

Mr Jeremy Edwards; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Norm Marlborough; Mr Paul Omodei; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Arthur Marshall; Dr Janet Woollard; Acting Speaker; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Mark McGowan

FREMANTLE AND METROPOLITAN CEMETERIES BOARDS, AMALGAMATION

Motion

MR J.P.D. EDWARDS (Greenough) [4.06 pm]: I move -

That the Gallop Government be condemned for the forced amalgamation of the Fremantle Cemetery Board and the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board.

Questions need to be asked: why is the Government amalgamating the Fremantle Cemetery Board and the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board; for whose economic benefit and advantage is this to be done; and is there another agenda behind this move that has not been publicly aired?

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: I thought you said another gender.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I have always prided myself on being reasonably understandable; maybe it is not so some days.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You speak extremely good English.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I thank the member.

The Fremantle Cemetery land was vested in the City of Fremantle in 1899, which makes the cemetery 104 years old. It is currently owned by the people of Fremantle. However, it reverted from being owned by the local authority to the Fremantle Cemetery Board, which is a statutory authority, when it was established on 1 January 1989 following the 1987 cemetery working party review. This establishment also resulted from representations to the Government of the day by the councils involved in the review at the time - namely, the Cities of Fremantle and Melville and the Town of East Fremantle - which wanted a locally based cemetery. The Fremantle Cemetery Board has statutory responsibility to provide burial and cremation facilities at the cemetery. Currently, the board employs 26 or 30 staff, and the cemetery comprises between 46 and 47 hectares of land bounded by Carrington Street, Leach Highway, Stock Road and Sainsbury Road. The cemetery has sufficient unused land to meet expected demand for some 50 years. If cemeteries can be called attractive, it is a most attractive piece of land for those who wish to bury their loved ones there.

The Fremantle Cemetery Board has very much responded to the local community through its operation, the state of the cemetery and how it has used its income to provide amenities to the public and improve the maintenance of the grounds accordingly. It has provided a modern, award-winning crematorium and improved public facilities, such as tearooms, condolence rooms and improved toilets. It has also met the demands of the ethnic communities in the southern metropolitan area. I believe that in October 2002 the board decided to proceed with the construction of a 400-crypt mausoleum. The Fremantle Cemetery Board considers that there is ample evidence of its commitment to deliver a cemetery and a management service that is flexible, efficient and effective, meets the demands of today's world and is very much committed to the needs of its local community. As the member for Peel came into the Chamber he reminded me that his wife is a member of the board. It would be interesting to know her views on the proposed amalgamation for 1 July this year.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: I know her views. She has been wanting to bury me for a long time!

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I understand Mrs Marlborough is not happy with the decision and has made the point very clearly to people who should be listening. I have no doubt that the member for Peel is one of them. I understand that the member for Peel also has made his point clear on this matter, as only he can.

In March 2001 the Government established the Machinery of Government Taskforce to assess and advise on necessary reforms across government activities. It concluded in its report of 21 June 2001 that the number of statutory authorities in the State was excessive. The task force noted that such authorities are inflexible, cumbersome and unresponsive to changing administrative needs, and that their greater independence from government can also compromise appropriate accountability. However, not all statutory authorities should be put in the same boat. I suggest that to abolish the Fremantle Cemetery Board would be a matter of throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

I think I have explained some of the background to the Fremantle Cemetery Board. It has a very strong local commitment; it is run very economically and managed well; and it had a foreseeable future for some years. The question must be asked why Minister Stephens thinks that amalgamation with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board is of economic benefit and what advantages an amalgamation will bring to the Fremantle community. I

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am also aware that at the time the Fremantle Cemetery Board was established, the member for Fremantle and Attorney General was very supportive of it. I believe that the Premier and the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, Hon Tom Stephens, have made statements that fly in the face of Hon Tom Stephens' proposal. I understand that the Premier said on 20 November 2001 that the more proactive we are as citizens, the stronger we make our democracy. He said that the Government had established a citizens and civics unit, the focus of which is on participation in and input to public life and decision making, and that democracy needs public input and constant dialogue between citizens and government. They are all noble words. The Minister for Local Government and Regional Development followed that up with the statement -

As well, we will strive to devolve decision making and service delivery to a regional and local level as we work to build capacity for good governance and leadership in community development.

That is dated 19 October 2001 and can be found on the minister's web site. Those brave words now seem to have a hollow ring to them, because obviously the local community is not being given the capacity for such democratic good governance and leadership as the Premier and Minister Stephens espoused at that time.

The board is charged with making all decisions that are necessary for the good running of a cemetery board. To that end, when the review was conducted, the board responded with a detailed submission. The submission drew attention to the benefits of the board continuing as a statutory authority. It said that it would be more efficient to make policy decisions at the cemetery rather than in a central city office location or elsewhere, and it would be better to have the decision makers in constant touch with what is happening in the local area so that they are aware of the implications of policy decisions and are subject to more immediate public accountability. As the submission rightly points out, this sense of immediacy would be lost in a public service department. As I understand it, the merger of the two boards will come under the auspices of the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. The submission said also that any income generated and moneys brought in by the business of the cemetery could be easily absorbed into a larger departmental budget or could well be returned to Treasury and not back to the local authority or statutory authority. In other words, the money would go out of the local area. The submission said also that the board makes 90 per cent of its purchases locally, and its economic support for the Fremantle region amounts to approximately \$1.5 million per annum. It is difficult to believe that this would continue if the management and administration of the board were elsewhere.

The Fremantle Cemetery Board is efficient and very well managed. It knows how to save money and use its assets well. As someone has said at another time, this amalgamation is basically a blatant cash and land grab. The Government is creating a monopoly, and by creating a monopoly it is also eliminating competition. I venture to say that competition is a good thing in any business, whether it be a cemetery or any other business. The other point that needs to be made is that the Fremantle Cemetery Board has never received any government funding. I think I am correct in saying that it probably received £100 in 1889 when it first started. However, since then it has been totally self-funded. The board has always made a profit of between \$180 000 and \$200 000 a year. The minister is projecting savings of some \$600 000 a year. I have to question whether those savings are correct and whether they are worthwhile, considering that the savings would probably amount to only \$200 000, which would make up the salaries of the chief executive officer, the executive secretary and the board members. Naturally enough, the staff would not be included in that cost. The cost of restructuring and establishing the new board would involve increased membership; therefore, that must surely be taken into account. The people of Fremantle are being done a disservice. Many of them would choose to have their loved ones either buried or cremated at the cemetery for family, cultural, sentimental and financial reasons. They will be the big losers in this exercise.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Why is that? I want to answer the member for Greenough. Why will they be the losers?

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I am taking a local point of view. As a local cemetery, it has a community background in the area. I believe that from a moral point of view, the community will be the losers regardless of whether it is financial or otherwise. My colleagues in the other place Hon Simon O'Brien and Hon Barbara Scott made some comments on this matter. They support the arguments I am putting forward. Hon Simon O'Brien said that the reasons given by Hon Tom Stephens for this action do not make any sort of case, let alone a case compelling enough to override the wishes and interests of the region. Constituents of that area have asked where is the benefit. They do not believe it is clear who will benefit from this but they are pretty clear about who will lose. This is an important issue for that community. I have no doubt that if the member for Peel were prepared to get to his feet and espouse his views on the matter, they would be the same as mine. However, far be it from me to put words into the mouth of the member for Peel, which I obviously do not need to do anyway.

