the Parliament of Western Australia, sends a big, heartfelt thankyou for the work that you do and continue to do. I, as the local member, will forever be in your service.

I also want to talk about another local issue that has been quite significant in my community—the amalgamation of Hamilton Senior High School and South Fremantle Senior High School. Those schools have been around for more than 50 years now; I went to the fiftieth birthday of Hamilton Senior High School a couple of years ago and a great number of ex-students from over that time came back to participate in those celebrations. Unfortunately, the changing demographics of the area and the desire and need for certain types of public education has required some rationalisation. Hamilton Senior High School has been extremely well led by its current principal, Donna McDonald, and she deserves all the recognition and respect I can muster as a local member, simply because she has had to lead a school that is in decline and is fiscally challenged. It has been under-supported for the infrastructure it needs, but that is also a function of scale. When enrolment numbers fall below 600 students, things get hard and it becomes a diminishing returns argument. With South Fremantle Senior High School only a short distance away—a couple of kilometres, as the crow flies—it was inevitable either that one of those schools would close or they would amalgamate. The decision was made to amalgamate, and I support that decision because South Fremantle Senior High School was similarly under all sorts of pressures, including reputational and support problems. The part of Fremantle where I grew up, particularly South Fremantle, has always been a challenging environment and South Fremantle Senior High School has not kept pace with community expectations in South Fremantle.

The amalgamation of Hamilton Senior High School and South Fremantle Senior High School to create the proposed Fremantle College will, I am sure, be a great addition to public education opportunities and choices in the Fremantle district, but it will not be without its challenges. South Fremantle Senior High School has fewer than 500 students; it has had all sorts of resources given to it over the years and it has used them well. The maritime services area and performing arts are two standouts. It also has a specialty program for baseball, of all things, which is extremely well attended, and I hope it will continue if there is community need for it. The Department of Education and the state government have given the schools every opportunity for success in the amalgamation process, with a \$30 million injection into producing 16 new classrooms, amongst other things, and refurbishing common areas, administration blocks, and all the other necessary enabling infrastructure for producing outstanding opportunities.

There is a fundamental change in the Fremantle demographic. When I grew up there it was full of wharfies and fishermen; that has now changed significantly as property prices increase and gentrification occurs, as it has throughout the inner metropolitan area. The public now expects, as I term it, the best private education public

money can buy. We see that happening at John Curtin College of the Arts, Shenton College, Rossmoyne Senior High School and other schools that have been the beneficiaries of both demographic change and significant investment over the years. Fremantle College—I might add that that is the working title—has my full support and blessing. The challenge is to make sure that it meets the expectations of its local demographic and its shared catchment. There are three catchments for the proposed Fremantle College: the existing South Fremantle catchment; the amalgamated Hamilton Senior High School catchment; and the third, intangible catchment, which is the unmet need of the Fremantle district for an alternative to the current offerings between Hamilton Senior High School and South Fremantle Senior High School.

I was privileged to be invited to join the selection panel for the new principal at Fremantle College and I was very pleased with the result. We had more than 20 applications from outstanding candidates. We shortlisted them and went through an exhaustive process to identify who would be best to lead this very challenging mission to amalgamate these two schools. We chose the then deputy principal of Applecross Senior High School, Mr Myles Draper. Myles has been deputy principal at many schools in different places and was, I think, also acting principal at Applecross for those times when principals take various types of leave. It was a bit of a challenge for the selection panel to give such a task to someone who has not been a principal at that level. Sue Curnow, the district director, was very strong in accepting the recommendation of us all that a deputy could actually make the grade, because at some point they have to step up, fall over or fail. I have every confidence that Myles Draper will do it. The resourcing that has been given to him is significant. The school will have a GATE program, which is unusual for a school straight out of the “gate”. On 26 October it will present to the community the gifted and talented education program opportunities at Fremantle College. It has an exciting future.

