

Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Barron-; Mr Tony Dean; Mr Tony McRae; Acting Speaker; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Dianne Guise; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 14 August.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham - Parliamentary Secretary) [10.12 am]: As I indicated last night, I will address my remarks in the Address-in-Reply to the asylum seeker debate, which has been raging around Australia for the past year or so. The context in which I want to make my remarks is somewhat different from the standard debate that has been going on around Australia since the lead-up to the last federal election around September last year. That debate has focused on those who support asylum seekers and those who are opposed to asylum seekers, and it has polarised the Australian community along those lines. I want to raise an issue that I do not believe has been raised by the mainstream media or any of the federal politicians who have been involved in the debate; that is, the impact the strategies adopted by the federal Government to intercept asylum seekers at sea are having on Australian citizens. I want to raise the concerns and issues of the people in my constituency; that is, the crews of the ships that are put out to sea to intercept asylum seeker boats. I particularly want to focus on the concerns and issues of the families of those who are involved in this activity.

For the record, I support our armed forces. I support our sailors who crew our warships and submarines. I think they are the hardest-working citizens in our country bar none. That includes farmers, small businessmen, politicians - any occupation. The sailors who crew our ships and submarines are the hardest-working people in our country. I think they deserve some recognition and better pay. Also for the record, I support mandatory detention. I do not think that the policy the Hawke-Keating Government put in place in the early 1990s can be changed. I think that that is the view of this and virtually every other State Government in Australia. I also support a fairly robust approach towards asylum seekers; however, as a country we need to speed up the process for dealing with asylum seekers. We also need to put more effort into working with the countries from which asylum seekers originate to deal with the problem at the source rather than subsequently.

I want to discuss what is known as Operation Relex, through which our ships are put to sea to deal with asylum seeker boats. A range of frigates is based in Western Australia at HMAS *Stirling*; HMAS *Adelaide*, *Darwin*, *Canberra*, *Anzac*, *Warramunga*, and *Arunta*. All those ships are high technology vessels, and each would cost in excess of half a billion dollars. It is often said that they are the equivalent of a United States cruiser. They are highly equipped with anti-submarine, anti-aircraft and anti-ship warfare capabilities. They are very expensive pieces of kit and have very highly trained crews. These ships have carried the burden of Australia's overseas operations for a long time - since the Gulf War. Australia's sailors have generally carried the burden in the Persian Gulf. They are currently carrying the burden off Afghanistan. We have had ships in the gulf since 1991 - 11 years. These ships helped carry the burden in East Timor and now they are carrying the burden with Operation Relex, through which sailors work in what they call the refugee line in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Western Australia. Our crews are very highly trained. In my view, the training of an average electrical, mechanical or combat sailor is equivalent to that of a university graduate. They are very capable and highly educated people. The ships involved in Operation Relex also have up to 20 to 25 soldiers on board. Up to 200 serving Australians are on board each ship in the Indian Ocean.

Now that I have outlined the ships and their capabilities, I will detail what we are doing in the Indian Ocean; what the federal Government is making our ships do.

Firstly, the last boatload of asylum seekers to be intercepted or detected leaving Indonesia was in November 2001, that is, nine and a half months ago. Shortly we will be moving into the monsoon season, and there will be very little likelihood of any boats attempting to leave Indonesia during that period of rough weather to try to come to Australia. In the interim, since September of last year, on average one frigate - that is, 200 people on a \$500 million warship - has been stationed north of Christmas Island and another ship of the same capabilities has been stationed somewhere to the north west of Ashmore Reef off the northern coast of Western Australia. Each of those ships does what is known as a deployment and, on average, each deployment is of three months duration. During that time those ships have been stationed off the coast, patrolling in search of boats carrying asylum seekers, and they have not seen one of those boats for nine and a half months. There are also two frigates stationed off the coast of Iraq and another stationed off the coast of Afghanistan, working with the United States Navy. Our ships do rotations, whereby they sit on the refugee line, as it is called, for three months, then they return home and sail again for a six-month deployment to the Persian Gulf or the coast off Afghanistan. Therefore, on average, our Navy personnel are away from their homes and their families, comprising hundreds of our fellow citizens, for nine months of the year. No other job in Australia imposes that requirement on our citizens.

Of course, we as members of Parliament have a difficult job. We are out at night, and our federal colleagues are away over east for four or five days a week. Generally they perceive their job as onerous, because they are away

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from home for four or five days of the week and spend only the weekends at home. Our serving personnel spend nine months away from home and their only contact with their families is by email. Some of the husbands or wives of the sailors on these ships - and up to 1 000 personnel are engaged on these exercises at the moment - could be sitting at home alone in Rockingham, Warnbro Sound, Kwinana or Mandurah for nine months of the year. They may not have been to Western Australia before. These people might move to Western Australia and sit at home while their loved ones sail away. They must then deal with all of the issues that occur with young children and they do not have the support of their husbands or wives. The sailors who are involved in Operation Relax and who are searching for boats carrying asylum seekers - and they have not seen any for nine and a half months - are not paid one extra cent for being on the high seas for three months. However, our personnel on the ships in the Persian Gulf or off the coast of Afghanistan receive \$125 per day tax free, on top of their ordinary pay and seagoing allowance.

Members would be aware that the Special Air Service is operating in Afghanistan, and personnel who go ashore there receive \$179 per day tax free additional to their ordinary pay, whereas our sailors who are sitting off Christmas Island or Ashmore Reef do not receive one extra cent. When our ships intercepted boats carrying asylum seekers nine and a half months ago, it was a very dangerous and draining situation. Those boats were unseaworthy and overcrowded, and they were carrying people who were desperate in their determination to get to Australia. Boarding crews were sent across to those boats, and it was very dangerous. I am aware that eight weapons were confiscated from the people on board one of those boats. Boarding crews, consisting of eight to 15 people, boarded boats containing up to 200 asylum seekers. As I said, on occasions weapons were found on board those boats. Our personnel were also dealing with people who had endured a lot and who were desperate; they were dealing with children in what might be seen as sad and desperate circumstances. For that they were not paid one extra cent.

Our sailors are very highly trained. For instance, some of our weapons sailors undertake courses in the United States to learn to operate their equipment. We then send these ships up to Christmas Island and station them off Ashmore Reef where they patrol an area of about two million to three million square kilometres, and they operate in what they call a box. Each ship must take care of an area known as a box; the ship is moved from one end of the box to the other and then back again. In order to save fuel, following orders from the federal Government, these \$500 million warships with highly trained crews move from one end of the box to the other under power and drift back - that is, not under power. The engines are running, of course - they would not stop their engines at sea - but they do not operate under power. These crews, who are trained to operate this high technology equipment, to perform operations at sea with different navies and to operate under extreme warfare-type circumstances, move their ships from one end of the box to the other and then drift back with the current, and they have not seen one boatload of asylum seekers in nine and a half months. With the monsoon season approaching, the chances are that they will not see another of these boats for a long time. With the change in circumstances in Afghanistan it is highly probable that they will not see any more of these boats in the foreseeable future.

When we send these crews away for three months, they go to sea for three months and they are not allowed ashore. There have been some incidents on Christmas Island of drunken behaviour by some crew members ashore, and the crews are now not permitted to go ashore there. They get on the ship and go away to sea for three months and they are not permitted off the ship. That is like saying that from now until November none of us is permitted to leave this building - the bar will be closed at the same time - and we must all sleep here. That is what we are doing to our crews at the moment. The crews are away for a total of nine months of the year and do not have contact with their families. The ships have not intercepted any refugee boats for nine and a half months and the crews are not paid one extra cent for their arduous duty. The crews are not allowed ashore for recreation. The crews are not able to exercise all their skills and talents. In fact, for most of the time, the ships simply drift around the ocean trying to carry out the Government's policy.

What is the consequence of this policy for our personnel and our country? The first consequence is that it is enormously costly on the wear and tear of the ships and very costly to put the ships to sea. No interceptions are being made. The consequence for the crews - Australian citizens - is that they are undergoing very high divorce rates. It was reported to me recently by someone who crews on one of the ships that the divorce rate among crew members who have been married for less than five years is 60 per cent. One sailor said recently that the Navy is now a single person's organisation. He said that if people want to stay married they should not join the Navy. The high divorce rate is due to the arduous conditions placed on the crews. There is a huge impact on the morale and welfare of the crews, who are all Australian citizens. The enormous amount of time spent at sea is causing huge problems. Crews do not have contact with their families for long periods. I was advised that one ship with a crew of 200 people has had 28 crew members taken off and sent home because of morale and welfare problems. We are doing this to our own people. As a country, we are supposed to be family friendly and to take account of the wishes of our citizens. What is happening? There are high divorce rates among our fellow

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citizens, there are morale and welfare problems, and the Navy has not intercepted any refugee boats in nine months. As soon as the crews return from Operation Relex they are sent to other operations in the gulf and Afghanistan. As such, they are away from home for nine months of the year. In my book, that is too hard. Our people are being asked to undertake operations that are too hard.

We need to examine other options when dealing with asylum seekers. As a start, Navy personnel should be paid more. Crews on patrol for three months at a time are not allowed ashore. They must share accommodation with 20 or 30 other people when working 12 to 16 hours a day and must deal with refugees in desperate circumstances. These personnel should receive a special allowance. I advocate that they receive the same allowance as personnel in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, which is an additional \$125 a day tax free. It should be recognised that there is not a high prospect of any refugee boats being intercepted in the near future. As a consequence, we should make better use of our resources and assets. We should use our Coastwatch aircraft and P3 Orions to survey the ocean in the area of operations, which covers two to three million square kilometres, and have an interception policy in place whereby ships are not sitting on the ocean for three months at a time without intercepting anything. Patrol boats may be based in Broome and frigates may be on stand-by in Perth, but they should not be allowed to drift on the ocean, which results in morale problems for the crew. We must be vigilant, but we must also not hurt our own citizens by being so.

We need to be family friendly and provide more support services, money and assistance for the families left behind while the ships and crews are on operations. We must recognise the talents of our people and their training. We must not put assets worth half a billion dollars, with highly trained crews of 200 people, into the role of a patrol boat or coastguard vessel. We must support our own people and their families.

In summary, there are options. Firstly, personnel must be paid more. Secondly, we should use aircraft to survey areas of risk. The area concerned is enormous; it is almost the same size as Australia. If we use aircraft we can develop interception practices. We should rely more on northern ports such as Broome for this role. We must recognise that we are putting too many obligations on the crews and their families. We must decrease the tempo of operations and give them a more family-friendly life.