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As I said earlier, the cemetery is bounded by Leach Highway, Carrington Street and Stock Road and the land area is some 47 hectares. I questioned who might benefit from the Government's proposal. It has not been mentioned, but I believe it should be aired, that the land abounding the eastern side of the cemetery is currently leased to South West Transit Pty Ltd, or Southern Transport Services Pty Ltd and Vinidex Pty Ltd. A couple of years ago Vinidex signed a new lease giving a five-year extension, which will be close to its end. With regard to the traffic flow from Stock Road to Leach Highway, it is necessary for trucks coming down the hill to the intersection to turn left and crawl down the gears before going up the hill. It has been suggested that the traffic congestion could be eased by building a road from Stock Road to Leach Highway. There are moves afoot to widen Leach Highway. Those proposals have been discussed in this place at another time. The Government might consider there are some advantages in controlling the cemetery through amalgamating and then building a road from Stock Road to Leach Highway across the top of the hill.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Thank you for bringing that to our attention; I was not aware of that.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I am sure the minister is far too shrewd not to know about that issue. I have no doubt that it has crossed the minister's mind. However, for what it is worth, I believe that question must be answered. That proposal has been raised with me, which is why I raise it.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: You have been given incorrect information.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: That may be so, but I am only raising it as an issue, and I believe it is an issue.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: Presently, Stock Road runs at a major crossroad to Leach Highway.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I am aware of that. That is the point I am making. If a road ran from south of the intersection of Stock Road through the corner of the cemetery across to Leach Highway, it would ease the traffic congestion with the trucks turning left at the bottom of the intersection.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: I can see the press release: Liberals support road through new cemetery.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: That suggestion might not be the case, but I have put that forward. I would be interested to hear the minister's denial of that. I will come back at another time and say I told her so when it happens. I remind members that the Cemeteries Act 1986 recognises the value of establishing statutory authorities to undertake the specialised responsibilities of providing and managing cemetery facilities. The operation of the Fremantle Cemetery Board has proved exemplary during this period. Since its creation in 1989, the board has built up a strong rapport with communities south of the river, established a record in responding to those changed public attitudes and developed a reputation as a very efficient management agency. It begs the question why the board must be amalgamated with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board for the sake of such a paltry sum of money. The Fremantle Cemetery Board is particularly proud of its role. Since the new Government came to power the board has comprised new members, who have tailored the board to the needs of the community and devoted considerable time and effort to maintaining that role. The general community expects a certain level of expertise in the disposal of their loved ones. Although the State Government correctly provides a statutory framework to respond to that expectation, it is essential that the needs of local communities be met in a caring and sensitive manner; the Fremantle Cemetery Board no doubt does that.

The board is strongly of the view that the management of a cemetery facility is a function that cannot be properly performed by a public service department and that it should continue to be undertaken by the board as a statutory authority with input from the local community. I remind the House again that amalgamation will take away competition for cemetery services in Perth. I suggest to the Government that the future development of the city and the metropolitan area means the need for cemetery services will continue to grow as time goes by. Cemetery land is in short supply, particularly north of the river in the Karrakatta area. It may be that there should be two cemetery boards and that the Swan River should be the dividing line. The Fremantle Cemetery Board could take control of all cemeteries south of the river, and the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board could take control of all cemeteries north of the river, such as the Guildford Cemetery, Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park and - I am searching for another one north of the river.

Mr J.H.D. Day: Midland Cemetery.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: Midland is the other one I was thinking of - I thank the member for Darling Range.

Effectively there could be a compromise without the need to amalgamate the two boards, which could be to the detriment of the people and localities in Fremantle. It should be assessed by the minister before he goes down the path of review. Interestingly enough, when the review was done, the Fremantle Cemetery Board made a good enough argument for the Machinery of Government Taskforce to agree that it did not need to be amalgamated with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. It is interesting that 18 months later, the minister has

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come up with a different answer for other reasons that do not add up when it comes to a financial benefit, particularly to the people of Fremantle.

I will leave the question about the road issue; that may be an issue that the Government is keeping up its sleeve for later. I support my colleague in the upper House in the call for a parliamentary inquiry on the future of the Fremantle Cemetery. It is a sensible suggestion and would give the minister the opportunity to respond to some of the questions about why the Government is going down this particular road.

MS A.J. MacTIERNAN (Armadale - Minister for Planning and Infrastructure) [4.32 pm]: I rise to respond on behalf of the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, Hon Tom Stephens. It is fair to say that the Fremantle Cemetery Board would prefer to continue to operate; its board members have expressed strong feelings of sentiment and would prefer to continue to run a separate operation. It is also fair to say that Hon Tom Stephens did not necessarily feel that this was perhaps the biggest issue in his portfolio and that there were arguments either way. He has given some thought to this issue but, at the end of the day, government came to the decision that the best outcome would be to amalgamate the boards. These are always questions of judgment but that is not to say that there are no arguments against amalgamation. When government considered the arguments for and against amalgamation, the decision was made to proceed with the process.

It is the intention that at least two members of the Fremantle Cemetery Board be invited to go on the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. We are keen to have that local input and institutional memory incorporated into the ongoing board structure. I also urge the member not to think of this just as a local Fremantle issue because the Fremantle Cemetery does not cater for just Fremantle people. The way the member has addressed this matter would suggest that it does. The Fremantle Cemetery provides for many people across the metropolitan area and not just for those south of the river. For a range of historic and family reasons people often choose to -

Mr R.C. Kucera: My parents are buried there.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Okay. Where did they live?

Mr R.C. Kucera: They lived in the Fremantle area.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: However, people are buried in that cemetery who come from a range of areas. For those living in Gosnells and Armadale, the Fremantle Cemetery is generally speaking but not exclusively the cemetery of choice. I would be very surprised if people in my community were aware that there was a Fremantle Cemetery Board. I would also be surprised if many people in Fremantle knew that the Fremantle Cemetery Board existed. They are probably quite blissfully unaware of the particular administrative arrangements that are in place to manage the cemeteries of the State. I do not think we should get too overwrought about the argument of the local community in relation to this issue.

The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board was created in 1986 after we conducted a review of cemeteries and introduced a new Cemeteries Act. The previous Act dated from 1897. The new Act did a range of things, including bringing most of the cemeteries in the metropolitan area under the one board. After some lobbying from people in the Fremantle region, the Fremantle Cemetery remained under the administration of a separate board.

In the meantime, the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has undertaken a wide range of tasks, including developing and achieving operating self-sufficiency at the new Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park; dealing with the East Rockingham Cemetery while a new memorial park is developed; developing from scratch the Rockingham Regional Memorial Park, which is scheduled to open in 2007; and accepting responsibility for and improving the underdeveloped Guildford and Midland Cemeteries. There is not a separate cemetery board for Guildford or Midland Cemeteries. In that case, why is it necessary that the Fremantle Cemetery have a separate board? I do not discern any sense of grievance among the Midland and Guildford communities because their cemeteries do not have a separate cemetery board. Similarly, there is not a separate Pinnaroo cemetery board, and there does not seem to be an outpouring of grief by community members about their lack of ability to serve on a local cemetery board.

The Cemeteries Board has also acquired three parcels of additional land to prolong the life of Guildford Cemetery; undertaken Australia's most advanced plan for cemetery renewal at Karrakatta Cemetery, which will ensure land availability at and the continued operation of Perth's major and central cemetery; committed hundreds of hours to the search for new cemetery land - it will bring them out to Armadale soon; and become the first cemeteries board in Australia to introduce virtual memorials and funeral service web casting.

Mr M.F. Board: Did you say virtual memorials?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: It is probably cheaper.