Dr M.D. Nahan: What’s the GATE program focused on?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am not quite sure; it has a list of options. Obviously they have to look for a differential advantage with the other schools, including John Curtin, Christian Brothers College Fremantle and Seton Catholic College, because there is all that mix. It is in a very tough market. Melville Senior High School, one of my other schools, is in a similar position. It needs to meet a changing demographic, but it still has a significant proportion of students from the low socioeconomic index quartile—I think about 19 per cent—and the next quartile is also strongly represented. They have a dual challenge. For members who do not know, Melville Senior High School sits on Leach Highway; to its north it has the river and all the leafy suburbs and to its south, over into Willagee and down through the suburbs where my electorate is, there is a very different demographic, and it needs to be able to please all comers. Under Phil White, his deputy Kylie Bottcher and the team do a great job to meet the needs and they lift all the boats. Phil White and his team at Melville Senior High School have serious competition from Applecross Senior High School, Santa Maria College, the Christian Brothers College Fremantle, Seton Catholic College and John Curtin College of the Arts, which are all within an easy bus ride —

Dr M.D. Nahan: And Rossmoyne.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: There is also Rossmoyne Senior High School; I thank the Treasurer. They are in a fight. Personally, I do not think it is a bad thing. Melville has nearly 1 300 kids. It has the scale to be viable. There are specialist programs and it has good leadership. There is a good, active parenting body. There is no reason that a parent from any catchment school would not seriously consider Melville Senior High School as an option. It will be game on when we have Fremantle college.

Dr A.D. Buti: I’m very disappointed that the name “South Fremantle” is going!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The member for Armadale might be! I hasten to add, for those who are concerned, that it will just be called drab old “Fremantle College”. There is a big push —

Ms S.F. McGurk: Mighty Fremantle college!

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The member for Fremantle has been quite active in making sure that it is given a name—there is a working title—that reflects something other than just a geographic location and expresses some sort of ambition about what the college wants to be. I proffered the idea of calling it Beazley college; I do not mean Kim Beazley junior, I mean Kim Beazley senior. He was the federal member for Fremantle. Under the Whitlam government, he gave 28 years of his professional adult life to deliver the free tertiary education system that we knew —

Dr A.D. Buti: He was also the author of a very comprehensive review of the education system in WA called the Beazley report in the 1980s.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: There we go; I thank the member for Armadale. We are all better informed about the heritage of those who have driven education in this country and this state to a level that we enjoy now, particularly in public education. It is great to see.

Mr I.C. Blayney: But you lost the argument.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The argument continues, my friend! I am fighting a rearguard action, but I will work it out. It may be the Kim Beazley senior performing arts centre or something; we will see.

That was at a local level. I said those thank-yous and highlighted for the chamber and recognised the people who ought to be recognised for their great work. I could obviously spend the entire time on my feet recognising the great work done in the community, as each and every one of us who are active in our electorates could. Now I want to step out because this is a money bill. It lends itself to talk about the economy. I am not about to go through the critique of the government that many people have done over nearly the last four years—certainly the shadow Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition—about the mismanagement or our perception of the mismanagement of this government’s approach to the economy and its finances. I want to step further away from that and talk about the idea of what is happening in our region globally.

I keep saying this and I will continue to say it; this never became more obvious to me than during the Economics and Industry Standing Committee’s inquiry into innovation and what is happening with global trade arrangements in our region. I am talking specifically about how we take advantage of the Asian opportunity. We often talk about it here—the Asian century and the sorts of things that will allow us to get into Asia, including being export-oriented and our differential advantages. It is all talk because there is currently no evidence, and I take no comfort from the evidence that I have been able to find, that businesses in Australia—certainly, Western Australia would not be immune from the same sort of research—is taking advantage of these opportunities. It is very timely that two reports have recently come out. One comes from *The Economist* Intelligence Unit. It did a survey of a number of enterprises that I will talk about in a second. There is also the PricewaterhouseCoopers report, “Passing us by: Why Australian businesses are missing the Asian opportunity. And what they can do about it.” I will not quote extensively from this article but the executive summary tells us both the sample size and what it found. The PWC report surveyed more than a thousand businesses across the full spectrum of Australian businesses and it spoke in depth to 50 businesses. It did qualitative and quantitative research to find out what was driving decision-making in regarding Asia and the Asian opportunity. The report’s four key findings are quite damning. They are —

- Only 9 per cent of Australian businesses are currently operating in Asia and only 12 per cent have any experience of doing business in Asia at all.
- The majority—around two thirds—have no intention of changing their stance towards Asia in the next two to three years.
- Of Australia’s large companies, half are doing business in Asia but only 23 per cent have staff on the ground in-market.
- For those large companies that did have an Asian strategy, the total contribution of it to their bottom line was only 12 per cent.