MR J.P.D. EDWARDS (Greenough) [10.37 am]: I take the opportunity to speak on something that is a world away from the member for Rockingham's address. I will reflect on Parliament and my experiences in it the past 15 months. The actions and behaviour of members in this place has moved a long way. I recall during the first few months witnessing the debacle of some late-night sittings. There were some "exemplary" examples of bad behaviour by members of this House. I remember commenting on them at the time. I have always been conscious of that sort of behaviour. Members must always be aware of their behaviour and demeanour and how it is reflected to the electorate. I do not want to be the moral watchdog of the Parliament, but it is worth remembering that we have the privilege of freedom of speech in this place. A certain level of respect and behaviour should be afforded to fellow members. From time to time we need to be reminded of that. I will paraphrase part of a speech by my predecessor for the seat of Greenough, Kevin Minson. In his valedictory speech he said with regret that when he sat in the House he often wondered what percentage of what was said was really for the benefit of Western Australia. He also said that the challenge for members is to try to raise the standard in the House and not always find the lowest common denominator. That is something we all need to remember. He went on to say that members should remember that it is an honour to be selected by the people of Western Australia to represent them in the supreme Legislature of the State. We should never underestimate that. Hon Kevin Minson further stated that through our words and actions, members should never allow the standing of this place to become diminished. They are wise words that we must remember.

In her Address-in-Reply, the member for Swan Hills, as the first speaker, made the point that it is our privilege to operate in a democracy. Unlike other parts of the world - even in so-called democracies - we do not use the gun, the sword or even fisticuffs. A group of schoolchildren were in here a few moments ago but have now left. We must be seen to act as an example to younger generations and other members of the community. I always tend to cringe a little during question time when schoolchildren are in the public gallery because, sadly, they probably see the worst, rather than the best, aspect of Parliament. Question time allows those of us who have some acting abilities to demonstrate them.

I have just returned from a visit to the United Kingdom where I had some family business to attend to. While I was there, I took the opportunity to visit Westminster, the Mother of Parliaments. I have just referred to the freedom that we enjoy in this place. Any member of the public can walk into our public gallery to listen to the debates and proceedings of the House. As visitors enter the south entrance, they pass through a metal detector that alerts the security staff to any metal objects that they might be carrying. It is a fairly simple security procedure. However, there is a more rigorous procedure in Westminster. When I was there, a police sergeant at the door to which I was directed to go met me. My wife and I were escorted into a security area where we were

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taken through what can only be described as a security system similar to those used at international airports. About half a dozen police officers stood around us as four or five security guards operated the security system. Having gone through it and moved into St Stephen's Hall, my eye caught another person standing somewhat back in the shadows under a pillar. This was yet another policeman wearing a flack jacket with a submachine gun in his hands. Those types of guards were located throughout Westminster. We are very privileged that we do not have to resort to that type of security in this State.

My comments run parallel to those made by the member for Rockingham, who referred to the issue of refugees and all that that entails; that is, the influence of the refugees in this country and the security about which I have just referred. I will not go into great detail about why Westminster must have that level of security because it is well known and does not need to be advertised in this place. We must remember that we are extremely lucky. The democracy and freedom of speech that we enjoy in this place is sacrosanct.

I will now comment on a case of democracy going mad. I read an article in one of the daily papers in England that referred to heritage, which is my shadow portfolio. It just happened to be the example that was used. Currently, a Labour Government under Prime Minister Tony Blair happens to be in office in the UK. The issue to which I refer relates to local government. I warn local governments that they must be very careful of model codes of conduct. The case in question was about a unique art deco bus station in the heart of the midlands. The local council seemed intent on demolishing it in favour of a vast new riverside development. A retired schoolmistress, Mrs Crosby, was elected to the council in a popular revolt against the Labour Party-dominated council. She opposed the demolition of the bus station. However, because she was elected on a single issue, the new code of conduct now governing local councils across Britain means that she cannot talk about the issue because of her involvement with the bus station action group that helped get her elected to the council. The council's deputy chief executive, Mr Foote, warned her that this link amounted to a prejudicial interest, which barred her from speaking in the Chamber. Effectively, she had been gagged on the very issue for which she was elected to the council to oppose. The article states -

Mrs Crosby's gagging is justified under the benign-sounding Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order of 2001. When it slipped through Parliament last year, it was described as a "modernising" instrument designed to raise standards in local government. Whatever the intention of the Code of Conduct may have been, the effect has been to gag a democratically elected councillor from speaking on an issue about which 16,000 people in Derby have demanded action.

The Labour government has at a stroke destroyed single issue politics in local government throughout Britain.

...

The strange aspect of this case is that Mrs Crosby is deemed to have a prejudicial interest, yet the members of the majority Labour caucus who favour demolition and a highly lucrative redevelopment project are deemed to be objective, and can speak freely.

To my mind, that is democracy gone mad.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It is a problem of the interpretation of the code.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: It may well be, but the fact is that it has happened. The article further states -

If the principle of Mrs Crosby's gagging order is accepted, councillors could be barred from speaking in virtually any circumstances on issues they hold dear.

With his tongue firmly in his cheek, an independent councillor, Ronald Allen, who was elected in May on a wave of popular resentment against road bumps, said -

"I thought only the Pope could impose interdicts, but New Labour is acting with papal authority when they encounter opposition,"

...

Mr Allen swept aside a veteran Labour councillor, but is now awaiting his letter from Mr Foote telling him he must gag himself.

"The road hump review is coming up in the autumn, so I'm sure I've got my gagging coming up," said Mr Allen, a structural surveyor. "We're seeing pure arrogance from the council, and democracy is going out the window."

There might be plenty of other reasons behind that.

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Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It is a very serious point, but you do yourself a discredit by saying it is a problem of Labour versus liberal. There were unintended consequences of that legislation.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I did not say that; I said that there just so happened to be a Labour-dominated council. It could well have been a Conservative-dominated council.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: We have similar problems in Western Australia that you might be well aware of.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: That may be; however, the fact remains that it has happened. I raised the matter to explain that we must be careful not to go down that path.

Having made those comments, I will now refer to my electorate. After the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has tried to bag me, I will probably give her a pat on the back; she should take it while it is offered. This next matter does not directly involve my electorate but it does impact upon it. I recognise the Government's role in finalising a start date for the construction of the southern transport corridor. I also recognise that the \$100 million guarantee for the port project has been put in place and that port deepening will start in October, which is good to see. These projects will reflect on the whole of the hinterland of the Geraldton region. The current unemployment figure in that region over the past 12 months has been just under 2 000. Hopefully, these new projects will go some way towards reducing the rate of unemployment.

I understand that the Kalbarri air service deals with three aircraft a week. That is another issue that now seems to have been resolved. Whether it will be enough aircraft remains to be seen, but at least air services are now going into Kalbarri. The Kalbarri airport was built in the last couple of years and there were problems in trying to attract an air service there.

The farming community in the Greenough electorate has an uncertain future, with the changing weather patterns impacting on the farming community. The coastal areas have had a reasonably good year and are looking forward to some reasonable production.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: What about inland?

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: Inland, unfortunately, or in some of the eastern parts of my electorate, some farmers have not even bothered to put in a crop. It is that bad.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Is that around Morawa and Mullewa?

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I am referring to the Mullewa-Morawa-Perenjori line east of Mullewa and Morawa, as well as some patches west of those towns. It is a real problem, with some of the people involved facing their third year of hardship. I am interested to see what happens with the new legislation on land clearing, which is an issue in my electorate. Some farmers in the northern part of the electorate are in a grey area with regard to land clearing. Land clearing raises the issue of property and ownership rights and what one can do with one's property and freehold. To some degree, I can marry that matter back to the heritage issues in Subiaco. There is some correlation, but the environmental issues in farming probably take precedence. This issue must be resolved and, again, we need to be careful how we treat the farming community in terms of its property rights.

The scarcity-of-water pricing has been raised as an issue. That would be the last straw for farmers and should not even be looked at as an issue. The water issue is a bigger subject altogether, which I will comment on later. However, the idea of scarcity-of-water pricing is anathema to the farming community.

Lack of road funding, the downsizing of the Agriculture Protection Board and the Department of Agriculture, the impact on farming communities of public liability insurance and the continuing high price of fuel are not helpful to the farming community and, dare I say it, to the fishing community to a lesser degree. The rises in third-party insurance and vehicle stamp duty charges have not helped either. The Government's two per cent point reduction brought in stamp duty on trucks and trailers. That reduction does not go far enough and will continue to impact on machinery dealers in country areas, particularly if they are losing business to tax-free Queensland models.

There is always a need to encourage young people to stay in the rural areas and regional towns. I will try to make a parallel here with the industrial relations issue. In some small country towns young people were finding employment in, perhaps, the local supermarket or local store and being paid under a workplace agreement. That is now changing and most of the store and supermarket owners are saying that if they have to go back to paying time and a half and double time, they will put youngsters off, and have been doing so. Therefore, the youngsters will not have the \$60 or \$70 pocket money they may have picked up over the weekend and they will probably have to go out of town to find employment. That is a side effect of the industrial relations issue in country towns in Western Australia. It may be a small example but it shows the impact on those towns.

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I move on to the issue of heritage, which is one of my portfolios. I note in today's newspaper that the minister is to bring the heritage Bill into Cabinet, which is good to see. It has taken 15 months to get it there but at least it is starting to move. As a result of that delay there has been conflict and confusion within the community because of the unresolved controversy associated with municipal inventories. That has been proved in Subiaco and there have also been other incidents. It is important to get the heritage Bill into this House for debate. The current Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990 does not give enough direction to local governments and authorities in developing municipal inventories. Since the Act was first gazetted, the heritage industry in countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and even New Zealand has grown, as it has in this State. However, those countries have ensured that their Acts have kept pace with that growth. We are in a catch-up situation here.

I will mention some of the bigger issues that have been in the news over the past 12 months involving the heritage threat to some of our older buildings with state heritage significance. It always galvanises the local community into action when they start talking about the impact on places such as Heathcote Hospital and Edward Millen Home. Heathcote Hospital was once proposed for development. The last coalition Government was responsible enough to take on board the community's plea that it be saved; it acted in response to that need and saved that historic place. It is now a great place for families to visit and enjoy themselves. In addition to that is the Heathcote lower land, which has been referred to in this place before. This land was set aside in a legal agreement between the Government and the City of Melville. Under that agreement it was intended that the lower land be given to the people of this State. That matter has not been resolved and the Minister for Housing and Works is handling the issue. It is a matter that he now needs to move on and make happen, because people are seeking a decision. The Government seems to be slow in bringing this matter forward as one of its priorities.

The matter of the Edward Millen Home, a site in East Victoria Park, has been raised by me and other members in this House before at the request of people who live in the Premier's electorate. The community has told me that it does not want the former hospital site carved up for development. The Government has told the community that it is seeking a cost-neutral solution to the problem of future maintenance and, with that action, possibly selling off the place. A cost-effective solution was put forward by attendees at the consultation session and was widely accepted by the community; that is, for a non-government heritage organisation to accept responsibility for the future of the place. Again, that is something the Government needs to address under its heritage portfolio. The future of Sunset Hospital is another issue currently in the public eye. I am aware that approximately 80 people attended a workshop recently, and are objecting to any future plans to demolish the hospital. The Government must work through that very carefully; the community is watching with interest. I look forward to the heritage legislation coming into this place, because it is overdue for review.