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Mr M.F. Board: I suppose if they are digitalised, they cannot be vandalised.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: That is right. Virtual memorials would create great opportunities for ghosting! The Cemeteries Board has assisted cemeteries throughout the State. That is what a combined Cemeteries Board has been able to achieve. The amalgamation of those resources and the development of a professional capacity has enabled a much more professional and progressive approach to the management of cemeteries throughout Perth.

The Functional Review Taskforce provided a number of reasons for the amalgamation, and I will share these with the member. The amalgamation has the potential to reduce the debt levels of the Fremantle Cemetery Board and the levels of borrowing from government for capital works. The Fremantle Cemetery Board has an outstanding loan of some \$2 million, and it has applied for a further \$4 million loan to construct a new mausoleum. The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has considerable reserves that could fund the mausoleum and reduce the debt of the Fremantle Cemetery.

Mr P.D. Omodei: What level of reserves does it have?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I have been advised that the reserves amount to \$11 million.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Will that money not be required by the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board for the future development of cemeteries?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: Fremantle can be part of that future development.

The revenue and asset base of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board is approximately three times that of the Fremantle Cemetery Board. The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has a more sophisticated level of management support than the Fremantle board. Cost savings can be achieved from greater economies of scale, rationalisation of office technology and reduced staff. The integration would provide for more efficient planning and project management across all metropolitan cemeteries. Savings could be achieved through a reduction in the total number of board members and reduced reporting costs. Improved services could be delivered by extending to the Fremantle cemetery the greater range of services and choice of memorial products available to the MCB. They could then have their virtual memorials. A reduction in red tape would be achieved by no longer requiring funeral directors and monumental masons to obtain licences from both. A range of possible savings led to the Functional Review Taskforce recommending in favour of the amalgamation.

Other factors outlined by the task force include benefits for Fremantle from the introduction of a state-of-the-art cemetery record system that will benefit both cemetery clients and genealogical researchers. Web casting and virtual memorial options are also mentioned, as well as bringing expertise to the construction of the proposed mausoleum at Fremantle. The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board is probably the most experienced builder of mausoleums, even more so than some shopping centre developers. There will be more sophisticated human resource, financial and infrastructure management and efficiencies, and broadened roles and development opportunities for staff. Respect will be paid to the local character and identity of the Fremantle cemetery and the MCB will, as in all other locations, work in close liaison with local government and community organisations to ensure that local needs - which must be interpreted very broadly in relation to Fremantle cemetery - are met, while providing consistently high standards of customer services. Local staff will remain involved to provide caring and sensitive service to the public. It is the view of the Government that the inclusion of the Fremantle cemetery with the Pinnaroo, Midland and Guildford cemeteries is necessary in recognition of the need to provide equitable, accessible and consistent cemetery services to the metropolitan area.

The member talked about some land on the east side of the cemetery. I know what it is like in opposition - the job description is to be critical and to always presume the worst about the Government. It is an unfortunate job description, but sometimes these things reach a very fanciful level.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: You did the same thing.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: Yes, I agree. I assure the member 100 per cent that there has been absolutely no consideration of ploughing a road through the land of the dead. This is the first I have heard of this proposition. May *Hansard* record that I had my hand on my heart. Is that where the heart is? Did anyone do biology?

Mr A.D. Marshall interjected.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: That is because it is so large - the size of Phar Lap's heart.

Mr M.F. Board: You have mentioned the widening of High Street.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: That is true. We do not have specific plans, but we acknowledge that the widening of High Street is a possibility, but that is not over the land that the member mentioned.

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Mr M.F. Board: It is the next corner.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: Yes. This decision has not been made in the context of its offering any opportunity for road development.

Mr M.F. Board: You should be aware that both the public and private golf course representatives in Fremantle have written to us, and probably to you, about losing land on the widening of High Street. I assumed that what the Fremantle Cemetery Board is concerned about is that its land may also be an issue because it is on the very next corner.

Mr J.P.D. Edwards: I assure the minister that that is not something that came out of my head, but it has been put to me by other people.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I understand that the nature of our politics is such that people are always extraordinarily suspicious of anything that Governments do. However, I can assure members that this decision was made in absolute isolation of any consideration about roads. It was never an issue that informed the debate about the amalgamation of the cemetery boards. Is the member for Greenough the spokesperson on cemeteries?

Mr J.P.D. Edwards: I am the spokesman for local government.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: The big issue is not the amalgamation of these two boards. The big issue is the availability of land for cemeteries and how we are to provide into the future. The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has obviously been confronted with much of its landholding or its prospective landholding being subject to Bush Forever and there being some difficulty in coming to negotiated solutions for that land. In my electorate, a cemetery of some type is desperately needed, but it is very hard to find suitable land. Because of the very low watertable, much of the land on the plain is unsuitable and in the hills the land is very rocky and claylike and also unsuitable. A few small pockets of land which might be of the right geological type are not readily accessible. We are grappling with how we will plan into the future for proper cemetery facilities.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Is that the Government? I thought the cemetery boards would be looking for the land.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: The cemetery boards are agents of the Government. Because we are the Government, we do not tell the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board that it cannot find land; it is its problem, not ours. Its problems are our problems and the community's problems.

Mr P.D. Omodei: You are helping the cemetery boards by closing them down.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: We are not closing down the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board; we are expanding it to bring to Fremantle the same level of expertise and the breadth of service that is available throughout the rest of the metropolitan area. I do understand. The member has quite rightly pointed out that people who have traditionally been associated with the Fremantle Cemetery Board would prefer this not to be the case, but there is no difference in principle between Fremantle, Guildford, Midland and Pinnaroo. We believe that on balance the best organisation, service delivery and financial outcome for the community can be achieved through this amalgamation. I repeat that it is the intention of the minister to ensure that a number of personnel from the Fremantle Cemetery Board are invited to continue their service with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board.

MR N.R. MARLBOROUGH (Peel - Parliamentary Secretary) [4.51 pm]: I will speak briefly on the proposed amalgamation of the Fremantle Cemetery Board and the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. Anyone who thinks seriously about cemeteries will recognise a few key elements. First, the truism about cemeteries is that they are the place where we all become equal. It does not matter what position we hold in life, when we get to a cemetery at the end of our lives we are all equal. The other thing that members on both sides of politics realise about cemeteries is that not only are they the holders of our history, but also they are the holders of our personal history. They hold our nearest and dearest. Just as we would care in the best way we could for members of our family if they were alive, we want to care for them when they are dead. It has been stated by the member for Greenough that my wife, Roslyn, is a very recent appointment to the board.

Mr P.D. Omodei: What does she think about this?

Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH: I will come to that. Ros has a great family history with Fremantle Cemetery. Her grandfather, Harry Gray, was a member of the upper House of this Parliament from 1923 to 1952 representing West Province. Both her grandparents, Harry and Fanny, are in Fremantle Cemetery. In more recent years, she has lost her parents, Frances and Bill Shea and brothers-in-law Barrie and Ben. Many members know that Frances Shea, Ros's mother, worked with John Curtin for many years. She played a unique role in the political history of this nation. If members are interested in the role of Frances in politics and her relationship with John Curtin, they need go no further than Curtin University. Much of the memorabilia at Curtin University was

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donated by Frances Shea. Some members who have been in politics long enough may recall that 20 years ago or thereabouts Mike Willesee presented a three-part program on the one-hundredth anniversary of John Curtin's birth. The star of the three-part series was Frances Shea. When Willesee's production group visited Elsie, John Curtin's daughter, Elsie told them that there was no point talking to her because she was only a young child when her father was Prime Minister of Australia during the war. She said the person they should talk to was Frances Shea, who worked on all John Curtin's campaigns and with him for many years. Ros's commitment to Fremantle Cemetery has been one of a daughter caring for her immediate family. The Shea family is very close. The family are all fiercely independent, but very loyal to each other. They regularly visit the cemetery. My wife goes to the cemetery twice a week to care for her parents' graves. She goes with Gwen, Doreen or Janice and, on the odd occasion, with Sid, Alan or George. Anyone who knew anything about old Bill Shea, who was the sergeant of police in Fremantle for 30 years, would recall that apart from his policing he was known as a great gardener. If a person went to see Bill and Francis Shea's graves in Fremantle Cemetery he would see a magnificent garden with natural flowers growing around the grave. On a more personal level, since arriving in Australia in 1963 I have lost a father and my youngest brother Kevin. They are also at Fremantle Cemetery.