Obviously, there are ways to pick holes in all that, including the sample size and who they talked to. If they interviewed just BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto, there would be a massive distortion right there. It is not about the fine-grained nature of the detail in the report; the trend is of interest.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: If we are to accept at least the sentiment of these findings, there is a significant problem. PWC is not given to outrageous claims in much of its research. It may, from time to time, not quite meet requirements but the report’s findings are there for all to see. This led me to wonder, “What’s not right? What’s not working? Why aren’t we getting more involved in Asia?” As we stand here today, there are more bilateral and multilateral trade agreements than ever before in our history. Australia has been party to trade agreements in some form or another for many, many years, since it came into being. I am no grand advocate for bilateral trade agreements. I can find some argument for the benefits of multilateral trade agreements but a lot of the evidence does not allow that. When I ask them about free trade agreements, economists typically want to start by telling me that, of course, the purest economic thinking is that any agreement between two participants in a market is actually a distortion of the market and not helpful, yet, here we are within an inordinate number of free trade agreements. *The Economist* Intelligence Unit recently produced a report called “FTAs: fantastic, fine or futile? Business views on trade agreements in Asia”. It is a very specific study into the specific area of what the impact of free trade agreements is having at the enterprise level in Australia and for Australian enterprises. We must understand the scale of what is happening. As I have said before, Western Australia is trade-exposed in a couple of key commodities to the global winds of change. We could be knocked about, as we have been; the Treasurer has been quite vocal about the changes that have impacted on the finances of Western Australia. The PWC report highlights, and it is worth mentioning again, that by 2030, four of the world’s five largest economies in purchasing power parity will be in Asia. The region will account for more than 50 per cent of global gross domestic product. This is by 2030.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I assume that includes India?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Yes. Asia will be home to 3.2 billion members of the consuming class, many of whom will live in 21 of the world's 37 megacities that will be in Asia. The drive to urbanisation, the concentration of population and the rise of disposable incomes in PPP terms will provide significant opportunity and challenge. Here in Western Australia, we risk a decline in the standard of living. Nothing will grab a politician's attention more than when people feel like they are missing out, they cannot do something, they cannot get ahead or they cannot get the same as their parents got. Most people who sit in this chamber have enjoyed a golden period in their adult working life; they have enjoyed above-inflation wages growth, low interest rates and continuous economic growth.

Dr M.D. Nahan: For 25 years.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: For 25 years. Probably after the next election, people who have never seen or been in a recession may come into this chamber. Imagine the culture shock when—it will be when, as every economist will tell you; they just cannot predict when—there is a recession. I remember paying 18 per cent interest on the mortgage of a \$72 000 flat in Applecross on a staff cadet's wages at the Royal Military College, Duntroon. That was not a happy place to be. There was double-digit unemployment in some parts of the country and youth unemployment was unbelievably high. We came through that and we have come out of the global financial crisis, but we must be savvy about what is happening in our region. I am less worried about downside risk than I am about us not taking advantage of the upside opportunity.

The Economist report shows clear evidence of that. The survey it conducted was in the first quarter of 2014—I accept that is the date of the information—but the sample size was significant. It interviewed senior executives from 800 companies in Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam—100 companies from each country, so 100 Australian companies. For the purpose of balance in the statements I make, the survey was weighted in favour of the views of the small and medium-sized companies, and I will get to the definition of "small" and "medium". Eighty per cent of respondent enterprises had annual revenues of between \$50 million and \$150 million, while 20 per cent had revenues in excess of \$150 million. It was weighted down the revenue spectrum to give a better sense of the small-cap companies and their impact. The free trade agreement usage rate, which is the key piece that it was looking at, was significantly lower across all surveyed countries. Australia was second last in the ranking, ahead of Malaysia. Only 19 per cent of Australian respondents made use of FTAs. In Malaysia, it was 16 per cent. Indonesia, interestingly, was the highest and used FTAs to the full value of 42 per cent. Therefore, something is not happening; nation-to-nation negotiation produces the trade agreements that we see—the China–Australia Free Trade Agreement is a good example, but it is yet to really flow through—but there is a disconnect happening between nation to nation. This is where states need to step up and guide enterprises to the opportunities as best as possible. States need to guide, draw, encourage and incentivise when necessary.