The final issue I wish to touch on is water. We are told that a water crisis exists, so there may be a future opportunity to talk on the subject in greater depth. When the previous coalition Government was elected in 1993, it very quickly established its credentials in the area of water resources. A strategy was developed to ensure that all Western Australians had access to clean water for domestic use and safe sewage disposal and adequate drainage at a reasonable cost; that where possible primary and secondary industry had access to water of appropriate quality to meet their reasonable needs; and that aquatic ecosystems were maintained and their full biological integrity ensured, providing for the conservation of species and a variety of aesthetic, commercial and recreational benefits for humans. The strategy also included securing on-farm water supplies to ensure that domestic and livestock demands could cope with drought conditions. During the period of the previous Government, many of those goals were achieved. The farm water scheme, implemented by my colleague the member for Moore, was put in place. It is an untruth for the Government to say that no water strategy has been put in place in the past 10 years. This side of the House recognised the need to transform Western Australia's water resources industry into a modern and efficient sector that served the people of this State. A framework was developed to encourage the acquisition of scientific knowledge necessary to manage the State's water resources. The coalition Government also recognised the need to protect the environment by ensuring that new landfill sites were managed to minimise the impact on ground water systems. Water has been an issue for a long time; it has not suddenly jumped on us. Most intelligent people understand that Australia is the driest continent in the world, and Western Australia is probably one of its drier States, although South Australia is probably drier. The issue of water needs to be acted upon in as bipartisan a manner as possible. Political differences on how the issue should be approached will obviously exist, but it is incumbent on all of us to understand that water is a very precious commodity, and it should not be the subject of political games. The strategies and the thinking could be different on both sides of the House, and there will be further debate on the issue. With those comments, I bring my contribution to the Address-in-Reply to a conclusion.

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MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [11.04 am]: In responding to the address of the Governor, I will focus on some pleasing outcomes that have emerged in recent months in my electorate. Although some of the work which led to these outcomes was commenced under the previous Government, the ongoing commitment to those programs and strategies by the Gallop Government is a testament to its focus on making the lives of all Western Australians more safe and secure, and to its basic values of social justice and equality of opportunity.

The first favourable outcome is the result achieved in the west metropolitan police district, which includes the suburbs of Mirrabooka, Balga and Hamersley, all in the electorate of Girrawheen. Crime statistics over the past year or so, by dint of hard work and a focus on tried and true police methods, can only be described as a beautiful set of numbers. In the last financial year, the district recorded a 21 per cent drop in home burglary offences, a 25 per cent drop in robberies, and a 6.2 per cent drop in assaults. More significantly, the clearance rate, which has hovered around the eight per cent mark for some years, has risen to 12.7 per cent. The community demands the apprehension of offenders, and this figure translates into many more offenders being caught. The overall crime rate in the district fell by 7.2 per cent, which is a fantastic result. Acting District Superintendent Brian Cunningham and his team should be congratulated for their considerable efforts in achieving this outcome. These results are attributable to a focus on intelligence gathering, increased visibility, and better community liaison. In this context, excellent work has been undertaken in the area of multicultural liaison. Better communication with the many linguistically and culturally diverse groups in the community is leading to the creation of excellent channels of communication and constructive and trusting relationships with community leaders. Consequently, much better intelligence is being gathered. This downward trend in crime is no excuse for complacency, and the community expects unstinting efforts to build on these results in the future. Nevertheless, the results were so extraordinary that last month *The West Australian* was inspired to print a laudatory editorial. I commend the paper for focusing so prominently on a “good news” story, and for acknowledging the efforts of the Police Service in achieving these outcomes.

The newspaper also highlighted other possible factors that may have contributed to the much improved crime rate. One of these is the urban renewal program, called the new north, that is being carried out in the area. This is an extraordinary and very ambitious program. In this year’s budget, the Government pledged its continuing commitment to the new living program, of which new north is part. Page 363 of the *Budget Statements* states -

The highly acclaimed New Living Program, which seeks to lift amenity levels of traditional welfare housing suburbs will continue at record levels with projected sales of 517 units, and refurbishment of 345 units in 2002-03. This program will make a strong counter cyclical contribution to employment in the construction industry in Western Australia as activity in this sector recedes following the recent housing boom.

The commitment of extensive resources to refurbishment of public rental stock, through this and other refurbishment programs, has been maintained allowing the rental waiting list to remain stable over the past three years.

The Minister for Housing and Works has been extremely enthusiastic and supportive of this program. I take this opportunity to acknowledge his commitment and unremitting endeavours to ensure the success of the new north program. Because of the extensive impact of the new north program on the electorate, I will briefly examine the philosophy and underlying methodologies of the program. The new north program covers redevelopment of Homeswest assets in Koondoola, Girrawheen and Balga. It commenced in 1998. It is the largest urban renewal program undertaken in Australia. Its presence is very evident in the Girrawheen electorate.

The aims of the program are, first, to reduce the public housing presence that dominates the area; secondly, to refurbish homes for sale to the public or existing tenants; thirdly, to reduce the social stigma caused by the density of inappropriate and outdated public housing; and, fourthly, to upgrade and refurbish public rental housing to improve the social mix and the total area through streetscapes and parks to create a satisfied community and encourage a sense of added security for local residents by eliminating areas that provide venues for antisocial behaviour.

In August 2000 the new living program, which incorporated the new north program, was awarded the United Nations world habitat award. In its citation it was noted that the new living program has pioneered the renewal of large, high-density public housing estates in Western Australia. It has been carried out in partnership with the private sector, and uses a neighbourhood-wide approach. A combination of improvement, demolition, new building and sales to existing tenants has encouraged a mix of tenures and helped provide accommodation that is more appropriate to the current needs and expectations of those seeking public housing. The program incorporates a high degree of practical community involvement and is self-funded through the sale of upgraded properties, vacant land and new brownfield sites created by demolition. Local tradespeople are employed in the refurbishment work in order to help revitalise the local economy. It serves to highlight the value of partnership

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in achieving a successful and sustainable outcome and underlies the crucial role being played by the local community in achieving that success. As noted in the citation, the program is a joint partnership between the Department of Housing and Works and private developers. The work of the private developer, the Satterley Property Group, also needs to be commended. The private developer is an integral part of the success of the program.

The beautification of streetscapes and parks is also part of the overall plan. The rationale for this is so that residents are confident that the image of their suburbs will improve. The tidying up of local areas within the project area is done in consultation with the local community. As part of this process, the developer is engaged in a number of community activities, such as running competitions to encourage existing residents to beautify their front yards and gardens. Also, a number of main roads in the area have been landscaped, with the addition of traffic-calming measures and street trees. The work of the Cities of Wanneroo and Stirling has been pivotal in this context. Landscaped entry statements are situated at key locations throughout the area of renewal. As I said, in partnership with local government, road reserves, parks, children's play equipment and civil works maintenance programs are all being upgraded.

The objective of the participation of the developer in the community generally has been achieved. It is pleasing to see its full participation in many local activities. This involvement extends to sponsorship of a number of community events and activities, the donation of prizes for school graduations and the promotion of a range of shared community goals and values, such as Neighbourhood Watch, the preservation of the environment and the encouragement of sporting and cultural groups. Recently, with my federal colleagues the members for Cowan and Stirling, I was very proud to show the federal shadow minister for economic ownership, Mark Latham MHR, around the new north program area. My discussions with him indicated that what is being achieved there is highly innovative and creates a blueprint that could be readily followed elsewhere in the country.

Although it would be trite to say that property values have risen in the area and there is a new sense of pride and ownership, I must be truthful and say that not all outcomes of the project are favourable. The first outcome that is problematical - my role as the local member is to ensure that it does not become more of a problem - is the genesis of stigmatisation of remaining Homeswest tenants. We need to be vigilant that those within the community do not marginalise the decreasing percentage of residents who live in Homeswest housing. It is hoped that once the project is completed, there will be a seamless blend of public and private housing.

The final reservation that I have about the project is that it does not alter orientation, major layout, design or structural faults in the suburbs, such as large setbacks from the road, road design and lack of proximity to commercial areas. These all mean that many of the underlying problems associated with poor urban design and car dependence will persist despite cosmetic changes. I was fortunate recently to discuss this legacy of 30 years of poor planning practices with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure during her visit to the electorate. Although her capacity to ameliorate these problems is limited, it is important that future planning decisions in the area do not compound existing problems.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: I appreciate the opportunity to have gone there and seen it.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I thank the minister.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It shows the importance for ministers to think long term and not make short-term, politically expedient decisions. They must think about what the long-term impacts on communities will be.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I now want to deal with a couple of areas that have demonstrated pleasing outcomes in the past year. I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure for her considerable thought and reflection on these problems.

Girrawheen is blessed with highly professional and dedicated educators. Without singling out anyone, I will refer to some of the projects at Girrawheen and Balga Senior High Schools. First, at Balga Senior High School a childcare centre was established some months ago, which assists young mothers who want to complete their formal education. The centre has been enthusiastically embraced by the local community and will break the cycle of young girls having to leave school because of pregnancy and their subsequent welfare dependency due to the failure to acquire skills or training at school. As an added bonus, the centre can also provide on-site training for students who might be contemplating a career in child care. It is a terrific project, and I commend the proponents of the centre, because it took some considerable time to get it up and running.

I also refer to two projects at Girrawheen Senior High School. The first is the so-called TED program. It is not named after my predecessor, but stands for the term "treating everybody decently". It is a fresh approach aimed at countering bullying in schools. The TED program has been designed to positively engage people in behaviours that support the building of friendly relationships and a sense of community within the school, thereby discouraging bullying behaviour. This is part of the Gallop Government's \$28 million commitment

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throughout the State to behaviour management and discipline. The TED program was developed very significantly with much consultation with students, parents and staff.

The other development at Girrawheen Senior High School is the learning and sanctuary centre, which is also known as MOASH or the “mother of all sheds”. This concept was first developed by Barry Cable of the Community Development Foundation, whose tireless energy is reminiscent of the Duracell bunny. He, in conjunction with his colleague Jenny Day, and Bill Mann, the principal of Girrawheen Senior High School, established a MOASH at the school site in September last year. The shed has been significantly upgraded and renovated inside and forms the basis of support for Aboriginal families in the local community. It is used for meetings of Aboriginal community groups, and for running recreational, art and craft and targeted health education programs for Aboriginal groups such as young mothers, as well as other training programs.

These developments are all local examples of commitment to the core issues of education and safety and security in our community. I now move to the question of future challenges. Although the programs I have described demonstrate positive outcomes that can be achieved in these key areas of safety and security, housing and education at a local level, that is not to say that more cannot be done. In the time remaining, I will briefly focus on some of these challenges. Three areas of government activity require some special attention. The first could be generally described as service delivery. Although much has been done during the term of the Gallop Labor Government to rationalise government agencies and improve processes, more still needs to be done in the area of service delivery. Problems associated with severe social disadvantage ordinarily do not fit neatly into a single category or program but tend to present a complex array of problems. For that reason, a number of agencies need to accept and share responsibility. Invariably, this does not happen. I also regret that there are still signs of the so-called silo mentality. Early in its term, the Gallop Government quite rightly directed its attention to processes; however, it should perhaps now expand that focus to outcomes. The community wants results. It is not very concerned about how an issue is resolved, but it demands resolution of these matters.