Cemeteries are all about our immediate history and the distant history of families. Since being with Ros, I have always viewed the cemetery as an extension of my day-to-day life. I want to make sure that that cemetery is well looked after and appropriately maintained, and that it enjoys the proper respect it should be given. Ros Marlborough, who was appointed to the board, has lived in Fremantle all her life, as have many of the other board members. Don Whittington was a member of the Fremantle City Council with me. A number of other board members have a long history with the area, and Fremantle has a uniqueness that people want to hang onto if they can. People want to hang onto the Fremantle Cemetery Board because of their concern for its history, and they want to ensure that the care of their loved ones is retained and enhanced. That is what they want to secure, as well as making sure that anybody who has to leave his or her job should be properly looked after. They are going through that process at the moment. I have known the chief executive officer, Brian Adams, since 1980 when I first got involved with the Fremantle Sailing Club as a Fremantle city councillor. The Fremantle Sailing Club had some problems with the design of and community access to the beach surrounding the sailing club as it was then. Brian Adams subsequently went on to become chief executive officer of the sailing club. As CEO of Fremantle Cemetery he has done an excellent job, as have all of his staff, in particular Rod Walker who has the grounds in immaculate condition. This amalgamation has nothing to do with the views expressed by anybody in government - but as a result of the Functional Review Taskforce a decision had to be made about how best to manage the cemetery.

A meeting was held at the board this morning, attended by the minister and the board members. I think it will be on the news tonight that a new heritage trail is being put in place, officially opened by the minister today. I was invited but was unable to attend because I had to attend a meeting. I would like to have attended. The Fremantle Cemetery Board had the opportunity to meet with Peter MacLean, the chief executive officer of the Metropolitan Cemetery Board. Ros is delighted that she has met Peter MacLean. She is convinced that he has a clear understanding of the needs of the Fremantle Cemetery, its heritage, history and the need to continue to improve the cemetery. She was concerned that Fremantle's heritage and history would be buried by some large conglomerate that looked after Karrakatta and that it would not understand the personal and historical needs of the people of Fremantle, but her concerns have been allayed following this morning's meeting.

I give another example of a Fremantle person who sits on the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. It is a pity that the member for Dawesville is not here because this name will certainly ring a bell for him. The members for Greenough and Murdoch may not be aware of this person as one of them is from the United Kingdom and the other is from interstate. Ross Bowe is a board member of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board, and it goes without saying that the Bowe family are Fremantle through and through. Ross played football for Fremantle, and was the Under Treasurer of the State for many years. He will help to maintain respect for Fremantle's history. The personal fears about how Fremantle Cemetery will be run following this amalgamation have been allayed as a result of the meetings held this morning.

Members have already heard the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure on behalf of the Minister for Local Government state that the Government intends to create a new board. I understand that under the Act, the board is restricted to comprise seven people. The minister will offer positions on the new board to people presently on the Fremantle Cemetery Board. I assure members that Ros Marlborough will not be one of the people on the central board, as she does not have the time to devote to that role; she has made that clear to the minister.

That is the background. Let us be real about it. A river runs through the centre of Perth and through many suburbs, but a management committee does not run each section of the river. The Swan River Trust looks after the river. Different health organisations throughout the city do not deliver health services -

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Mr R.C. Kucera: It used to be the case.

Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH: - although that was the case in the past. The Police Department manages the entire State. The model itself should not be seen as the problem. A question needs to be considered: will introducing a new model be detrimental to the current situation? The changes arguably are minor and not necessary for the budget saving involved; the amalgamation will save \$300 000 or \$400 000 in any one year. However, I am convinced that the people who care for Karrakatta Cemetery and other cemeteries - no-one argues that they do not care for them properly - will not treat Fremantle Cemetery as any less of an entity than the cemeteries for which they currently have responsibility.

As a parochial Fremantle-ite, I would have no difficulty historically keeping the current board structure. However, those changes have been made. I am happy that respect for the history of Fremantle and many of the aspects of the cemetery will be retained. I give an example, and I did not realise this difference existed between Karrakatta and Fremantle Cemeteries: when someone is cremated at Karrakatta, one has to pay \$85, after paying for the crematorium, to get the urn. Nothing is paid at Fremantle Cemetery to get the urn following a cremation. As a result of this morning's meeting, that practice will continue at Fremantle. Such practices that are special to Fremantle - those that the board was worried may be changed - will continue at Fremantle Cemetery.

It is true, as the member for Greenough stated, that the Fremantle Cemetery Board has had landholding opportunities for many years that were not available to the Karrakatta Cemetery. Karrakatta has had to acquire its lands for many years, which placed an in-built cost on funerals taking place under its jurisdiction. As the member for Greenough rightly stated, the Fremantle Cemetery Board not only owns the land on which it is situated but also leases a large parcel of it to existing businesses and derives an income from them. It is land that the board did not consider would be required by the board for 50 or 60 years. Unlike the Karrakatta Cemeteries Board, which does not have an opportunity to make money from land abutting its boundaries, Fremantle has had that opportunity. That will not change. There will not be a rush to tell tenants who hold five and 10-year leases that they must move and that the land will be required suddenly. Efforts are being made to establish a new metropolitan cemetery in Millar Road in my electorate. It was on the books when the Opposition was in government.

An Opposition member: Why?

Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH: In the Rockingham-Kwinana area there is massive growth. I have the second largest seat in the metropolitan area, with 36 000 voters. I think Wanneroo has the highest at 39 000.

An Opposition member: Forty-four thousand.

Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH: Yes. It is a rapidly growing area that needs to be serviced. Planning involves consideration of not only transport routes but also facilities such as cemeteries. It is imperative that a cemetery in Millar Road is ready for use in the next two or three years. The board that has taken over the responsibility of Fremantle cemetery has been planning and working on Millar Road with the Rockingham City Council.

I thank all the people who have been involved in the more recent management of the Fremantle Cemetery, particularly the chief executive officer, Brian Adams, and all the recent board members. I am confident that under Peter MacLean the Chief Executive Officer and Ross Bowe, Chairman, of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. Fremantle will be well catered for.

Mr M.F. Board: Do you know what will happen to Brian Adams under the proposal?

Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH: I understand that his contract was due to expire at the same time as the amalgamation. However, the government employees will be relocated elsewhere in government. I understand a number of them have been offered new positions in other departments.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: All 26 employees?

Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH: None of them will be sacked. I am aware that those employees are being interviewed for jobs elsewhere. As a caring, considerate board, the Fremantle board wanted to be assured by whichever party was in government that the employees would be looked after properly, the cemetery would retain its sense of history in Fremantle and it would continue to be an important part of our community, just as are hospitals schools and churches. We all end up in a cemetery as equals, and such a place should be properly managed and cared for throughout the year. With this amalgamation, all of those important philosophies will continue.