I point out that governments should never be in marketing; they should be in market development. There is a significant difference. Market development is going in and assisting in framing the market, and framing the market opportunity is particularly important. Some of the architecture is missing. I suspect a lot of it is because FTAs can be impenetrable to businesses. Businesses in Western Australia may not necessarily know where to go to get information. I am drawn to the Queensland government example. It discovered this problem and immediately decided that even the government itself, let alone any other institution, was this amorphous blob that is very difficult to understand and penetrate, particularly for a medium-sized business. It might have the balance sheet to prosecute an expansion or export program into a target country or market, but it might not know where to go to get help. Queensland developed a single entity—all based around a website—called Trade and Investment Queensland. It is a one-stop shop for businesses or anybody to go to, to have a look and be farmed out to the relevant department, organisation or non-government organisation that will assist in preparing them for exit.

There is a disconnect between what nation states are doing and what states at the subnational level are doing to assist in bringing enterprises to it. There is a gap. I have been working on this over the last couple of years and trying to work it out. As usual with these things, there is never a single answer; there is always a combination of issues, not least of which for Western Australian businesses has been the opportunity that has been presented through the resources boom. That impacted every business in some way, either directly or indirectly, so that their capacity to orientate any resources toward an Asian opportunity through that period may have been limited. For me, the private sector is falling behind—I would not say failing—and governments need to provide answers to where business growth is going to come from next, sector by sector, market by market. When I say market by market, I do not refer to national markets. As a state, we need to look at target markets as not homogeneous but heterogeneous. Indonesia, for example, has a multitude of opportunities. It may not be in the interests of the state to focus on Jakarta; it may be in the interests of the state to move our attention to the subnational level within Indonesia. As of this year, we have had a 25-year sister-state relationship with East Java. One might argue that we could set up shop in Surabaya or any other location, at the governor level, where there are activist governors wanting to promote these things. Vietnam is another example, with opportunities around its provinces. Danang in the middle of Vietnam seems to be the most active and most open for business. We need to look for those

opportunities. In my view, it is only through that narrowly cast market development that we will create the enterprise-by-enterprise opportunities that are sorely needed for Western Australia to reorientate the economy towards the opportunities of a knowledge export business so that all Western Australians who are yet to come into this place and who are yet to enter the workforce will be able to enjoy the same standard of living that we have enjoyed.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle) [5.08 pm]: I am pleased to speak on the Loan Bill 2016, which will enable us to pay the bills, public sector wages and keep the Western Australian household ticking over. It is extraordinary that it has come to this: there are 45 days left before we run out of money. There is not only an immediate question about the way the finances are organised, but also a broader question about the price the community is paying because of this government's mismanagement of our finances. Mr Acting Speaker, you might be aware that about 12 months ago I became the shadow minister responsible for community services and children's and women's interests. I want to speak about some of the issues within those portfolios that I have become aware of, whereby some of the most vulnerable in our community are paying the price because of this government's budget mismanagement.

I understand that this evening *Today Tonight* will be canvassing cuts to community-based childcare and neighbourhood centres. Just over \$1.4 million a year is expected to be saved by the state government withdrawing accommodation support from what I understand to be 32 community-based childcare centres and 33 neighbourhood or community centres—they have a range of different names. All in all, 65 centres will be affected, which will save the government just over \$1.4 million a year. The accommodation support given to those centres takes a range of different forms. My understanding is that all those centres are on crown land and the buildings can be owned by either the state government or the local council and leased by the local organisation.