This dilemma is no starker than in the area of youth at risk. It is hoped that we can move strategically to assess problems and ensure multi-agency intervention and effective, comprehensive responses. If we fail to embrace this challenge, we will be faced with an onerous burden in years to come. This legacy will translate into perpetual social disadvantage and generate much larger problems, such as escalating crime and the attendant economic problems that dysfunction creates. We know that early intervention works. We also know that economic and social stress can disrupt the parenting process, leaving kids with little supervision. Supporting vulnerable families is a better way to reduce crime than more traditional law and order policies.

In this context, I mention the good work of the Smith Family, which has targeted the Girrawheen area as one in which it wants to support parenting practices and the mentoring of kids. This factors in well with the strategy of identifying vulnerable family situations and intervening at an early stage. The Smith Family is very successful in collaborating with the corporate sector. A number of large corporate entities have been very generous in their support of the Smith Family. I commend the corporate sector for having the vision to back an agency such as the Smith Family in its work in my electorate. Generally speaking, it is important that expenditure in this area be considered an investment and not a cost. I do not want to canvass this matter in any great detail. For example, some current findings will trespass on some of these issues, and I look forward to contributing to the debate that will follow the release of the Gordon inquiry report, so that some strategies can be fashioned to ensure that our most vulnerable children do not fall between the cracks.

The final challenge involves the idea of building community cohesion and issues associated with racism, which to some extent have been exacerbated by the tragic events of 11 September last year. Our concept of citizenship accepts and respects the rights of all Western Australians to express and share their individual cultural identity within an overriding commitment to our Constitution and the basic values of democracy. However, these basic values have been questioned in recent times. There is much uncertainty in the world and it seems safer to distrust difference and feel comfortable only with people who look and sound the same as we do. Such attitudes do little to encourage a fair, just and compassionate community.

Strategies to combat racism are not easy at a community level; however, I commend the efforts of many in the Girrawheen community who celebrate and rejoice in diversity in order to enhance community cohesion. In tackling racism, Governments cannot be prescriptive by telling people what to think or feel. They can, however, act to limit conditions under which racism breeds - fear, insecurity and a lack of understanding. In this context, I welcome the initiative of the Gallop Government to formulate an anti-racism strategy, which will address ways in which government, in partnership with the community, can create a climate inimical to racism. Such a course is consistent with the overall government objective to ensure equality and respect for all Western Australians. I cannot emphasise enough that in the fight against racism, the goodwill and participation of local communities is essential.

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One of the most heart-warming occasions that I have experienced as a local member occurred recently at a local primary school. The occasion at Majella Catholic Primary School was a special celebration of NAIDOC Week. The Koora Boorda Nyoongah dance group was asked to tell stories and dance for the young pupils. The stories and dances were simple but compelling. The young audience was enthralled. They enthusiastically participated in the traditional dances, which represented emus and kangaroos meandering through the bush. The occasion was highly effective in sowing the seeds of understanding and empathy, and filled me with great optimism and hope that the future is in good hands.

However, we need to move from merely tolerating difference towards affording respect and equality. This was succinctly put last year during community consultation on racism in civil society, which was conducted by the Acting Race Discrimination Commissioner of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. A participant in the consultation is quoted on the HREOC web site as observing -

I don't want to be tolerated.
You can tolerate a headache.
I want to have respect and equality.

Although the issues and challenges that I have raised today are complex, the Gallop Government has made a commitment to tackle those challenges for the greater good of all Western Australians.

MR D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN (Mitchell - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.28 am]: People are often heard to say of politics that there is not much difference between the major parties. They say that the Liberal and Labor Parties seem to have moulded together; the Labor Party has drifted to the right and the Liberal Party has floated to the left.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: That is especially so when one considers such moderate, balanced politicians as the member for Hillarys and me. August 2002 will go down in history as a watershed in Australian politics, and I will explain why. Before I do, I will touch on a couple of key points that relate to the way the small business community is being treated in Western Australia under the current Labor Government.

As we speak in this Chamber today, small businesses around Western Australia, in both the metropolitan area and regional and country centres, cannot obtain public liability insurance or are being forced to pay massive increases in public liability insurance premiums. Over recent months I have spoken to numerous small business people who are operating their businesses, sometimes in a high-risk environment, without public liability cover because they either cannot get it or cannot afford it. The adventure tourism area is particularly affected. This is a phenomenon that has spread throughout the small business community in this State. People involved in the scaffolding industry, for example, have said that their premiums have increased by 500 or 1 000 per cent. Many of them, particularly those on low cash-flow operations, cannot afford those premiums. This is not something new; it has not cropped up over the past few weeks; it has been on the boil since the collapse of HIH Insurance in March last year. It has been exacerbated by a number of factors, including the ramifications of the 11 September tragedy and a number of factors specific to the insurance industry. In a crisis of this nature, naturally a State Government would respond quickly with a package of measures that would be effective and assist the small business community! Alas, that has not been the case here. Indeed, some legislation was introduced into this Chamber yesterday. On analysis it appears that it contains almost nothing to assist small business with its immediate public liability problems, despite the fact that other States, most notably New South Wales, have reacted promptly to this problem. Other States have already progressed legislation and are taking some very effective measures in support of the small business community.

Another area in which this Government is failing the small business community and is showing that it is not listening to people in small business is industrial relations. Members from the Government who attended any of the seminars operated by the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection will be well aware of the concerns small business has about this legislation. At a recent seminar in Scarborough, one of the small business people who walked out afterwards and who had had no involvement with this matter beforehand described the feeling of small business people in that seminar as one of "utter devastation". They were devastated by the impact that the Government's legislation and changes would have on them, particularly restaurateurs, caterers, people involved in aged care and retailers, especially fuel retailers. They were in despair about what would happen when this legislation took effect, which it has done since 1 August.

Given the advice they received at these seminars, that is hardly surprising. One small business operator asked the public servants in attendance what would happen about weekend trading. That operator made the point that under this legislation the costs of employing staff on the weekend would increase dramatically, so they would need to cut back on the hours they offered their staff. I was horrified at the response, which was that, unless they

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were able to demonstrate that their business would go broke as a result of those additional costs, they would not be allowed to reduce the hours of their staff. Members can imagine the impact that had on the businesspeople in that meeting. Afterwards when those people spoke to me, they wondered how they would cover these hours, because they are a husband and wife team with a couple of employees and will not be able to operate under that regime. When they asked the public servants in attendance that question, they were told that we had a system like this in 1992 and businesses could operate so they will be able to operate under that system now. It was an appalling admission of what this legislation will mean for the small business community.

Only yesterday in this Chamber the Premier was asked by the member for Kingsley about the motion carried at the Labor Party state conference that would prohibit a Labor Government from engaging in any campaign to deregister a state-based union. We saw the Premier wriggle in his seat and try to avoid answering the question. He referred to it as hypothetical. It is the talk in the small business community at the moment because as sure as apples are apples, the Cole royal commission will say that the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union is not a particularly pleasantly organised union. In the light of all the press articles about incidents involving that union and the thugs in it, many people in the small business community are drawing the conclusion that the Cole royal commission might just say that it should be deregistered. This is something that the Government should face up to today, as we speak. As we head towards, in my opinion and in the opinion of many in the business community, the inevitable deregistration of that union, it would be appropriate for the Government to consider what steps it would take if that occurred. As we know, if a union like that is deregistered at the federal level, it must be deregistered also at the state level.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It doesn't have to be; that is not correct. How much history do you know?

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: Come on! The CFMEU has state and federal union tickets. If I were to walk into a union office such as the CFMEU and saw a chair in the room, would it be owned by the state or federal union? It must be about both. If the CFMEU is deregistered federally, this Government must bite the bullet and deregister it at the state level. That is what the small business community is talking about now. It is saying we have a Government that has puppet strings attached to the union movement and clearly it will not have the guts to deregister the CFMEU, but that is what it wants to happen.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I wonder whether the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is one of those puppets. She seems to be defending the union.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: We should consider the union background of a number of members on that side, including the Minister for Small Business. It is like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank.

The small business community is being affected by a number of issues that this Government is not tackling, such as the crisis in the housing indemnity insurance area. Another is fuel pricing, particularly in country areas. The viability and livelihoods of retailers in country areas is under threat because the Government cannot get its maximum wholesale price system to work before it proceeds to cap prices in country areas. We have seen a massive reduction in capital works such as sewerage infill and roadworks. There has been a blatant taxation attack on small business. The Government ran away from its premium property tax initiative, but abolished the exemption from land tax of the principal place of residence, which will impact on small business people in particular. A tax review was undertaken by the Government that recommended an increase in taxes on small business by whacking an extra 16 per cent onto payroll tax. However, do members know what? The Government will reduce payroll tax for big business. The Government wants to take the load off the big end of town and whack it onto small business.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Maybe that is where it gets its donations from at election time.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: The ALP will not receive donations from small business after this performance.

A number of these blatant attacks have been made on the small business community. We wonder why the Government needs this tax. Why is it bleeding small business at every opportunity? It has jacked up government spending during this term in office, in a cumulative sense, by \$2.8 billion. Is that any surprise from a union-dominated Government?

Having set the scene, I now turn to the reason that August 2002 has been a watershed in Australian and Western Australian politics. I will start by turning to the Hawke-Wran review of the Labor Party. It is particularly interesting because, by its own admission, the Labor Party was pretty much in the doldrums. The federal Labor Party got the worst primary vote since 1906.

Several members interjected.

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Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: My friends opposite should not gloat, because they know that the Labor Party's primary vote in the state election was not flash.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: It was better than ours. That is why we are sitting on this side of the Chamber. That is why we are listening to groups such as small businesses and are responding to their concerns. If members opposite adopt an arrogant position so early in their term of office, the future will not look particularly good for the Labor Party in this State.

From memory, the Labor Party's primary vote at the federal election was 37.8 per cent. It is no wonder that the Labor Party decided to look at what it was doing wrong. It asked its eminent elder statesmen former Prime Minister Bob Hawke and former Premier Neville Wran to look at the whole situation. That has led to the single biggest differentiation between the two major parties in contemporary history, and that is the basis of the watershed in politics. I say that because the Liberal Party in Western Australia has made a dramatic shift back to the small business community. At the Liberal Party state conference, we launched the beginning of a major strategy to win back the trust and confidence of the small business community. I say that because not only is it the right thing to do, but also it is the basis of the Liberal Party's charter. Our charter refers to our belief in competitive enterprise in small business. I include National Party members, even though we are not in coalition. This side of the Chamber is dominated by people who have a small business or farming background - people who have been in a business and who have put their necks on the chopping block and have risked their livelihoods for the reward they can get if they are successful in business. We know why it is valuable and important to support the small business community.

We have seen in the Labor Party something very different. We have seen the release of a report, endorsed by the Labor Party leadership across Australia, particularly by the federal leader, Simon Crean, and Western Australia's Premier, which throws the emphasis onto union domination of that political party. The report and its recommendations do not refer to domination by rank and file trade unionists; it refers to domination and control by the union hierarchy. Far be it from me to lecture members of the Labor Party, but a lot of people would say that it was a wasted opportunity. Members can correct me if I am wrong, but only about 10 per cent of the work force is affiliated with the Labor Party through unions. If the Labor Party listened to people such as John Button and Joe de Bruyn and to the community, and if it was prepared to break its tenuous but very influential links with the trade union movement and maybe adopt the principles that are referred to as social democracy - the sorts of things that Tony Blair has achieved and that have happened in Sweden - perhaps the Labor Party would have seen a very different reaction in the community. However, no. The Labor Party has thrown out the anchor and is now well and truly anchored to the trade union movement across this nation.