MR P.D. OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood) [5.08 pm]: Government members who represent Fremantle and the surrounding areas have failed their constituencies badly on this issue. I refer to the member for Willagee, Hon Alan Carpenter; the member for Fremantle, the Attorney General, Hon Jim McGinty; and the member for Peel,

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who has just defended the Government's decision. The state Labor Government has sold out some of the heritage and history of the people of Fremantle and all the people who are resting in that cemetery. It is a day of great shame on which this Government, which established the Fremantle Cemetery Board, is now presiding over its demise. It is a sad day for all of those famous people.

I have had an association with Fremantle Cemetery for many years. I was the Minister for Local Government for eight years and had responsibility for cemeteries. The first public speech that I made was at a national conference of the Australasian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association and was about the rights of people in cremations. I knew absolutely nothing about the subject when I started as the minister, but over the time that I was the minister I grew to respect and admire the people who run the cemeteries and the chairmen and chief executive officers of the Fremantle Cemetery Board and the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. The history of Western Australia resides in those cemeteries. There has always been talk about amalgamation, with the predator of course being the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board is a very well run organisation. All of the historical things like web casting and virtual memorials were put together when I was the Minister for Local Government.

This is a very important issue. For the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to say that very few people in Fremantle know that there is a Fremantle Cemetery Board is wrong. It is a matter of great pride for the people of Fremantle that they have a cemetery that is owned in fee simple and belongs to the people of Fremantle. They have always aspired to create an extension of that cemetery in the south eastern corridor. There are always problems at cemeteries. I could almost write a book about some of the problems that I have seen occur at cemeteries. There is a strong feeling of not just nostalgia but ownership by the people of Fremantle about that facility. While I was the Minister for Local Government, the former Premier, Hon Richard Court, opened extensions to the crematorium, and also the first mausoleum in Western Australia, at Karrakatta Cemetery, and later I opened a similar facility at Fremantle Cemetery. Those were very important occasions and people took great notice of the historic significance of those events. I too have some direct contacts with the Fremantle Cemetery Board. Both my mother-in-law and father-in-law are interred there, along with a brother-in-law, so I have had a long association with the board.

As I said, there has been talk about the possibility of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board taking over all of the large cemeteries in Western Australia. We resisted that when we were in government. There was also talk about the private sector buying cemeteries in Western Australia. At that time Michael Kroger, the President of the Liberal Party, who is well known, particularly in Victoria, was part of an American company that owns cemeteries in other parts of the country and around the world and that came to Western Australia to try to convince the Government to take over cemeteries. Our Government resisted that approach to sell our cemeteries to that private body. If there was a party that would be in the business of amalgamating or selling cemeteries to the private sector, one would think it would be a conservative Government. However, it is this socialist Government that wants to break up an organisation that is very near and dear to the people of Fremantle. I hope the people of Fremantle will find out what the Government is doing in Fremantle and that they will punish the Government at the next election, because this is not necessary. Over time the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has developed Pinnaroo Cemetery, which is a very successful cemetery in the northern suburbs. It also manages the Guildford and Midland cemeteries and offers advice to cemeteries around Western Australia. Not many cemeteries have boards. However, there was a need to have a board for Fremantle Cemetery when it was first set up to help it retain its heritage and history.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.P.D. Edwards): Order! There is an undercurrent of conversation in the Chamber and I am having some difficulty hearing the member for Warren-Blackwood, as I am sure Hansard is also, so would those members who are speaking please either do it outside or cease and be quiet.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: Peter MacLean, the chief executive officer of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board, and his group are very professional, and I am sure they will make every effort to retain the history and heritage of Fremantle Cemetery under the new management structure. However, over time, it will probably be gobbled up. As the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure said, people from all over Western Australia are interred in those cemeteries. A former senator for Western Australia, Hon John Panizza, is buried at Karrakatta Cemetery. A number of Western Australian civic leaders have been interred in those cemeteries. The Government has not given a reason to amalgamate them. It seems as though the Labor Government in Western Australia has succumbed to the temptation to take the 30 pieces of silver and sell off the heritage of Fremantle and the people of Fremantle for a lousy \$600 000. I cannot believe what I am hearing.

If the amalgamation could be resisted under the former Government, it should be resisted under this Government. Although the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board always pitched the argument that one cemetery board should operate the entire metropolitan area, there was another school of thought that the Metropolitan

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Cemeteries Board should operate all cemeteries north of the river and that the Fremantle Cemetery Board should run the cemeteries south of the river, including the new Rockingham cemetery at Stakehill Road that is currently being developed by the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. That is a very good project that has taken a huge amount of landfill off that large hillside. The landfill has been used to build the freeway. The landfill was sold to gain an asset for the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. The reason the debt to equity ratio of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board is so good and so solid is the proceeds from the sale of that asset. It had plans to spend that money to build a mausoleum at either Midland or Guildford. It was allocated to a good purpose.

A sensible compromise would have been for the Government to allow the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board to manage cemeteries in the growing sector of the northern corridor and for the Fremantle Cemetery Board to manage the cemeteries south of the river. That would have meant an active contribution by the State Government through the Department of Land Administration to identify a piece of land in the south eastern corridor, which is a growing area.

I have another connection with the Fremantle Cemetery Board. The chief executive officer, Brian Adams - the member for Peel knows him well - went to school and grew up in downtown Pemberton. He attended the Pemberton District High School. He is a very good friend of my family. I know him well. He is a very professional person. Being the very professional person he is, I am sure that he will comply with the direction of the Government and make sure that the proposal works.

John Curtin, a famous Labor Prime Minister, was from Fremantle. The member for Peel said that his wife's mother was John Curtin's electorate secretary. The Government is throwing that history down the drain for 30 pieces of silver. It is a sad day for the people of Fremantle. That \$600 000 will not improve the finances of this Government. It is a shame that the members who represent that area have allowed the Functional Review Taskforce to override the wishes of Fremantle people. They should be standing in the community defending their rights to ensure that Fremantle people look after the Fremantle Cemetery Board. It would not surprise me if the Government sold some of that freehold land that is currently on long-term lease so that some new land can be bought. What will that do? It will provide a few lousy dollars to the Labor Government in Western Australia to fund a new cemetery site. If the Government were to look for vacant crown land in an appropriate position, it would not cost anything at all. I cannot understand why the Government is proceeding down this line.

The answers to questions asked in the Legislative Council about the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board indicate that the board manages 6 100 funerals a year at five cemetery sites throughout the metropolitan area and maintains 300 hectares of cemetery land. That cemetery land in the metropolitan area is a centrepiece. The way in which the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has recorded the history of cemeteries is absolutely fantastic. I congratulate all the board members for the work they have done. Loam is being removed from the land at the Rockingham Regional Memorial Park for the development of a new landscaped cemetery. The Rockingham cemetery conducts 6 100 funerals a year in contrast with the Fremantle Cemetery Board's management of a much smaller cemetery that conducts approximately 2 700 funerals a year and maintains 46 hectares of land within the Fremantle cemetery reserve. The Fremantle Cemetery Board has a full-time equivalent staff of 26 and the MCB has 73. Obviously, a comparison of those staff numbers indicates that the activities of the Fremantle Cemetery Board stack up very well against those of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board.

More must be done at Fremantle. The technology that will be implemented at the MCB could be replicated at Fremantle. I am concerned that Fremantle will lose its identity. There will be, obviously, some kind of structure, whether it be a computer model or a physical structure with headstones and so on, that will show the history of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and the Fremantle Cemetery Board. However, the identity of Fremantle people will be lost in the takeover by this large conglomerate. I would have thought, from the analysis by the Functional Review Committee of whether efficiencies would be created by the amalgamation, the committee would have wanted to encourage competition. I cannot foresee competition existing in the amalgamation of these two organisations; in fact, it will take it away.