Let us look at just the community-based childcare centres. They are not-for-profit centres run by a parent group, much the same as a parent and citizens association is organised, and the parents set the tone for the centre, the policy and the engagement with the local community. They also set a good example for those parents who might then go on and get involved with and volunteer for their local P&C. The experience in Western Australia is that those centres are some of the best quality early learning centres in the state. The Department of Local Government and Communities consistently gives them high ratings in its accreditation and rating surveys. The good thing about them is the level of engagement that the parents have with the surrounding community and the centre itself. Some of those centres have been around for 30 years. I think the Minister for Women's Interests mentioned today that they were set up in the early 1980s as a result of childcare demand at the time. I think it was a little more complicated than that, but, in any case, they have been around for a long time. Another characteristic of those childcare centres is that they have good ratios of care staff to children. Obviously a minimum has to be adhered to under childcare regulations, but these centres sometimes decide to either exceed those minimums or employ administrative, ground care or bookkeeping staff so that the people with qualifications to advise on education structures or care can get on and interact with and set programs for the children and do the hands-on work.

The removal of accommodation support means that the early learning centres, which now operate on a peppercorn rent, will be required to perhaps face commercial rental prices. For instance, I understand that the Town of Victoria Park is trying to get its childcare centres to pay commercial rates of about \$80 000 a year. Up to now the state government department has been in the corner of the childcare centres to help them resist having to pay commercial rates. When the state government exits that relationship, it will be left up to the local government to decide what sort of rates are paid. The Department of Local Government and Communities is telling those centres to have a discussion with their local council to see whether they can come to some sort of arrangement about how the centres will be supported. The state government cannot find \$1.4 million a year to support these centres and it is asking local councils to pick up the bill and provide some sort of support. This is blatant cost shifting. I had one meeting with the Western Australian Local Government Association and I have also written to it formally about this question because it is nothing else but cost shifting.

Dr M.D. Nahan: I do not want to interrupt. I have one centre in my electorate that I have had extensive dealings with. Three issues need to be considered. The member is right, the site is owned by the city council and it pays a peppercorn rent to the Department of Local Government and Communities. The government has invested \$350 000 into it over the last five years, but the council has done nothing with it even though it is council property. The community childcare centre does a good job—I am not arguing that it does not do an excellent job. However, the rate charged is essentially equivalent to the adjacent private rooms. I think that the council that owns the building needs to get some skin in the action. It owns the building and it allowed it to deteriorate badly—the roof, the equipment and whatnot. Just like the Town of Victoria Park tried to quadruple the rent on its centre, this council tried to do the same thing and we resisted strongly. It did not need to do that because it has not put any money into the building at all; it has not invested in anything. The state is not backing out of the maintenance of the building in the medium to long term. If we handed the building over to the council, it would just try to gouge, which is ridiculous.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I agree that there are different relationships with different councils, and some of them have been quite supportive. I met with representatives from the Shire of Collie. Grants have provided some assistance in Collie with over \$2 million being spent on a new centre there. However, these people are frustrated that the removal of that small but necessary amount of support will shift the sand from under those centres. It is disingenuous for the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Women's Interests to say, "Oh, we thought that the department had a conflict of interest because it is the regulator and it provides the support"—that is just not true. That is not their motivation. I think someone in Treasury just ran a red line through this and said —

Dr M.D. Nahan: I can tell you it was a suggestion made by the department. I had a personal interest in this not happening. I know it very clearly. In fact, I have a meeting tomorrow with the community childcare centre on this issue, so I know it well. I joined them with huge tussles with the old city council of Canning, which did exactly what you said the other council did: jack up the rates after putting nothing into it. In my view, we need to transfer it to the city's assets and have a reasonable approach from the city to it. In my case, the building has been completely refurbished by the state—it was actually built by the government—it does not need any maintenance and the council needs to have skin in the action.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I will move on. I think that that is a different discussion from the one about the state government withdrawing support and saying, "You must have discussions with your local councils." The City of Joondalup has said that its legal advice is that it is not to talk to the centre until 2018. On the one hand, the government is saying to not-for-profits that they should be governing themselves properly and putting in place responsible financial plans, and, on the other hand, it is leaving them to the wolves. This sort of community infrastructure is very important. It provides good engagement between the local parents and community. They are good quality centres. There is a shortage of early learning centres in this state, particularly in the metropolitan area, and these are quality centres. Today I asked the Minister for Women's Interests why she wants to undermine them. I do not know why the government would want to do that and I am determined to get that decision overturned. Similarly, the neighbourhood and community centres provide a really important venue for some very important services. If we take those venues away, and the local governments will be left holding the baby, so to speak, support services could be undermined and thrown into confusion—and what for? So that the state government can save \$1.4 million a year—it is absurd.