It is not just the trade union movement. The detail of the way the system works indicates that the Labor Party will now drift further towards control by the left-wing unions that dominate the Labor Party hierarchy. It is interesting because a number of people have referred to, for example, the Whitlam days and the Whitlamesque reforms that were proposed some 30 years ago. That is not what Gough Whitlam was talking about. That is not what the eminent statesman from the Labor Party - dare I call him that - was pushing for all those years ago. People like Whitlam, and Button in more contemporary times, said that people must listen to the rank and file, much as we on this side of the Chamber are listening to small businesses, family groups and so on. However, the Labor Party did not hear that. It decided to bond itself to the union movement. It is quite apparent that the union movement in Western Australia is well and truly in control of the Labor Party. One need look no further than the preselection of members of this very Chamber.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: I welcome interjections, because I am always interested in how parties operate their systems. When it was time to pick an opponent to face me in the last election, there was a fair amount of discord within Labor Party ranks. The reason for that is very simple: the local rank and file members of the Labor Party decided that they had a candidate they wanted to run against me. However, the hierarchy did not want that candidate; it wanted someone else. Under the Labor Party's constitution, about 240 delegates are involved in the preselection of a candidate for a lower House seat such as mine. Members can correct me if I am wrong, but the local branch - I think there is only one branch of the Labor Party in my electorate - is entitled to up to 40 of those 240 delegates.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Wrong!

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: That is wrong. How many are there then?

Ms M.M. Quirk: It is pro rata. It is scaled down.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: The member is right; it is scaled down. That is why I said "up to 40". Chances are that there probably were not even 40 rank and file Labor Party members involved in the preselection

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of my opponent. However, there were 120 union delegates and 80 central ALP delegates, so there were 200 hierarchy ALP people and up to 40 ALP rank and file people. It is interesting that the Premier does not like that system. The Premier is on the record as saying that preselection is so important that the Labor Party should have -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Is that why the member for the South West Region lives in Mt Lawley?

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: It probably is. It is probably why the member for Cockburn lives in Swanbourne and the member for Armadale lives in Leederville or West Perth. What a laugh! Three-quarters of my preselectors live locally.

Let us look at what the Premier said about this issue, because I am not the only one concerned about the Labor Party's preselection process. Members opposite probably do not care what I think about their preselection process, but they should care what the member for Victoria Park, as their illustrious Premier, thinks. He is on the record as saying that there should be 50 per cent rank and file say at the local level, but he has not achieved it. The Labor Party's state conference deferred a decision on it. No wonder - it was too tough! The Labor Party's union mates will not let it happen. We in this Chamber have seen union thugs sit in the gallery and virtually dictate to the person in the chair what he should say. I consider that to be virtually a contempt of this Parliament, if not a contempt. We have seen the puppet strings in action. We have seen this happen indirectly. We know where the support for the member for Leederville, or whatever her title is, comes from. We know how the preselection happened for seats such as Cockburn. The Labor Party had a respected and, in some respects, well-performing upper House member who looked at entering the lower House. Instead, no, the union strings were pulled, and consequently the current member for Cockburn is in the House today. Is it not interesting how the more moderate members of the Labor Party, such as New South Wales Premier Bob Carr, have been silent about the outcome of the Hawke-Wran review?

Ms D.J. Guise: On the question of membership, you are talking about the reviewed process of preselection and about Labor Party processes. My understanding is that the Liberal Party is going through the same process. Is that correct?

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: The point I am making is that the Labor Party process is dominated by hierarchy, and that hierarchy is dominated by the unions. The Liberal Party process is very grassroots. As I said, three-quarters of my members live locally, either in my electorate or in the south west. There is a total contrast.

Mr R.F. Johnson: In other words, businesses don't say who will be preselected in the Liberal Party.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: Imagine the Bunbury Chamber of Commerce having 12 or 15 votes on my preselection! It is ludicrous to suggest that, but that happens in the Labor Party. The trade union movement dominates the preselections. Therefore, let us ask the question: in the Hawke-Wran review, what fundamental recommendation for structural reform of the Labor Party was made about the preselection process? None - because the trade unions will not let the Labor Party do that. They will not let the Premier make those changes because the trade union movement will stay in charge. The media got it right. The editorial headline in *The Weekend Australian* of 10 August was "Crean's leap into the union past", and the editorial stated -

The dilution of the 60-40 rule for state conferences is window-dressing.

That is quite correct, because preselection was not dealt with. Further on it states -

Offering unions the right to send delegates to the national conference for the first time in the party's history may secure their support for wider reform, -

In other words, it is another way of grovelling to the unions and giving in to union power and control -

but it doesn't make Labor more "inclusive". ALP-affiliated unions make up only about 10 per cent of the workforce -

That is the figure I used earlier -

how does giving them a bigger say make Labor more inclusive?

That is the point. The Labor Party is now drifting over. The former Prime Minister Bob Hawke summed it up beautifully when he said -

"We reaffirm the party's partnership with the union movement. The link is foundational as a matter of history and fundamental to any assessment of the party's future. The way ahead is not to sever the union connection but to renew and reinvigorate the partnership."

Mr J.N. Hyde: Hear, hear!

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: Exactly. Listen to those opposite saying "Hear, hear!" because their union mates want to hear it. In other words, they are in bed with the union movement, and God they love the

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experience. That is my key point. The privileged union heavyweights, particularly those from the left, have got their greater say in Labor Party affairs.

About 132 000 small businesses employ approximately 400 000 people in Western Australia. Think about what they are saying about a Government that is becoming increasingly dominated by the trade union movement. I know what they are saying. I have had some meetings in Joondalup with the small business community. I can tell the member for Joondalup that they are terrified about what is happening. The member would know well what happened at a seminar that was held on the industrial relations changes in that area and how much support he has lost, including from some of the key businesspeople who supported his very election.

That is how these changes will affect the Labor Party because it is not listening to the community; it is listening only to those grubby, heavyweight union officials who dominate the Labor Party. The Premier has failed to get a change in the preselection process, and now compulsory unionism is being brought into our universities. God forbid! The Labor Party allows the union movement to dominate its internal processes and its preselection processes and, hence, its very conduct in this representative Chamber. Now it is taking those authoritarian union tactics into our places of learning - our tertiary institutions. People on the streets do not appreciate this form of blatant trade union control.

I will go back to the point I was making from the word go. In August, the Liberal Party in this State made a conscious decision, and that decision has been endorsed by its conference of delegates from around the State; that is, that our foundation stone - the bedrock of the Liberal Party - is and will continue to be the small business community. We believe earnestly in the processes of competitive enterprise. On the other hand, the Labor Party, by the admission of the members in this place today through their interjections, is quite happy to not only maintain the links it has with the trade union movement but also reinforce those links.

Ms D.J. Guise: Absolutely.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: "Absolutely" says the member for Wanneroo. The member for Riverton is delighted at the idea of having these trade union people, such as the ones who were in the gallery when he was in the chair that day, rule the roost in the Labor Party. I point to the fact that August 2002 will go down in history as a watershed for politics in this State for that very reason. The term very often used is wedge politics, which is a deliberate tactic adopted by a political party to differentiate it from its opponent. However, instead, wedge politics is happening of its own accord. The Labor Party is drifting further and further into union control, and the Liberal Party, on the other hand, is taking a far more grassroots approach and is positioning itself firmly behind the small business community in this State. I gave practical examples earlier of how the Labor Party is disregarding small business, and I have illustrated in no uncertain terms how, on the other hand, it is happy to maintain and strengthen its links with the trade union movement, which ultimately represents around 20 per cent of employees in this State. Many of those employees do not even support the Labor Party, to which some of the unions are affiliated.

Members on this side have been accused of being anti-union. We are not. We support strong and proper representation of the people at the workplace and in this Parliament. However, we do not want a Parliament or a Government that is dominated by any particular echelon in the community.

Withdrawals of Remark

Mr A.J. DEAN: I ask the member for Mitchell to withdraw his comments about the member for Riverton and his action in the chair on the day to which he referred. His comments reflected on the member when he was in the chair. That is unparliamentary and against standing orders.

Mr A.D. McRAE: I was waiting, and in fact I had requested the member for Mitchell, by way of interjection, to initiate his own withdrawal of those remarks. Members may remember that at a time of serious tension in this place, members of a union, as far as I am aware, were in the public gallery while I was in the chair. I took all reasonable steps, and took my responsibility very seriously, to maintain order in this Chamber and to allow debate to continue. Indeed, members on both sides commented that the way I had handled that matter had contributed to the good order of the Chamber and to productive debate being able to continue while there was a degree of interruption of the debate by people in the public gallery. Whether those people were unionists or other members of the community is neither here nor there. When the member for Mitchell -

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.P.D. Edwards): I understand what the member is saying, but he should bring his point to a conclusion.

Mr A.D. McRAE: I support the member for Bunbury in asking for the member for Mitchell to withdraw his remark. It is clear that the member for Mitchell has reflected on the Chair's role in running that debate.

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Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: Before I decide whether to withdraw my comment, I seek the guidance of the Chair. I was referring to the situation when a union official in the gallery unzipped his fly and called to the member for Kingsley, "I will show you my right of entry." In any reasonable person's assessment, that is a contempt of Parliament. That is what I was referring to. I implied that another person in the chair may have viewed that as a contempt of Parliament. A different person in the chair may have made a different call. I was not directly implying a slur on the member for Riverton. I seek the advice of the Chair now as to whether such action would constitute a contempt of Parliament and whether it would be incumbent on someone in the chair to determine it as such.

Mr A.D. McRAE: I was in the chair at the time and this is the first time I have heard the allegation that someone unzipped his fly. That is not my recollection of events. I was sitting in the chair at the time and I flatly refute and reject that any such behaviour occurred. If it had occurred, I would have taken direct action.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I allowed the member for Mitchell to bend the rules of the House somewhat. I was not going to comment on it but, as a point of order has been raised, I must do so. I ask the member to withdraw the remark.

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: I withdraw the remark.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: To sum up, we have seen a watershed. We have seen only the tip of the iceberg. Perhaps it is something that should be pursued more formally through parliamentary procedures. Time and again we have seen members on the other side of the House standing up for the worst side of unionism in this State. The Liberal Party is pro-small business; it is getting out and fighting for the community.

The Premier supports the recommendations of the Hawke-Wran review, as does Simon Crean. Support shown by Labor members in this place today demonstrates that the Labor Party is in bed with the union movement and that is the way it will stay.

MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin) [12.03 pm]: It is 18 months since the last election, and I will review what has happened in my first 18 months in Parliament. I will look at the issues in my electorate as well as the future.