Mr A.J. Dean: That's a dying issue!

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I thought the member for Bunbury was going to say something intelligent.

It appears that the amalgamation will create one monopoly cemetery organisation in Western Australia. I do not believe that is conducive to a reduction in the price of funerals in Western Australia. I cannot believe that the Government is taking such precipitate action that will take away from the people of Fremantle something that they hold near and dear. It is a day of shame. I notice that the Minister for Education and Training has just entered the Chamber.

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Mr A.J. Carpenter: I have been sitting in the back of the Chamber listening to the member for Warren-Blackwood.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: That is good. I am impressed. The minister has always impressed me -

Mr A.J. Carpenter: Thank you.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: - particularly when he makes very kind comments about my performance as a minister in the previous Government. He might have heard me telling the House that I was the minister responsible for cemeteries for eight years and that I grew to have a great appreciation for the work that the people on those boards carried out on behalf of the public right across Western Australia. It is a great shame to see those boards being amalgamated for no great gain. I would like to hear the members who represent the Fremantle area make public comments in defence of the Fremantle Cemetery Board.

MS K. HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [5.23 pm]: I cannot speak on cemeteries boards with the same authority as previous speakers, but I am interested in participating in the debate. I was somewhat heartened by the minister's hand-on-heart address earlier today, particularly about what the Opposition believes is a hidden agenda.

Mr A.J. Dean: It is a buried agenda!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Yes, a buried agenda. The minister certainly had her hand on her heart. In that respect, I will make some comments on this motion. The Opposition will watch the minister with great interest to ensure that she commits to the promise she made in this place today. It is interesting following on from the member for Warren-Blackwood, particularly in the light of his comments about the Functional Review Taskforce. I understand that that task force determined that there should be a merger, which will produce savings in the vicinity of \$600 000. The member for Warren-Blackwood is quite right; local members should be standing up for their community. In the past, the Functional Review Taskforce determined that it would sell a piece of land in my electorate. My local community decided that it was not going to have a bar of that. A steering committee was established and we asked a number of questions in the Estimates Committee. It now appears that that decision will be retracted and that that land will remain vested in the Water Corporation because it is still required.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: There could well be a hidden agenda by the Government to sell the land. However, I do not want to be distracted by the backbench members of the Government.

In researching this issue I ascertained that the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board performs 5 500 funerals per annum with a staff of 73. The Fremantle Cemetery Board conducts 2 700 funerals per annum with a staff of about 26. The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board charges \$1 280 for interments, yet the Fremantle Cemetery Board charges only \$870. That is fairly important, particularly in the light of the comments by the member for Warren-Blackwood. This will create a monopoly and there will be no competition. Comparing those last two figures, people will obviously be driven by what they can get for -

Mr J.L. Bradshaw: You can see where the \$600 000 savings will come from; they will just put up the costs at Fremantle!

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: That is right. The costs at Fremantle Cemetery will be increased. Earlier the member for Peel said that the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board charges \$85 for the collection of ashes, whereas the Fremantle Cemetery Board does not charge that. Mr Acting Speaker (Mr J.P.D. Edwards), you made a number of comments about the 47 hectares and that is bound by Leach Highway, Carrington Street and Stock Road. Given this Government's intent to delete the Fremantle eastern bypass from the metropolitan region scheme, the Opposition is suspicious that there may be some endeavour to put a road through that land because there will be so much more traffic volume on the local roads.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: If the member wants to make an address, he can do it in his time. Let me have my opportunity to speak. I do not interject on too many members in this place.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Yes, exactly. Those members interject to distract me and yes, they do distract me but I will repeat what I just said so they can hear it all over again. The Opposition is concerned about the deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass from the metropolitan region scheme. We know that this Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is hell-bent on doing that regardless of what the community wants and expects a

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good Government to deliver. We are concerned that the Government has a hidden agenda. Yes, I witnessed the “hand on the heart” address by the minister and we will certainly be keeping watch on the minister to ensure that she honours the commitment she made in this place today.

MR A.D. MARSHALL (Dawesville) [5.28 pm]: I too believe that the Gallop Government should be condemned for the forced amalgamation of the Fremantle Cemetery Board with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. I speak as a person who bleeds blue and white blood. I am a three generation Fremantle person. My family - my grandparents, children and grandchildren - all live in the Fremantle area. People who come from Fremantle are very, very special. The reason I stand here as the member for Dawesville is that 20 per cent of the people who live in Mandurah are retired Fremantle people. I tell the House something interesting. In 1993 I contested the marginal seat of Murray. It was held by the good Labor bloke, young Keith Read. Before the last polling station was counted, we were something like six-all. The last polling station to be counted was in Falcon, and everyone told me that I was gone because Falcon belonged to Labor and Keith Read. Keith Read was the patron of the South Mandurah Football Club and his wife taught at the Falcon school. I was told that I was a goner. I shuffled a little in my shyness, and thought about the people I had met when doorknocking. Many of the people in Falcon had worked on the wharfs with my uncle, grandfather and father. They were real workers who had retired to that area. I wondered whether the Fremantle spirit would stick and whether those people would forgo being Labor voters to vote for a candidate from Fremantle. History shows that in 1993 I won by 199 votes, and that 210 of my votes came from the Falcon booth.

The member for Willagee has just walked into the Fremantle area. He comes from Albany. He has been around. He does not really know and feel what it is all about to be from Fremantle. His blood does not curdle when he hears that the Fremantle Cemetery Board will be amalgamated with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. It does not seem to worry him at all. However, the blood of everyone who lives in the Fremantle area south of the river, which includes Willagee, is curdling at the sheer thought of it. In this place, there is them and us; that side of the Assembly and this side. People do not realise that that is what life is like in Fremantle. The south of the river people believe that they walk in white sand and that across the bridge in North Fremantle, which has nothing to do with Fremantle, there is black sand. They believe another lingo is used. I agree. People north of the river somehow think that they are better than south of the river people. It amazes me that south of the river sporting teams dominate all the Western Australian competitions. I believe the reason is that, having been made to feel the underdogs as this city and this State of ours grew, south of the river people have a chip on their shoulder that means they know where they belong. When people know where they belong and that there is always somewhere for them to go back to, they can afford to gamble and take calculated risks.

I would not like to be any of the members for Fremantle, Willagee or Cockburn. They are fly-by-night johnnies who do not know the meaning of belonging to the electorate they represent. They are standing back and accepting the argument - glory be! - that the Fremantle Cemetery Board should be amalgamated with that north of the river crowd, the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. It just will not work. They do not talk the same language. The member for Albany is looking at me quizzically. He has learnt something. The member for Albany was a runner for the Claremont Football Club, a north of the river side. The reason the Fremantle Dockers failed in the first eight years after the club got its licence is that there were not enough Fremantle footballers in the side. The West Coast Eagles Football Club had all the talented Fremantle players. That is why it won premierships. The Fremantle club did not have anyone on its board or executive from Fremantle. It did not have a president or board chairman from Fremantle; he was from West Perth. The number one badge holder thought she was from Fremantle, but she lived in North Fremantle - pong alley, good gracious me! That is how good the vision was. It was a Football Commission job, and also a political move. Who the heck would have named the Fremantle team the Dockers, when we were lumpers, for goodness sake? The wrong language was being spoken. Now, with the turnabout, the team has a Fremantle identity and the chairman is a Fremantle businessman. Three or four of the directors are from Fremantle. There are now Fremantle footballers in the side - Haselby and the like. They are now fifth in the Australian Football League competition. Coming from nowhere, they will play in the finals. That is what I mean about people having the game in the blood, knowing where they come from and feeling that they cannot work in an amalgamation with north-of-the-river people. Fremantle people are special. The tombstones and the heritage were mentioned by the member for Warren-Blackwood. There is no amalgamation.