This is one effect that the government's mismanagement of its budget has had on the community. It has created absolute upheaval and people are annoyed. The government needs to be aware of what it is doing. I met with a 57-place early learning centre and because it offers after-school and holiday care, it interacts with 360 families in its community. The government needs to think about whether, to save peanuts, it wants to take away and undermine these important community centres on which local families and working women—working families—rely.

Another issue I want to address is the cancelling of the Parenting WA scheme announced in this year's budget. Depending on how many people decided to take redundancies and those who were redeployed, I understand that 44 positions were affected—I am not sure whether they were full-time equivalents. A 24-hour helpline was part of the services offered, as were one-on-one counselling and workshops. In the regions there were full-time equivalent positions in Mandurah, with four FTEs; Albany two FTEs; Boulder one FTE; Carnarvon one FTE; Northam two FTEs; Broom one FTE; Bunbury one FTE; and 1.5 FTEs in Geraldton, which Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney) might have an interest in. In the metropolitan areas, Parenting WA had centres and did work in Armadale, Cannington, Balcatta, Midland, Rockingham and Mt Lawley. Again, the Minister for Local Government; Community Services said that there was no need to worry and that he thought the not-for-profit sector could do the work that Parenting WA was doing better. That has been the sum total of his response to community concerns and opposition questions about the cancelling of these services. That has been his response: "I think the not-for-profit sector, the community sector, can do this work better." That may be the case, but he has provided absolutely no evidence whatsoever for that—zip. What is more galling is that there is a \$4 million saving in transferring the allocation for Parenting WA to the contract that will be offered to the not-for-profit organisation. Somehow, something has to be lost if there is to be a \$4 million saving, and we have not seen the details of the tenders yet. I think there have been initial expressions of interest to the community sector, but we have not seen the detail of those tenders, or I have not seen them in any case.

We have a Commissioner for Children and Young People position that was set up in recognition of the important value that lies in young people. We talk about that all the time. It is almost a motherhood statement to talk about the importance of early years, education and investing in our children, but this government withdraws 44 experienced advisers who were helping some of the most at-risk families and at-risk communities that were having problems with their children. A good way of thinking about this is to use the example of Ngala, which for 100 years, I think, has provided assistance to Western Australian families on the very early years of childhood—essentially babies up to toddlers—particularly with sleep, feeding advice and perhaps tantrums. They are probably the sorts of services that Ngala is best known for in the very early years of childhood. That is certainly how I remember Ngala when I was a child; it had a reputation that parents with a new baby could ring it when

things were really going pear shaped and they were not sure what was going on. Ngala's very solid reputation is hard won and it has every right to it. I think about those families and the fact that as those children get older, we need the equivalent of a Ngala for people throughout the community to ring or get advice about what to do with their five-year-old or their child in primary school who is starting to have behavioural issues that they do not know how to deal with.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms S.F. McGURK: Those issues might translate into learning difficulties and issues with bonding and communication with their parents. That is the sort of advice and practical skills that the people at Parenting WA were giving WA families, but, again, with the stroke of a pen, this government has taken that away, not because there is a new model that will deliver services, but simply to save money. If there is a better model that would deliver better services or value for money, the minister has not demonstrated it and he has had ample opportunity to do so.