I have enjoyed the past 18 months in Parliament very much. It has been a privilege to sit in Parliament and represent the people of the electorate of Wagin. It is an honour and responsibility that I do not take lightly. Like many new members, I have learnt a great deal in the past 18 months. Like other members, I still have a lot to learn. It is always interesting to learn in life, as there are many challenges. I look forward to the challenges ahead of me.

I will speak about how my electorate has fared in the past 18 months and how it is progressing. My electorate is rural; it is a farming area that relies heavily on farming industries. Seasonal conditions affect everything that happens in the electorate. The start to the season was very dry in 2001, particularly in the eastern part which suffered a debilitating drought in early 2001. Thankfully, in late winter and early spring we received good rains. Most of my electorate came through the season quite well. Commodity prices ended up reasonably well. Some patchy areas in the eastern part of the electorate suffered and did not enjoy a good season. In 2002 the western part of the electorate - west of the Great Southern Highway - is enjoying a very good season and things look good in that area. There is a very confident and bright outlook. However, the eastern parts of the electorate face a very dry year. They have received just enough rain to keep things ticking over; nevertheless, some areas are patchy and in poor shape. Those areas need a very good spring rainfall but it is getting late. Further north and east of my electorate, the conditions are more critical. The harsh conditions in the eastern wheatbelt will affect the whole State.

Crops west of the Great Southern Highway are good although there is a water shortage. In the eastern areas, around Dalwallinu, Kalannie and Mukinbudin, the situation is more critical and some farmers will not get a crop this year. The whole of Western Australia, including the metropolitan area, is suffering water problems due to the lack of water catchment over the past two years. Even in the good areas in my region there will still be water shortages.

A large seminar on the water situation will be held tomorrow. It has been organised by the National Party and is called Liquid Assets Day. The minister and others will deliver speeches. However, I call on the Government to look sympathetically at farmers who will be desperately short of water. Areas in my electorate - north west of Wickepin and the Shire of Dumbleyung - are trying to get the comprehensive water scheme extended to reach more farmers. We need more support from the Government in this area as it is a critical issue.

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Although my electorate faces many challenges, the people in my electorate are very innovative and extremely community minded. They are committed to getting on and making things happen locally. Government ministers were in Narrogin last weekend and I am sure they would have seen that for themselves.

Retaining and expanding industries and attracting new industries is critical to the region. It is an extremely important priority. Apart from agriculture, which is the dominant industry, the area has industries in feedlots, hay and feed pelleting plants, aquaculture, abattoirs and meatworks. Katanning has large meatworks and Dardanup has a vibrant tannery. The area also has a bus building industry. The Premier mentioned the construction of firefighting vehicles in Narrogin; an article was carried on the front page of *The Narrogin Observer*. The area also has a tourism industry, which I will discuss later. The many small businesses in the area are the key to the future of the region.

Although I have great faith that country people will ensure that our communities will progress, it is extremely hard for small businesses when there are bad seasonal conditions. The area will need government incentives and support to ensure that businesses will continue to prosper and that the towns and communities will remain vibrant. It will enable us to attract new business and professional people. That is the key to survival and to providing wealth for the State.

Although I am not a negative person, I must raise some areas of concern for country people. The issues are real and, no doubt, were conveyed to some of the ministers when they visited the region recently. Country people are concerned about the loss of services and the lack of incentives and opportunities for country Western Australia. This is particularly true for young people. Country areas are losing a lot of their young people, particularly in my region. These are some of the issues that have come to my attention in the past 18 months.

The one vote, one value legislation has progressed through the Parliament. We now await the decision of the Supreme Court. People in country areas are very disappointed about this issue; they feel disenfranchised. They feel that their voice in this Parliament and their representation will be greatly diminished. They feel left out and that they are not as important as metropolitan citizens. They see the power in the State being transferred to the metropolitan region. Some people say that people in the regions have an inferiority complex. Sometimes, complaints can be overdone. However, members will soon see why country people feel the way they do. The cuts in funding generally and road funding in particular have resulted in 51 projects not proceeding. That is critical to country Western Australia because the people there rely heavily on the road system for everything they do, from taking the kids to school and attending sporting venues to carrying out business locally and going to Perth for business.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: We certainly stopped building roads in and out of Binnu.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I know that standing contracts made by the last Government must be continued by this Government, and I am glad they are there. I realise that every area cannot be a priority area and that there is only so much money to go around. However, this is an important matter in this large and expansive State. One vote, one value and road funding are important issues because they are so critical -

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: I absolutely understand and agree that roads are an issue. However, you must understand that this Government has increased the percentage of funding going into rural roads. It has not decreased that funding.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: However, that includes many ongoing, term contracts put in place by the previous Government and this Government is bound to complete them. That is also a fair comment.

I urge the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure in the next budget to consider as a safety issue the construction of more passing lanes on Albany Highway. Two more passing lanes are being constructed near Mt Barker, but in my region north of Kojonup and Williams the situation is dangerous, especially in wet weather when the driver of a motor vehicle following a truck cannot see the road ahead. People get impatient and take risks. I know it is the aim of Main Roads Western Australia to have passing lanes at intervals so that people know it will not be long before they will have the opportunity to pass. I urge the minister to look at that matter from a safety point of view.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: We would love to have the money to put in those lanes. Perhaps if we had not spent all that money on the Northbridge tunnel, we would have had it.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Perhaps we need to prioritise where moneys should go. Albany Highway is not used by only country people. Thousands of city people use it; it is a major route. The next stage of the Narrogin link road has not been continued and that road is not doing what it was meant to do.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: You do know that we brought forward that expenditure. That funding was budgeted for under your Government and the next stage of the link road was not going to be carried out for many years -

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Mr T.K. WALDRON: I congratulate the minister for that, but I urge her to get onto the next stage of that link road, otherwise it will not serve the purpose for which it was envisaged.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Should we give priority to the Wickepin-Kulin road?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I am coming to that.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Should that get priority?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: The Wickepin-Kulin road is a priority. Only one stage of the link road has been completed and the second stage is needed. The route the trucks currently take creates a dangerous situation. I believe in addressing the safety aspects of roads, and that situation poses a safety risk.

Health services is another area in which country people feel that they have been hard done by with the abolition of the country health service boards. Once again people feel disfranchised, because their input and local management has been taken away and the health service is now directed from Perth. I could understand the need to do this if those boards had been functioning badly and were financially inept. However, in my electorate, the Upper Great Southern Health Service and the Central Great Southern Health Board have an outstanding record that is there for all to see. The boards were penalised the previous year because they put money away that was to be utilised to improve facilities in those areas. They did not get the draw-down from the Government on that money and they lost it. We must remember that local knowledge is imperative. It is like asking country people to run Perth hospitals. That would be difficult because country people do not have the experience or knowledge to do that job and the same situation applies in reverse to country areas. It appears that Wagin District Hospital will lose its obstetrics service and some theatre operations. That may cause the local doctor to say that if he cannot do certain procedures, he will leave. Therefore, that country town will lose its doctor. That is an example of an important problem that a local board would not allow to happen and people in the country are fearful that it will happen.

I urge the Government to pay greater attention to mental illness in rural Western Australia because it is a growing problem. The minister is aware of this problem, but it must be given greater priority. People working in the area of mental health in rural WA are under huge pressure and I congratulate them on the work they do. Mental illness is a growing problem that needs more attention. The National Party supports a program by Dr Christine Day and I urge the Government to add its support to that program. Local governments are prepared to allocate money to this program, which aims to educate people in smaller towns to recognise the early symptoms of mental illness and to get specialist help for those involved at an early stage, which will reduce the problems and the costs further down the line.

Since this Government took office, the agricultural budget has been cut by approximately \$40 million. Agriculture is still one of this State's major industries and it is a real concern that we are losing people from the Department of Agriculture in country Western Australia. My first concern relates to research and development. Like everything else in this world, agriculture is changing rapidly, and we must keep abreast of the times. If we continue to lose people, particularly from the area of research and development, it is a false economy. We may be cutting costs now, but we will suffer further down the line. Noxious weed, pest and vermin control is already being affected and skeleton weed, which used to be under control, is now becoming a major problem. In addition, bridal creeper, which many people do not know about, is becoming a nuisance in country WA. I urge the Minister for Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture to give more consideration to that growing problem.

The Government has announced that it will provide funding for more police officers. We are yet to see them in my electorate. However, I hope that they come to that area because they are needed. The difficulties of maintaining law and order and the associated problems are increasing, not only in major towns but also in smaller towns to which people are relocated to benefit from cheap rent and the like. Support is required to overcome the problems that arise from relocation. The Police Service, with District Superintendent Merv Pegler as the head of the southern region, does a fantastic job.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: Why do you need more police officers then?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: The police officers are under great stress; one has only to talk to them to find that out. They are doing a fantastic job, but everyone has their limits. In bigger towns the police are coping reasonably well, but in smaller towns, such as Darkan, Wickepin and Kukerin, police coverage is inadequate when the need arises. We saw what happened in Wandering. Had there been more of a police presence, that situation would never have eventuated. A guy who had allegedly caused community problems had his house burnt down and was belted up and the people who did wrong are now facing court action, which is fair enough. However, that is where a better allocation system is needed, and the Minister for Police must address that issue. If more police officers are available, and are supposedly coming on stream, we should ensure that they are allocated fairly

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throughout the State. Katanning had a huge crime problem. Senior Sergeant Brian Wilkinson introduced a number of measures to work with the youth. One measure, which I have mentioned before in this House, is the breakfast club. Many children were not going to school so a breakfast club was introduced at the school. Katanning now has up to 25 children going to that breakfast club and staying on at school. It has reduced crime in Katanning by 50 per cent.

Under the state housing scheme, families have been relocated to smaller country towns. In some cases, the families have had inherent problems and a history of crime. Everyone needs housing and not for one minute do I say that those people should not be given available housing. We must provide housing regardless of the type of person who requires it. However, if a family that has a history of problems is sent to a small country town, we must ensure that the services and the backup facilities are available in that town. The family needs that support and help and the community needs support to deal with the family and to ensure the family has a future. At the moment some families are being dumped in towns where there is no support and that causes problems. In Kojonup, my home town, the local Nyoongah community found the relocation process was causing problems in their community. Representatives approached me about this matter and we had a meeting with the Department of Housing and Works. If more thought had been put into the decision to relocate those families, better places would have been found to which the families could go.

I turn now to the subject of education. During the recess I visited all the schools in my electorate, and it was a very interesting exercise. Teachers have been working very hard. A number of issues were raised repeatedly, and I will be taking these up with the minister during the course of this session. The cost of boarding for isolated and distant families who have no other alternatives is becoming almost prohibitive in some cases, and more assistance is required. The Government needs to ensure that new staffing formulas do not affect what schools, particularly district high schools, can offer to their students, and do not put pressure on the smaller schools, where the principals must take on more work. Some of the principals in level 3 schools told me that they do not know if they can handle the greater workload, and they fear for what they can deliver to their students. The issue of quality housing was raised repeatedly by the teachers. Quality housing must be provided to attract those teachers. The rules on permanency for teachers need to be altered. There is a real opportunity to provide permanency incentives to teachers who are prepared to teach in country schools. I had a meeting with the minister about school bus contractors, and the changes that threaten their future viability, particularly in extending the life of buses. The State has a great safety record with school buses, and I do not want to see that jeopardised in any way.