In the 1986 by-election, I beat the member for Fremantle. I did not know I was in a handicap event.

Mr M. McGowan: It was 1990.

Mr A.D. MARSHALL: Was it? Has time not flown! I stand corrected on that. It was just a bit of fun really, but in that by-election all the Fremantle people voted for the Liberal Party member, because they thought it was a championship event and so did I. The results were Marshall first, McGinty second and the Greens third. I did

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not know that the handicap was that I was playing against the Greens and the ALP at the time. I was very immature to the job. The Fremantle people honoured their Fremantle candidate in that election. I know what I am talking about when I say that these are people I love, who are my heritage, with whom I played football, and who would put their lives on the line to keep me alive in a match. Fremantle people bond and believe, because they are grassroots working-class people.

In the old days, people travelled from Bendigo and Ballarat to Kalgoorlie and Boulder. When the gold petered out in Kalgoorlie the unskilled work force ended up in Midland or on the wharf at Fremantle. All those people had to work together. They did not have much money during the Great Depression, so they shared. They became the unit that has made the place very special. Now this Government cannot see anything special with the word Fremantle in it standing out like a neon sign in Las Vegas. It automatically has the admiration of anyone looking at it. Members can mention Rockingham or Cottesloe without acknowledgment, but when they mention Fremantle, the world knows where it is. The America's Cup put it on the map. Fremantle is something, but to be Fremantle-metropolitan or something like that will never work. It did not work with the Dockers and it has not worked with the amalgamation of the education system in Mandurah, in which the Peel region is now controlled by a group from Beaconsfield with no identity. People must have an identity. People on the board should understand the feeling of the area. The funeral was held the other day for Barry Johns, the past president of the East Fremantle Football Club. Driving to the funeral, I saw the Fremantle golf course in all its serenity and magnificent beauty. That is one of the best golf courses around. At the funeral I met people with whom I played golf and tennis, swam and worked. They are all members of the Fremantle community, and it is something very special.

That is how the board works. All the board members have grown up in the area. They know how to make the place tick and have a feel for it. An amalgamation with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board simply will not work. I would not like to think that Fremantle will lose its identity. I do not believe that the Government will sell the land, because it would finish the Government if it were to do that. It would finish the member for Fremantle and the member for Willagee if the Government were to sell any of the land. I do not believe it will happen, but with an amalgamation with people who do not care about Fremantle, I cannot predict what other things might happen. It would never be the same.

I have been involved in the new sporting walkway of fame in Fremantle, which is something like the one for film stars in America. People can walk down the path and see the names of champions and remember their heritage. When people go to the cemetery at Fremantle, they cannot but be overwhelmed by what has made the people of Fremantle great. When we look at people's tombstones, we can remember those people or that our fathers talked about them. I think how lucky I am to have been in a position to teach people and help people understand the Fremantle way of life. Some people listen and some people have deaf ears. The people with deaf ears do not live anywhere near Fremantle. They have never had the feeling of belonging and the passion of knowing all the people around them and respecting what they have done for the heritage of the area. Fremantle is something very special.

The Government will rue the day the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board is amalgamated with the Fremantle Cemetery Board, and the community will vote against people who suggest that it is a good thing.

DR J.M. WOOLLARD (Alfred Cove) [5.44 pm]: The Cemeteries Act 1986, which replaced the legislation of 1897, appears to be good legislation. The 1986 Act was introduced by a Labor Government. One of the reasons the Act was introduced was to enable the amalgamation of cemetery boards. In 1988, again when a Labor Government was in power, Premier Dowding listened to the community when it stated that it wanted to keep the Fremantle Cemetery Board separate from the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. Mr Carr, who was then the Minister for Local Government, stated in the second reading speech that the Bill had been prepared following considerable public input to an extensive review process. Back in those days the Labor Party was listening to the community.

My concern with this motion is the consultation that occurred with the community, which perceives the Fremantle Cemetery as its cemetery. Were people involved in the consultation process? Were the options put to them? Were they advised that an amalgamation would lead to a cost saving? Many members in this House have congratulated Peter MacLean from the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and other members of that board. They have also congratulated Brian Adams and other members of the Fremantle Cemetery Board. This motion is not about the performance of individual CEOs or board members. Both CEOs have done their very best for their own areas, as have the other board members. The motion condemns the Government for the forced amalgamation of the Fremantle Cemetery Board with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board.

Mr Jeremy Edwards; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Norm Marlborough; Mr Paul Omodei; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Arthur Marshall; Dr Janet Woollard; Acting Speaker; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Mark McGowan

The motion reminds me of a similar motion some months ago against the Government moving the Brookdale toxic waste plant to Boulder without community consultation. This motion is all about consultation. If members opposite do not have a copy of the document titled "Community Consultation", which was prepared by the Premier's department last year and has his name on it, I will table one next week if I am permitted. The document is very good. It discusses in detail how to consult with community members and groups. That has not been done on this issue. The Fremantle Cemetery Board is to be amalgamated with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. I have heard from many of my constituents that they are concerned that it is a grab for money by the Government. They fear the Government may sell the land that the Fremantle Cemetery Board has set aside.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.P.D. Edwards): Order, member for Roleystone!

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: They are concerned that prices may increase at Fremantle Cemetery. The relative prices between the two cemeteries - bearing in mind that the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board caters for two-thirds of funerals in Perth and Fremantle deals with one-third - are similar. The burial or interment fee is \$710 for the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and \$680 for Fremantle. The cremation fees are between \$612 and \$720 for the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and between \$622 and \$710 for Fremantle. Although the fees are similar, the Government, the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and its CEO see a cost saving if the two boards are merged. The community feels it will lose part of what makes up Fremantle Cemetery. The community is concerned that the land will be sold, that prices will go up and that the profits made by that cemetery will not go back into it. I believe the minister has given an assurance that that is not the case, and that the Government does not propose closing the Fremantle Cemetery Board to enable the Government to sell off the land and to put more money into its coffers for the next election. The Government says that this recommendation has come from the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board, but I remind the Government that it was elected on a platform of accountability and community consultation. There was no community consultation when the minister announced that he was closing down the Fremantle Cemetery Board, the chief executive officer and the secretary would not have a position and it would all come under one structure. I believe that the community has the right -

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Firstly, I remind the member for Roleystone that he is out of his seat and, secondly, that the member with the call is not seeking interjections.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The community should be given the facts and the Government should provide some feedback on those facts. I believe the savings will be in the order of \$600 000. The community would probably like to know where that \$600 000 will go. Will it go back into the Fremantle area? Will the Government put some money back into the Fremantle area? Will the Government put that money towards the magnetic resonance imaging scanner for the Fremantle Hospital or towards the additional beds that are required -

Mr R.C. Kucera: We do not need money for the MRI; it is already in the budget. The member knows that.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The Minister for Health says that the money for the MRI scanner is in the budget, but the minister will not give a guarantee that if the federal Government issues another licence for an MRI scanner, that licence will go to Fremantle Hospital.

Mr R.C. Kucera: If the licence goes to Fremantle tomorrow, I will buy the machine tomorrow. I have said that on a number of occasions.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: If that is the case, why will the minister not put that in writing?

Mr R.C. Kucera: I think the member is knocking the wrong Government.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I remind the member for Alfred Cove and the minister to make their remarks through the Chair. The member for Alfred Cove has the floor.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Not only are the people of Fremantle not getting the MRI scanner they need, but also this Government endorsed the review that was conducted last year by the Auditor General into stroke management in the metropolitan area. One of the recommendations of that review was that any hospital admitting more than 100 stroke patients each year should have a dedicated stroke unit. Fremantle Hospital admits more than 250 stroke patients a year. Will the Government use money saved in amalgamating these cemetery boards to create a dedicated stroke unit at Fremantle Hospital? I can assure the House that stroke patients at Fremantle Hospital go to whichever ward has a bed for them. Although the nursing and medical staff provide the best care they can, these wards often have other priorities. For example, patients might have returned from surgery and need pain relief and dressings. These other priorities mean that stroke patients do not receive appropriate care and attention.

Mr Jeremy Edwards; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Norm Marlborough; Mr Paul Omodei; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Arthur Marshall; Dr Janet Woollard; Acting Speaker; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Mark McGowan

Point of Order

Mr R.C. KUCERA: We continually remind this member of the relevance of debate. I draw attention to Standing Order No 94 in that regard. It may be that when someone goes past the stage of a stroke, one may need to talk about cemeteries. I am not being flippant in saying that, Mr Acting Speaker. I question the relevance of these comments to this debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.P.D. Edwards): The minister has a point. I am giving the member some latitude as she is making some comparisons in financial issues she raised.

Debate Resumed

[Quorum formed.]

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I thank you for your indulgence, Mr Acting Speaker. The Government claims this merger is taking place to save money. The community should have been consulted, not just told that the decision had been made. The Government had stated that the community would be consulted. The community wants to know where the funds will be directed. I drew your attention, Mr Acting Speaker, to the lack of resources directed to Fremantle Hospital because patients from that hospital often end up in Fremantle Cemetery. Until a dedicated stroke unit is provided, possibly more patients will end up in the cemetery than need be the case. Stroke patients are not receiving the level of care they deserve. They are not receiving the appropriate medical, nursing, physiotherapy, speech therapy and other services to which they have a right.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It concerns me that the Government did not consult the community. Although the Government said it would not sell land or increase fees, it has found other ways to save money. Where will the money be spent that is saved from this amalgamation? The \$600 000 a year would assist people in the southern corridor who attend Fremantle Hospital if it were put towards a dedicated stroke unit.

Point of Order

Mr M.P. WHITELY: The member for Alfred Cove is not only pushing the boundaries of relevance but also engaging in tedious repetition.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have given the member a lot of latitude. However, she is stretching that latitude to some degree and I ask that she keep her comments relevant to the motion.

Debate Resumed

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: My constituents have called me about this issue. My constituents have praised the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and said what a wonderful job it does. They have also told me what a wonderful job the Fremantle Cemetery Board has done. They are very unhappy that they were not consulted. This Government continues to claim after making decisions that consultation occurred.

The motion condemns the Government. If that condemnation is about consultation - I believe it is - unfortunately I must support the motion. This is not the first time the Government has made a decision and then told the community about it. The minister who made the decision is the same minister who changed government policy on retention of community assets. He declared that Duncraig House should be sold.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: Standing Order No 97 headed "Repetitious or irrelevant debate" reads -

A member who persists in irrelevance or tedious repetition, either of the member's own arguments or of the arguments used by other members, may be directed by the Speaker to discontinue the speech.

Standing Order No 94 also refers to relevance. The member for Alfred Cove has constantly referred to matters other than the motion, which is about amalgamation of the Fremantle Cemetery Board with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. Standing Order No 97 provides the Chair with the capacity to direct that the member discontinue his or her speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): Members, I have been following the debate for the past half hour or so, and I am aware of the previous Acting Speaker's ruling on this matter. The member for Alfred Cove can take this as my first and final warning under Standing Order No 97, and I will direct the member to discontinue her speech if I consider that it is irrelevant and repetitious.

Debate Resumed

Mr Jeremy Edwards; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Norm Marlborough; Mr Paul Omodei; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Arthur Marshall; Dr Janet Woollard; Acting Speaker; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Mark McGowan

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Obviously I accept your ruling, Mr Acting Speaker. However, I do not believe I was being repetitious, because I had not discussed the minister's background in making decisions like this and then putting them straight out to the community. The point I was making is that the Government is making decisions and is then foisting them on the community rather than consulting with the community. I was simply giving an example to the House.

Point of Order

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: Mr Acting Speaker, having just warned the member about engaging in tedious repetition she is continuing to state the same argument again. I ask that the member be sat down.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Alfred Cove is seeking to explain my ruling. I suggest she not do that. She should move on, please.

Debate Resumed

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I support the motion. In supporting the motion I do not in any way have a negative attitude towards either the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board or the Fremantle Cemetery Board. I support the motion because this decision has been made without community consultation. The Government should put the full facts and figures to the community and seek its input before making decisions such as this. The people who live in the Fremantle area are very concerned that this will be a very detrimental decision from their perspective. I listened to the speech by the member for Peel, who said that his wife was on the Fremantle Cemetery Board and that now that she has had the opportunity to meet with the chief executive officer of the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board she feels assured that the Fremantle Cemetery Board will continue to provide the same level of service, costs will not go up, and the heritage values of Fremantle Cemetery will not be affected.

Mr P.D. Omodei: They will turn over in their graves!

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The member for Warren-Blackwood suggests that the people in Fremantle Cemetery will turn over in their graves because of this decision. In fact, when the original legislation was introduced there was an outcry from the people in the region, and that is why the then Premier, Peter Dowding, listened to the community groups and kept the Fremantle Cemetery Board separate from the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. He was obviously a Labor person who believed in listening to what the community had to say. I hope that this Government will not continue along the same path it appears to be following with regard to the Brookdale waste treatment plant and the Fremantle Cemetery. Goodness knows what issue it will be next week. I wish government members would think back to 2001 and remember the promises it made to consult with the community. I hope that in the future motions like this will not be moved during private member's business in which the Government is condemned for its lack of community consultation.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 18 June 2003]
p8907c-8922a

Mr Jeremy Edwards; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Norm Marlborough; Mr Paul Omodei; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Arthur Marshall; Dr Janet Woollard; Acting Speaker; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Mark McGowan

Ayes (16)

Mr R.A. Ainsworth	Dr E. Constable	Ms K. Hodson-Thomas	Mr P.G. Pandal
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr J.H.D. Day	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr M.J. Birney	Mrs C.L. Edwardes	Mr B.K. Masters	Dr J.M. Woollard
Mr M.F. Board	Mr J.P.D. Edwards	Mr P.D. Omodei	Mr J.L. Bradshaw (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (26)

Mr J.J.M. Bowler	Mr J.N. Hyde	Mr A.D. McRae	Mrs M.H. Roberts
Mr C.M. Brown	Mr J.C. Kobelke	Mr N.R. Marlborough	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr A.J. Carpenter	Mr R.C. Kucera	Mrs C.A. Martin	Mr P.B. Watson
Dr J.M. Edwards	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr M.P. Murray	Mr M.P. Whitely
Dr G.I. Gallop	Ms A.J. MacTiernan	Mr A.P. O’Gorman	Ms M.M. Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs D.J. Guise	Mr M. McGowan	Mr J.R. Quigley	
Mr S.R. Hill	Ms S.M. McHale	Ms J.A. Radisich	

Pairs

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan	Mr J.A. McGinty
Mr A.D. Marshall	Mr E.S. Ripper
Mr R.N. Sweetman	Mr P.W. Andrews

Question thus negatived.