Quite a lot of work has been done to demonstrate the need for investment in the early years of childhood. As I said, the position of children's commissioner in this state is there to advise on these matters, and there is any amount of research and information that could be drawn on to talk about the importance of investment in the early years. This afternoon I will rely on the Minderoo Foundation, which people in this house would know as the philanthropic foundation established by Andrew and Nicola Forrest. In the Minderoo Foundation's position paper, Nicola Forrest writes about her opportunity in 2010 to visit the Challis Parenting and Early Learning Centre, which I think the member for Armadale was speaking about earlier today. She became aware of the important work done in its integrated early intervention program in the early years, integrating children from a very young age with services and linking those services with families so that the children are then kindy, preprimary and school ready, and it has provided great results. The Telethon Kids Institute worked with the Minderoo Foundation to document some of the results, and again that has been highly regarded, and rightly so. If we think about the need for a preventive approach, that is precisely the opposite of what is being done with the withdrawal of the Parenting WA program in this state. I will read from the report "Time to Act: Investing in our children and our future", which is a position paper from the Minderoo Foundation and Thrive by Five. In it, Nicola Forrest writes the following —

... we have become acutely aware of the need to take a preventative approach if we are to truly lift the outcomes of our most at-risk children. In other words, we must address the cause not the symptoms of disadvantage in our community.

Further, she writes —

The smart course for all governments is to ensure that every disadvantaged child has access to such programs. This course is the most cost-effective, efficient and evidence-based strategy to address economic and social disadvantage.

The report overview states —

Longitudinal data from international studies demonstrate that a child who is developmentally vulnerable at the start of their schooling is likely to continue a life trajectory of poor life outcomes ...

As a nation, our response to disadvantage has been largely remedial focused on intensive pre-employment training, school attendance measures, increased incarceration capacity and adult literacy programs. Such responses are necessary; however it is now acknowledged that early intervention is a more cost efficient and effective way to deal with disadvantage. Despite this our focus on prevention has been limited and fragmented.

I think there is no better example of that than the reduction in parenting programs by this government. I could go on to talk about the evidence. Another quote in that Minderoo Foundation position paper is by James Heckman, a Nobel laureate in economics in 2000. The quote states —

"Quality early childhood programs for disadvantaged children are not 'entitlements' or bottomless wells of social spending. They foster human flourishing and they improve our economic productivity in the process. There is no trade-off between equity and efficiency... Investing in quality early childhood development for disadvantaged children from birth through age five will help prevent achievement deficits and produce better education, health, social and economic outcomes.

On the one hand, this government has quite rightly invested in child and parent centres, which were taken largely from Labor's policy developed by a former member of the upper house, Linda Savage, but welcomed nevertheless. The child and parent centres have been a good initiative. On the other hand, the government is cutting funding to community-based childhood centres, including neighbourhood centres and Parenting WA. It is really quite disgraceful. We talk about dysfunction in terms of incarceration rates and the number of young people in justice centres. When we see particular communities with high levels of dysfunction, people talk about the need for early intervention programs to get families communicating and working together, yet Parenting WA programs are being cut and compromised. It makes absolutely no sense.

I will finish soon, Mr Acting Speaker. I want to talk briefly about other examples of poor financial management by this government in my electorate. The obvious one is Perth Freight Link. It cost \$1.2 billion to build a children's hospital, yet the government is talking about spending \$2 billion to build Perth Freight Link, which will triple the number of containers going into Fremantle port, and it is doing nothing to invest in a new, modern port to take freight away from the metropolitan area. It has been described by others as a zero-sum gain. The government expects to receive about \$2 billion in income from the sale of Fremantle port, yet it is talking about expenditure of \$2 billion to build a road through important wetlands, and a road that actually does not get to Fremantle port. It really is extraordinary, when it is for zero-sum gain. When we factor in the \$60-plus million that was taken in income last year alone from Fremantle port, members can see that the sums do not add up. But that is what we are being led to believe by a no more enthusiastic proponent than the Treasurer. He thinks this is a fantastic deal. I think one of his key motivations for Perth Freight Link is a bloody-mindedness about Roe 8. We have a narrow opportunity to get Roe 8 signed off while the Liberals are, hopefully, in their dying days in government in Western Australia and the Liberal Party in power federally is prepared to fund what is clearly a ridiculous project. That is what we are talking to people about in my electorate, in the south metropolitan electorates and also some of the north-of-the-river electorates. I firmly believe that tripling the number of containers in and out of Fremantle will significantly increase the number of trucks on Leach Highway and going north of the river.