People in my electorate feel strongly that this Government is focused very much on the city, and the Government must understand why they feel that way. When these decisions are made, one on top of the other, this feeling grows. I urge the Government to rethink its attitude and policy towards country Western Australia. At the same time, I congratulate the Government for taking cabinet meetings out to the regions. The previous Government did that, and I am glad that this Government is continuing the practice. The recent visit to Narrogin was very much appreciated and well received by the people of the region. Country people respect people who front up. Sometimes the questions may not be agreeable, and it may not be the minister's patch, but people really respect ministers for fronting up and giving them the opportunity to speak directly to them. I thank ministers who have made themselves available to me to bring groups to meet with them on particular issues. It is great for me as a local member to be able to do that, and for the people to have access to their ministers. I realise this is not always possible, but it reflects very well on ministers. The Premier should visit the timber towns. He has made a mistake in not going down there and fronting up, and the longer he leaves it the worse it will become. If the Premier had fronted up earlier, it might not have been easy for him, but he would have won a great deal of respect. The area has many inherent problems, which have been very strongly highlighted by the member for Warren-Blackwood. During the drought, the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture fronted up to Lake Grace. They copped a bit of flak, but people appreciated the fact that they had taken the time to go there. When ministers visit, people think that their Government cares.

I will now talk briefly about tourism. Country Western Australia has a problem in attracting industries. The Minister for Energy is presently in the House. The provision of energy for attracting industries needs to be addressed by whoever is in Government. Tourism as an industry already exists in country Western Australia, but it is not yet properly utilised. People are beginning to become aware of it, but that interest must be capitalised on. The industry must also be coordinated. People will not go to Wagin or to Kojonup just for the day. They want an experience, and we must make sure that that is offered. Already through groups such as the Heartland Tourism Association local government authorities are banding together to make sure that this happens. Last night I attended the presentation of the heartlands tourism awards, at which there was great enthusiasm. The Minister for Tourism was there, and got a fright during his speech when "Moondyne Joe" came out shooting. It was very well done. I urge the Government to support tourism in country Western Australia. The minister said

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last night that tourism had begun to increase since the slump after the tragedies of 11 September last year and the collapse of Ansett. Levels this year are up by some 14 per cent. That increase must be built on. Exciting new tourism ventures in my area include the nocturnal viewing enclosure in the Dryandra forest, which will enable visitors to watch animals in their natural habitat at night. That venture won a heartlands tourism award last night. Another is the Kodja Place cultural interpretive centre in Kojonup, which has been a fantastic example of cooperation with the local Nyoongah community. The process of establishing that centre has done more for reconciliation in that town than anything else over the past 30 years. It is well worth stopping to look at when passing through Kojonup. The giant ram and the historical village in Wagin also won awards last night. Also in the area are Albert Facey house at Wickiepin, the old mill and museum in Katanning, and the *Bluebird* display at Lake Dumbleyung. A festival now goes with that, so that community is beginning to capitalise on the fact that Donald Campbell broke the world water speed record there all those years ago. Many other farm stays, trails and walks are available in the area. The tourist centres are doing a terrific job, staffed mainly by volunteers.

Sporting and other clubs play an important role in our communities. New facilities have been provided in Narrogin and other towns in the region. These facilities must be maintained. If we are to attract professional people to the area, we must provide their families with opportunities that match as close as possible those available in the metropolitan area. I spoke earlier about health, and sport, particularly team sport, plays a critical role in the health of communities in country Western Australia. It is an important part of the social structure, providing meeting places, social activities and a physical health benefit. We read all the time about obesity in young children. That was seen to be more a city thing, but that does not apply any more, because I see it in country Western Australia as well. Where two parents are working, and the children are left home by themselves for that one and a half hours after school- they cannot go out of the house because their parents worry about them - they eat and watch television. Organised sport can play a crucial role in overcoming that situation. Sport also plays an important role in mental health by giving people opportunities to get together, to participate, to watch, or to be involved in some way and therefore get away from the stresses and pressures of finance, their businesses, homes and families. Sport is fantastic for our youth, particularly in country Western Australia, where there are not often other things to do. Sport provides young people with social interaction and discipline, particularly in team sports. I do not mean that children should be beaten, but discipline is still important, and being part of a sporting team establishes boundaries. Young people enjoy having boundaries and knowing where they can step. Sport also gives children an opportunity to learn about responsibility, by making them rely on others and to learn that others rely on them, and leadership skills, which will be needed in the future.

At times we underestimate our young people, and we do not pay enough attention to them. Most of our young people are working or studying, and many of them are doing both; they are holding down a couple of jobs to help get through their study. Most of them are involved in their community and most are keen to take on leadership roles. Sometimes in country communities we do not allow them to come through when they are raring to go. As our communities come under more pressure, the younger generation will be needed to take on leadership roles. It is no different in the city. If young people are keen to take on responsible roles, they should be allowed to have a go. Two of my daughters are aged 22 and 24 years. They tell me things that I am not aware of as I get older. Sometimes people get out of touch, and we must make sure that we stay in touch.

The International Year of Volunteers was a fantastic initiative. The subject of volunteers was dealt with extensively at the heartlands tourism awards last night. In fact, the minister copped a bit of flak about support for the volunteers. I urge the Government to keep supporting volunteers. I believe that our Bill on public liability that exempted volunteers was the way to go. Country football in Western Australia has never suffered a claim. When the Attorney General on the last day of the last session passed to his advisers the question about the number of recorded cases of volunteers being sued under public liability, they could not come up with any. A great deal of money is being paid in premiums, and volunteers are so important that I believe that they can be excluded from liability. It may be that there needs to be some other fund to which each club might contribute perhaps \$100. I am sure that people would do that willingly. If there are no claims, we must be able to improve that area. The Government intends to introduce legislation dealing with this issue during this session. I hope that it addresses that problem.

I thank everyone for their help during my first 18 months in this place. I thank my National Party colleagues, wherever they are, for their support. I am sure that they are watching me on their television screens. I thank other members of Parliament and the staff for their friendship and support. Sometimes when we look at the world and we argue in this place, we fail to realise that we live in a pretty good State and we are very lucky to be here. All of us have a big responsibility to make sure that we work hard for our State because it is such a great place. We talk a lot about fairness and equality. We must ensure that fairness and equality extend across the whole State and not just to those places where the votes are or where we think the priorities should be. We need

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to recognise that fairness and equality are needed right across the State from Wyndham to Esperance to Bunbury. I urge the Government to think about that.

MS D.J. GUISE (Wanneroo) [12.33 pm]: I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, as moved by the member for Swan Hills.

As we embark on the second session of the thirty-sixth Parliament, it is perhaps wise firstly to reflect on the Government's aims for facilitating reform through its legislative program in the first session. I believe the aims have been met through legislation to improve policing, powers to assist in breaking the back of organised crime, a return to fairness and balance in the area of industrial relations and reforming sexual discrimination legislation to ensure that all citizens are treated equally before the law.

Two areas about which I spoke in my first speech are touched by new legislation and possibilities for a new approach. I will touch on those briefly before I move to the new program. I will speak on industrial relations first and the continuing fight for pay equity for women workers. I concede that much more needs to be done to improve wages and conditions for women to ensure parity and recognition for equal work. However, I believe that under the changes made to date women workers, the young and other marginalised employees will be afforded much greater protection under the new legislation. It is true that women and young people in particular engage in part-time and casual work, but that should not mean that they are forced to accept below-award wages and conditions to do so. Unfortunately, in the past there have been many instances of that happening, particularly with young people. My own experience, through my children, is that they are very eager when they enter certain years in high school to get out and earn a little bit of extra money. Due to that eagerness and people often unfortunately not doing the right thing, they accepted and entered into workplace agreements under the old regime that were less than satisfactory and bordering on slave labour. I thought Australia had moved on from that, so I am pleased we are able to put in place legislation that will ensure that they are far better dealt with. I congratulate the many good employers in our community - I am very pleased to see that I have many of them in my electorate - who do the right thing. However, I take this opportunity to say to the others who have sadly abused and exploited workers in the past that their days are well and truly numbered.

Another point that I wanted to pick up from my earlier speech that reflected on our first session was the gay and lesbian law reform legislation. During that debate I warned that although one can legislate for change, it would take some time to bring about a change in community thinking for some at least - gladly, not all. Sadly this is proving to be the case. I have been advised that the Freedom Centre situated in Northbridge has launched an appeal for help in the form of household goods to aid efforts to provide safe accommodation for those who are no longer welcome at home. I urge members to support it. It has sometimes proved impossible to get hostel or supported accommodation in the past for the young, due to a young person's fears or homophobia on the part of some service providers. This has resulted in young people in that position finding themselves on the street, crashing at a friend's place or unfortunately engaging in sex work. To the parents of young people coming to terms with their sexual identity, I plead with all my heart that they continue to love and support their children. I also wish to stress that support is available for parents through the P-FLAG organisation.

I now address some of the new programs for this session and, in particular, the aim for sustainable economic, social and environmental development. I will touch on some pertinent issues in my electorate of Wanneroo to highlight the importance of that development. At the weekend the Premier signed an agreement with Wesbeam which secured plantation pine timber at the Neerabup industrial estate in a \$80 million project. The project will create value-added timber, plant and manufacture high-strength lumber from plantation pine, and produce about 100 000 cubic metres each year. It will deliver 140 local jobs and training opportunities in the new Neerabup industrial estate north of Wanneroo. I believe that one of the key priorities for me as the member for Wanneroo is to ensure that the Government attracts new jobs to the region, and this project bodes well for the future. A lot of new development is happening in my electorate. It is all very well and good for us to continue with urban development, but it is not much good if the area continues to be a sleepy hollow and does not provide jobs for people living in the area. The project will have significant benefits for other local industries, particularly agriculture. The project will support the clearing of the Gngangara mound, increasing the recharge of the aquifer by about 36 gigalitres a year. Native vegetation will be re-established in Gngangara Park, and reduce the draw-down on the water resource. Access to water is one of the most significant problems facing the agricultural industry in this region. This project should help to ease some of the water concerns and assist other valuable local industry.

The protection of the rural areas is incredibly important. Wanneroo is a very significant contributor to agriculture, through both domestic and export markets. That is often overlooked; in fact, one of the ministers reminded me that I should rouse some country members because I would probably knock their socks off. The gross value of the agricultural product in the area is estimated to be \$98 million. Some figures provided to me by the Department of Agriculture show that is made up of 27 per cent vegetables; 19 per cent flowers, turf etc;

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11 per cent fruit; two per cent pigs; one per cent eggs; and 40 per cent poultry. I am advised that Wanneroo is the largest agricultural producing shire in the south west, with a total worth of \$1 billion. The Wanneroo region accounts for 45 per cent of south west poultry production; 22 per cent of south west vegetable production; and 30 per cent of south west nursery, flower and turf production.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Beautiful strawberries are grown up there.

Ms D.J. GUISE: They are beautiful strawberries. I hope that the ones we are fortunate enough to eat at Parliament House come from Wanneroo.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I certainly hope so.