I do not know how many times I have spoken in this house about the need for the state government to make a decision about relocating the Department of Housing to Fremantle. The government promised it in 2012. It is now 2016—just make a decision! If the government is going to do it, do it. If it is not going to do it—I sincerely and enthusiastically hope it will—tell the City of Fremantle that it is not going to move a government department to Fremantle. But nothing has happened. For about four years I have been told a decision is imminent; it is about to happen! Again, it is about this government's poor handling of investment decisions and of infrastructure in the case of the Perth Freight Link. In this case, it is not only affecting the people who work in the Department of Housing, and possibly positions from other departments, as I understand according to the proposal, but also it has left hanging the City of Fremantle and the proponent, Sirona Capital Pty Ltd, which is involved in the Kings Square development, with no investment going into an important metropolitan strategic centre—the City of Fremantle.

With the right kind of investment, the opportunities in Fremantle could be considerable. Hope against experience made me think that perhaps when the Premier took responsibility for the tourism portfolio he might start to understand the significance of Fremantle as a tourist destination, especially for the thousands of people who get off cruise liners every month. At the moment, those who do not get on a bus and go somewhere else but want to come into Fremantle, walk across the footbridge to the first point of arrival, which is Captain Munchies. As much as I am fond of Captain Munchies, I think we can do better. There are huge opportunities in cruise ship arrival points as well as from investments in Fremantle. Some of that needs to be done by business and some needs to be done by the local community.

The government has been promising something that will rejuvenate the centre of Fremantle but it has delivered nothing, just as it promised to spend, I think, \$19 million refurbishing Fremantle Hospital. The government has taken nearly 2 000 jobs out of Fremantle Hospital, and it promised \$19 million to refurbish that hospital when it took a number of services away with the opening of Fiona Stanley Hospital. However, I think we have seen about \$3 million invested and the rest of the proposed funding for the refurbishment of Fremantle Hospital has been taken out of the budget allocation. This is not the first time I have said this in the house, but I say again that we need only walk around that hospital to see the level of neglect. I hope its clinical operations are run a lot better than the physical site, which looks terrible. It was described to me the other day by a woman I know who was walking down my street and who stopped to have a chat. Her father was in Fremantle Hospital. She said, "I'm embarrassed when I see the comparison between Fiona Stanley Hospital and Fremantle Hospital; it's absolutely woeful". But, really, that is this government's neglect of Fremantle, writ large. The government invests in bright, shiny projects but fails to invest in basic infrastructure to make sure our health and community infrastructure is backed in. That is what is needed for utilising Fremantle Hospital. It is what is needed for experienced people, through Parenting WA programs, who are used to working with the most disadvantaged communities.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.H.D. Day**.

**FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (COMPENSATION) BILL 2016**

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 5.39 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT — BIRNEY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS — MEETINGS**5712. Mr M. McGowan to the Minister for Regional Development; Lands; Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development:**

- (1) Has the Minister and/or any staff member or placement within the Minister's Office, had any contact or meetings with representatives of registered lobbyist Birney Corporate Communications, since 1 September 2015?
- (2) If yes to (1):
 - (a) what were the dates of the contact(s) or meeting(s);
 - (b) what was the name of the client being represented during the contact;
 - (c) what was the nature or subject of discussion during the contact(s) or meeting(s);
 - (d) were other people present during the contact(s) or meeting(s); and
 - (e) what were the names of all people present?

Mr D.T. Redman replied:

Telephone and email contact with a representative of Birney Corporate Communications for administrative purposes only are not included in this response.

- (1) Yes.
 - (2)
 - (a) 27 October 2015.
 - (b) TFS.
 - (c) Structural changes to the sandalwood industry.
 - (d) Yes.
 - (e) Minister Redman, Tim Whyte (Policy Adviser), Matt Birney (Birney Corporate Communications), Dalton Gooding (Chair TFS).
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