Ms D.J. GUISE: I must check on that. The region is the fourth largest producer of agricultural goods in a State in which the total value of agricultural product is \$4.2 billion. According to the Department of Agriculture, the climate in Wanneroo is suitable for year-round production. That situation could not be repeated if the industry were moved either north or south. Wanneroo is a valuable asset to not only the region but also the State. The City of Wanneroo is working to ensure that essential industry is protected and promoted. It has undertaken further work on its local rural strategy, which the State Government is helping with. We need to know how to protect agricultural industries while at the same time allowing rural areas to capitalise on other potential assets such as recreational, tourism and cultural values. We must find viable uses for land for which water licences cannot be obtained for purposes other than domestic use.

There are many competing interests in the region of Wanneroo. It is the fastest-growing region of residential development. In the past three to four months, 34 per cent of Perth's new housing approvals have been within the City of Wanneroo, which is astounding. There are also plans for tourist and recreational developments in the area. Those areas need serious work. The Wanneroo electorate has a long history of diverse pressures being placed on land and water supplies. Residents have ongoing problems. I have seen at first hand the conflicting advice that has been given to residents by various agencies in the past, which I have found astounding. That frustration is enormous and totally unnecessary; it must stop.

The future of the region requires a long-term, integrated strategy for land and resource use. Residents and businesses alike are frustrated by the lack of that kind of strategy and the certainty it would bring. To mitigate some of this frustration, I have been able, with the cooperation of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the Minister for Agriculture, the Water and Rivers Commission and the Water Corporation, to organise for relevant departmental officers to work with representatives of the City of Wanneroo with a view to forming a more definitive policy for the east Wanneroo precinct. That bodes well for the future. It is certainly time to draw a line in the sand that more clearly defines rural and special rural land uses, urban areas in which redevelopment and subdivision can occur, where value adding can be achieved through the promotion of tourism, and the location of water supplies. All people want in their lives is certainty. It is time to deliver that certainty so that we can all move on.

We need to keep what is precious to the area and valuable assets of the State - the agricultural and horticultural industries. Part of this hinges on the water supply problem faced by the region and the State, and the drought response. The total inflow to the integrated water supply scheme storage dams in the winter of 2001 was just 30 gegalitres. That was 18 per cent of the average of the past 25 years and only nine per cent of the long-term average. Ground water levels also remain low due to reduced recharge in many areas. The low level of run-off has created an unprecedented water supply situation, despite the \$523 million accelerated source development program, which has boosted supply capacity by 76 per cent during a period in which demand has increased only marginally. Unfortunately, long-term climate forecasts by the Indian Ocean climate initiative indicate a continuation of the current dry sequence rainfall for the foreseeable future. I believe this has been factored into the Water Corporation's accelerated source development program. Cabinet recently announced the development of three new Yarragadee aquifer bores to provide an additional 15 gegalitres of water. Discussions about and a review of the need to develop a 30-gegalitre contingency source are continuing. The impact on the Water Corporation's pumping strategy will also be evaluated. Luckily, the Water Corporation pays close attention to the bores in the Gngangara mound, and I am regularly assured that a certain number are turned off so that agriculturalists in my electorate are protected and are able to maintain their businesses. Some initiatives have been undertaken, such as the recycling of grey water and a commitment by Kwinana industries to reuse wastewater. There is a capacity for this welcome initiative to expand. Other measures are in place in terms of water trading. There is divided opinion in my electorate on how successful that has been.

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: Divided?

Ms D.J. GUISE: There is diverse opinion perhaps. That initiative was designed to allow the water industry to respond to changing conditions and enable the reallocation of water in fully allocated areas and the migration of

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water to uses of higher economic value. Efficient use of water is also encouraged. I am keeping an eye on that situation.

Land use management is incredibly important to my electorate. I refer particularly to the Swan plantation. The Forest Products Commission has overall responsibility for the management of pine resources on the Gngangara mound. The plantation covers 22 000 hectares, which is a considerable area. The volume of the stand is approximately 3.3 million cubic metres. It is a substantial plantation. I am referring to not only Gngangara, but also the Yanchep and Pinjar plantations. I earlier referred to the Wesbeam Pty Ltd agreement that has been signed. This project will support the clearing of the Gngangara mound, which will increase the recharge of ground water by about 36 gegalitres a year. That is welcome news. I am sure that some market gardeners in my electorate have grins a mile wide following the news that work will start on those plantations. That work follows on from work done by the previous Government.

Agreed initiatives must be put in place that reflect the effective integration of land use planning and water resource management systems in rural areas. There must be long-term sustainable development of horticultural industries and other productive uses of rural areas to support the local economy and community. The Government's state planning strategy is to protect prime agricultural land and intensive agricultural infrastructure from incompatible development and to ensure that the main market garden areas, such as those in Wanneroo and Carabooda, are identified and protected.

There are many other examples in my electorate of how the Government is continuing to work on its program of reform and which reflect the Government's goals of sustainable economic development, community building and environmental protection. I have indicated that jobs are a high priority for the electorate of Wanneroo, as they are across the State.

There is a need to ensure that our health system is alive and well and functioning to service the community. One of the challenges in the northern suburbs is to keep abreast of aged care. We have an aging population. People often find it difficult to find aged care accommodation close to their families in the northern suburbs. I hope that we will all work to redress that situation.

The other issue for people in the northern suburbs is access to general practice services. It is an ongoing problem. Certainly in Two Rocks it has been of concern for some time, although it has been addressed recently. Basically a problem exists for people who live anywhere north of Burns Beach Road. Given the number of people who require access to services in that area, it is an unacceptable situation. I encourage all members to support any initiative that is implemented to improve those services.

In any area of growth, we are faced with the continuing challenge of providing educational services. The Brighton development will create increasing challenges. At one stage it was planned to use shops to accommodate schooling. However, we are reviewing that plan. The developer has assured me that it is very difficult to keep up with demand. I am yet to find out where all the people in that development are coming from. We must implement some way of accommodating the children of families moving in, which are predominantly young families, and at the same time support our existing schools and acknowledge the wonderful job they are doing to educate our children.

I am very pleased that the Government has announced that the Wanneroo Police Station will be rebuilt and will properly accommodate an area of growth.

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: Location will be the interesting question.

Ms D.J. GUISE: Yes, the location is to be resolved. I am assured by the local coppers that the existing site is perhaps less than satisfactory, so we must have discussion about that and ensure it is close to town and able to service the communities appropriately. It must be able to support the other stations also, particularly Clarkson, which has continuing pressures due to the sheer population growth in that area. That is something of which we must be mindful.

As many other members have indicated, a number of people who work in our communities do astounding jobs; whether they are volunteers through agencies etc, they are people who glue together our communities. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity of acknowledging and thanking them for the wonderful work they do.

A number of Bills will be introduced into the Parliament, one of which is the Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Bill, which many members have mentioned. Legislation to protect community groups who work very hard is essential. Other legislation to be introduced includes the Environmental Protection Amendment Bill, the Economic Regulation Authority Bill, the Cannabis Control Bill, the Nurses Amendment Bill, the Adoption Amendment Bill, and the Prostitution Control Bill, some of which will be controversial in the minds of some. We in this place can run, but we cannot hide. We have an obligation and responsibility to address all the matters

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that impact on our community. We may not always agree but one thing I have learnt in my first 18 months is that there is a measure of cooperation in this place. That is how our democracy works.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve my electorate. I thank other members for their patience and forbearance while I have undertaken the role of Deputy Speaker, particularly as someone appointed from outside Parliament. I understand it was a first. It was a steep learning curve and members have all been very understanding while I tackled that role. I would be remiss if I forgot to acknowledge the work of the Clerk and Deputy Clerks because they have played a substantial role in assisting me in that job.

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: Given, as you acknowledge, you came in as a new member, you have done it particularly well.

Ms D.J. GUISE: Thank you, member for Kingsley. I understand I was the first woman to hold the position. I was also surprised to learn I was the first to take it on who had never been in Parliament before. I do not think that I needed to know that extra information, although it added to the challenge. I am aware that other members want to speak. I wanted to acknowledge that and say that we are all working in our own way to ensure that Western Australia becomes a better place for all of us to live in. Having just returned from overseas I appreciate more what a wonderful place it is. There is nothing better than stepping off an aeroplane and appreciating the wonderful feeling of being at home. I hope we all continue to cooperate and work towards making Western Australia the place we want it to be.

MRS C.L. EDWARDES (Kingsley) [12.56 pm]: I refer first to the attack on the community by this Government in its endeavours to raise money in every conceivable way. This week and last week the community has been debating the increases in water charges. However, the efforts by the Government involve far more than just increases to water charges. Increases over the past 18 months are documented in the budget process. However, in addition, the regulations reveal increases in fees and licences, albeit minor increases. In percentage terms some of the figures are nonetheless significant. Although I do not propose on this occasion to discuss them in detail, I highlight the fact that charges and fees have increased. As I said, we are now being softened up to pay more for water.

One issue in the previous budget that caused some controversy was the increase in stamp duty on property sales. The failed property tax of last year still concerns members in the community in case it is revisited under another name. If history is a guide, property owners could face a new tax for not only buying but also selling their homes. At present only purchasers pay a tax in the form of stamp duty, which has been increased. However, I read in a July edition of *The Evening Standard* a radical new proposal being discussed in England to tax property owners when they sell their homes as well as when they buy them. The rate of tax would rise every year the seller lived in the property, in a twist aimed at encouraging people to move more often.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Are you foreshadowing Liberal policy development here?

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: Not at all. I am foreshadowing that this could be the property tax that this Labor Government introduces under another name. A sellers tax by the Labor Government could partially replace stamp duty, which is paid by home buyers at up to four per cent of the value of the property.

The aim of the proposal is to encourage flexibility in the housing market and to free up more homes. The authorities in England want people to move. They do not want people to sit in their homes for a long time. The idea is to counter the charge that home owners would be penalised. In other words, the stamp duty for purchasers would be reduced while it would be increased for sellers on the basis that the whole package would be cost neutral. It is a fantastic spin. Backers of the proposal claim that the stamp duty acts as a halt on the property market by giving growing families an incentive to stay put and build an extension rather than move. People might like to do that. At present people pay stamp duty when they purchase a house. That creates rigidity and inhibits its efficiency, because people try not to move home to avoid paying stamp duty. People think that if they move now they will pay less stamp duty than they would in five years. That is a great philosophy in the endeavour to sell a sellers tax! Given that this is being considered by the Blair Labour Government in England, I am wondering whether the Gallop Labor Government is likely to be thinking of it for Western Australia.

Mr A.J. Dean: It's a long bow.

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: I want to draw to the Treasurer's attention that it will not be acceptable to the community. The people of Western Australia will not accept this. If the Treasurer is proposing to introduce the property tax under another name, such as a "sellers tax", I am putting on record that it will not be sold in Western Australia and the Liberal Party is onto members opposite. The Australian Labor Party follows very closely what occurs in England under Tony Blair. We know that regular contact occurs between the two

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Governments so we are saying now, right up-front, that a sellers tax in Western Australia will not be acceptable to the people of Western Australia. A review has been undertaken regarding collections.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 211.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm