

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (NO. 1) 2001

Cognate Debate

On motion by Mr Ripper (Treasurer), resolved -

That leave be granted for the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 1) 2001 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 2) 2001 to be considered cognately, and that the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No. 1) 2001 be considered the principal Bill.

Second Reading

Resumed from 13 September.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [2.54 pm]: In its first budget the Government has failed to provide any clear sense of economic direction or economic policy for Western Australia. It has also broken its key election promise that there will be no increase in taxes, and a raft of other election promises spread throughout the portfolios. It has also failed to do what it promised the Western Australian public; that is, substantially increase funding in what it identified as key areas of education, health, and law and order. There are little or no real increases - in some cases a nominal increase - and in fact there are real decreases in key areas.

In every sense, the Government has failed on the commitment it gave to the people of Western Australia during the election campaign. If there is a financial strategy for the future, it is inherently fragile. This budget has a number of internal inconsistencies, which means that the outcomes the Treasurer hopes for will not be realised at the end of this financial year. The State's economy is in a difficult situation. There is clearly rising unemployment, and a great deal of uncertainty as a result of the corporate collapses of HIH Insurance, Onetel Pty Ltd and, more recently, Ansett Australia. There is a great degree of international uncertainty and apprehension, resulting from the tragic terrorist attacks in the United States. The tourism and transport sectors are in a state of disarray. Given the fall in share prices and financial asset values in the wake of the United States tragedies, many people and companies will find that their financial position has changed dramatically. Many people dependent on fixed incomes, such as investments, will find their circumstances vastly different. All these things will have an effect on consumer spending, business confidence and the overall state of the economy.

Mr Ripper: Does the Leader of the Opposition think the growth forecast is wrong?

Mr BARNETT: Yes, I think it was overoptimistic.

When this Government came to power we heard much from the Premier about how strong he intended to be in areas such as ministerial conduct. He went on and on about how he would cut government spending. He would reduce the size of Cabinet, and the numbers of ministerial staff and cars, cut back on travel, and scrutinise and cut down on the use of imprest accounts. That was part of the lead-up - softening up the public for what the Premier and the Treasurer have now brought down. It is an irony that in the very week in which this budget is delivered, after months of talk by the Treasurer of budget black holes and deficit, and about how the Government will cut back, and about how 50 meetings have been held, saving a penny here and a cent there, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is planning a lavish party, with 700 staff to attend, and with the cost of catering estimated at \$20 a head. That is \$14 000, plus the cost of buses and the like. That is absolutely unjustified. Where is the ability of either the Treasurer or the Premier to control spending? This erratic, unstable minister is out there spending taxpayers' money.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr KOBELKE: It is not within standing orders for the Leader of the Opposition, in responding, to make a direct attack on a minister by pointing at her and using unparliamentary language.

The SPEAKER: The word "erratic" was not offensive, but the word "unstable" was offensive, and I direct the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw that comment.

Mr BARNETT: I withdraw the remark.

Debate Resumed

Mr BARNETT: This minister is all over the place in her conduct in terms of the drink driving offences and the loss of her licence. She then showed duplicity in claiming she was being open and public about those matters, when clearly that was not the case. That is a major transgression. I did not call for her to be sacked; I demanded that she be stood aside from road safety responsibilities, if not from the transport portfolio. The Premier, despite all his bleating and claims of ministerial conduct, failed to act. This week we find that same minister, in major transgression number two, was planning to have a party for 700 public servants, during working time and at

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taxpayers' expense. This is just one week after the budget, and just two weeks after the Premier made great play of the fact that a farewell thank you function had been held for Shane Crockett, who had served this State well and retired. Where is the standard, and where was the Premier? Did he come down and publicly discipline or chastise this minister? We heard not a bleep! Not one member of the Government did that.

Ms MacTiernan: Did the member never have any functions for his staff or his departments?

Mr BARNETT: I never had a party for 700 people.

Ms MacTiernan: Neither did I.

Mr BARNETT: The minister was going to. She was caught out. Look at the invitation -

CELEBRATION IN THE PARK

BUSH BBQ

To help us celebrate Planning and Infrastructure Minister

Alannah MacTiernan MLA

will be in attendance.

She is the minister for parties and good times. She was going to be there at taxpayers' expense during working hours. I do not mind a Christmas party or a farewell party if someone is leaving after years of good service, but one does not have a booze up in a park at taxpayers' expense during working hours. It is not on at a time when the Government is telling people that money must be saved. Where are the standards? Does the Treasurer endorse those standards?

Mr Ripper: The important point is that it did not happen.

Mr BARNETT: Only because she was caught. Is it appropriate for members of Cabinet to have parties, to entertain and wine and dine? In some circumstances, yes.

Ms MacTiernan: Is the member willing to put on record all the entertainment he funded when he was a minister?

Mr BARNETT: I have no embarrassment about anything I did. When I was a minister, I entertained and took to dinner visiting trade officials and people involved in investment projects. I did not do it often, but I did it. I did it appropriately; I do not consider the actions of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to be appropriate. I would have no objection if she had dinner with people involved in transport projects in this State. There are guidelines. What is the Treasurer's standard? Does he endorse that behaviour?

Mr Ripper: As I said, the Leader of the Opposition has missed the most important point: it did not happen.

Mr BARNETT: Only because the Government was caught. Did the Treasurer give a briefing to journalists prior to the budget?

Mr Ripper: Absolutely.

Mr BARNETT: Did the Treasurer provide entertainment for them?

Mr Ripper: Yes.

Mr BARNETT: Where was that done?

Mr Ripper: At the Parmelia Hilton.

Mr BARNETT: How many journalists were present?

Mr Ripper: I do not know the exact number, but if the member asks me this at question time I will provide a detailed answer. I will provide an answer now. I have been asked the question and the member should at least listen to the answer. A pre-budget briefing and dinner was planned which was to be held in the cabinet dining room in Parliament House. The terrorist attacks in the United States occurred on the night before, and on the day of the event there was a bomb scare at Parliament House. In view of the circumstances, it was decided at the last minute to shift the event to the Parmelia Hilton. The purpose of the evening was to brief journalists on the next day's budget and to give them an opportunity to hold the Government accountable by giving them a chance to ask questions of the Treasurer in addition to the budget lock-up.

Mr BARNETT: That is not appropriate. It is acceptable and appropriate for the Treasurer or any minister to brief journalists - I do not mind that. It is not appropriate to take a group of about 20 journalists to an expensive restaurant and wine and dine them on the eve of the budget. What did it cost?

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Mr Ripper: I do not know the exact cost.

Mr BARNETT: Take a guess.

Mr Ripper: The original plan was to hold the dinner at Parliament House. The Leader of the Opposition has already conceded that it is appropriate for ministers to have working dinners. It was a working dinner and was entirely within the guidelines. It is the same sort of operation that the Leader of the Opposition has conceded he engaged in when he was a minister. It was entirely within the relevant budgets, which have been reduced.

Mr BARNETT: The Treasurer came into this House, day in and day out, and told the House how he was saving dollars. He then took a group of journalists to an expensive restaurant the night before the budget presentation to give them his view of the budget. He was looking for a positive response. He wined and dined them. There was expensive food and excellent Western Australian wines - I hope. What was the cost? At the Globe Wine Bar and Restaurant it would be about \$100 to \$150 a head - it is a fine restaurant; a fine institution. It is not appropriate for ministers, particularly a Treasurer, on the eve of the budget, to use taxpayers' funds in such a blatant attempted political manipulation of the media. It is not appropriate at all. The Treasurer should not come into this House and talk about propriety and penny-pinching.

Mr Ripper: Did the previous Premier host journalists for Christmas drinks?

Mr BARNETT: Yes, he did; however, that was not a problem because we were not selling a budget at the time. The Treasurer probably spent \$2 000 or \$3 000 on the night prior to the budget trying to influence the media; that is entirely inappropriate. As I said in question time, I do not have any difficulty with an end-of-year event for staff or for groups that the Government works with. The Opposition will host events, and it will spend its own money to invite journalists for a drink. I do not have a difficulty with that, nor do I have a difficulty with the Government providing entertainment for appropriate functions. However, it is entirely inappropriate for the Treasurer to spend \$2 000 to \$3 000 of taxpayers' money on the eve of the budget to wine and dine the media. The Opposition provided briefings for the media prior the budget, but it did not wine and dine them.

Mr Ripper: Do you believe that it affected the integrity of the media's coverage of the budget?

Mr BARNETT: I have no doubt that it gave the Treasurer the opportunity to present the Labor Party's view on the budget prior to it being delivered, and I have no doubt that taking the journalists out for fine dining and red wine helped in the way the budget was received. That was a political use of taxpayers' money. The Treasurer should not come into this House and tell us how hard the Government scrimped and saved when, on the eve of the budget, he had his snout firmly in the trough at the taxpayers' expense. The Treasurer's snout was in the trough as he snorted on food and red wine on the very eve of the budget.

Mr Ripper: We had better see how many dinners you held as the Minister for Resources Development. We had better get out the records.

Mr BARNETT: The Treasurer can do that. On the eve of the budget, the Treasurer had his snout in the trough with 20 journalists. That is the standard of this Government. The Opposition has ministerial standards and codes of conduct. The Premier came in here and bleated and preached about ministerial standards, yet the minister for parties and infrastructure organised a booze-up barbecue for 700 people to promote the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure as a special guest. Further, on the eve of the budget, the Treasurer himself had his snout in the trough at a fine restaurant, where he drank good red wine and had a good time with journalists as he told them what a good bloke he is. What an appalling standard. This is the Labor Party of the 1980s. The Labor Party has its snout in the trough, and is back in style. It is exactly the same now as it was then; it is in full flight.

Several members interjected.

Mr BARNETT: I have an hour and a half worth of substance about which I can speak. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is the minister for parties and infrastructure; and, on the eve of the budget, the Treasurer had his snout in the trough with 20 of his journalist mates as he tried to get good publicity. Where is the Premier? Where is the champion of ministerial conduct? He is nowhere to be seen.

Mr Ripper: Do you think that the journalists have their snouts in the trough?

Mr BARNETT: Journalists live the high life, particularly the national journalists. The Treasurer looked up to the press gallery for applause. The reality is that national journalists are entertained a lot by the corporate sector, and I do not approve of that. I have not taken a journalist out to dinner.

Mr Ripper: What about lunch or breakfast?

Mr BARNETT: I do not do it. I have meetings with journalists. If the Government had a briefing with journalists and provided coffee, sandwiches and a glass of wine, I would not object. However, to take 20

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journalists to The Globe at the Parmelia Hilton for a big night on the town wining and dining is inappropriate. The Treasurer must display some moderation, discretion and propriety.

Mr Ripper: Do you think it affected the media's coverage? A working meal is okay.

Mr BARNETT: A working meal at the Hilton! Pass the chardonnay; we are working! What a joke! A working meal consists of sitting around a table with a cup of tea and a few sandwiches.

Mr Ripper: When you were minister, where did you hold the working meals?

Mr BARNETT: As I said, I did not take journalists out to lunch or dinner.

Mr Logan: They ought to love you.

Mr BARNETT: No. I did not do it. I had plenty of meetings with journalists, but that is not what I do. I shall return -

Mr Hyde: You have wasted 25 minutes!

Mr BARNETT: There is no clock. I could speak for hours and hours yet.

Mr Hyde interjected.

Mr BARNETT: I will get through the Labor Party's little agenda.

Mr Ripper: Would you like to know how much it cost?

Mr BARNETT: Yes.

Mr Ripper: It cost \$1 302.90.

Mr BARNETT: \$1 300!

Mrs Edwardes: In which room was it held?

Mr BARNETT: Was it a private room?

Mr Ripper: It was held in the restaurant, so that I could brief them.

Mr BARNETT: The Treasurer was working at the restaurant?

Mr Ripper: A section of the restaurant is closed off and meetings can be held there. That is where I conducted the meeting.

Mr BARNETT: That is not appropriate. However, that is the Treasurer's standard and he will be judged by it.

Mrs Roberts: It was less than \$70 a head!

Mr BARNETT: It was cheap, was it not? Chicken feed in fact! It cost only \$70 a head! Government members should tell some of the pensioners that it was only \$70 a head when services decline. They did not have the best chardonnay; they went for the one on the second shelf!

Several members interjected.

Mr BARNETT: I will move on now to the main substance of the budget.

Mr Ripper: You will move on to some substance!

Mr BARNETT: The expenditure of \$1 300 of taxpayers' money does not lack substance.

Mr Ripper interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): I call members on my right to order. The Leader of the Opposition has the floor and is moving on.

Mr BARNETT: I move on. As I said, this budget is attached to the great lie of the election campaign and of the Gallop Government. The Premier made a commitment on television to not increase taxes and charges. I could forgive him the increase in charges, because that was an absolutely foolish thing to say. Charges are for services and they inevitably rise as the cost of providing those services rises. However, the commitment to not increase taxes was absolutely unequivocal. The Premier argued that that was not his intention. He did not say that! He said that the Labor Government would not increase taxes. It was a black and white statement heard by tens if not hundreds of thousands of people throughout the State. This Premier has started his term by breaking a commitment.

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Other commitments have been broken. This Government promised the people of this State that it would focus on health, education and police. However, real spending has effectively been cut in education. In the police portfolio, even nominal spending has been cut. The increase in spending in health will barely match the consumer price index inflation rate; it will not keep up with the cost of providing services. The Government has not honoured its commitment to improve and commit to education, health and police.

Mr Ripper: Hang on, let me get this right: are you asking for lower taxes and higher spending?

Mr BARNETT: No, I know exactly what I am asking for and I will make my speech.

Mr Ripper: You are making two contradictory statements.

Mr BARNETT: Sorry. As the Treasurer insists on interjecting, I refer him to an article in *The West Australian* of 19 May 2000, in which Mr Ripper said -

... it was irresponsible for the Government to claim a 3.6 per cent increase in health funding when it would almost all be eaten away by inflation which was expected to run at about 3 per cent next year.

I say the same thing! The Government's real increase in health, at about 0.8 per cent, is barely above the inflation rate. The 2.4 per cent increase in funding for schools is below the Government's assumption of the inflation rate. If one allows for the growth in school population of about 1.5 per cent each year, the real spending for each student is significantly reduced by about two per cent, which is a lot in what is always a tight budget. The Government has decreased the police budget. There has been an overall real decrease of about six per cent. The Labor Party has not honoured its commitment to health, education and law and order. The Opposition will go through that in painstaking detail during this week and next and will demonstrate to everyone in this State that this Government has failed to honour its commitments.

Mr Ripper: Let me get this straight: do you want to increase spending in those areas?

Mr BARNETT: The Treasurer gets paid a couple of hundred grand to be Treasurer. If he wants me to do the job, I will do it, but if he is going to do the job, he should try to cope.

In its post-election publicity, Labor had the audacity to claim that it was honouring its election promises. It had the absolute audacity to put out fliers and newspaper wraparounds under the banner that Labor was honouring its election promises. What a lie that was! That would be contrary to the Trade Practices Act 1974 if the Government were a commercial operation. There is no sense of economic direction. If people in the community, particularly those in business or who are looking to invest in this State, expect to find some sense of economic direction from the Government in this budget, they will not find any. This budget completely lacks any economic direction. It is framed on some rather optimistic assumptions. It assumes that economic growth will be four per cent. That is optimistic given the current circumstances for 2001-02. Time will tell, but it is optimistic. It is an extremely uncertain environment. Indeed, the collapse of Ansett Australia Ltd could have a catastrophic impact on the tourism industry, which is the largest employment sector in this economy and is important throughout the State, and particularly in regional areas.

Mr Ripper: Do you want to know the forecast of other private forecasters?

Mr BARNETT: I have a long time and I will go through my points. The Opposition listened to the Treasurer in silence and I am -

Mr Ripper: You did not listen to me in silence.

Mr BARNETT: I am sorry, the Opposition extended the normal courtesies. Opposition members made a few comments.

Mr Ripper: It did not seem like it to me. There were a lot of comments.

Mr BARNETT: The tradition of this Parliament has been that the Treasurer is heard with courtesy when he makes his budget speech - the odd interjection is okay - and the Leader of the Opposition or the opposition treasury spokesman is shown the same courtesy.

That has been the tradition in this Parliament. Mr Acting Speaker, I know that you have not been here long, but that is the parliamentary tradition.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): I understand that tradition.

Mr BARNETT: It is a tradition, Mr Acting Speaker; that is all it is. It is not in the standing orders; it is only a tradition.

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Some of the commitments and promises the Labor Party made during the election campaign have been listed in the budget, and a number of them have been funded to an amount of 10 per cent of the final amount the promise will require. In some cases, the commitment is one per cent of the final amount! The Government has listed programs with only one to 10 per cent of the actual funding required! Nominally, this provides an illusion or an appearance that the Government is delivering its commitments.

I move now to some of the final bottom-line outcomes. In the general government sector, the net debt will almost double. There will be an enormous expansion of the net debt in the general government sector.

Mr Ripper interjected.

Mr BARNETT: I am coming back to debt, and I will go right through debt.

I turn now to the revenue and taxation side. The Labor Government inherited a budget with an operating surplus of \$251 million. That fact has been understood finally throughout the community. This year, the Government has forecast a surplus of \$51 million - one-fifth of the surplus that it inherited. I doubt whether the Government will achieve that surplus. However, the reality is that it inherited a strong surplus. It also inherited state debt that had been reduced by some \$4 000 million - a level of state debt that frees the Government from some \$300 million a year in interest payments. Therefore, the Government has inherited a sound financial position. In spite of that, the Government has announced \$150 million worth of extra tax revenue initiatives in its budget. It has announced over \$100 million in payroll tax increases. What an extraordinary impost to put on employers and the business sector. An amount of \$10 million will be raised from the so-called premium land tax. In addition, another \$40 million will be raised in land taxes by changing the scales and the treatment. These changes will effectively mean that small businesses people who rely on using, or are forced to use, their family homes as collateral for business loans, will now have taxes applied to the land on which those homes stand. Consequently, thousands of small business people will be affected.

This is a historic budget for the simple reason that the Labor Government has broken a long Australian tradition; namely, that pillar of our society that we do not tax the family home. I know the Government has a social problem with that, and that it is driven by envy. Why does the capital gains tax deliberately exempt the family home? Why do Australians have one of the highest rates of home ownership, at approximately 90 per cent? One of the pillars of Australian society, and one of its sources of stability, has been that every Australian aspires, and reasonably expects, to own his or her own home.

That is why Australian Governments, whether federal or state, have traditionally over the past 100 years resisted the temptation to tax the family home. This Government has done it by widening the land tax scale and structure. It has widened the net to make the homes owned by small business people now subject to land tax and it has imposed a premium property tax, which I will come back to, that for the moment members opposite think will affect only 900 property owners. I assure members that that tax will stretch far wider and it is just the thin edge of the wedge, as we will see. In addition, more than \$40 million of increases in charges and taxes were announced prior to the end of June.

Mr Ripper: You do not like the tax measures but you want more spending to go to key areas. How about a bit of reality!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Belmont!

Mr BARNETT: I have not even started on reality yet.

The Government inherited a budget surplus of \$251 million. There is no justification for the tax increases and the new taxes that it has introduced. Between its June statement and this budget, the Government has effectively increased taxes on Western Australian businesses and households to the tune of \$190 million. That is not justified; it is certainly not justified within the current economic environment. The effect of those increases is at least \$100 per person in this State, because all those business taxes will inevitably flow on to the consumer one-way or another. Businesses can pass on taxes; that is the reality. Effectively, that cost will flow through at a rate of about \$100 a head for every man, woman and child in this State. So much for the Government's commitment to Western Australian families of no increases in taxes. That is what it has done.

Mr Hyde: There are 50 000 small businesses that are paying land tax now. You have not mentioned that.

Mr BARNETT: That is paid on properties worth less than \$50 000. How many of those are there around?

Mr Ripper: There are 52 000 of them.

Mr BARNETT: What is the Treasurer talking about? Where can one buy a piece of residential or commercial land in the metropolitan area for less than \$50 000?

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Mr Ripper: If they had previously paid for it -

Mr BARNETT: If the Treasurer can find a piece of residential land anywhere in the greater metropolitan area for less than \$52 000, I would like to buy it.

Mr Hyde: What about regional Western Australia?

Mr BARNETT: The member is essentially talking about undeveloped, unsaleable land that is probably in declining country towns.

Mr Hyde: What about Albany?

Mr BARNETT: He is not talking about land in Albany. Land cannot be bought in Albany for \$50 000.

I will continue with the issue of payroll tax.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I call members on my right to order.

Mr BARNETT: We have seen a range of taxes, but payroll tax is a very serious issue. The increase in the top rate of payroll tax by eight per cent - from 5.56 to six per cent - will add substantially to the wages bills of medium to large employers. We are not necessarily talking about the BHPs and the Woodsides of this world. There are many other Western Australian based companies that fall within that bracket, and what will they do? They will not react immediately. When workers leave, they will not replace them. They will gradually reduce their casual work force staff, offer some redundancies and trim their work force.

Mr Ripper: Just because of an extra \$4 a week?

Mr BARNETT: Yes, they will, because business decisions are made at the margin. Those companies will look at the services provided. I am not saying there will be wholesale sackings, but we will see those companies trim their work forces. It is an uncertain economic environment, and business decisions are made at the margin. This Government has raised the marginal cost of employing people - it is an absolute truism - and fewer people will be employed. This will have an effect, as I said at the beginning of this year, and because of a variety of circumstances unemployment will rise in this State. It has already risen by 15 000 over the past 12 months, and because of this measure alone a further growth will be seen in unemployment over the course of this year. There are other factors that I do not deny, but how foolish is it to increase payroll tax at a time of weakness in the economy and when unemployment is clearly rising?

Mr Ripper: Because of \$4?

Mr BARNETT: Sorry; it does not work like that.

Mr Hyde: Max Evans, your previous Minister for Finance, said it did.

Mr BARNETT: I hope the member for Perth will learn some good conduct and behaviour. He is a poor member of Parliament who does not distinguish this House at all. I am trying to give a serious response to what I assume is a serious budget and I can do without a clown like him around.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): This is the Leader of the Opposition's time. I am trying to follow the Leader of the Opposition. I can hear him most of the time, but every now and again something comes out of the blue and I miss what he says.

Mr BARNETT: Payroll tax is to be increased by \$100 million. The impost on the employment and business sector of this State will not be \$4 a week, but an additional \$100 million. That will have a dramatic effect on employment. The widening of the net and the so-called measures to stop "employee-like" contractors will have a particularly damaging effect on the small business sector. It is a philosophical union agenda that is being driven by this Government. Flexible bases of employment - workplace agreements, subcontracting and the like - enable many small employers and businesses to compete with the big guys. This Government will take those away. Many small businesses will close. They will drop out of some industries and not tender for contracts. The effect will be sharp, sad and damaging. The number of unemployed people in this State has increased by 15 000 since August last year. That is not an unemployment figure that is trickling along. I am also conscious of the high rate of bankruptcy - I acknowledge the goods and services tax is related. Small business is not travelling well.

Mr Kucera: It's the GST.

Mr BARNETT: It has had an effect; I do not doubt that. The number of bankruptcies increased by 33 per cent to June 2001. The small business sector is under stress. Events such as the Ansett Australia Ltd collapse will

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affect the tourism industry, which comprises mainly small business operators. They will not last. They do not have large assets, but rely on cash flow. They will collapse very quickly if there is any downturn in the economy. Although I hope that does not happen in this case, any sensible commentator would expect it.

The Certified Practising Accountants best summed up this budget when it said that the Government has thrown business an anchor when it needs a lifeline. That is what it has done. It has thrown an anchor to small businesses in trouble. This Government is anti-business. Some people in business groups thought they would get on well with the Labor Government, and they probably sucked up to the Labor Party in opposition. The penny has now dropped. They have realised that this Government is anti-business. The reasons for that may be philosophy or envy. Government members may not know or trust many businesspeople. They have increased payroll and land taxes, which will affect businesses. They plan to get rid of workplace agreements, which allow small businesses to compete. They will stop contracting out so that businesses will not be able to get a share of government work. They are trying to stop businesses using contractors by bringing contractors into the payroll tax net. This Government is doing everything possible to stifle the growth of a vibrant small to medium business sector in this economy. The business community is starting to understand what the Labor Party is really about: it is anti-business. As I said when we first came into this Chamber this year, there is only one minister with a clear responsibility for business - the Minister for State Development - and he is the one minister who sits on the back benches. He is not a bad bloke. That attitude reflects the Government's commitment to business and development in this State.

Mr Ripper: Don't you think energy policy is important for business?

Mr BARNETT: Nothing in this budget provides a sense of direction or confidence for the development of this State, business, investment or jobs.

Mr Ripper: What about the AAA credit rating?

Mr BARNETT: The previous Labor Government lost the AAA credit rating in the early 1990s. The Treasurer was a cabinet minister at the time. It took the coalition Government nearly five years to regain that. A AAA credit rating can be lost in a whisker, but it takes a long time to get it back. If I were the Treasurer, I would not bleat about the AAA credit rating. It was only effort and strong economic development in Western Australia that got that back.

Mr Watson interjected.

Mr BARNETT: The member does not understand the first thing about the economy. The Government is attacking business. Perhaps the attack is not intended; however, the implication exists and the outcome will be the same. The Government wants to re-regulate the labour market. Why would a Government that wants employment and the economy to grow and develop re-regulate and tie up the labour market? That will cost jobs. Increases in workers compensation are imminent, about which the member for Kingsley will talk. Those increases will add more to the on-costs of employment.

The Government has initiated a range of productivity and other complex deals within the public sector. Its employment and labour relations strategy is in all sorts of trouble; that is, if it has one. Those deals will affect both the public sector and, more importantly from my point of view, the private sector. It has no sense of balance, direction or control in that area. A major price will have to be paid.

Contracting out is important. I know that the Labor Party has a philosophical objection to contracting out and that under the previous Government not every contracting-out project went perfectly. However, the Government should not think that every example of in-house labour within the public sector works perfectly. It does not. In any large organisation, whether in-house employees or outside contractors do the work, there will be errors, poor productivity and the like. However, overall, contracting out has been important. The former Department of Contract and Management Services estimated that contracting out over 1999-2000 saved \$110 million. That is because it was efficient. Beyond that, contracting out gave many small to medium businesses a lifeline by allowing them to get government work. Under the previous Government's Buy Local policy, which I am sure the member for Hillarys will talk about, 70 per cent of regional purchasing was picked up by locally based regional businesses. The Government is probably not concerned about that, but it is important that locally based retailers, manufacturers and suppliers can pick up government work. The Government does not like contracting out. It will wind back all of that because it has a different philosophy. That will compound the other effects on employment.

I will move to the premium property tax, which is a tax born of envy. This tax shows better than anything else does the philosophical approach of the Labor Party. I do not know why the Labor Party resents so much people who have worked, saved and succeeded in building up an asset in which they live. Why do members oppose

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

dislike that so much? It brings out the true socialism and the true left wing of the Labor Party. Members opposite have not thought this tax through.

Mr Watson: Reds under the bed!

Mr BARNETT: Yes, it is reds under the bed. This is what the Labor Party is about. The member for Swan Hills laughs. I will read a few letters from people in this State, and I hope she does not laugh at them like she is laughing now.

This tax is inequitable. The Government claims at the moment that 900 property owners are affected. In other words, the land value of 900 residences is over \$1 million.

Mr Ripper: That is the advice to me.

Mr BARNETT: I suspect that far more properties will be affected. My electorate is the most affected. Probably almost the entire shire of Peppermint Grove and one-third to one-half of Cottesloe are affected; and so on right along the coast and the river. All of those areas are affected. We will wait to see the final impact, but if it is 900 today, which is a conservative estimate, the number will increase rapidly.

The Government intends to index the threshold by the consumer price index - that is, by three per cent a year. If the threshold is \$1 million now, it will be \$1 030 000 next year and then \$1 062 000 the year after. At what rate do members opposite expect property prices to rise? Will it be three per cent or more? It will be above that.

Mr Ripper: It is a bit volatile.

Mr BARNETT: It is volatile, and property prices in Perth are likely to rise strongly, as has happened recently in Sydney and Melbourne. It would not be unusual if property prices rose by 20 to 25 per cent in the next couple of years.

Mr Whitely: Won't that more than cover it?

Mr BARNETT: No, and I will tell the member for Roleystone why it will not. The Government will find that the number of people caught by this tax will increase rapidly.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): Order! The member for Roleystone and the member for Nedlands!

Mr BARNETT: Anyone who owns a property with a land value of \$1.2 million will pay \$4 000; if the land value is \$1.5 million the tax is \$10 000 - this is \$10 000 after tax. For most people, in order to pay a tax of \$10 000 they will require income of \$20 000, because it is an after-tax figure. They have to find that amount and pay it to the Government. If someone has a property worth \$2 million, the tax is \$20 000 and so it goes up. It is a large amount of money.

Let us say that property values increase at the rate of five or six per cent over the next two years. The threshold will increase by three per cent but the number of properties moving above that threshold will expand quickly. The number will expand exponentially, because of the greater numbers of property worth between \$900 000 and \$1 million and between \$800 000 and \$900 000. The lower the price, the more properties there will be. As property values increase it will not be long before people who thought they were not affected will be drawn above that threshold.

Who will it affect? Some people are very wealthy and have high incomes, and they can afford to pay \$10 000 or \$20 000 a year. Many people have been calling into and ringing my office since this was mooted. Other members have experienced the same. If members opposite are honest, a few of them will say they have experienced the same.

Mrs Roberts: We have got a few calls of congratulations.

Mr BARNETT: There are probably some socialists out there like the member for Midland.

Members opposite laugh, but who are the people who will be affected? They belong to a number of categories. The first and most prevalent category in my electorate comprises elderly people who bought their block of land probably prewar and during the war; and probably the biggest group within that category bought land immediately postwar. This is the World War II generation; people who came back from serving this country and bought a nice block of land - even then. They went out of their way to buy a block of land in Perth, which, at the time, was a small community. The population of Perth then was 300 000 or 400 000 at most. It was a small town. A map of Perth in the 1950s and 1960s would show that there were only two streets south of the river. There had been no development more than one or two streets back from the river. That was a similar situation

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for much of the area around the western suburbs and along the coast. Scarborough was largely a holiday location for Perth people. People bought blocks of land in these areas because they wanted to be near the river, to have a reasonably big block of land or an ocean outlook.

Mr Watson: They had money.

Mr BARNETT: No, they did not. Many of those people did not have money. They bought inexpensive blocks of land. Perth was a small provincial regional city with a population of 300 000 to 400 000. I can give examples of returned servicemen who bought land, for example, in Dalkeith for £50. They were not wealthy people. That group of people bought land and built family homes. They lived in those homes all of their lives. Many of them have retired. In many cases the man has passed on, and many elderly women are living in their family homes on little and sometimes no income, and sometimes their children or grandchildren support them. However, their pride and satisfaction is centred on the homes in which they have lived for 40 or 50 years. My electorate might have the greatest number of these people, but there are hundreds of them. There are thousands of people whose property is not worth \$1 million but might be worth somewhere in the range of \$750 000 to \$1 million and who are fearful because they know this tax will catch up with them in two or three years when property values increase. These people are decent, hard-working Australians. They are not the sort of people who ask for government handouts. They are people who have saved and scrimped, who have worked and cared for themselves and their families. They do not live flamboyant, rich, flashy lifestyles.

Members should consider the inequities. There are people in my electorate - elderly women in particular - who live on land worth \$1 million. There are young people who live on land worth less than \$1 million but whose homes are worth \$2 million or \$3 million; and they have high incomes, but will not pay this tax. I am not saying that they should, but they will not. There is no equity at all in this tax; it is entirely inequitable.

Another category of people is small business people. They can be self-employed or professionals who do not have superannuation. The expansion of superannuation is essentially a phenomenon in the past 15 to 20 years. It was not widely available. Small business people in the postwar period in the 1950s and 1960s did not have superannuation. What was their superannuation and how did they save for retirement? They bought a family home. They generally bought a bigger and better family home or a better block of land than they would normally have bought, and they worked to pay it off. That was their nest egg for their retirement. They built that up over time deliberately planning for their retirement. They have already paid tax on their income; they are not double dipping. They bought that land in good faith thinking that the Australian family would always be safe. The family home was safe until Messrs Gallop and Ripper came along. That is what this Government has done. Those people are small business people who are still running their small business. They had an asset - the family home - which they thought was preserved for their retirement. Now they will pay \$5 000, \$10 000 or \$20 000 extra tax a year. They cannot do that. They cannot take it from their small business. Small business people will also find that land tax is imposed on any other asset they have. This is a most miserable, mean policy born of envy.

I shall inform the House of the comments of some people who have written to me. I will not use their names, although many of them would accept that. I said that this is the World War II generation, and it is. These comments are from people who served in that war, came back to Western Australia, saw the conditions at that time and scrimped and saved to buy a block of land to build a home. They did not build lavish homes. They could not build lavish homes in the late 1940s or early 1950s because there were restrictions on the size of the house to be built and the building materials that could be used. That is the reality. These people are not millionaires. They are average, working Western Australians who served their country and who struggled, scrimped and saved.

Mr Ripper: What is the value of their asset?

Mr BARNETT: The value of their asset might be quite high. These people are in their 80s and 90s and do not have an income to pay this tax.

Mr Ripper: In that case they will be eligible for a concession.

Mr BARNETT: The House should have some courtesy.

Mr Logan: You object to their sons and daughters paying the tax?

Mr BARNETT: I object to a tax on a family home and I object to death duties.

Mr Logan: Their sons and daughters can inherit millions and you object to them paying tax.

Mr BARNETT: I object to death duties and that is what this tax is about.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr Logan: Do you support that view?

Mr BARNETT: The member lives in Swanbourne and pretends to represent Cockburn. He should not be serious in this House.

Mr Logan: Are you jealous?

Mr BARNETT: Jealous of someone? I am sorry, I am not.

I received letters from people mainly in my electorate but also from other electorates. The House should take a moment to listen to what some of these people said. I shall read a sample of the dozens of faxes and phone calls that I received. A male of working age, wrote -

I am a landowner who will be significantly impacted by such a tax and at present am in no position to pay it without liquidating assets. . . . my background is the mining industry, but with the downturn in that industry and in particular, exploration, I've been without a contract for about 2 years. We have been living off assets and a small income from part-time work. It has been a struggle, what with three children, but we've managed. Now this proposed tax is going to be a significant, additional on-going burden, which we frankly will not be able to afford. To rub salt into the wound, this is a tax paid for with after-tax money. It is about as cynical a socialist tax as you could devise.

That was from a person still of working age. A considered and compassionate letter from one of our leading Western Australians, whom I shall not name but who is a very prominent and distinguished person and who has given enormous service to the Western Australian community, wrote giving details -

Mr McRae: We will just take your word that he is a leading Western Australian.

Mr BARNETT: Yes, the letter is from one of the most eminent Western Australians in our history.

Mr McRae interjected.

Mr BARNETT: I respect this person in particular. One of his comments in his letter to me reads -

I give you these details so that it may be appreciated that my ownership of the land and my subsequent occupation of it never reflected wealth; it was something which grew out of my war service now over half a century ago.

That man, in his 80s, served in the army and then returned to Western Australia from the war. He struggled to establish himself, bought a block of land - which now has a very high value - and built a modest cottage on it, in which he lives today.

Mr Ripper: Does he give details of his current income? Does his current income entitle him to a commonwealth health care card?

Mr BARNETT: I imagine it would not. He has a wife who is in care, which is costing him a lot of money. He has given unpaid service to the State.

Mr Ripper: He might be eligible for a concession.

Mr BARNETT: I do not believe he is eligible. However, he is one of the most distinguished and gracious Western Australians in our history.

Another letter, again from someone in my electorate, reads -

My wife and I have three children ages 14, 12 and 8 and while we are comfortable we do not have a large amount of disposable income. I have a small business and over the last 27 years have bought, renovated and sold about five times. I am now in a situation where I own a block of land with a value of about \$1.4 million I do not have any superannuation as I have not had the disposable income to pay for it. My house has been my super. Some 6 years ago I had a melanoma removed and now am uninsurable for a life policy. I have always worked on the theory that in the event something happened to me my house would be an easily realised asset for my family, and would take care of their future.

That will not be an unusual case, Mr Speaker.

There is another issue. Another person wrote -

I am the owner of -

He mentions an address in Cottesloe -

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 18 September 2001]

p3849b-3917a

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

- which the previous government placed in state heritage, thus preventing the demolition and development of the property. I am required to maintain the property, and the Government can penalize me, if I neglect to do so.

With the new land tax it would be easier to demolish the house and subdivide the property in three lots thus avoiding the tax and making a handsome profit. This I cannot do.

I know that person well. He bought a heritage property and spent a vast amount of money complying with heritage orders to restore it. That person does not have a high income. He cannot restore that heritage property and pay a tax, which in his case would be between \$15 000 and \$20 000. He will have to sell the property. Who would buy a property on which there is a heritage order - which he does not dispute - and spend money on heritage restoration? Heritage restoration is extremely expensive. This is a prominent property which he is devoted to and on which he has himself done a lot of restoration work. He cannot afford to have his children and family in that house, comply with the heritage orders and pay this tax.

This tax will have an unintended consequence on heritage. People will not be prepared to buy heritage properties with this added burden and people with larger blocks of land will subdivide them. Does this Government want an increase in residential density? This tax will change the nature of some of Perth's older suburbs and will be counter to the heritage objectives that essentially have bipartisan support.

Another letter from another couple of constituents of mine, again a reasonably well-known Western Australian family, reads -

Four generations of my family have lived in this house since 1950. The house is over 100 years old, and while gracious, it lacks most facilities considered standard in today's modern homes. The location and size of the original block of land (2726 sq.m.) are impressive although complementary to the heritage home.

The Shire has the house on its Municipal Heritage list and we have respected their guidelines and restrictions in all renovations and maintenance, keeping the original character of the house and its visual amenity.

We have three children who are full time students. The youngest is 10 years old. They are distressed, as are we, that we will be forced to sell our home of 50 years to pay the government. My elderly mother (85 yrs) had been promised this could be her home for her life. Words can not express our dismay.

Another letter reads -

We are self-funded retirees, both having worked for the Government in Education for many years.

I assume they are schoolteachers. The letter continues -

Our combined taxable income on our most recent returns was less than \$36,000-00.

I assume that is per year. The letter continues -

We live at the above address because my astute grandfather purchased the land in 1915, not because we are millionaires.

Mr Ripper: They will be able to defer the tax.

Mr BARNETT: The Government has no understanding of the way in which proud people view their family home. The Treasurer said they could defer the tax. That could be a tax of \$30 000 to \$40 000 a year. For how many years can one defer that amount at compound interest before there is nothing left? These are proud people. They are not the sort of people who defer taxes. They will sell their family home rather than not pay their taxes. The Government does not understand the psyche of 80-year-olds in our community and does not care about them.

Mr Ripper: If land values increase at the rate you say they will, that increase will cover the tax.

Mr BARNETT: It will not! The Treasurer does not understand people who are of the World War II generation. They did not put their hand out. They fought for their country, worked and saved, provided for their wives and families and looked after themselves. That generation paid their taxes. They will not defer taxes. If the Treasurer tells a person aged 80 or 90 that the tax can be deferred, people of that calibre and standing will not do it. They are too proud to do it. The Treasurer might say that is financially irrational. I am sorry, but I do not speak about financial rationalism to people aged 80 and 90 in my electorate. I respect what they have done for this country, for their community and their families. They do not need to be insulted and treated as tax evaders,

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or non-taxpayers, by the Treasurer and his mate, the Premier. This is the most disgraceful, nasty, mean-spirited, socialist policy I have ever seen. Nothing has made me as angry as seeing these people who are visibly distressed come into my electorate office, as they have been doing since this measure was announced. An elderly person may be living in a house and supporting a partner who is now in nursing care, for which they are paying \$20 000 or \$30 000 a year. That person may want to leave something to children or grandchildren, and has worked a lifetime to do that. The Treasurer sits and sniggers. I do not snigger at those people, and I do not ignore them. I will provide some other examples. I have a letter from a person in Mosman Park, which reads -

My father bought the property in 1957. My mother is now 77 years old. The house is in a good position and is probably worth a lot of money, if she chose to sell. She does not wish to sell. That is where she and my father have lived since the 1960's and she is safe and secure there; and I live 5 seconds away, which to my mother is extremely important. My mother has no other living relatives in this State.

The letter continues -

My father who is now, almost 94 lives in an aged care facility . . .

Further on the letter states -

Now I must meet the total cost of my fathers aged care as well as provide for my mother. She has no independent source of income, nor any entitlement to funds that would enable her to meet this horrendous tax.

. . . the Government says she can defer paying the tax until her death. Isn't that an indirect death tax, something that the Labour party would have never got through, if they had been up front before the election.

That is exactly right. This is a deferred death tax for many of these people. If they take the Government's so-called relief option - disgraceful as that is - it becomes simply a death duty, which is progressively cumulative. Either the Government will force people out of their homes, or, if they defer the tax, it becomes a death duty. The Treasurer should be honest and admit that he is imposing death duties on families in Western Australia, and they will not affect just 900, but thousands of people will be affected. The Opposition will wait to see the legislation. I will provide another example in which a constituent writes -

We purchased our home . . . 23 years ago. We are self-funded retirees, we do not rely on the government pension, but on a self-funded equivalent.

Why should we be penalised when we have bought this as a family home with the aim of paying it off by the time we retire. Our income in no way covers the proposed amount of land tax, and should this bill be passed, we will be forced to sell our family home.

Mr Ripper: What is the value of their block?

Mr BARNETT: It would be substantial.

Mr Ripper: Then they will be eligible for the concession.

Mr BARNETT: So, they will be eligible for the Treasurer's grotty little, miserable concession! Who does the Treasurer think he is, offering a concession to people who have worked all their lives to provide for themselves and their families! These people absolutely reject the tax and the miserable concession. They are not interested in deferring taxes or having Labor Party concessions. These are proud people, who have worked and provided for themselves. They have never put their hand out and asked for a pension or a subsidy. They have deferred holidays, raised their children and provided for their retirement, and now the Government is taking their family home off them. They do not want the Government's concession; they want what they are entitled to - the sanctity of the family home. That is all they are asking for. They are retired, and they want the Government to go away and leave them alone. They have done their bit for this country. They went to war, saved, protected and supported their families, built businesses and employed people and now they have virtually no income because they are in retirement, but they get by, their children support them, and they are happy living in their family home of 50 years. They do not want to defer taxes and they do not want concessions; they just want to be left alone to enjoy their remaining years in their family home with some dignity and pride. Why does the Treasurer hate these people so much? Why does he behave like this? It is disgraceful.

Mr Sweetman: The Treasurer says he will go away and wait until they die.

Mr BARNETT: That will make it a death duty. These people are not interested in that. They wanted to provide for their children and grandchildren. They will not sit there and watch the value of their property disappear. The

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letter continues by saying that people who have paid their way for their entire life, who have not relied on the Government for any form of income, who have provided their own security and financial arrangements for their retirement should not have to pay again. I know these people quite well. They are fine people, who have given enormous service to this community, in the form of charity work, and they are not wealthy. They have lived for 23 years on land which is now worth a lot of money. They have done a great deal to help the disadvantaged and underprivileged in our community, and now the Treasurer will tax them. They thought they were at least secure on a tiny income. At least they had the house, which they have always valued and treasured, and restored, brick by brick. Now the Government will take that house off them. The Treasurer may shake his head, but these people are proud, and they will sell their house rather than defer the tax. The Government will take their house and family away from them. I will provide another example -

I have lived at the above address for thirty six years in a house which I built myself, with the help of my Son.

By hard work and carefull spending over the years I have lived without Government handouts but I am not wealthy. I certainly would be hard pressed to pay two per cent a year of the value of my land.

... This property is my home and my families home.

That is all he writes; it is his home. He has worked for it all his life. He built and maintained it himself, and it is his pride and joy, but he cannot keep it. Here is a simple one -

My Mother has lived in her house for 45 years and has not got the funds to pay this regressive tax. What are we going to do?

This is someone just crying for help, asking what to do. His mother has lived in the house for 45 years and there is no way she can pay, and her son certainly cannot. How does he explain that to his mother? How can one explain to elderly people aged in their 80s or 90s, some of whom may even have dementia, that they cannot keep their family home? How is the Treasurer going to do that? Will the Treasurer sit down with me in my electorate, as I will for the next few weeks, and talk to these elderly people and visit them? He will not, and if my constituents saw him, they would be disgusted.

Mr Ripper: People do ring me, and I talk to them in my office about exactly these same issues.

Mr BARNETT: The Treasurer will not be welcome in my electorate, and in many other parts of this State. If he thinks this is confined to my electorate, and a few other wealthy suburbs, he is gravely mistaken. I provide another example -

We live in Applecross & bought our block 26 yrs ago. Over the years we have made sacrifices in order to be able to live in the area of our choice.

It is our primary asset and is to be our superannuation.

We cannot afford the proposed increase in taxes so is the Govt going to force the sale of our family home because of our inability to pay?

The answer will probably be yes. Another letter reads -

I am sick and tired of the catch cry "the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer"
... Because you may live in a better home or better area does *not* mean you have the 'capacity to pay'
...

There are many such examples. These letters are accumulating. I will finish with this example -

... the government is discriminating specifically against a portion of the electorate on the basis simply that it is an easy mark.

As you will now be aware, many people living on land with a large value are ordinary Australians who are not born with a silver spoon in their mouths, and have worked long and hard (and paid taxes - federal state and local) for what they have; frequently it is their superannuation scheme.

I am sure that members will get many letters similar to those. To the best of my ability, I will meet with all the people in my electorate who have written to me. This example of lack of respect for elderly people in our community is the most shameful act I have seen by a Government. It is a nasty, pernicious tax; it is not \$1 000 a year that people can find their way through or that they can be helped with. How can retired people in their 80s and 90s find \$10 000 or \$20 000, year in and year out? They cannot go to their children - who probably have children of their own - who may be heavily committed to their own mortgages and school expenses. Some of

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these people cannot afford \$5 000 a year. Many of them cannot afford \$1 000 a year. Many people in my electorate are eminent Western Australians. Others have provided a lifetime of community service to charitable organisations and have helped the disadvantaged and others when there was a need. They are the pillars of society. Many of them do not live in lavish houses, but they do have large blocks of land that are close to the river or the ocean. Somewhat erroneously and naively, I assumed that many of them were wealthy. I have been surprised when some of them have told me frankly what their income is. Many of them have incomes that are well below the poverty line.

Mr Whitely: Does the member understand the difference between income and assets?

Mr BARNETT: I understand it perfectly well. Members on this side of the House and I respect seniors who have worked, saved and provided for themselves. We also respect the notion of the family home being sacrosanct. I know it is a long time out to make commitments, but the first act of a future Liberal Government will be to repeal this tax.

Mr Ripper: It is the first unfunded commitment of the next election campaign.

Mr BARNETT: An unfunded commitment! We are talking about the Second World War generation and the Treasurer is talking about unfunded commitments!

Mr Ripper: It is a new Barnett budget blow-out.

Mr BARNETT: Budget blow-out! The Treasurer is a disgrace. He is talking about the Second World War generation - the diggers who came home and bought a block of land. He sniggers. My electorate is full of those people. They came back from the war and bought land.

Mr Whiteley interjected.

Mr Ripper: A few tradesmen fought in the war as well.

Mr BARNETT: What a comment! Many of the people I am talking about have trades backgrounds. Many of them worked as clerks in businesses all their lives; they are not millionaires. They were never wealthy. They scrimped and saved; they have never had a new car. More often than not, their widows have found themselves without a high income. All they have is a modest house on a valuable block of land.

Mr Logan: They will defer the tax.

Mr BARNETT: They will not defer the tax.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edwards): Order, members! The Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mr BARNETT: This legislation shows starkly the difference between members on this side of the House and members on the other side. We do not suffer from envy; we respect and support people who have worked for themselves, and contributed to their families and the community. People's plans for retirement, whether through superannuation or by building up the value of an asset such as a family home, should be protected. This Government should not make changes that will adversely and unfairly affect them. This issue will go on. I see the member for Roleystone is sniggering. He will be surprised to find that some of the people I am talking about are in his electorate.

Mr Whitely: I will be surprised.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr BARNETT: Some people will be affected in Mt Lawley, where the minister lives. She is the member for Armadale but she lives in Mt Lawley.

Ms MacTiernan: I have a house in Kelmscott.

Mr BARNETT: The holiday house in Kelmscott! The minister lives in Mt Lawley, just as the member for Cockburn lives in my electorate of Cottesloe. That is their choice. They should not pretend that they are fighting for the battlers in low-income suburbs. A few Labor members live in my electorate. The minister is not alone in living in Mt Lawley.

Mr Whitely: Are we not allowed to?

Mr BARNETT: Of course, members are, but they should not come into this place and claim that they represent the working poor and the underprivileged of the community because they do not; they are the chardonnay set. Half of them live in wealthy, riverside and ocean side suburbs in nice, flash houses on expensive land and they have holiday shacks in their electorates. That is the reality of the situation. I have no problem in standing up for

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

the people of my electorate and those in other electorates, including those in the Government's electorates, on this issue.

I will refer to some areas of expenditure and go through some of the great commitments made by the Labor Party. There is an increase of \$69 million in the health budget for 2001-02. After accounting for inflation, that is a real increase of 0.8 per cent. The health budget will increase by 3.8 per cent but the budget forecast is for an inflation rate of three per cent. The health budget will increase by only 0.8 per cent. As the member for Murdoch will say, the cost of providing extra health services to satisfy demand is running at about seven to nine per cent a year. That will mean cuts. We will find out later this week where the cuts are. The capital contribution in the health budget has been cut by 10 per cent. Planned capital works total \$102.9 million, according to the Minister for Health. He did not tell us that only \$25 million of that is for new works. The rest is for works already under way. It is a fantastic commitment to health; what a fantastic effort!

Education will receive an increase of \$48 million in 2001-02. After inflation, it will be a decrease of 0.5 per cent. The student population will grow by at least 1.5 per cent, which means effectively that there will be a two per cent cut in funding for each student. So much for the Government's commitment to education. During the lead up to the election and during the election campaign, we heard a lot about education. Education spending has been cut. The Government should not try to blame the federal Government. I remind members opposite that 70 per cent of students attend government schools and government schools are 90 per cent funded by the State Government. The Government has cut the funding for the vast majority of students in the vast majority of schools, which are government schools.

The police budget will be cut in nominal terms by 2.8 per cent. After allowing for inflation, the cut will be 5.8 per cent. There is no growth for transport. Planning and infrastructure will receive a 13 per cent cut and agriculture will receive a real cut of nine per cent. After the tragic events in the United States it is ironic that fire and emergency services will receive a real cut of 18 per cent.

The Premier has been trying to talk up the tourism industry. Why has the tourism budget been cut by 10.6 per cent? The Government says that the industry should be talked up - what a commitment! With due respect to Premier Beattie, the Queensland Government is doing something. The South Australian Government has done something. What is this Government doing? It says we should talk up the industry! How do we talk up the industry when only 40 airline seats are going into Broome compared with 250 before the collapse of Ansett? People are stranded. There is not much point in talking up the industry.

The Treasurer made great play of the largest capital works program in the history of the State. Generally, each program is the biggest as the State is getting bigger. That claim can be made every year. For the general government sector, the capital works budget for 2001-02 is \$1.00249 billion. It is actually \$47 million less than 2000-01. The Government reduced capital works in the general government sector by nearly \$48 million. The Treasurer runs around and says that the Government has embarked on the largest capital works program in government in the State's history -

Mr Ripper: Across the total public sector.

Mr BARNETT: It is the Treasurer's boast, not mine that it is the largest capital works program in the State's history. Expenditure on capital works was cut by \$48 million in the general government sector, which is the area over which the Treasurer controls directly; that is, without boards.

Mr Ripper: What happened over the total public sector?

Mr BARNETT: The total public sector, but not the area over which the Treasurer has total control - because there are government trading enterprises and boards, which are quite different -

Mr Ripper: We do have control over the capital works programs.

Mr BARNETT: The Treasurer does not. The total public sector expenditure has increased from \$3.1 billion to \$3.26 billion, an increase of \$155 million. What is the major reason for that? The reason is that I made the decision to go ahead with the redevelopment of the Kwinana power station and also because the new dam and the pipeline are being built. They were decisions made by Western Power and the Water Corporation that were approved by the previous Government and were already under way. That is the only reason the capital works budget has increased.

Mr Ripper: Do you want to claim the credit?

Mr BARNETT: No, I am only making an observation. The Treasurer said that the budget would provide for the largest capital works program in history. However, the Treasurer has actually cut \$48 million from the general public sector and from areas for which he has responsibility. The reason for the increase in capital works in the

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

areas in which the Treasurer did not have responsibility is that those independent boards, which are provided for by legislation, made decisions in previous years that were sanctioned by the previous Government. The Treasurer should not boast to the House about something with which he had very little to do. The Treasurer has displayed a lack of integrity in this exercise.

I refer to this wonderful claim, which I referred to in question time, that the Labor Party would save \$850 million.

Mr Ripper: A saving of \$852 million.

Mr BARNETT: I thank the Treasurer for providing me with that detail. The Government might save \$2 million; however, I think it might be a struggle to save \$850 million. The Government expects that \$850 million will be saved because of a priority dividend. This is an interesting point. Half of those savings have been identified and will be considered by the Opposition. Half of the savings are to be achieved by the so-called priority dividend. How many times did the Treasurer come in here and say that he had been to 73 meetings and that he was cutting and slashing and burning the Government's spending and that he was burning the midnight oil? Yet we find that half of the \$850 million savings are notional; that is, they are assumed savings.

Mr Ripper: You should ask my ministerial colleagues whether they are notional.

Mr BARNETT: We will. I am sure that half of the savings are real. Let us consider the notional savings. About 60 to 70 per cent of expenditure within the public sector, particularly the general government sector, goes to wages and wage on-costs. If large savings were to be made, programs and projects would need to be stopped. However, to save money, the Government would have to stop employing people. That will be the Achilles heel of this budget. The Labor Party will not have the fortitude to stop employing public servants. However, if it does not stop employing public servants - in other words, if the size of the public sector is not reduced significantly - and if more redundancies are not offered, the savings forecast by the Government will not be achieved. Even redundancies are a net cost in the year in which they are offered. Therefore, savings may occur, but they will occur some time later. I assume that the Government will not sack public servants, yet it has a notional figure of some \$450 million of savings.

How else might the Government save that amount of money? The Government might argue that it could make the public sector more efficient. I am sure that can be done and that there is always room to make any organisation, including the public sector, more efficient. How will the Government make it more efficient? One way might be to contract out functions of government. Instead of having in-house public servants, their jobs could be contracted out. However, the Government is philosophically opposed to that. As I said earlier, the former Department of Contract and Management Services showed that \$110 million was saved by contracting out services, but the Government is trying to reverse the contracting-out process; therefore it cannot make savings in that way.

Mr Johnson: The unions do not like it.

Mr BARNETT: Exactly. The other way to save money would be to make people more efficient by the use of flexible working arrangements. However, the Government cannot do that because it does not like workplace agreements; it wants everyone to be on the same standard conditions. The Government's savings of \$450 million are purely notional. The Government is not prepared to sack public servants, it does not like contracting out, and it is committed to getting rid of workplace agreements; therefore, those savings will not occur. That is the great fallacy of this budget. This budget will fall over.

Mr Ripper: Do you remember the 1997-98 coalition budget statement? It was all about productivity savings of \$60 million, \$86 million, \$120 million and \$103 million.

Mr BARNETT: Did they occur?

Mr Ripper: The coalition was not able to deliver them.

Mr BARNETT: Every Government that has tried to balance its budget by notional productivity savings has failed.

Mr Ripper: Do you know which portfolio caused the biggest trouble for the former Treasurer? It was your portfolio.

Mr BARNETT: Congratulations, sunshine. That is because I cared for kids and the Government expanded the school system.

Mr Ripper: Did you ignore the former Treasurer's productivity dividend?

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr BARNETT: No, Education was exempt.

Mr Ripper: It was not, as you know.

Mr BARNETT: Education was exempt.

Mr Ripper: Only after you refused to do it.

Mr BARNETT: Education and Health were always exempt. The point I make, which is a criticism of the previous Government, is that productivity and efficiency dividends do not work.

Mr Ripper: It is a priority dividend.

Mr BARNETT: That will not work either. The Treasurer can call it whatever he wants to call it. Call it "Ripper's rip off", it will not work. The budget is built on the assumption that these savings will be made.

Mr Ripper: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia might have told you to say that, but it is wrong.

Mr BARNETT: It does not tell me to say anything.

Mr Ripper: Were chamber members not there to guide you on what to say after the budget was brought down?

Mr BARNETT: No. I met with them and I asked them about the impact of payroll tax.

Mr Ripper: Did they tell you which line to read when it came to judging whether there would be a surplus in the budget?

Mr BARNETT: I do not need the CCI to tell me that. The Treasurer might recall that I was its economist for three years.

The savings outlined in the budget will not be made. I remind the Treasurer that he forecast savings of \$850 million. Spokespersons on this side of the House will debate the detail of the budget. However, its structure is fundamentally flawed for that reason alone. The budget broke the Labor Party's great promise that it would not increase taxes, it failed to deliver on health, education, and law and order, and it will see unemployment and state debt rise. The State's economy will not progress as a result of this budget; it has no vision or direction, and there is nothing in it that anyone can grasp with any confidence.

I will now refer to education. I am pleased that the member opposite raised it. For five years, I was the Minister for Education. It is a wonderful job and if any members in this House get a chance to become the education minister, I urge them to take it because it is probably the most satisfying portfolio in government. The previous Government made an enormous commitment to education and members opposite sometimes acknowledge those achievements. However, in the lead up to the election, the now Minister for Education went out of his way to criticise the education system in this State. In particular, he was critical of government schooling, which is his style.

During the past five years the former Government increased education funding enormously. I agree that that rate of growth could not and should not be sustained in the long term; however the real per capita funding for schools and education must be increased. In the past five years, the average annual increase was 8.1 per cent, which was a high percentage. That increase occurred for a number of reasons. The principal reason was the introduction of a universal primary year for five-year-olds, and a universal kindergarten year for four-year-olds. The introduction of effectively two more years of schooling on a universal basis required an enormous increase in school funding. The school budget also provided for strong capital works programs, particularly with the building and rebuilding of schools under the local area planning process, which was contentious at the time.

The former Government provided for the expenditure of \$100 million for computers, and members opposite like to make fun of that. However, I have no doubt that when they visit not only the government schools but also the non-government schools in this State that were funded by the coalition Government, the students and teachers will proudly show them the computers. The previous Government put about 26 000 computers into government schools and 8 000 computers into non-government schools throughout the State. Members opposite criticised and ridiculed that policy. I am immensely proud of it. I do not deny for a moment that there were some glitches in introducing technology into schools at that scale and speed. Of course there were. Anyone who has a home or business computer is aware of the problems of rapidly developing and expanding technology, but the children in Western Australia did not have the level of access to and education in computers that was needed and justified. The previous Government quickly addressed that issue.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

It also addressed the issue of vocational training in schools. Our school system had for too long been heavily concentrated on the so-called academic or tertiary entrance examination programs. During those five years, the proportion of students undertaking a vocational program in high school increased from three per cent to more than 30 per cent. Vocational education is expensive. It costs more to have an applied, practical program than it does to provide an academic course in mathematics, history or English. Part of the reason the education budget increased was that the previous Government deliberately provided schooling opportunities for less academic kids, who chose a vocational program. That has been important in improving retention rates in the education system, and not necessarily in the school itself. Many of those young people have moved seamlessly into the technical and further education sector and from there have gone to university or employment - wherever they chose. More young people are engaging in relevant and useful education and training through that program. The coalition Government also introduced a new curriculum from kindergarten to year 12. Costs were involved in the move to an outcomes-based curriculum. All those things were done. Since 1993, the coalition Government has built 36 new primary schools and 11 new high schools. I could go on and on.

I am immensely proud of what was achieved by my predecessor Hon Norman Moore and myself in the education portfolio. We reduced class sizes in the early childhood area, and we started a process of reducing class sizes for adolescent students who experienced behavioural problems. We successfully negotiated two rounds of wage increases, which substantially increased the salary levels of teachers. We addressed the situation in which it was difficult to find teachers who were prepared to go to country areas. The crisis of 1997-98 was turned around; we managed to get experienced teachers to go back to country areas. That will always be a difficult thing to do in a State like Western Australia. All those matters were part of the day-to-day role of developing and improving education, and managing situations as they occurred. Ministers must be able to deal with situations. They cannot just put out press releases; they must actually deal with issues as they occur.

I will now consider what the Labor Party has provided in this budget. It has not even increased school funding to the level of inflation! Where are these people? They distributed brochures and talked about their commitment to public education during the election campaign. How many times did we hear it? How many times did Labor Party members imply that coalition members cared only about private schools and rich kids and their families? The Labor Party implied that consistently. Its members made commitments to support a government school system and campaigned strongly on that point. Its members used every tactic. The Minister for Education got down into the gutter, but I will not refer to that. Labor Party members used all those tactics to criticise a coalition Government that had done more for government schooling in this State than probably any previous Government during the post-war years. Perhaps the only rivals to the coalition Government might be the Governments during the era of post-war immigration, when there was enormous expansion to cope with the large number of immigrants to Australia.

The previous Government expanded, upgraded and funded the State's school system, and the school system responded. The pride in schools was evident throughout the State. As I have said on other occasions, I visited more than 600 schools in this State during my time as education minister. The improvement in standards, uniforms, presentation and pride among students and teachers was visible during those five years. Public education - government schooling - moved forward; it progressed and competed with the best private schools in the State. Indeed, many families in my electorate, for example, decided to take their children out of private schools and to put them in government schools. Admittedly, it is a great government school, but it was happening there and elsewhere. I will not name the person involved, but during the controversial and difficult local area education planning process, the Government announced that it would build some new schools. One of the district directors said to me, "Thanks Colin, for the first time in my career, the government school system is fighting back". For the first time, the government school system was building facilities of a standard and calibre to match those in the best private schools in this State. I am proud of that and of the way in which our government school system responded.

What has the Labor Party provided? For the first time since 1993, the level of funding for schooling, which is essentially government schooling, will not keep up with the inflation rate, let alone the growth in school population. That is an absolute disgrace. The political party that campaigned so strongly on its support for public schooling and government education has not matched the inflation rate in its first budget. It is the lowest increase in school funding for about a decade. That is what the Labor Government has done. The Minister for Education has failed our school system - particularly our government school system - the teachers, the students and their parents. The Australian Labor Party pledged to support reduced class sizes for years 1 to 3. I refer to the ALP policy commitment titled "Investing in our children". What a joke. The Labor Party has not funded the education budget enough to maintain its value and to sustain it where it is, let alone to cope with student growth.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

I will consider the forward estimates, of which the Treasurer seems so fond. There is no funding to reduce class sizes in this year's budget or in the forward year budgets. I always think that forward estimates are exaggerated. The Treasurer chose to exaggerate because he thought he could make some political points. I will make a political point: where is the Minister for Education's pre-election commitment to reduce class sizes? It is not in this year's budget and it is not in the forward estimates. It is not there.

Do members remember the debate about technology during the election campaign? The largest single commitment the coalition made was that it would provide about \$120 million to fund online teaching and learning. That would have effectively been the next step in technology and computing in schools. It would have allowed online teaching and allowed schools to network. What a huge boost that would be for regional Western Australia. If a district high school could not afford a science teacher, it could hook up to a teacher from a major metropolitan school who could run the program and interact directly with students online. All sorts of fantastic things could be done. It would have provided the opportunity for parents to have online access to the classroom, teacher and the Internet. The students and their parents would have been provided with Internet access from home as part of this package, which was designed within an educational framework. There were lots of technical challenges to overcome, but the single biggest commitment the coalition made was for more than \$100 million of its total election commitment of \$440 million to be used to improve technology in schools. What did the Labor Party do during the election campaign? With great fanfare, the current Minister for Education announced that he would provide an extra \$30 million for technology in schools. It costs at least \$100 million to set up online teaching and learning facilities. The coalition knew that it cost \$100 million to put 26 000 computers into government schools and 8 000 computers into non-government schools. To take the next generational step, which the technology now allows, would cost \$120 million. The Labor Party was starting to run shy of its excessive election commitments and said that it would provide \$30 million. I said during the election campaign that it could not be done for \$30 million. The present Minister for Education said that a Labor Government would match everything that I had promised and would do it for \$30 million. He was \$90 million short.

Mr Bradshaw: Pigs might fly.

Mr BARNETT: That is right; they might. In a report in *The West Australian* of 5 June 2001, the current Minister for Education proudly announced that he would provide another \$90 million for technology in schools. Hang on! Where did this come from? This is the \$90 million the Minister for Education was short of in the election campaign. It cost \$120 million, and we committed \$120 million. During the election campaign the Minister for Education said it would cost \$30 million. However, in June - four months after the election - he states that the Government will find another \$90 million. We have looked at the budget, and it is not there. It has disappeared again! The Minister for Education has gone back to the \$30 million. Therefore, online teaching and learning in schools has gone again. The Minister for Education tried to pretend he was promising it - then he did promise it - and now he has taken it away. The guy is incompetent. He has shown no genuine ability to progress education in this State.

Another item under education is school fees. The Labor Party seems to believe that parents should not contribute anything towards the cost of consumable items that students use in government schools.

Mr Sweetman interjected.

Mr BARNETT: Yes.

Therefore, the Government believes that parents, apart from buying the uniforms and feeding and housing their kids, should not contribute anything. The idea that government schooling is free was good politics, and it has probably worked. The Government tried to portray the coalition Government and me as being responsible for the introduction of government school fees on government schools. However, who put the fees in place? It was the Labor Government in 1984. I have never made much of that. I recognise that, and I have always supported that. It had a level of bipartisan support, because it is proper that parents should contribute money towards the cost of consumable items; that is, those things that the students are allowed to keep, and take home. In the old days, consumable items might have included cooking materials and bits of wood. However, today consumable items include floppy disks, computer paper, excursions to theatres, and a host of things that make up modern learning. The fee was not much at all. It was to be capped at \$50 for primary schools after a survey showed that many schools were charging \$50, even though the regulations stated that schools could not charge more than \$9. Many schools, including those in government members' electorates, were already charging \$30, \$40 or \$50, and parents were paying it because they recognised that it was for consumable items. Also, parents wanted to avoid a note being sent home with Johnny or Sally every time there was a school activity stating that \$2 or \$3 was required for something, \$5 was required for a floppy disk, or \$3 was required for a bus fare for an excursion.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Parents preferred to pay up front, and to let the school manage the money for all activities. The coalition Government introduced strict guidelines to ensure that the scheme was carried out properly. However, what has happened? The Labor Party said that school fees will be paid on a voluntary basis. However, in many respects, those payments have been voluntary. Indeed, what I was introducing under -

Mr Marlborough: So, we haven't done anything different from you.

Mr BARNETT: No, the Government has, because it has -

Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr BARNETT: No, the Government has given a commitment to amend the legislation, and it has told people -

Mr Marlborough: You have told the people in the real world it isn't any different.

Mr BARNETT: The difference is subtle, but legally it is significant. The Government has removed schools' power or authority to collect money. The Government has also stated publicly that fees will be paid on a voluntary basis.

Mr Marlborough: Leader of the Opposition, do you think it was appropriate for schools to call in private investigators, to arrest parents, and to take them to court for not paying school fees? You know that was happening under your regime.

Mr BARNETT: When it was brought to my attention, I stopped that practice.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr BARNETT: This is my speech in the budget debate, and courtesy demands that I be given an opportunity to speak.

There has always been a doubt about it. The coalition Government took an approach that parents - this is a philosophical difference between the Government and the Opposition - should contribute something towards consumable items. However, provision was made for additional funding to be provided to schools in which collection and contribution rates would be lower because there was a higher proportion of low-income families.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr BARNETT: That is what we put in place.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr BARNETT: I want to finish, and then the member for Peel can ask any question he wants.

Those school fees generated about \$17 million across our government school system. During the election campaign, the now Minister for Education - I will wait to see if he does it now - told people that the fees would be voluntary. Are parents still paying them? In some cases they are; however, in a number of schools, contributions from parents have collapsed. I cannot find anything in the budget that will provide compensation to the Department of Education or schools for the loss of \$17 million in school fees. In a number of schools in which there were high collection rates, fee payments have either dwindled or they no longer exist. Is there any wonder when parents have been told that the payment of school fees is voluntary - that they do not have to pay them? The Minister for Education has been boasting about this. However, if he is to continue to boast about it, he must fund those schools for their loss of fees.

I turn now to vocational education and training. In 1997, just after I became the education minister, only 638 Western Australian students from 36 schools were doing a VET program. By 2000, 7 700 students in 140 government schools were doing a VET program. Therefore, in just three years, the coalition Government was able to increase the number of students in vocational education training from 638 to 7 700. The Government's budget papers state that vocational education and training programs in schools will be expanded. However, vocational education costs more than the so-called TEE or academic programs. The Government has said that it will continue the expansion of vocational programs, but the funding does not exist. There is nothing in the budget. Nothing has been provided even in the Government's precious forward estimates. That is the reality.

The Opposition has only just started to look at the budget. I have made a few comments on education, and other members will comment on health and police, and the implications for industrial relations and the like of the budget. This budget has not been well prepared. The Treasurer will remember that on budget day, I shook his hand and said that while I did not wish him luck politically, I hoped that he had done a good job. I have to say that I am not happy, Eric! This is not a good budget. It does not deliver the promises that the Labor Party has

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

made in a host of areas. It is inherently and structurally unsound, and that is it. It will mean rising unemployment, and a lack of confidence in business and investment in this State. It is a nasty budget in that it attacks independent self-funded retired people. It also attacks the small business sector, and it attacks the people in the community who work and strive for themselves, and for their families. It is overladen - if not weighed down - by a tired, socialist philosophy of a Labor Government. It has come from a Labor Government that is more interested in electoral matters, gay and lesbian reform, and a host of social issues, than it is in the decent, hard-working people of this State. The Treasurer has not done well with this budget. It will not stand the test of time, and it is likely to be in tatters before the end of the calendar year.

MR MARSHALL (Dawesville) [4.38 pm]: In 1992, when I was endorsed as the Liberal candidate to contest the seat of Murray, most of my mates thought I was crazy. They thought that I should retire because I had had a wonderful sporting and business career. However, I was concerned about the future of young Western Australians. At that time, unemployment was sky-high, the education system was in disarray, the health system was shot to pieces, roads needed maintenance, and the State was practically bankrupt. I had been criticising the Labor Government for a couple of years because I believed there was no future for the youth, and that the unions had too much control. Everyone was concerned and pessimistic about his or her future. Once again, my mates told me to "put my money where my mouth is". As a sportsman, I had heard that many times, so I thought, "Why not?" Although I was quoted at 10 to one for the seat of Murray, I won. What followed were some of the most exciting years I have experienced. This Parliament had vibrant times between 1993 and 2001, when the coalition Government was able to rectify the crisis it had inherited in 1992. History will show that although the coalition lost government in 2001, it left the State stable. It had record low unemployment, its AAA credit rating had been restored, and it was financially respected around the world. The coalition Government spent millions of dollars on important infrastructure projects around the State. In 2001, it left the State with a credit balance of \$268 million. In just six months, that stability has started to crumble.

Last year, when we were in government, I was gravely concerned about the cockiness of the then Opposition. During a speech I asked if any opposition member had been in business. Not a hand fluttered. I asked if any opposition member understood finance, and no-one moved. I asked if any opposition member could read a balance sheet, and a couple half-indicated that they could. Then, with tongue in cheek, I asked if any opposition member had ever known the feel of money and if any could count it correctly. I repeat that I asked that question tongue in cheek but, unfortunately for the people of Western Australia, it looks as though I was right. The health system has crumbled in just six months. This was confirmed by a recent article in *The West Australian* entitled "Labor fails health test: AMA". The Australian Medical Association is reported as saying -

The state of WA's health system has plummeted since the new State Government has been in power

...

Last year in Parliament, I asked whether any of the opposition members would know how to govern. It was an off-hand remark - some bait thrown into the debate. I am afraid to say that, once again, it looks as though I was right. What kind of a Government is this? I thought that ministers were supposed to be leaders. They are supposed to have a grasp of their portfolios and, most importantly, they are supposed to be able to make decisions. In six months, this Government has set up 55 reviews, inquiries, committees and summits, all endeavouring to make a decision for the ministers of the day. Delays like this certainly show the Gallop Government to be a slow-trot Government. Those 55 reviews are: one, review of the public health system's administrative system following the abolition of the Metropolitan Health Service Board; two, review of community health services; three, review of penalties for people who refuse to answer questions at coronial inquiries; four, review of state-run hostels; five, review of the services for students with disabilities; six, review of workers compensation; seven, review of the training sector; eight, review of the planning policy for Smiths Beach; nine, review of sporting infrastructure needs.

These ministers should know what is going on; yet, they hold reviews. I continue: 10, review of the building industry code of practice; 11, review of the water service standards; 12, review of state and local government relations; 13, review of native title negotiation principles; 14, review of security in public housing; 15, review of the laws on when children can be held to know right from wrong; 16, review of the private port contract at Kwinana; 17, review of the bus schedules; 18, review of public education; 19, review of Main Roads' privatised contracts system; 20, review of business taxes.

I realise this repetition is making this speech sound a little dull, but it is important that the people of Western Australia know that this Government is failing them. I will finish the list: 21, review of membership of advisory boards and committees; 22, review of the Osborne Park Hospital; 23, review of the contracts for Peel and Joondalup Health Campuses; 24, review of work place and mining safety laws; 25, review of the Perth Market Act; 26, review of the women's interest portfolio; 27, review of the approvals process for major developments

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

and projects. Does this Government know anything? I continue: 28, review to address concerns of former Agriculture Protection Board employees about health implications of weed spraying in the Kimberley; 29, review of the optional voting rights for 16-year-olds; 30, state development forum to set up a think tank on industry development; 31, inquiry into autopsies and tissue removal; 32, royal commission into finance brokers; 33, royal commission into police corruption.

What about the committees and task forces? They are: 34, committee to develop legislative amendments on gay and lesbian rights; 35, committee to review all government tenancies; 36, panel to recommend whether the South Perth council should be dismissed or reinstated; 37, task force on reform of public sector; 38, task force to scrutinise the convention centre project; 39, committee to make recommendations on industry assistance to the timber industry; 40, committee to fix the ailing health system; 41, task force on homelessness.

I know this sounds boring. It is the most boring speech I have ever made, and one of the few that I have read in its entirety.

Mr Marlborough: I do not think it's boring; but I don't know what you consider boring. More government members than opposition members are listening.

Mr MARSHALL: I am a great admirer of the member for Peel and his orations in this House; however, I ask him to give this his full attention. I know that he is in fairyland, but this is not a fairytale.

I continue: 42, dry season task force; 43, coastal planning and management task force; 44, task force on energy reform; 45, Administrative Appeals Tribunal task force; 46, technical task force to examine ways to speed up processes of mining exploration and land title applications in areas where native title might survive; 47 - the list goes on - task force on physical activity for children; 48, steering committee on gas deregulation; 49, task force on regional air services; 50, task force to progress security of payment matters in the building and construction industry; 51, task force on salinity strategies; 52, task force on the police helicopter service. Does this Government know anything? I continue: 53, task force on Rockingham transit system; 54, electricity reform task force; and 55, the Community Drug Summit, which has just been held. The Government has established 55 reviews in six months. What will it be like in three and a half years? I shudder to think about that.

What about the broken promises? The Government promised to increase the fight against corruption and establish a royal commission into the Police Service to restore community confidence. It promised to set up a royal commission into finance brokers. It made promises about the number of police to be sent to Kalgoorlie and the Maylands Police Academy. It said tax and charges would not be increased. It made promises about public sector redundancies; it said there would be no public service job cuts under the Labor Party's reconstruction plan. Oh yeah! Why have Peter Browne, Neil Jarvis and Stephen Home left the Department of Education? Why have Wally Cox and Bryan Jenkins left the environmental departments? Alan Bansemer and Andrew Weeks are no longer with the Department of Health, and Simon Holthouse and Gary Prattley are no longer with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. All those highly qualified executive officers have left departments in the past six months. That has resulted in a great loss of experience for the State. Everything this Government touches falls apart.

Mr Bradshaw: Most of those people were top-class public servants who contributed in a great way, and their expertise has now been pushed aside.

Mr MARSHALL: I agree with the member for Murray-Wellington that we are starting at the bottom again without the extensive experience of qualified chief executive officers. The Government cannot skim all the cream off the top at once; it has to give the public service a chance and to start with a sprinkling of new people.

Mr Johnson: They are moving back in all their old cronies.

Mr MARSHALL: If they are their old cronies, that is up to the Government; we cannot control that. I hope their old cronies are up to the standard required to control and govern the State, because we need proper direction. Only time will tell whether the member for Hillarys is correct.

Several members interjected.

Mr MARSHALL: I cannot hear the member for Wanneroo because about five people were interjecting. The Government has 32 members in this Chamber, but they are so ashamed of the budget that only a handful are here tonight. The theme of broken budget promises was picked up by the Alston cartoon in *The West Australian* of 5 September, which I thought was fantastic. Alston had me in stitches, and everyone I spoke to agreed; they all thought it was hilarious. Alston captured the ministers - Ripper, Edwards, McGinty, Kucera, Brown and Roberts perfectly. The entire State is laughing at this Government's inability to govern. I will table that cartoon, because it will remind everyone that government ministers are a joke in the community.

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

Mr MARSHALL: Everywhere I go in my electorate of Dawesville, the community is already dissatisfied with the Gallop Government's performance. The member for Mandurah is in the performing arts game; he has heard the call of, "Encore! encore!" Everywhere I go the call is, "Blame the Gallop Government." It is incredible. I was playing golf at the Mandurah Country Club on Saturday when a bloke duffed his approach to the seventh green. Normally when he duffs a shot on the golf course there might be a few expletives and he might throw his club, but he said, "Damn it! Blame the Gallop Government". When the Peel deviation delay was referred to in the budget all I heard in my electorate was, "Blame the Gallop Government." When the freeway extension was delayed, all I heard was, "Blame the Gallop Government." When the Perth-Mandurah rail link was changed and delayed until 2006 - if we are lucky - the chorus was, "Blame the Gallop Government." That is all I have heard. When it was announced that there were no funds for a police station at Falcon, everyone said, "Blame the Gallop Government." When there were delays and restrictions to the construction of the sewerage system for the Riverside and Falcon areas, which are environmental areas near the rivers and the ocean that definitely need sewerage instead of septic tanks, the residents said, "Blame the Gallop Government." When the Government knocked back funding for the Falcon skating rink the cry was unanimous, "Blame the Gallop Government." When people heard about the delay in constructing the Mandurah bus terminal until 2005 - if we are lucky, but I doubt it will ever be built - the call was "Blame the Gallop Government." Again, the call in the electoral reform, one vote, one value scam is, "Blame the Gallop Government." The unanimous call resulting from the Government's lack of response to the appointment of two extra marine and fisheries officers in my electorate was, "Blame the Gallop Government."

It is not easy being in opposition. However, being in government when it is failing must be pure hell. It is little wonder that some of the ministers have inferiority complexes. Despite this negativity the people of Dawesville-Mandurah are optimistic about the future. They are grateful to the Court Government for establishing the new 140-bed hospital and for the five new schools that were opened in the past seven years. They are particularly grateful for the new senior campus where all the year 11 and 12 students are under one roof and have the advantage that every subject is taught according to their skill level. That is a marvellous innovation. The new senior campus is a leader in Australia, and everyone appreciates the Court Government for establishing that school. The Court Government appointed additional police to the area, even though their presence may not be obvious. The police who replaced the officers who were on sick leave counter all the people coming into the area on holidays. Although I thought my area would get another eight police, the budget was so difficult to interpret that I do not know whether there will be another eight officers. I will talk to the Minister for Police a little later about that. The former coalition Government coordinated the purchase of the extra Mercedes buses that now travel between Mandurah and Perth. All the people in my electorate appreciate what they received from the former Government. That includes the magnificent 800-seat capacity performing arts centre in which the member for Mandurah has starred and drawn the full applause of the house on many occasions. The member for Mandurah knows it well, and is proud of it. About 250 000 people a year visit the performing arts centre - not all come to see the member for Mandurah. It is a tourist attraction and people visit for the restaurants and the art gallery. It is a focal point for the Mandurah community.

The ocean marina was a dream for about 12 years. The previous Government dreamt about it for about five years before being elected in 1993. A task force chaired by the mayor of Mandurah was formed through the Peel Development Commission. That 500 pen marina is up and running and is successful. It was proposed that the first stage of the marina would initially have 100 boat pens, but it opened with 200 pens. This will be a two and a half stage project that will provide over 300 jobs for the locals in the area. It will be another landmark for Mandurah. It was started by the Court coalition Government. As the Court Government acknowledged the Labor Government at the opening of the Dawesville channel, the Labor Government acknowledged the Court Government for creating and starting the marina project that was the coalition's vision for the Mandurah, Dawesville and Peel area.

More and more people are moving to Mandurah. The population in my electorate of Dawesville has increased from 11 000 to 18 000 in the past eight years. Tourism is booming. Four cruise boats now operate on the Peel-Harvey estuary. I remind members that the estuary and the waterways of Mandurah are two and a half times the size of the Swan River estuary. We look in awe at the Swan River. It is promoted as the best river of any capital city in Australia and tourism succeeds because of it. Yet the waterways in Mandurah are better. Cruises are becoming more and more popular and people are coming to Mandurah to see those waterway and canal developments. In the past four years 19 restaurants have opened in Mandurah and Dawesville. Mandurah is not a fly-by-night success. It has gone from a village to a town and now it is a thriving city. The infrastructure is in place because of the efforts of the coalition Government. More money has been spent in that area in the past

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eight years than in the history of the region. That is why I am incredibly disappointed in this year's budget in relation to the Peel region.

Mrs Roberts: You never used to be a whinger.

Mr MARSHALL: It is difficult being in opposition when the news is all negative. I say to the Minister for Police that I was always known in the sporting world as someone who made the truth sound a little better than it was. I never turned around the truth, but I stretched it a bit to make people happy. That is my style and my psyche. Tonight in this speech I am a little negative, but I am telling the truth. I apologise if the truth hurts members and makes them a little edgy.

Mrs Roberts: You were the best tennis coach I ever had.

Mr MARSHALL: I taught the Minister for Police in my camps never to have an inferiority complex. She is one of the few ministers on the other side of the House who has learnt that lesson.

I return to the wonderful area that I represent and that is succeeding - Mandurah-Dawesville. Land values are going sky high, especially on the canals. There are urban developments such as Seascapes, Erskine, Falcon, Wannanup, Florida and Parkridge. Developments in those areas are on the move, bringing in more people to live in that terrific area.

While I am talking about that, I shall comment on the tax on people living in homes on land worth \$1 million. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition's impassioned speech on that subject of about one and a quarter hours. I will not talk about the subject for as long as that. However, when retired pensioners visit my office, I ask them what type of pensioner they are. I ask them if they are the type who had solid jobs all their lives and raised families. I ask them if they are the type that bet \$20 to \$30 a week on the horses, spent \$30 to \$40 a week in a hotel, \$50 a week on their wives' hair and enjoyed themselves so that when they retired they had little money. I ask them if they are the type of pensioner who saved their money, gave their kids extra things in life and went without things themselves so that when they retired their children would not be responsible for them because they were proud and good planners. I have nothing against any style of person; however, those two types come to my office and I admit that the goods and services tax has hurt them. There are retirees who, in their opinion, have done everything correctly by giving their children a start in life and paying off their homes so that they are not in debt. The other type retires with no money and expects the Government to look after them forever, but while they were fit and young they did everything and had a wonderful time. I do not know which type of person is better than the other. However, it is wrong to tax people for having the vision when they were young to buy a virgin block of land, for realising when the trees were chopped down they would have a river view and for deciding that they wanted to stay there for the rest of their lives. Some of those blocks of land have increased in value over the years from a measly \$20 000 or \$30 000 to now \$1 million. Some members might say that those people are lucky. However, I know many elderly people who had the foresight that the Leader of the Opposition spoke about. Because of their foresight they have had to pay land tax on the increased value of their land. This Government should be looking after them. One must question what type of millionaire they are. Are they millionaires who can afford the tax? Are they millionaires by chance and foresight who, in their youth, bought a home that was a little more expensive than they could afford at the time, but who worked overtime to pay it off and are now reaping the benefits at 70 years of age? This tax in this budget will hurt them dearly. I disagree with the philosophy of the tax. It will hurt the canals residents of Mandurah.

The Dawesville-Mandurah area is a wonderful place in which to live or holiday. It recently won an award for the most visited day destination in WA. It is correctly known in Australia as the home of the blue manna crab and, of course, it gives people lots of recreational fun and keeps together families in the area. Most people I talk to believe that this Gallop Government will be a one-term Government. They claim that they cannot wait to vote it out.

Mr Logan: Don't believe them.

Mr MARSHALL: The member for Cockburn may live in fairyland and may tell fairytales, but he should get out into the community and listen to the people of Western Australia. Things are changing fast. The Government has failed to understand that Western Australians do not like broken promises; they do not like to see unfair legislation rushed through Parliament, such as the one vote, one value electoral reform legislation; and they do not like being taken for granted. Members opposite should beware: the people of Western Australia will be out to get them in three and a half years.

I am extremely disappointed with this Labor Government's first budget. The Government has shown little interest in the Mandurah area or the Peel region. There are few itemised amounts in the budget and the en masse

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allocations make it difficult to track down promised moneys in the portfolios. I guess when the Government has something to hide, that is a good way of putting it. In the Mandurah and Dawesville electorates there is not one new or innovative budget allocation in any minister's portfolio. However, I am pleased to see that moneys promised by the previous Government for mosquito control and the Halls Head Community College improvements will be available. This is the worst budget for the Peel region in the past nine years and indicates that this Government has no interest in my area.

I shall mention how people down there are feeling. Members of the football fraternity have been doing it tough for the past three months when they know they have everything going for them, but they cannot get the support of the WAFL presidents. It is tough when people have developed a football side such as Peel Thunder and gone through all the pain and anguish not only to get a licence granted by the West Australian Football Commission and establish a club, but also to put it on a financial footing to challenge the other 100-year-old historical metropolitan clubs. However, a loophole in the West Australian Football League's constitution was found that indicated the WAFL was controlled by the presidents of the day of the clubs in the league - there were eight, but now there are nine - and Peel Thunder lost the vote eight to one because the metropolitan ministers got their heads together and did not want that regional club in the competition.

Mrs Roberts: I put in a big plug for Peel the other day at a breakfast I attended.

Mr MARSHALL: So the minister should, as did the Minister for Sport and Recreation. The Football Commission was wisely put in place by the Burke Government because the sport needed an independent view. It had to take away the selfish attitudes, the lack of vision and the sheer pig-headedness of the older clubs. It is only natural to look after one's family and garden and to not care much about what is up the road. However, the sport needed an independent body so that it could see the big picture. The big picture was there, but the loophole cancelled it and now Peel Thunder is fighting for its life. If it loses its licence, it will be one of the great injustices done to sport that I will have witnessed. In our area the Peel Thunder Football Club has established a goal for young footballers. Already there are squads of under-12s, under-14s and under-16s, three young boys in the state schoolboys' side, a couple of Teal Cup players and three or four signed up for the Australian Football League. All of those things, which are giving those youngsters a chance in life, have occurred in five years. I hope that all members will watch the future of Peel Thunder. It is currently taking the matter to court and I believe, if justice is on its side, it will win.

About six years ago I mentioned in Parliament that Peel Thunder could become a reality. A few football fans in this place scoffed a little. I am now pleased to say those members are now on my side. I said at the time in one of my speeches that Peel Thunder would put Mandurah on the map. The only time Mandurah was ever heard of during that period was in the weather forecasts. That is what has happened since Peel Thunder entered the competition. On Thursday, a press article covers Peel Thunder, and who they will be playing. On Friday there is another article, about a player being pulled out of the side, and then on Saturday, the press speculates about whether Peel Thunder will win on that day. Then on Sunday, another Peel Thunder victory is reported. That football club, in just four seasons, has brought more publicity to Mandurah and the Peel region than has any other project. I am upset, because people I have mixed with in football in the metropolitan area for many years, who are the administrators and presidents of the metropolitan clubs, just cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel. East Fremantle is my own football club; I am a life member. The municipality of East Fremantle is one square mile, and has the greatest traditions of any municipality in the whole of Australia. The East Fremantle Football Club believes it belongs only to that one square mile. It cannot see that it has lost its vision. This year the club went from the top of the league table to third last, below Peel Thunder. The club cannot see that the future of football is in the periphery of the metropolitan area. West Perth Football Club moved up to Joondalup, and Mandurah and Rockingham are fast growing areas, where the potential for junior development is huge. As I predicted at the beginning of my speech that the present Government will be a failure, I now predict that if Peel Thunder is dropped from the league, the next largest soccer region in Western Australia will be Rockingham and Mandurah. Soccer is ready to go in those areas, and why should it not? It is an international sport, with less likelihood of injuries to young players. Comparing Australian football with soccer will show that soccer has much more going for it. But Australians are parochial, and they play the Australian, tough, he-man's game; the game with discipline that gets athletes somewhere. It is the game that has the money in it in Western Australia - Australian rules football. However, when analysing the pros and the cons of each code, most people would probably want their grandchildren to play soccer or hockey, because football is too rough, too crude and undisciplined. In attempting to eliminate Peel Thunder from the competition, the big loser will be Australian rules football.

The Gallop Government is a slow-trot Government. It has presented a substandard budget, and has shown no interest in my Mandurah-Dawesville electorate at all. The Government has already lost the respect and trust of

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the people of Western Australia, and all government members should note in their black books that it will be a one-term Government.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [5.13 pm]: The first budget is an important watershed for this Government, because it brings an end to excuses. Now that this Government has its own budget in place, no longer will it be able to hide behind the veil of blaming the previous Government for the financial administration of Western Australia. By its own admission, this Government inherited a \$255 million surplus on the last budget outcome. It has, in effect, admitted that there is no such thing as a black hole left by the previous Government. This raises the question of what this Government will do about coming clean on its own black hole, which is a black hole of services, that Labor is putting into country and regional Western Australia. The facts surrounding this budget include a \$255 million surplus inherited from the last budget; increased taxes and charges, despite a promise that they would never occur; yet an overall increase in revenue that does not keep up with the increase in expenditure. This will result in a reduced surplus, according to the Government's own budget papers, to just \$51 million. This surplus is based on an assumption that the growth rate in the economy will be four per cent - more than double last year's rate. That is highly unlikely, given what is happening in the world at the moment. Expenditure is reduced on agriculture, health services to the regions, and country roads, and question marks hang over the provision of police, TAFE and other essential services to country Western Australia. The question now is, where do the Government's expenditure priorities lie? The priority is clearly in the city. For instance, it appears that \$1 billion has gone into the suburban rail system; in particular, hundreds of millions of dollars will be spent making the rail journey from Mandurah to Perth 12 minutes quicker. That, for country people, is Ripper's rip-off. That cry will be heard a lot in the next three and a half years. The railway line should have signs along it saying "This rail service is brought to you by courtesy of wheatbelt hospitals, great southern health services, and country roads". Governments are very keen on putting up signs. This project will be great for Mandurah, but not too good for the rest of the State.

Mr Dean: Are we seeing the politics of envy at work here?

Mr TRENORDEN: I will not get into the politics of envy, but the Government has definitely instituted that in this budget. Firstly, there is the linchpin role of rural and regional Western Australia in the State's economy. Secondly, there are the commitments made by the Labor Party to the regions at the last election, which promised equity of services. Thirdly, there is the very real danger that this Government has given up on rural and regional Western Australia. The Government is attempting to diminish country representation in this House to insignificant numbers, and then delivers a budget framed on the basis that the Government of the day no longer needs votes from country people.

I will elaborate on those three points. Rural and regional Western Australia produces the overwhelming majority of Western Australia's exports - about 30 per cent of the gross state product. In doing so, it accounts for between 20 and 25 per cent of Australia's total exports. In short, rural and regional Western Australia produces the wealth of this State, and is its foundation. This Government faces some difficulties not of its own making. Much of the agricultural region has suffered two to four years of adverse seasonal conditions, which have been some of the worst on record. The effect of this drought has been highlighted in the economic downturn in country areas, where small businesses in towns and contractors who work in the agricultural industries, have been hit as hard and in many cases harder than the farming community. What has not been properly acknowledged is the effect of the adverse seasonal conditions on the Perth economy, and the broader Western Australian economy. As a result of the previous year's drought, up to \$1 billion has not flowed through Perth and the Western Australian economy. This is the lost income from just one section of the agricultural industries - the grain industry. This is only now being realised on profit and loss sheets where many businesses right throughout the State have suffered a drop in income. Much of the blame for this has been placed on the goods and services tax. This Government has been very quick to run into the House and say that the goods and services tax is the cause of this downturn. The fact is that many businesses have experienced a decline in annual demand, and it is time that this House recognised that the loss of \$1 billion, and its flow-on effect throughout the State, is substantial. That was a result of last year's adverse conditions, and this year is very similar, maybe even worse. The effects of that will extend through the community, and people will find that demand will not be as they expect, and it will affect businesses.

These points are relevant, because they highlight the importance of communities outside Perth to the economy of the State. Approximately 25 per cent of the Western Australian community lives in rural or regional Western Australia and is responsible for about 20 per cent of the nation's exports. In October 2000, the State's unemployment rate was 5.8 per cent and in May 2001 it was 7.2 per cent. I suggest that the rate of unemployment is rising as we speak. The loss of Ansett Australia and the people who have been put off in the central and lower wheatbelt will cause the rate of unemployment to rise further. The percentage increase in the

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unemployment rate represents about 14 000 people, and this increase has been influenced by the loss of \$1 billion in income from the agricultural sector in the past year due to the poor season. For the first time in eight years, Western Australia's unemployment rate is the highest in the nation. The impact of adverse conditions on prices is also apparent. If this Government does not recognise this and is not mindful of the effect of increased taxes and the impact of reduced expenditure on country infrastructure, it could result in the continuation of the rapidly increasing price of food in Perth. I am amazed at the number of people who come into my electorate office and tell me that the GST is still putting up the price of food when that is not possible.

Mrs Roberts: Yes, it is. There are transport costs.

Mr TRENORDEN: It is a one-off effect. Cost structures have been forced through the process and there has been a downturn in demand. That will put up prices. Prices rose in this State by 2.1 per cent in the first three months to June, which was the largest increase in Australia. Why is it happening only here? Obviously it is not occurring because of the GST; that would not be logical. There is concern over the reduced allocation for the Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture Protection Board. After the unforeseen and very tragic events of recent times, cutting back on agricultural protection is akin to believing that there are no surprises in this world and that human and environmental tragedies have no economic impact. We know from the events of the past two weeks that that is not the case. An even greater threat to the economy of Western Australia is the inability to attract people to the regions and to get them to stay there. The amenities that encourage people to stay in the regions are the very things that this Government is wrecking: these include available and accessible health services and road construction and maintenance. These amenities are as pertinent as they have ever been especially now that air travel is such a big issue and people are having to revert to driving long distances. Who knows when that issue will be resolved. Adequate police numbers are needed to encourage people to feel safe in their homes and communities and a viable small business sector is required, as it is the cornerstone of regional Western Australia.

There will be a requirement - not an option - for the traditional industries of which we are so fond in Western Australia to change over the next few decades. The crops that we grow and the places where we grow them will have to change to meet changing environmental and world conditions. The minerals we mine may also be different. In some cases, resource deposits and world conditions will change. The need for infrastructure to support agricultural and mining activities will not change, and the Government must continue to support those developments. It is hard to see provision for that in this budget.

The regions of Western Australia have been, and continue to be, adversely affected by recent events that are not the fault of the Government. However, it is the Government's fault that it has not invested in the regions and that it has provided a regional investment fund that has amassed only \$18 million, which is a pittance. The figure of \$18 million comprises previous commitments and expenditure. Under the previous coalition Government, diversification of the Western Australian economy was actively supported by government. In the past decade, alumina and iron ore represented 40 per cent of Western Australia's exports in a diverse export base. Included in the top 10 per cent of the State's exports were the mineral and energy sector; agricultural foodstuffs and livestock; the marine and fisheries sector; and elaborately transformed manufactured goods such as ships and boats. It was a very impressive effort. Support for these industries and for regional development did not come from throwing huge amounts of money at them or from running bidding wars with other States. That happened in the eastern States, but it did not happen here. Support came through the provision of a framework and infrastructure for regional development. Because of the need for regional development, the National Party, when in coalition, achieved the following: in the area of telecommunications, the former Deputy Premier and member for Merredin, Hendy Cowan, was instrumental in establishing almost 100 telecentres throughout rural Western Australia. About \$8 million was spent on satellite technology that now enables data transmission from the telecentres. Almost \$20 million was invested in covering the gap in communications in the south west of the State and producing satellite links for emergency services in remote areas. In the area of small business, the National Party in coalition was instrumental in developing and increasing the support for small business enterprises centres. A total of 37 centres were developed, 27 of which were in the country. A massive effort was made in the area of trade to consolidate existing markets and build new ones and to support services in manufacturing and downstream food processing. In regional development, nine development commissions were established to promote capital expenditure and government services throughout the State. The commissions were instrumental in developing projects such as the Mandurah marina, the boat harbours at Geraldton and Exmouth, Halls Creek and Newdegate community resource centres, the Avon industrial park in my electorate, and countless road projects. During the eight years of the coalition Government, road funding in the State was increased from \$400 million to \$832 million. Almost 55 per cent of the funds was spent in country Western Australia. Local government road funding, which is very important, increased from \$61 million to \$131 million in eight years. Through the efforts of the National Party's Minister for Transport, Murray Criddle,

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the coalition improved the ports of Albany and Esperance, which are now seeing the benefits of increased exports in iron ore. I visited Esperance a few months ago and it is doing very well.

Our former Minister for Agriculture and member for Stirling put in place a community builders program in regional Western Australia in recognition of the need to support and help people involved in the development of the State. Many older and young people went through the programs.

Mr Logan: Many were supporters of the National Party.

Mr TRENORDEN: They are doing great things in the community. They are not all National Party supporters. They are doing very good work. All these achievements beg the question: what is Labor doing in the regions? So far, it has done nothing except cut regional health and police budgets and take away the voting rights of country people.

Mr Kucera: Where is the cut in the member for Avon's health budget?

Mr TRENORDEN: The Minister for Health has just entered the House. There are seven hospitals in the Merredin region, but the Government's budget cuts may result in the closure of four of them.

Mr Kucera: There is an increase in the budget of \$10.7 million.

Mr TRENORDEN: The Government has put money in with one hand, but has taken it out with the other. The National Party has examined all the service delivery areas, each of which has reported a severely cut bottom line in the vicinity of 3.5 to five per cent. I do not doubt that the minister has increased the revenue, but the Government has whipped it out at the other end.

Measures like the GST -

Mr Kucera: You do not know what you are talking about. Read your budget papers.

Mr TRENORDEN: Some \$100 000 has been raised through the goods and services tax in the region of Avon alone. I refer to the reports from every country health region that their bottom line has substantially reduced. Why would the Merredin Health Service Board have discussed the closure of four hospitals if there were an increase in health funding in the budget? The minister should be realistic. He is presiding over a serious downturn in the health system in rural Western Australia. We will report to the regional boards on a day-to-day basis, and we will tell them what the Government is doing to them, although we do not have to tell them because they are telling us what the Government is doing to them.

Mr Dean: If you cannot tell the truth, make it up.

Mr TRENORDEN: I cannot help it if the minister cannot tell the truth, that is his problem, not mine. He has been referred to as a minister for band-aids. He would be lucky if he could supply band-aids.

Mr Kucera: Is the member suggesting that the Government should follow the line that is being peddled around the country by the Australian Medical Association and yourselves?

Mr TRENORDEN: I suggest that the Minister for Health take the line that we are putting.

Mr Kucera: That there have not been cuts?

Mr TRENORDEN: There have been cuts to every one of those country regions of between 3.5 and five per cent, depending on the region. I have the figures in my office, and the minister should examine them.

The previous Government doubled its commitment to road infrastructure in Western Australia, whereas this Government has talked about delaying projects, including the Indian Ocean Drive between Cervantes and Lancelin. At the same time, the Government has announced that it will spend \$1.2 million to save 12 minutes on a train journey from Mandurah to Perth. The Government talks of regional infrastructure funds, but its commitment amounts to no more than \$18 million a year, which is a pittance for rural Western Australia. Millions of dollars have been stripped from road projects. In one year, \$25 million has been ripped out of country health services. The regional infrastructure fund is window-dressing only. The Government has delivered a double-edged sword to businesses and to the State.

We congratulate the Government for honouring its commitment to reduce stamp duty on workers compensation for small businesses; however, it has increased the levy on the HIH Insurance liability by more than it reduced the stamp duty, which is a net loss to the small business community. At the same time that the Queensland Government is reducing payroll tax, this Government has increased it. I do not deny that the tax base of the Western Australia Government is small; however, I also note that this year, the State will receive a \$300 million increase from the Commonwealth in GST revenue. The assumptions that are built into this budget will provide

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greater problems for the State Government and for the regions, which are a low priority for this Government. This budget will not achieve a surplus for the following reasons: a growth rate of four per cent is highly unlikely in the current world circumstances - we know a bit about those circumstances; the Government has not factored into the budget the full effect of the adverse seasonal conditions for the State's agriculture; and the Government has factored in only three per cent of wages growth while at the same time it has abolished workplace agreements and other cost efficiency measures. The budget surplus is highly unlikely to be met. The Government also relies on productivity dividends of two per cent each year. Even if the health, education and police portfolios were not included in this productivity assumption, because they are quarantined to about \$4.9 billion, a failure to achieve this dividend would increase costs by about \$120 million. That alone would push the budget into a deficit of \$70 million.

I refer to current matters of electoral reform. I draw the attention of the House to the timing of the passage of the Electoral Amendment Bill through the House. If the Government has its way, 15 regional seats will be removed from this House in the next Government. Only 14 of the 57 seats in the Legislative Assembly will represent country areas, depending on what happens to Mandurah during that process. Throughout the debate on the Bill, we pointed out that the Government of the day would concentrate on winning the majority of the metropolitan area to win government. It is clear that the Government is focused on winning office through the metropolitan area, and is not worried about the regions.

I was interested in the comments by David Black this morning at a breakfast that was held by local governments. He said that in the future, the real country seats might be represented by only five or seven members. Five or seven seats in this House would barely make a difference to the people of country Western Australia.

Over the next few months, the National Party will scrutinise this budget and the Government's provision of services and infrastructure to find out whether the Government has made a mistake by abandoning the lifeblood of the Western Australian economy; that is, the regions and country people. We will focus on this budget and we will watch the Minister for Health closely. We will watch as this budget unravels over the next few months. I will be interested to hear Treasury's comments on the budget in December when it conducts a review of the budget.

In the last budget, my electorate received an allocation of just under \$120 million. However, in this budget, Avon gets \$130 000. That is only a little over one per cent of what it got in the last budget. That demonstrates what the region of Avon means to this Government. I will make that clear to the people who live there and I will let them know what this Government has done to the region. Members of the Government take great satisfaction in pointing out the number of votes I received at the last election.

During the election, the big issue in Avon was George O'Neil's naltrexone clinic in Northam, which caused great pain and division in the community. A candidate who ran on that issue in the election gave his preferences to the Labor Party - I was at the bottom end of his list for preferences. The then Opposition promised the people of Northam that that clinic would get no state government funds. However, they now find that that is not true and that the State Government has given the clinic \$1 million.

Mr Kucera: No, it has not. Get your facts right.

Mr TRENORDEN: Tell me what the facts are; this is the Minister for Health's opportunity.

Mr Kucera: Send me a question, and I will respond.

Mr TRENORDEN: Tell me what the facts are now.

Mr Kucera: George O'Neil's program is funded, not the clinic. The member knows that there are planning problems in the clinic.

Mr TRENORDEN: The previous Government had earmarked those funds for the Perth clinic. This Government's funding is open, which directly breaks an election promise that the Labor Party made to the Avon electorate. I will be happy to eat humble pie if I am incorrect, and I will go to the people of Northam and tell them that I was not correct. However, *The Avon Valley Advocate* has reported that the Minister for Health has broken that promise.

Mr Kucera: No doubt the story came from you.

Mr TRENORDEN: The story did not come from me; it came from the newspaper's own interests. The administrator of George O'Neil's program in Northam has resigned in disgust because of George O'Neil's broken promise to the community. The story came from the Town of Northam, which will make a decision this week on whether to take legal action because the conditions placed on George O'Neil's program have not been

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complied with. The story did not come from me; the last thing I would want to do is cause division in my community.

Mr Kucera: The Government has indicated its opposition to the clinic in its current location.

Mr TRENORDEN: I know that.

Mr Kucera: We will work with staff and management to find a suitable location elsewhere. They are the facts of the matter. Get your facts right.

Mr TRENORDEN: What about government funding?

Mr Kucera: The member for Avon knows that the funding goes to Dr George O'Neil's program in Perth.

Mr TRENORDEN: No, I do not know that. The budget papers do not say that. If the Minister for Health can give some indication to the people of Northam he will do himself a favour, because at the moment everyone in Northam is saying that the minister has broken a promise to the community. It is not for me to make that position clear; I will not bat for the minister in that area. I am not making these statements; they have been made by community members.

Mr Kucera: Like the statement you made about superannuation.

Mr TRENORDEN: The statement I made about superannuation is correct. Peter Morton, the Independent candidate who opposed me at the election and who gave his preferences to the Labor Party, has made those statements to the local newspaper, *The Avon Valley Advocate*, and not me. If the minister wants to correct that assumption, I suggest that he approach the Press in Northam and point out the precise position, because the clinic in Northam has exploded. As I said, the manager has resigned over this issue.

Mr Kucera: Mr Houston.

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes. He is a decent person.

Mr Kucera: He certainly is. I have been speaking to him.

Mr TRENORDEN: He has resigned because commitments to the community of Northam have been broken. As the minister is probably aware, the Town of Northam might take legal action against Dr O'Neil.

Mr Kucera: Precisely. I am aware of the situation. However, the member for Avon disappoints me somewhat. I am getting used to people saying, "Is it the truth or did you hear it from the member for Avon?"

Mr TRENORDEN: The minister has the reputation of being a decent person. I did not know him before he became a member of this place, but his performance in health has been abysmal. That is not a comment about the minister personally, but about his performance. The minister must get away from his bureaucrats and should get on the telephone. He should get some people that he can trust out into regional areas to find out what regional administrators are saying about the health budget. I will run that hard because it is true.

Mr Kucera: Good.

Mr TRENORDEN: The minister is dead right when he says that it is good. One of the things the Labor Party was able to do in opposition was convince people that Governments could not be trusted.

Mr Kucera: You had eight years to do that, and you did it very well.

Mr TRENORDEN: The minister can say whatever he likes. Labor Party members are now wearing that hat and not us. The community does not believe the Government for a second; it is far from convincing. The minister is hardly likely to succeed when he is attempting to get rid of hospital boards. The minister wants to kick out the only mechanism in rural Western Australia that provides any accountability.

Mr Kucera: There is an accountability mechanism called government, of which I am happy to be a part.

Mr TRENORDEN: In that case, why were the rural administrators told that they would be sacked if they spoke to the Opposition or the Press?

Mr Kucera: That is nonsense.

Mr TRENORDEN: It is not nonsense at all.

Mr Ainsworth: A letter was read to me over the phone saying precisely that sort of thing.

Mr Kucera: That is an absolute nonsense, and you know it.

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Mr TRENORDEN: It is not nonsense at all. The minister should get in touch with his ministry. He is way out of touch. He is so far out of touch that he might as well be on another planet. The minister is heading for disaster in the health portfolio, and he will get a lot of pain. I will go no further, but I will watch this budget with interest. The assumptions made in this budget are daring and keen, but they have never been achieved in this State or in any other State in Australia. They will not be achieved in the next 12 months.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [5.43 pm]: This budget has proven to be a letdown for the people of Western Australia. The way this budget has been presented is a disgrace. Promises were made to fix law and order, health and education. However, an examination of the budget and the money made available indicates that will not happen. I do not have the exact figures in front of me, but in the 2000-01 budget the expenditure on the Police Service was about \$560 million. This year, the allocation is about \$520 million. About \$35 million less will be spent during this financial year on the Police Service. If there are to be any improvements in the law and order situation, more police must be on the beat trying to catch criminals or trying to prevent people from becoming criminals. Reducing the amount of money spent on the Police Service is the wrong direction to take.

Mrs Roberts: It is a big increase; it is the biggest increase in the operational spending for the Police Service.

Mr BRADSHAW: Unfortunately, I do not have the figures in front of me. Why was the amount spent in the past financial year greater than the amount that will be spent this financial year?

Mrs Roberts: What you are talking about are bricks and mortar projects. I have delivered additional police officers. An extra \$20 million has been allocated to the operational budget over the next four years, plus an additional \$8 million will be provided over the next four years to provide country incentives to police officers. There will be 250 more police officers and 40 more Aboriginal police liaison officers, so it really is a substantial increase in front-line policing.

Mr BRADSHAW: The minister might consider that to be so, but the fact is that \$35 million less will be spent this year than last.

The increase in the budget for the education portfolio is less than three per cent. That does not even keep up with inflation or take into account the wage increases that will occur over that time. In other words, there will be few improvements. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out earlier, there is nothing in the forward estimates about reducing class sizes, which was one of the big commitments the Labor Party made. The coalition Government achieved a reduction in class sizes. It achieved a helluva lot in education over the past eight years. It built more schools. That is why there will be a little fiddling of the books. Few capital works or renovations will be carried out in schools, and perhaps more money will go to recurrent funding for staff and those types of things. A three per cent increase is chickenfeed; it will not keep up with inflation. This will have a poor effect on education.

I did not do the figures myself, but the Minister for Health spoke about an eight per cent increase in the health budget. When the figures were bandied about last week, I heard that it was a three per cent increase.

Mr Kucera: It is an 8.3 per cent increase for rural health. The overall budget increase is about 3.5 per cent.

Mr BRADSHAW: Okay. Again, if inflation is taken into account, this 3.5 per cent increase will be wiped out before the Government even begins. The wage increases promised to nursing staff and the demands made by other people in the health system mean that the 3.5 per cent increase will not go far. The coalition Government increased the health budget at a rate of six per cent over the past eight years. To be frank, that did not keep up with the demands on the health system.

Mr Kucera: Are you suggesting that we keep doing that, because it is not sustainable?

Mr BRADSHAW: The Government has a major problem. It does not matter which party is in government, there is a major problem because -

Mr Kucera: That is where you have to draw a line in the sand.

Mr BRADSHAW: Right. However, that produces a longer waiting list. The minister should talk to some of the people who are on waiting lists. I have spoken to some people waiting for hip replacements. Those people cannot lie down, sit up, stand or sleep. Their lives are a total misery. When they must wait two or three years for a hip replacement, it is -

Mrs Roberts: They were waiting since you were in government.

Mrs Edwardes: No, they were not.

Mr Kucera: Waiting lists are down to the lowest point they have been in nine years.

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Mr BRADSHAW: This poor increase in funding for the health system will mean that waiting lists will grow once again. As I have pointed out, an ageing population and the new operations that are developed for hip and knee replacements and open-heart surgery are huge budget items. The Government can draw the line in the sand, but all that will happen is that waiting lists will get longer, which will result in more discontent. The problem is the real pain and agony these people must live through. It is very sad, particularly when the Government while in opposition campaigned about how it would fix the health system, the law and order problem and the education system.

Mrs Roberts: We are already doing it.

Mr Kucera: It will not be fixed by one budget.

Mr BRADSHAW: I appreciate that it takes time. However, an increase of 3.5 per cent means the Government will be going backwards next year. It will need to increase it by much more.

Mr Kucera: What area do you represent?

Mr BRADSHAW: I represent Murray-Wellington. We are getting nothing. I would love to know what we are getting.

Mr Kucera: Harvey Hospital and Yarloop District Hospital are in your area. I do not think I should have to do all your work. Harvey Hospital received an 11.4 per cent increase. Peel received a 56.9 per cent increase.

Mr BRADSHAW: The Murray District Hospital in Pinjarra is in my area.

Mr Kucera: That is part of Peel.

Mr BRADSHAW: I am talking about the Murray District Hospital.

Mr Kucera: It is part of the Peel and Rockingham/Kwinana Health Service, which received a 56.9 per cent increase. The budget was increased from \$5.5 million last year to \$8.6 million this year. As I keep saying, read your budget papers.

Mr BRADSHAW: I will believe it when I see things in my electorate start to fly. The minister can say what he likes about a 56 per cent increase in the Peel health service budget. The number of beds per head of population in the Peel region is by far the lowest in Western Australia.

Mr Kucera: I went to Pinjarra with you. How many beds are at Murray District Hospital?

Mr BRADSHAW: There are currently 30. There should be 80, but the hospital is operating with 30 beds. It is time that was cranked up.

Mr Kucera: It is an 80-bed hospital.

Mr BRADSHAW: Yes, but when the Peel Health Campus in Mandurah opened, Murray District Hospital lost 60 beds.

Mr Kucera: It doesn't need them. The Peel Health Campus is 15 minutes away.

Mr BRADSHAW: The minister should go to Pinjarra and tell the people that. It is not 15 minutes away for the people who live in Dwellingup, Boddington, North Dandalup and Waroona. They are serviced by the Murray District Hospital. The minister cannot say it is 15 minutes away; it depends on where people live. The health campus is 15 minutes away only if one drives from Murray District Hospital to the Peel Health Campus.

The Peel Health Campus is always running at capacity. It occasionally has to shift patients to Pinjarra or Fremantle Hospital. That is not good enough. Why not increase the capacity of Murray District Hospital so that it can accommodate more patients? That would be good for the area.

One of the issues I take up with my colleague and friend the member for Dawesville is the amount of money that has been spent in Mandurah over the past 18 years. I refer also to what has happened in Bunbury. For some reason, Governments are besotted by these regional centres, probably because they contain seats that are a bit dicky. All the money flies into these regional centres while surrounding towns are excluded.

Mr Dean: You love us really.

Mr BRADSHAW: No, I do not. I rarely go to Bunbury or Mandurah. I am happy with Harvey, Waroona and Pinjarra.

Mr Marshall: Mandurah has cinemas, and restaurants.

Mr BRADSHAW: Big deal. Governments are besotted by these centres because they contain marginal seats.

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Mr Dean: Not any more.

Mr BRADSHAW: That is what the former member for Bunbury used to say. That is why he is now again working on his farm. I tell the Government in power - I do not care which Government - that it should not worry about concentrating on these places because the people do not care how much money is put into them; the seat eventually changes hands. It has happened in Bunbury and Mandurah. It happened in Murray. It also happened in Bunbury when Phil Smith was the member. He did a great job, but when it came time to change Governments, out he went and in came the next member. Things have changed again. The Government will not save seats by putting lots of money and effort into a regional centre.

Mrs Roberts: A good member is what is needed.

Mr BRADSHAW: Let us find out how good are the two currently representing Mandurah and Bunbury.

Mrs Roberts: Our member for Bunbury is excellent. I am sure there will be no problems.

Mr BRADSHAW: I heard those things said about former members.

Mrs Roberts: I would even be prepared to say that you are a good member.

Mr BRADSHAW: I thank the minister for the compliment, but I will let other people judge that, and seeing as I -

Mrs Roberts: You did have a bad swing against you.

Mr BRADSHAW: I was about to say that seeing as I received a primary vote of only 36 per cent, I am not sure the minister's statement is correct. However, I like to think I have worked hard in my electorate.

Mrs Roberts: I think you were punished because of the actions of previous ministers.

Mr BRADSHAW: I might agree with the minister about that.

The Government should consider the other country towns. Yesterday I wrote a letter to the Peel Development Commission pointing out that it should start to concentrate on areas other than Mandurah. It has been a good development commission in that it has put a lot of effort into the railway heritage centre at Pinjarra. However, the commission is based in Mandurah. When one lives and works in a town, one tends to get centralised in that town. I suggested to our Government a few years ago that the development commissions should be moved out of the regional centres and into the country towns. The South West, Peel and Great Southern Development Commissions should not be located in regional centres. Those centres will grow regardless of what is put into them, unlike the other country towns. For some reason, what happened 20 or 30 years ago does not happen today. People are deciding they do not want to live in these country towns; they want to live near the water. The fact that they probably rarely go near the water is irrelevant. We must concentrate on getting facilities and improvements for these country towns to attract people back. Some of that will involve setting up lifestyle blocks, which are very difficult to obtain in country towns. For example, the Shire of Harvey has a town planning scheme that reinforces its belief that rural blocks should not be smaller than 40 hectares, which is 100 acres in the old term. A 100-acre block is too big for somebody who wants only five or 10 acres for a horse and so on. I know such a plan would mean chopping up some good rural land. However, times are changing and people do not necessarily make profits or a living off 100 acres. People can put in grapevines - either table grapes or wine grapes - or undertake some other form of horticulture on 10-acre blocks. People often make more money from that than from running beef on 100 acres. It is time attitudes changed and a new planning system was developed so that country towns are seen in a different light and are able to attract more people. For example, the school in Harvey has lost its funding to teach tertiary entrance examination subjects. A family might wish to live in Harvey because the father works in one of the businesses in the town. However, that family will now choose to live in Australind or Bunbury, and the father will travel to Harvey each day to work, so that the child does not have to travel to school. That is another problem that must be addressed. It is time that the development commissions, whose role is to develop regional Western Australia, focused on these areas instead of being centralised and worrying about the regional centres like Mandurah and Bunbury. That focus should also come from the top. The Government, as I previously pointed out, also has a centralist attitude and worries only about retaining seats. It is time it got over that. Despite what Governments may put into those seats, they do not always hold them.

Another matter that worries me is the *Australind* train service. An investigation is under way to determine whether the service should be expanded further south and whether the travelling time to Perth could be reduced.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr BRADSHAW: As I said before the dinner break, the *Australind* train service is a very good service. However, in 1987, when the new service was introduced, one of the problems was that the Government of the day was concentrating too much on regional centres like Bunbury. It wanted to get the people from Bunbury to Perth as quickly as it could, and it disregarded the needs of the people in between. People who travelled from stations like Waroona and Yarloop could not get to Perth and back on the one day; the service was inadequate. After many years of pushing, I managed to have that policy reversed, so that the *Australind* now stops on all occasions at those stations. Those people can now travel to and from Perth in one day rather than drive to Pinjarra or Harvey to do that.

Another problem that arose when the new *Australind* service began operating in 1987 was that the platforms were too low. The infirm or people in wheelchairs could not get onto the train between Bunbury and Perth unless they could get someone to lift them into a carriage. In this day and age that is disgraceful. After much lobbying, I managed to get the Harvey station upgraded. It now has a ramp and an elevated platform, so that people can get straight onto the train instead of negotiating stairs. However, a few other stations on the *Australind* route require upgrading for the same reason. People who are infirm or who have disabilities have trouble boarding the *Australind* at stations other than Perth and Bunbury, and the Harvey and Mundijong railway stations, which were upgraded in the past few years. It is important that these other stations be upgraded. The Waroona railway station is a disgrace. It needs a little money to beautify it and to bring it up to a standard suitable for the needs of the infirm and people in wheelchairs, so they do not need assistance to board a train. It is about time the Government came to the party.

The new *Australind* came into service in 1987; it has not been a brilliant service and a review is under way. However, I am concerned because the word is that the *Australind* will not stop at Cookernup station in future. In other words, the 500 or so people living at Cookernup who are serviced by that station will miss out on their train service. Although the population of Cookernup is not large, why should they not receive a similar service to that provided in Bunbury, Harvey and Waroona? At this stage it looks as though their needs will be ignored and the train will go straight past Cookernup. I hope that the review of the train service will not cut out more stations so the people who live in Bunbury can get to Perth in less time. That will be a slap in the face of people who live along the line who will be treated as second-class citizens. The Government is concentrating too much on regional cities; it needs to consider other areas and make them user-friendly for their residents, otherwise these areas will not move forward.

It would be wrong of me not to mention the disgraceful events that occurred last week in America. It was an emotional time, and something that none of us will ever forget. When the Leader of the Opposition told me that two planes had flown into the World Trade Centre in New York, I did not believe him because it was too far fetched to imagine that something like that could occur. I send my sympathy to the people who have been affected. There will be repercussions not only from the follow-up action against the terrorists but also economically. I am sure much of the world will be battenning down their finances and will perhaps stop spending in case something occurs. It is unfortunate that there will be repercussions down the track in addition to the loss of life that has occurred.

Another tragedy, which is certainly not on the same scale as events in America, concerns the people living in and around Alcoa World Alumina Australia's Wagerup alumina refinery. It is a major concern. The Wagerup alumina refinery started operations in 1984. From 1984 to 1996 it operated in harmony with the community. It provided a lot of work in the community and contributed to the community in other ways. However, in 1996 Alcoa built a liquor-burning plant on that site. From then on I have had nothing but complaints. Unfortunately, as much as Alcoa says that it is working on this and is trying to overcome the difficulties, the number of complaints is increasing; the smells are getting worse and people's health is deteriorating even further. It is about time there was a major investigation into Alcoa's operations at Wagerup. Some inquiries and investigations have been conducted, and Alcoa says that it will fix the problems. Even though Alcoa says that last year it reduced its odour emissions by 50 per cent and spent a few million dollars to do that, I have experienced those smells. I live eight kilometres south of Yarloop and my constituents ring me so that I can come up and smell the odours. The smells are atrocious. The odours bring on people's asthma attacks, drive them inside or they have to leave town. They have to close their doors and windows. Last week a lady rang me and told me that she and her husband have a farm at Yarloop and a beach house at Preston Beach. They have decided to leave Yarloop. This lady has found that when she leaves Yarloop her health comes good again. It is disgraceful. It is about time that Alcoa fixed the problem instead of saying it is working on it or it has done this and that. Alcoa says it has reduced emissions by 50 per cent, yet the smells are worse and the complaints have doubled this year. I will quote from a couple of letters, although I will not name the correspondents. The first letter reads -

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 18 September 2001]

p3849b-3917a

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

We had never complained to Alcoa about beltline noise or the smell from the refinery, but the idea that our health may be compromised by their emissions was very upsetting and frightening and we began putting in complaints. Our property was chosen for its natural beauty and fresh water. We have used no chemicals except Roundup on it for the past 15 years and have not even used Roundup for the past two. We have been growing our own fruit and vegetables organically and raising our own poultry as part of our commitment to a healthy lifestyle. It is very distressing to think that the children and we may have been exposed to dangerous airborne chemicals for all these years. We have sent away some soil and an egg for testing and are waiting for the results. Here is a summary of some of the problems that we are concerned may be related to the pollution from the refinery:

Multiple chemical sensitivity . . . Blood noses . . . Frequent Headaches . . . General immune system problems . . . Frequent Mouth Ulcers & Metallic Tongue . . . Sinus problems . . . Sore Kidneys . . . Blood in urine . . . Flu like aches & pains . . . Skin problems . . . Tachycardia . . . Burning stomach . . . Increasing food intolerances . . . Chooks hardly laying all this year . . . Llama aborting twice . . .

Those people believe that a range of things have been caused by Alcoa. They had been living on the property for 15 years and hoped eventually to retire to it. They said to me on the phone that they would leave the property because they could not bear to live there anymore. Alcoa has bought them out and they have moved.

A letter from another person who lives nearby reads, in part -

My life has been affected in these ways:

- had to resign from the workforce due to sore joints and fatigue.
- loss of income with no form of recompense.
- depression due to continual pain and inability to live a normal life.
- sleeping problems due to constant pain.
- had to endure continual thrush.
- extreme difficulty in doing housework due to sore joints and fatigue.
- had to cease all hobbies due to sore joints.
- had to curtail social life due to sensitivity to many chemicals (perfumes, deodorants etc).
- can no longer drive a motor vehicle outside my local area due to sore joints and fatigue.
- have become relatively house bound due to sore joints, fatigue and sensitivity to chemicals.

These are samples of a couple of the letters I have received from people who are or have been living in the area. A range of Alcoa workers have said they are ill as a result of working at Alcoa in Wagerup. Unfortunately, Alcoa will not recognise them for workers compensation. On the other hand, some workers have been told not to go to work and that Alcoa will pay them to stay home. An attempt was made by Alcoa to employ them on the mine site away from the refinery. Another worker was overcome by some of the fumes at the refinery, and had elevated blood pressure and trouble breathing. It is just not good enough. Earlier this year Alcoa considered buying about 100 nearby residences. However, I am concerned that it will destroy the town of Yarloop. If a third of Yarloop is removed - it has roughly 300 houses - it will affect the school, the hospitals, the stores and the general wellbeing of the town, including sporting organisations that cannot function without a certain number of people. I have been trying to get something done for years. I did not get too far with the previous Government and, to a large extent, I am not getting too far with the current Government. One problem is that the Environmental Protection Authority has said that Alcoa is working within World Health Organisation standards. However, a multitude of emissions are coming out of that refinery. It may be that a cocktail of chemicals is causing the problem. Although individual items in the effluent may be all right by themselves, when put together in a cocktail they appear to have an effect on people.

A fellow who used to live in Harvey and who moved to Yarloop a few years ago said that he had developed asthma at the age of 68. I do not know whether people normally develop asthma at 68 - I have not heard of any in the past - but that person is genuine. He worked for the forestry department in the old days - the Department of Conservation and Land Management now. He retired a few years ago and is now suffering from asthma. Another person, who came into my office collecting for the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and who retired to

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Yarloop some years ago, said that he had to leave Yarloop because his eyes were streaming and the skin around them was red raw. That is very unfortunate. I call on the Government to take more action and to do something about it. The main asset of those people is their health and their second asset is their property, and the Government's response to the problem is not good enough. Many Italian people who live in Yarloop are either related to or friendly with each other. They have a great community of association and often work together, socialise and interact. If the Government buys them out, they will scatter to all different areas of Western Australia and the community will not be the same. One fellow, a plastering contractor, lives on a couple of acres of land in Yarloop on which he has a few grape vines from which he makes wine. He had planned to build a house or two on some of the land to provide rental income for his retirement. That will go by the by because there is no way that he will build those houses now. There is a good chance that he may be eventually forced out because of the circumstances. Where would he buy another two to three acres of land? It is not a simple situation.

Mr Logan: Do you recognise that this Labor Government has not only instigated that through the DEP and EPA, but also set up parliamentary investigations through my office as parliamentary secretary?

Mr BRADSHAW: I am not aware of that.

Mr Logan: We have met with both workers and residents down there, and also with the company. Could you outline to the Parliament exactly what was done in your term of government?

Mr BRADSHAW: I told the House what happened.

Mr Logan: What?

Mr BRADSHAW: Very little.

Mr Logan: What was that?

Mr BRADSHAW: Nothing.

Mr Logan: Nothing?

Mr BRADSHAW: I have said I was not happy with what happened under our Government. However, I can tell the member that not much is happening currently. He might say that he has a committee or something else going, but nothing has happened.

Mr Logan: Could you tell the Parliament exactly what is the problem?

Mr BRADSHAW: There is effluent coming from Alcoa's refinery.

Mr Logan: What is causing people's illnesses? If you know, you will know more than anybody else in the world.

Mr BRADSHAW: Why were people not complaining of being sick between 1984 and 1996? I never had one complaint about Alcoa in that time. Since then, the smells have become worse. I do not care what the problem is; it must be fixed.

Mr Logan: I do not deny that and nobody is arguing that point. However, do you know what it is? Sure as hell Alcoa doesn't and sure as hell most of the highly qualified scientists in Australia do not know.

Mr Omodei: Are you saying those people are hypochondriacs?

Mr Logan: No, I am not saying that. We want to find out what is causing their illness. At the moment we do not know. How do you suggest we fix it? Should we close Alcoa?

Mr BRADSHAW: No, I do not suggest you close Alcoa because it employs a lot of people. I would like it to be expanded, but I will not support its expansion while this is happening. I will be very upset if the Government allows it to expand to its next stage.

Mr Logan: Do you realise that for as long as it operates it will emit a smell? We all have concerns about what might be making the people sick; we just do not know what it is. However, are you suggesting that the way to stop it would be to close the refinery?

Mr BRADSHAW: No, I am not suggesting that. I repeat for the third time, that from 1984 to 1996 there were no problems. Therefore, Alcoa must have been doing something right in those years.

Mr Logan: Do you accept now that people still get sick even when the liquor burner is off?

Mr BRADSHAW: I have been told that. Something has therefore gone wrong with the process of pushing out the effluent, which is smelling a lot worse. Although Alcoa reckoned it reduced its over-emissions by 50 per

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cent last year, I say that is a load of bunkum. I visited Yarloop - not the refinery - this year, smelt it and in fact got a burning sensation in my nose and mouth. It is a difficult problem. Can Alcoa not bring in enough experts to indicate what is the problem? That does not seem to be happening. Alcoa spent a couple of million dollars last year supposedly reducing its over-emissions by 50 per cent, yet the complaints this year have doubled and the smells have become stronger and worse. Somehow there must be a focus on the refinery. I read a report a few weeks ago in the paper - the member for Collie will back me up on this - that Worsley Alumina Pty Ltd had the same difficulties after it established a liquor-burning plant. The problems started after the liquor-burning plant was installed. There must be some association with that liquor-burning plant, regardless whether it is turned on or off. Maybe the liquor-burning plant needs to be placed well away from the other plant, rather than having it at those two sites. It is just not good enough for workers and residents to fall ill and to live under the threat of having to leave the town and lose money. Whatever the price received when a property is sold, there is still the problem of finding another place to live. When Alcoa first came to town in the late 1970s, a friend of mine had just bought 40 hectares, right where the refinery is, and built a house. Alcoa came along after he had built the house and offered to buy it. My friend doubled his money in the space of a year. He thought he was doing very well, but he finished up on the Collie hill, with no power, and no telephone. He lived there for only two or three years, and became very disillusioned. He had been living in Yarloop, and Wagerup is only a kilometre or two down the road, and he would probably still have been living in that area. Instead, he and his wife left the area and never returned. I am not sure whether the people whose houses are bought by Alcoa will receive a reasonable amount of money but, whatever they get, it will not necessarily bring them joy and happiness to have to go and find another place to live. Major problems have arisen since 1996, and more energy must be expended on finding out what the source of the problem. I speak to Alcoa all the time, and they tell me that they are working on it, but nobody is satisfied now. Consultation can take place, and literature can be distributed but, in the final analysis, the only thing that will make people happy is if the nasty smells and emissions are stopped. It does not affect just the Yarloop area; it extends in all directions. Alcoa has bought a property north east of the refinery, which adjoins the Waroona town site. An ex-employee lives on the other side of the highway - the north-west side. He now works for another mining company, so he is not antagonistic towards Alcoa or the mining industry. He is now finding it difficult, and is affected by the smell on certain days and nights. Other people south of there are in the same boat. It is a major problem. Those people do not want to leave. The man I just mentioned, who used to work for Alcoa, lives north west of the refinery, near Hamel. He and his wife own two or four hectares. They married, built a house there and planted trees, and now they have all these things they love. They cannot go off and start a new life and wait for another 25 years for the trees and the garden to grow. They have been affected only in the past two or three years. They were quite happy until then. As much as the member for Cockburn might ask what the problem is, I am not the expert. Surely there is an expert somewhere who can put his finger on the problem and find a solution, because the way it is going is just not acceptable. Regardless of whether committee meetings are held at which members sit and bang their gums, the problem is not solved.

Mr Logan: Of course that is not solving the problem, but that is not all that is being done. In addition to the investigation I am conducting, surveys are being carried out by the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources in consultation with Alcoa and the local residents to try to isolate the source of the problem. A number of things are being done, but if the exact source of the problem cannot be isolated, what then is to be done? Is the plant to be closed down even if the source of the problem cannot be isolated? That is the situation that you face. There must be a good reason for closing the plant.

Mr BRADSHAW: Neither I nor the other people in the area want to close Alcoa, but they want the problem fixed. At the rate we are going, in 10 years we will probably still be talking about the same thing. It will not necessarily be me talking about it, but some members of the community will be.

Mr Logan: I hope the health of the member for Murray-Wellington is still good by that time.

Mr BRADSHAW: I do not mean that I am going to die as a result of this problem, but I do not expect to be in this place in 10 years.

One of the other problems that has come to light in the past few months is the relocation of Agriculture Western Australia offices from Harvey and Pinjarra to Waroona. I was visited by some of the staff from those offices, who alerted me to this problem. From a political point of view, it is a very difficult issue, since the three towns are in my electorate. Eighteen workers are employed at the two offices, and 16 of them will be adversely affected by the relocation. It was formally announced today that the relocation was going ahead. Sixteen of the employees will have to travel an extra 60 kilometres a day, or 300 kilometres in a working week. One worker estimated that he will have to spend an extra five to 10 per cent of his wages to get to work and back. Consideration should be given to the workers. If I could see some benefits in relocating to Waroona I would

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

support it, but the agricultural activity there is not as great as it used to be, because Alcoa bought out about 30 dairy farmers when it first moved into the area and is now in the process of trying to buy more farms. The people at the Agriculture Western Australia office will be servicing an area extending from Serpentine-Jarrahdale down as far as Bunbury. Not only will they have to spend more time and money travelling to work, but also, once they get to work, they will have to drive further to get to the areas in which they are servicing their clients. It does not seem logical to my mind, but unfortunately the minister and the chief executive officer of Agriculture Western Australia announced today that the relocation would go ahead. No compassion has been shown to those employees, and it is about time that people showed some feelings. One of the people who spoke to me is a single father who must get home as soon as he can to look after his child. He said he cannot afford the extra \$150 per week that it will cost him to get to work and back. He bought a house in Harvey because he was working there and now, at the stroke of a pen, he is told that if he wants to keep his job he must go to work in Waroona, which is 30 kilometres from Harvey. It will add up to an hour a day to this worker's travelling time, and he has a child at home for whom he will have to make other arrangements. It is a sad state of affairs. I do not think the chief executive officer of Agriculture Western Australia has been all that compassionate or smart. I have respected Dr Graeme Robertson in the past, but on this occasion he has made a grave error, and it is a sad state of affairs. I hope that decision can be reversed, even though Waroona is probably clapping its hands with joy now that it has another business and more employees in the town. They will not necessarily be living in Waroona, but they will be working there.

MR OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood) [7.30 pm]: I will talk about the Government's record on police, which is my shadow portfolio responsibility. Given enough time, I will also talk about the impact of the budget on my electorate. If there was ever a smoke and mirrors budget, this would be it. I have been a member of this House for 12 years. I have been searching for items in the budget and I dare say that I might find them during the estimates committee debate. I intend to ask questions. The Police Service is a vastly different organisation from the one the coalition inherited in 1993. That is thanks to eight years of practical and effective reform, and capital injection on a scale that was previously unseen in policing in this State. The coalition Government was committed, and the current Opposition is committed, to recognising and supporting the invaluable role that the men and women of the Western Australia Police Service fulfil in our society.

Forgive me if I refer to some notes, as I want to read some figures into *Hansard*. After eight years of coalition Government, the Western Australia Police Service is one of the best resourced in operational equipment and facilities. The expenditure for 2000-01 represents a 77 per cent increase over the last Labor police budget in 1992. In real terms, the coalition spent \$231 for each person in the State on policing in 2000-01, compared to Labor's \$168 on each person in its last budget. The training of police officers in Western Australia is now comparable to that in any jurisdiction in the world. Foreign nations, particularly in South East Asia, have approached the Police Service with a view to using its training services for their own police forces. The coalition delivered its promise to invest \$45 million in the establishment of the new police academy at Joondalup, which I believe is almost complete.

Mrs Roberts: It should be completed by 18 December, and it will be opening in February.

Mr OMODEI: It will be a great occasion. It will further enhance the quality of training that recruits will be offered. Between 1993 and 2000, the coalition increased pay rates for police officers by 27.7 per cent, making Western Australia's police officers among the highest paid in the nation. The union is currently negotiating with the Government on the enterprise bargaining agreement.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McRae): I draw the member's attention to standing orders. Reading from documents should be limited to a few lines, and documents should be paraphrased. The member has gone past the limit of a few lines.

Mr OMODEI: I thought I had sought the indulgence of the Acting Speaker. I have to recite a large number of figures and, at my age, my memory is not as good as it could be.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member should get straight to the figures he wants to present.

Mr OMODEI: Civil liability protection was established as a result of legislation passed in 1999. The employment and training of 400 staff was undertaken to ensure the widest and most appropriate level of coverage of occupational health and safety measures for the Police Service were put in place. The death and total and permanent disability benefit was increased by 172 per cent; that is, the amount paid to the dependants of police officers killed in the line of duty increased from \$106 000 to \$288 000. During its eight years of government, the coalition injected more than \$2.7 billion into operational policing. An amount of \$214 million was put into capital expenditure, which is more than triple the amount the Labor Party spent in its previous seven years in government. The coalition established 28 new police facilities, including police stations and district

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

office complexes, at a total cost of \$58 million. They were located in areas from Carnamah to Kununurra, Meekatharra to Mirrabooka, and from Hillarys to Halls Creek.

Mr Johnson: The coalition also invested millions of dollars for fax machines that the police were going without under the previous Labor Government. A lot of police stations did not have fax machines.

Mr OMODEI: I thank the member. An additional \$12.9 million was spent prior to the election on the construction of the Bunbury Police Station and the Kiara Police Station, which is the old Lockridge-Beechboro station. The Busselton Police Station was opened prior to the election.

An amount of \$42 million was spent on a police operations support facility on the site of the former Midland railways workshop. It will provide a state-of-the-art complex for a number of police units, including the Delta communications and technology project and the computer-aided dispatch and related communications project. Funds were allocated to the police pipe band, and the mounted and canine sections.

Under the coalition Government, the Police Service had the highest number of police officers per capita of any State. The coalition met its pledge in 1993 and recruited an additional 500 officers. An additional 300 non-operational police officers were returned to front-line police duties. An additional 64 officers who had been used for custodial and transport duties were also released to front-line duties. The State has 4 800 sworn police officers and a further 340 unsworn officers who provide administrative support for the Police Service. In the lead-up to the 2001 election, the coalition promised an additional 200 police officers. I will refer to the current Government's commitment in a while.

Under the coalition, the Police Service had a new operational structure and a focus that was world's best practice. Following similar worldwide changes, the coalition put in place support for the efforts of the Commissioner of Police to simplify the service's organisational structure through the Delta program. Officers were able to take a more proactive approach in their duties, and they are now supported at the local level by the allocation of resources in a manner that is most appropriate to meet local needs. The program of devolution is beginning to bear fruit in the short term. During 1999-2000, the total number of offences reported decreased compared to 1998-99. The clearance rate is still improving. The Police Service is also supported by tough new legislation in a variety of areas in which it can more effectively maintain law and order. It is covered by a raft of legislation, including the Prostitution Act 2000, which was the first piece of legislation since 1850 that dealt with prostitution. It involves heavier penalties for persons involved in street prostitution and child prostitution. Amendments were passed to the Firearms Act 1973 that reflected the national firearms agreement. The coalition tightened the Act to make it harder for the general public to obtain firearms. The Weapons Act 1999 was introduced, and it provided police officers with the power to search individuals suspected of possessing a weapon other than a firearm. The Act also provides police officers with the power to remove a weapon if a person is found to have one in his possession without a lawful excuse. The Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1994 was passed, and it was designed to make the conversion of stolen goods significantly more difficult.

The Police Amendment (Graffiti) Act was passed in 1994. Graffiti is again on the agenda. The legislation gives police greater power to stop people and search them on the basis that they may be planning to commit graffiti offences. The Security and Related Activities (Control) Act 1996 was passed, which allows police to maintain a watching brief on all employed and unemployed security personnel as well as refuse entry to those who should not be employed in the industry. The Surveillance Devices Act 1998 was passed, and it creates offences for any member of the public utilising audio or visual surveillance devices in respect of private conversations and publishing or communicating such conversations and activities. The Acts Amendment (Police Immunity) Act was initiated by the former Minister for Police, Hon Kevin Prince. It provides police with protection from civil liability for action they take in the course of their duties. The Police Service was very happy to have that legislation passed. The Protective Custody Act 2000 was also passed. It provides police officers with the power to detain for a period up to eight hours any person who is suffering significant impairment of judgment or is intoxicated. It was designed to protect the health and safety of individuals and the safety of property. The coalition was also committed to reform of the Police Act 1892, to ensure that police officers were better managed and provided with the necessary powers to ensure a safer Western Australia.

The Opposition continues to maintain a strong focus on community-based crime prevention. In 1996, the former Government announced the establishment of the state crime prevention strategy. Each year, we spent \$500 000 on community-based crime prevention initiatives. The coalition also provided more than \$600 000 annually for community policing grants, which are allocated crime prevention projects that incorporate police officers. Safer WA was developed at a cost of \$4 million over four years and it was launched during Local Government Week

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

to build a safer and more secure environment for all Western Australians. I intend to mention the current situation of Safer WA when I complete this overview of the coalition's position.

The funding of technology initiatives was discussed during the budget debates. The Labor Government is trying to deflect the issue of the Delta communications and information technology program and the computer-aided dispatch and communications system. It is untrue that the coalition Government left a \$138 million hole in that budget. The former Government intended to fund that program in the ensuing budgets and I understand that that issue is currently under review. During the election, the Labor Party was privy to the same budgetary information as was the coalition, particularly information that related to DCAT and CADCOM. Those technologies must be pursued by the Government if we are to combat some of the serious incidents that have occurred recently.

The previous Government introduced the Criminal Property Confiscation Bill, which was an important piece of legislation. It was passed in November 2000 and came into effect on 1 January 2001. The key feature of that legislation enabled police to target criminals, including drug traffickers, who would lose all of their explained and unexplained property. Every asset that they possessed would be able to be confiscated and forfeited. The police described it as the most valuable legislation to be passed by Parliament. On 31 December 2000, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Robert Cock QC, said that it was the most complete and aggressive type of legislation in Australia. In December 2000, Assistant Commissioner Tim Atherton said that there was no doubt that it was the strongest legislation in Australia, if not in the western world. He said that it was a very powerful tool against organised crime that was not only aimed at drug traffickers, but also related to all criminal activity. That is another example of how the coalition Government addressed issues that were of great concern to the WA Police Service. That legislation is a very valuable tool with which to fight crime in Western Australia that has become more evident in the past six months.

Legislation for DNA testing is also required in Western Australia. It is currently being considered by the Minister for Police and must be introduced as soon as possible. Commitments have been made in the budget for DNA testing. Some of the CrimTrac initiatives that will receive funds from the federal Government are also important. The coalition was committed to the establishment of the Western Australian forensic laboratories to be based at the police operations support facility in Midland. Although the Government has been in power for some time, we are yet to see the DNA legislation reintroduced into this House.

Another issue worth mentioning is the royal commission into police corruption. The Opposition does not believe that a royal commission into the Police Service is necessary. The cost of such a commission could blow out to the tune of \$50 million or \$70 million, as did the Wood royal commission in New South Wales. At \$150 000 per sitting day, that money could be better spent elsewhere. That covers roughly the coalition's position.

I now refer to some of the issues that concern the police in the current budget. The total funding for 2001-02 is \$515 828 000, which is a real reduction in funding of \$14 845 000, or 5.8 per cent, from the 2000-01 budget. That compares to a \$47.4 million, or seven per cent, boost to the Police Service's funding by the coalition in 2000-01. This budget abolished the \$20 million immobiliser program, despite the now Minister for Health, when he was an assistant police commissioner, stating that it was the best thing that he had heard of in years. The budget refers to a review of the number of random breath tests, which suggests a cut in that vital area that has led to a significant improvement in the number of drink driving offences since its implementation.

No new capital commitments for the Police Service have been made, which is in sharp contrast to the coalition's commitment to that area. In its last term of office, the coalition provided the funds to build 28 new police stations and the academy. The capital works budget in 2001-02 has been cut, and there has been no real commitment by the Labor Government to the DCAT and CADCOM programs. The only new funding in the budget provides for a \$12 million review of DCAT. That is further evidence that Labor's policy initiative to maximise the Police Service's existing technology, as outlined in the budget papers, is not true. My shadow portfolio of fire and emergency services has received a cut of 18 per cent, or \$8.44 million from \$45.8 million \$37.4 million. The areas to which I have referred are of real concern.

I turn now to the issue of police numbers. The Labor Party promised to provide \$58 million and 250 more police officers over four years. However, the budget papers refer to an allocation of only 200 police officers. Although another 50 police officers will be added, when I examined the budget papers, I found that those officers had been transferred from the Department of Transport. The budget papers show that 50 new police cadets will go to the police academy. Where will the other 50 police officers come from? Are they existing police officers? The Government has made a commitment to provide 40 Aboriginal liaison officers. Although I acknowledge that, the people are being snowed. It is the old smoke and mirrors trick. The Government has said that it will provide 250 extra police, but only 200 police have been provided for in the current budget. We will get to the bottom of

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that during the Estimates Committee. The Labor Party committed to provide \$15 million for police radio communications; however, I cannot find that in the budget. Some \$10 million was meant to be allocated to crime prevention projects, including an extra \$2.8 million; however, again, that is not in the budget. I also cannot find in the budget papers either a \$1.4 million increase that was supposed to be provided to the mounted police and the canine section of the Police Service, or a \$280 000 increase for the Geraldton patrol. I dare say that we will get to the bottom of that during the Estimates Committee.

The other area of the budget that concerns me relates to the south west. The media has approached me for details about what has been provided in the budget for the south west and, in particular, for my own electorate of Warren-Blackwood. I can find very little provision for the south west apart from the extension to the Margaret River Hospital at a cost of \$3 million. Global figures have been announced in the budget and in the budget speech; however, in 2001-02, for example, only \$220 000 has been provided for the planning of the extension to the Margaret River Hospital. We know what happens to planning scenarios under the Labor Government. In the days of the Warren Blackwood Health Service redevelopment, 13 different plans were submitted before the coalition Government finally built the hospital a few years ago. I do not trust the Labor Party when it talks about these types of commitments. The budget provides little for the south west.

In contrast to this Government, during eight years under the coalition Government, the joint housing scheme ensured that from one end of Western Australia to the other, virtually every town had improved housing for the aged and rental accommodation for Ministry of Housing clients.

I will now consider the health budget. During the past eight years, the coalition Government built in my electorate a brand new 30-bed nursing home in Manjimup, rebuilt the Manjimup hospital to the tune of about \$6.5 million, built a new hospital in Pemberton, which will be opened soon, and built a new hospital in Nannup, which was virtually a complete renewal of the Nannup hospital as well as its aged-care component. That was opened by the former minister, Graham Kierath.

Under the coalition Government, families in those towns were provided with access to four-year-old schooling and covered areas were constructed at schools. The previous Labor Government built the primary school in Bridgetown, but the high school was upgraded under the coalition. The school in Nannup received some additions, and Manjimup Senior High School and the technical and further education college were relocated. More than \$6 million was spent on Manjimup Senior High School during the coalition's time in government. East Manjimup Primary School also received significant extensions.

The remaining announcement for the Government to make concerns the new primary school in Manjimup. The old building is not up to standard. It is a 1920s-type building that has floorboards about half an inch thick. The classrooms are poorly ventilated and poorly heated. The conditions for teaching students are not appropriate. A thorough community consultation process was undertaken with the Minister for Education and the local shire for more than six months. The community understood that a new school would be built by 2004. Hon Colin Barnett, the former Minister for Education, made that commitment. The community went through that process and discussed whether the school should be built on the site adjacent to the high school or on the multipurpose-campus site. The results of the consultation process were presented to the minister and to the Department of Education. I understand that the Minister for Education has a proposal on his desk for the new primary school for Manjimup. It is an important project for that town. I understand that there is some conjecture about whether the school will be built by 2004. I urge the Government to make sure that it considers that area with some compassion, because Manjimup is going through significant change. There is a lot of uncertainty in the Manjimup and Pemberton areas and the announcement of the construction of a new school by 2004 would be a great fillip to that community. If the Government gave that kind of commitment, it would show that it has some confidence in the future of that area.

I am worried about where the Safer WA program fits in the local government budget. The Safer WA program was launched under the coalition Government about four years ago and committees were set up across Western Australia. The standing committee on law and order involved ministers from the portfolios of police, justice, local government, family and children's services and education, and it was chaired by Deputy Premier Hendy Cowan. A Safer WA council was set up and was chaired by the Commissioner of Police. That council included the chief executive officers from the departments of justice, family and children's services, local government and the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet and included a representative from the Western Australian Municipal Association and the chair of the Safer WA committees. Community representatives were also included. The Safer WA program replaced the community policing, crime prevention committees, known as the CPCPCs, and committees were set up across Western Australia. They were embraced by all towns and are now used as a base to apply for grants for new facilities for towns, such as skate parks, and for audits of law and order efforts. The Safer WA program was a great success across both metropolitan and country regions.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 18 September 2001]

p3849b-3917a

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

I cannot find the \$4 million funding over four years that was provided under the previous budgets. I do not know whether it has been included in this budget. The Government announced last Saturday that it was setting up an office of crime prevention, which would operate from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I have a horrible feeling that we will get to the bottom of this during the estimates committees and that the Safer WA program will be rebadged and fitted somewhere in this new crime bureau. That will mean that the funds previously expended under the Safer WA banner will now be expended through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The Safer WA program was successful. I urge the Government to continue it in its entirety. The community has confidence in that program and the Government should continue to support it.

The other area that concerns me under the local government budget is the community facilities grants. For those members who are not aware, the previous Government funded the community facilities grants to the tune of \$1 million a year over four years. There were two allocations of four years. The State Government funds were matched by funds from local governments in Western Australia, resulting in more than \$20 million being spent on community facilities over that period of eight years. Playgrounds were among the facilities funded and always included a disabled aspect and ablution facilities. It was a successful program. Both the Safer WA program and the community facilities grants were overseen by independent committees, which analysed budgets and applications for grants and which made the final decision on grants. It was at arm's length from government and was well received by local governments across country Western Australia.

I am concerned that the community facilities grants have been cut in half under the current budget. There is a \$2 million program over the next four years, which means that the Government will spend only \$500 000 this year. That will render the whole program ineffective. It is a short-sighted move by the Government. The previous program provided \$1 million a year and attracted more than \$1 million in matching money each year. In most cases, the matching contribution was at a ratio of almost two to one. To reduce the funding now will mean that 112 local governments in country Western Australia will vie for the available money. If \$500 000 is divided among 112 councils, each will get only an infinitesimal amount. On the other hand, if winners are selected, some people will miss out. In many cases, local governments have deliberately set aside funds to assist in the funding of a playground with access for the disabled and toilet facilities or whatever. The reduction in the community facilities grants will halve the State Government's contribution to these projects. It is a short-sighted view.

I touch now on the timber industry in Western Australia. I refer once again to the Government's statements about budgets in general. The provision of \$130 million may sound like a lot of money and it might suggest that the Government is serious about this issue. However, on analysis, I found an allocation of only \$22 million in next year's budget. I cannot see how the amount of money required in the budget can be accurately predicted until the Government has decided on the volume of timber to be produced. I have been to some of the forest management planning meetings, including one in Mount Hawthorn last week. The Government is facing similar problems to those faced by the previous Government. The green movement is not receptive to finding a balance between conservation of forests and production of timber in Western Australia, to such an extent that many believe logging should be completely stopped in state forests in Western Australia. Meetings have been held across Western Australia, in Perth and in towns like Bridgetown, Busselton, Margaret River, Nannup, Denmark, Pemberton, Walpole, Albany, Northcliffe, Manjimup, Collie, Dwellingup, Kalamunda, Bunbury and Fremantle. The common line coming from the conservation movement at these meetings is that the jarrah cut should be reduced to 30 000 or 40 000 cubic metres. The Government believes that it should be 140 000 cubic metres. In reality, the Minister for Forestry wants the jarrah cut to be 180 000, and he is pretty close to the mark. I do not know whether the Government realises it, but there has been a reduction of \$9 million in income from royalties. That is a \$9 million reduction in income to the State that was not necessary. If a balance is found - and that can be achieved by taking the advice of the scientists and making some tough political decisions - royalty income to the State will rise, and it will not be necessary to exit people from the industry and pay retrenched timber workers to train for new jobs. Therefore, the Government faces a challenge. After attending those meetings and witnessing the depth of feeling that many of those people have on this matter, I believe that successive Governments have failed to educate the public about the processes that occur in the management of forests in Western Australia. I also believe that the industry is partly at fault, and that we have failed as a community to come to grips with the issue of forest management, and that is now causing a dilemma for the State Government. The dilemma that it is causing me in the seat of Warren-Blackwood is that a large number of people are uncertain about their future. We want to be able to expand the education system in my electorate. On the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Pemberton District High School - a school that was opened by the former Labor Government - we want the Minister for Education to come down and make an announcement that funding will be provided for the science room. We must not allow that uncertainty to continue, and we must not allow people to lose their jobs without putting alternative industries in place. Prior to the election, under the coalition

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Government, a furniture manufacturer was prepared to come to Manjimup and employ between 60 and 80 people. That project was ready to be signed the day after the election, following 18 months analysing the submission, verifying the volumes, and ensuring that there would be a market for the product. It has been frustrating for me and for the people in those communities to see that project completely evaporate since the election.

I turn now to an issue in Pemberton where a sports facility is being built which will house all of the sports clubs under one roof. The previous Government made a commitment to fund that facility under the community sporting and recreation facilities fund under a one-third, one-third, one-third arrangement, in which each third comprised \$474 000. The sports club owns the current old workers club, known as the sports club, and in the package put together by the previous Government it was agreed not only that there would be a \$5 million dollar assistance package for the mill, but also that the Government would buy the old country club for \$700 000 that \$700 000 would then be allocated to the wet area of the new integrated sports facility. That meant the community would have a project worth approximately \$2.5 million, comprising the \$700 000 from the old country club; \$300 000 which was raised by the sports club; and the one-third, one-third, one-third arrangement of \$474 000 each from the shire, the Government and the local community. I am sure that every member would agree that would be a great fillip to the community given that it is facing an uncertain future.

I examined the budget papers, but I could not find a reference to the figure of \$700 000. I have been told that it is being held in trust, and I hope it is. I have made it my business to find the cabinet decision, and there is no doubt that the previous Government decided not only to assist the mill in its restructure after 2003, but also, based on the policy of the previous Government, to buy the old country club for \$700 000. I shall cite a letter from the current Minister for Education to the President of the Manjimup Shire Council. The Minister responded to a number of questions, but a pertinent paragraph that is probably the most relevant to the \$700 000 states -

Cabinet approved a payment of \$700 000 through the Forest Products Commission to purchase the existing freehold land from the Pemberton Sports Club to allow them to complete the sale of their property. Funds from the sale of the land were to be used to assist with building extensions at the Pemberton Recreation Centre (this component will be licensed to sell alcohol and is therefore not eligible for CSRFF). Those involved with the Pemberton Sports Club assumed that the money would go to the South-West Development Commission for them to hold, and pass onto the Club at the appropriate time. Presumably the appropriate time is when all money for the total project has been confirmed. At present the project is still \$300 000 short on the community facility side.

The local community is confident that it will be able to raise the funds to match the CSRFF amount, and if the \$700 000 is in the budget - I hope it is - concept plans and detailed drawings could be started and work on the project could begin by early 2002. That is the expectation of the community. We have these letters of commitment, and I am sure that the Government will accede to the commitments that have been made both by the previous Government and in this letter. I expect that the Minister for Sport and Recreation will receive further letters, as will the Minister for Peel and the South West and the Treasurer, to ensure that the funds are somewhere in the budget. The funds may already be there, and I might be overreacting. However, this matter is very important to the community. It has been planned for more than six years and the community has been involved in many activities to raise funds for the sports club and the community component of the CSRFF project. Members of the community have picked grapes; planted, harvested and exported potatoes; run beef cattle on consignment; and harvested and stacked timber, as part of their "in kind" component of the project. That timber is ready to be dressed, but they are waiting for the quantity surveyors to work out the type of timber needed for the facility, and then the remainder of the timber will be sold. At the same time, there has been generous sponsorship from the local community of Pemberton although not too many people there are flush with money. Since the Labor Government stopped the logging of old-growth karri and jarrah, the number of tourists has dropped off dramatically, which has nothing to do with the Ansett situation or the tragedy in America. It may well be that people believe that now the forests have been saved, they do not need to go and see them again. The message that I try to convey to people around Western Australia is that Pemberton, Manjimup, the lower south west and Bridgetown are magnificent places to visit at this time of the year. The situation in this area may soon be similar to that in Margaret River where wine and food tourism - such as new olive oil ventures - are going ahead in leaps and bounds. Pemberton, Manjimup, Bridgetown, Northcliffe, and Walpole, being inland towns, are following slightly behind, but the necessity to have a vibrant tourist industry is very important.

Mrs Edwardes: Have you asked the minister if the non-funding is due to the liquor licensing? Is that a new policy? I am not sure, and I stand to be corrected.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr OMODEI: I thank the member for Kingsley. I believe that the minister understands there are two distinct parts to this matter, even though they will be under one roof. One component is the Department of Sport and Recreation's funding through the CSRFF, which is the one-third, one-third, one-third arrangement. That will keep retain all the sports clubs under one roof. The other component is the wet area, and the local community does not expect any matching funds for that. It is a straight commercial arrangement for the sale of that property to the Government for \$700 000. The reason for that was that prior to the Regional Forest Agreement it was expected that the old country club, or the sports club building, would be sold to Wesfarmers and used for office accommodation, or whatever, because it is adjacent to the mill offices. After the regional forest agreement step-down was enacted by the previous Government, Wesfarmers was no longer interested in purchasing that property, and on that basis the Government believed it was morally obliged to step into the breach. The idea was to buy that building to set up business incubators to train people in fine woodwork, woodcraft and furniture making. This Government should consider that proposition and the \$5 million that was to be provided to the Pemberton mill to continue value adding. Under that plan, the mill would experience a huge reduction in the karri volume, but it would be guaranteed to receive 30 000 cubic metres of karri and an assistance package to allow it to also cut marri and blue gum. There is talk that some pine could also be cut. Under the assistance package, those operations initially would be scaled down and employment built back up to current numbers. That is a distinct possibility. All that is needed is for the Government to have the will to step into the breach. Funds are available under the assistance package to build up industry, and the federal Minister for Forestry and Conservation has advertised a further \$15 million funding. The first advertisements appeared in newspapers last Saturday. Therefore, a further \$15 million is up for grabs

Mr Brown: It is a bit late. There must be a federal election soon.

Mr Omodei: I do not think that is it. We could talk about this issue later. This Government is in the same position as the previous Government. The federal Minister for Forestry and Conservation made it clear from the beginning that the State Government's responsibility is to provide the resource and the wherewithal to assist businesses to value add and build up the industry. The coalition could not do that to his satisfaction. This Government has also not been able to satisfy his requirements. He wanted a commitment on the resource, and that still has not been made. The federal minister therefore held back, for which there was probably justification. He is now advertising those funds, and they will be made available. If those funds are sought by industry, it will be money the State Government will not have to find. It should be pleased about that.

The volume is the main issue. Opinions seem to differ between government ministers. The state Minister for Forestry, Hon Kim Chance, seems keen to take some timber from the moratorium areas. I do not know whether that sentiment is shared by the Premier and Minister for the Environment and Heritage. That is something the Government must address. The time to address that issue has passed. It is a nonsense to suggest that the forest management plan process is holding up that decision. If the Labor Government can make a political decision to do a backflip on karri and the reduction of the volumes of jarrah and karri, it can make a political decision to provide 180 000 cubic metres of first and second-grade jarrah and to fit the forest management plan around it. That would be a simple thing to do. The Government would need to find and cut only that volume of timber in the forest. The Government has put 12 000 hectares of regenerated forest into reserves. It had no mandate for that. After the election, a bright spark decided to put another 12 000 hectares into reserve when it was not necessary. I know that the ministers responsible, including the Minister for State Development, have discovered that the issue is far more complex than they thought it was when they were in opposition. These issues came to light when they became ministers and started holding the reins. The Government must make some sensible decisions to save the Government money. If the Government allowed a cut of 180 000 cubic metres of jarrah and 50 000 to 60 000 cubic metres of karri, state income through royalties would increase. The Government would not have to exit the same number of people from the industry or retrain the people who would otherwise have lost their jobs, and the economy of the lower south west would hold up better than it would if the Government proceeded down the line it is taking now. They are very important issues.

Time and again I have given my commitment to assist the Government, provided that job creation projects are announced. I have not yet heard of any. This will be the fifth or sixth time I have urged the Government to take that action. It is playing with people's lives. If the Government reduces the volumes in contracts to allow only one shift at the Pemberton mill and does not replace those jobs, one-third of the breadwinners in Pemberton will be out of work. That is a large proportion of that community.

MR WALDRON (Wagin) [8.15 pm]: As a first-term parliamentarian, I was looking forward to the handing down of the budget and going through it and finding out what was what. I am surprised about and disappointed with the documents that have been delivered. I found it very hard to track some of the items; although, in some

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

cases, that may have related to my inability to properly read the budget papers. I was disappointed mainly because of the continued inequitable treatment of country people in this State. This budget contains real cuts to rural health, agriculture, country road programs, police numbers, tourism and other country services, plus an increased taxation on small business.

Overall, the Government's contribution to agriculture has been cut from \$165 million actual expenditure in 2000-01 to \$135 million in 2001-02. This cut will affect one of our major export industries, which is one of our major earners. The people in that industry are experiencing a difficult time. Road funding cuts amount to more than \$100 million. The budget has increased taxes to small businesses via the payroll tax and fringe benefits tax, which now includes contractors. Those measures will have a real effect on small business in country Western Australia, which is already suffering from the adverse seasonal conditions. Those communities need every bit of help they can get.

I would congratulate the Government for honouring its commitment to reduce the stamp duty on workers compensation premiums for small business; however, that move has been offset by the imposition of the levy resulting from the HIH Insurance collapse. Only this week a constituent from Central Great Southern Engineers in Kojonup rang me about his ability to pay his workers compensation premiums. Although he welcomes that reduction in the stamp duty rate, he must still pay the HIH imposition.

The second part of the budget disappointed me because of the way the Government has claimed credit for, and highlighted as its own, programs that were put in place by the previous Government. It is probably the Government's method of trying to appease country people and convince them that it cares about them, when at the same time it is trying to take away their basic political representation via the so-called one vote, one value legislation. This creativity is evident in my electorate of Wagin, in which the Government has claimed credit for projects such as the staff housing at the Katanning Residential College, the Albany Highway roadworks south of Kojonup to Cranbrook, the Narrogin Residential College, the Wickiepin health centre, the Katanning campus of the Great Southern Regional College of Technical and Further Education and the Narrogin Regional Hospital development. All those projects were put in place by the previous Government. They are important, and I congratulate the Government for completing the stages that were put in place. I am sure that although the public might at first be fooled by this creativity, they will not be fooled for too long. They will find this extremely misleading. Those projects already exist.

Stage 2 of the \$2.4 million Narrogin Regional Hospital redevelopment - which I will talk about now - appears as new funding; however, it is nearly completed. The Narrogin Regional Hospital wants an additional \$1.9 million to complete stage 3 of the project. It appears to me and to the Upper Great Southern Health Service in Narrogin that this has not been included in the budget. Therefore, this great project, which already has had so much money spent on it, is in limbo. Narrogin has an excellent facility that is two-thirds complete, and because the project will not be completed, in some ways the money that has been spent has been wasted. Narrogin has an excellent facility, but it has not been finished as it should be; it is half done. This means that the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the hospital and its staff, and the conditions and morale of the staff will be greatly diminished. The third stage fits in with the first two stages. It would centralise the nursing post and lead to ease of running of that hospital. It is extremely disappointing that stage 3 will not go ahead.

Police numbers, services and facilities are other areas of extreme concern to country people, and in particular in my region. I mentioned earlier this year in the Parliament that crime in country towns and districts is a real issue. Perhaps a few years ago it was not taken that seriously because the problems had not arisen, but country towns now have some real crime problems. In smaller towns and, more particularly, in regional centres crime is a real problem. In my electorate, the towns of Narrogin and Katanning have some real crime problems, such as drug problems, and crimes arising from those problems. The local police and local bodies such as SaferWA, which have already been mentioned, are doing a terrific job; and the best they can. However, I fear that the Narrogin Police Station will be downgraded and police numbers will be reduced.

There were rumours that policing numbers and the facilities at the Narrogin Police Station were being reviewed, so I met with the regional police superintendent to discuss those rumours. He confirmed a review was taking place. However, no-one at a local level had been consulted about that. I then wrote to the Police Department to seek a meeting with the review committee, to provide for consultation. I wrote jointly with Sally Higgins, the mayor of Narrogin, and also with Keith Madden, who is chairman of SaferWA, which is a group that does a fantastic job. I could not attend that meeting, but the mayor of Narrogin and the chairman of SaferWA did attend. They raised their concerns about police numbers and the downgrading of the building. The chairman of the SaferWA committee in the area is particularly concerned because he could lose the group's office in the area in which it operates. That will be very disappointing, because SaferWA is doing such a great job. SaferWA

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

committees were mentioned by the member for Warren-Blackwood. They play a terrific role in country policing and in assisting the police. I go to their meetings whenever possible. It has been an eye-opener to see the programs they have in place, the way they help youth in country towns and how they avert crime before it starts. It would be disconcerting and disappointing if the Narrogin Police Station were downgraded.

The budget referred to Aboriginal liaison officers, which was terrific to see. I hope that some of those Aboriginal liaison officers will be allocated to country Western Australia, because they will be of great benefit to policing in country WA and we would welcome them in our region. I make another point about the upgrading of police stations. In my electorate the Narrogin Police Station is the only station that has a lockup facility. If there were a problem in Katanning, which is a major regional centre, and someone were arrested and needed to be held overnight they would have to be transported to Narrogin. This seems inefficient and a waste of money, time and resources, and it should be looked at.

It is disappointing that the budget for road funding is down by more than \$100 million. That is of great concern to country people. I raise that issue on behalf of my electorate. The vast distances that electorates in country Western Australia cover was mentioned during the one vote, one value debate. WA is a big place and its roads are important. Years ago a chap from Victoria said that the trouble with Western Australia was that we had the best roads in Australia but there was no-one on them. That situation has changed a fair bit. Our roads are in reasonable condition, although some areas need a lot of attention. However, if the Government does not provide funding to construct the proposed new roads that would be of great benefit, roads in country Western Australia will deteriorate. That will happen due to the lack of funding. It can happen quickly, especially with the number of heavy vehicles using country roads. That will have a great effect on agriculture, small business, tourism and, above all, on road safety and the safety of families who constantly travel on those roads. They have to travel on those roads to access sports, education and health facilities - for everything. I noticed an allocation in the budget for the black spot programs, which is terrific, and also an allocation for some other safety upgrades. I congratulate the Government on that. It is a good initiative. However, that will pale into insignificance if the roads are not maintained. It will result in poor road surfaces and fewer passing lanes, which are important on country roads especially with the increased volume of heavy haulage vehicles on country roads. Passing lanes give people an opportunity to pass safely. If the number of passing lanes is not increased, there will be more accidents. As the traffic increases, and if the number of passing lanes does not increase, more people will become frustrated and take risks; and that is when accidents happen.

I also refer to the lack of new road projects. A couple of road-building projects have been stymied at this stage. It is important that those roads go ahead. That issue was raised in this place the other day. New roads provide alternative routes for heavy vehicles and for people travelling on holidays - especially along the Brand Highway. If that road building went ahead it would reduce the amount of normal traffic on the Brand Highway, on which there have been many road crashes. I am sure that a cut in road funding will result in more road crashes and more deaths and injuries to motorists. I know that no member of Parliament wants that. Only last week in my home town in Kojonup I lost a young friend in an accident that was mostly attributable to the road surface. It is a real problem.

I am pleased that \$23 million has been allocated to the Rural Business Development Corporation. That is a good initiative by the Government. However, I am concerned that the former Agriculture Protection Board will be absorbed into the Department of Agriculture, because I see a problem there. The APB used to be a separate body with individual responsibilities. Protecting our agricultural industries from the threat of disease should have the highest priority. We have seen the effect of foot-and-mouth disease. Mad cow disease and myriad other diseases can be brought into or spread across this country. I am concerned that the absorption of the Agriculture Protection Board into the Department of Agriculture will diminish the budget pool allocated to agriculture protection. It will reduce its independence and perhaps put WA agriculture at risk. I hope I am wrong about that. I hope the Department of Agriculture will be able to deliver the same service that the APB provided.

I am also disappointed that the budget contains no increase in grant allocation to the network of business enterprise centres that play a terrific role throughout WA. These centres assist people who want to form new businesses, and people who already have businesses in communities across rural WA. They do a great job. Many people use them, but they are desperately short of finance. They are allocated around \$64 000 a year, and they also raise other moneys. However, business enterprise centres need more financial assistance to continue assisting people with small businesses and people trying to establish small businesses. Members who have tried to establish a small business would know that it is not an easy thing to do. The assistance and advice on planning that they provide is essential. I have often talked about reality and real people; these centres provide that. They play a big role in giving people somewhere to go for good, sound advice on planning and in creating

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

business plans to help raise finance. I have witnessed in the past few months the real value of these business enterprise centres in country WA at a time when those communities are under a lot of pressure. I ask the Government to reassess its policy and consider those business enterprise centres.

I have written to the relevant federal minister asking the federal Government to support the State Government in allocating moneys to those BECs. Federal assistance would help to enhance the role played by BECs. I also encourage the State Government to examine closely the allocation to BECs, which would help rural WA on the ground and in a realistic manner.

Mr Brown: The federal Government has set up small business enterprise offices which duplicate the work of the BECs.

Mr WALDRON: Those are area consultative committees.

Mr Brown: It has in fact produced glossy advertising against the BECs. We have drawn the attention of the federal Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business to the fact that it has duplicated the work and that, if he wishes, we would be more than happy to do the work in the State by opening offices and sticking a few logos on windows. We said we would accommodate that. However, it appears that the federal Government is more interested in getting the minister's name into the community than coordinating a strategy for BECs.

Mr WALDRON: I agree with the minister. I was approached by the BECs on that matter. I agree that it is a duplication of services. The BECs are in a great position to provide those services. The other organisation does a good job and is trying to do the right thing. However, if both organisations were brought under the same umbrella and the federal Government assisted the State Government, we would benefit from that. I wrote a letter to the federal Government asking a question about the same matter that was brought to my attention by a constituent. I am happy to continue to support that and if I can be of help, I ask the minister to please let me know.

I refer to sport and recreation, which is an area that is close to my heart. I come from a sporting background and I believe strongly that sport and recreation in any form has great value in health and personal fitness benefits to communities and individuals. It also provides physical and mental benefits to individuals and the communities because sport provides a social outlet and social benefit to country WA. I shall comment on the sports budget because sports and recreation in country WA are important to our community life and need constant attention. In tough times, sport provides great pressure and stress outlets not only in country WA but also in the city, even if that means people just barrack for a team or yell at an umpire. It gets people away from their everyday stresses, business and family worries and financial pressures. Communities as a whole benefit from the release of those pressures. This is a great sporting nation and a great sporting State.

Team sport is extremely important and has a critical role to play in the development of young people, especially teaching young people about discipline. I found in my involvement with sports coaching, especially of team sports, that young people like some discipline. Today it is only through sport and other club activities that some youngsters get discipline. Team sport also teaches them responsibility. One thing they learn in a team sport is that other people rely on them and they rely on other people. That teaches them responsibility and helps build better citizens for the future and helps young people gain self-esteem. As we get older, we forget what it was like to be young. It is easy for older people to run down younger people. Young people can lose their confidence and self-esteem, which can lead to many stresses and disorders and sometimes dire consequences. The other day in the netball team in Narrogin for which my young daughter plays, I saw a little girl who is not outstanding at sport but who gets to play a game each week. The team has won two games this year and the other day, when it won its second game, that little girl said, "We are as good as the Dockers because we have won two games." It struck me that she was so proud to be part of the team. She had a glow on her face and as part of the team she felt she had achieved something. We all like to achieve something.

I welcome the increases in the budget to the community sport and recreation facilities fund which, I believe is different from the fund referred to by the member for Warren-Blackwood. I understand an increase in grants has been made under the CSRFF.

Mr Omodei: Yes, the minister was talking about that.

Mr WALDRON: It has been increased by about \$1.3 million a year. I welcome that because those grants build facilities across Western Australia. I support the Government in that, as I support it in the continuation of increased funding of the country sports enrichment scheme. The previous Government introduced that scheme and I had a lot to do with it when I was managing country football in WA. It is a fantastic scheme that sends to

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

the country top sportsmen and women to perform; for example, West Australian Football League players, the Warriors state cricket team, basketballers, squash players and players from many other sports.

Mr Barnett: You were not in the handball code, were you?

Mr WALDRON: I used to play handball occasionally but maybe the Leader of the Opposition did not run past enough times!

Mr Barnett: I do not remember you doing it.

Mr WALDRON: The country sport enrichment scheme provides great benefits to sports development and the promotion of sports in the country. It helps young people focus on some of the stars whom they see only on television and provides them with an opportunity to see them up close. Sometimes those little moments can spark a great sporting career. We all know that there is plenty of money and plenty of enjoyment to be had out of a great sporting career.

I am concerned about changes to the allocation of funds to the sport enrichment scheme. I know that the funds are spread around different sports and I am happy with that. However, taking players from the WAFL to the country by using these funds has proved a fantastic success. In addition to the sports development advantage given to country people from that fund by having that sport in their town, there is a financial benefit. That is important because it is hard running any sport in country WA, as it is in the city. However, opportunities exist for local sporting associations to make money from the deal, which was very much part of the deal with the previous Government. The Government is now asking local associations to provide half the money to get a team to go to country areas. That may well kill the scheme. I ask the Department of Sport and Recreation and the minister to consider that closely. It would be better to reduce the numbers of games played in the country and organise them properly than to have more games but organise them in a half-hearted way.

I move now to tourism. There appears to be cuts to tourism in the budget. Coupled with the road funding cuts and the current airline crisis, tourism is under terrific pressures and threats in this State at the moment. Country WA is always looking for new opportunities in the tourism industry because it must capitalise on tourism as much as possible. Western Australia is just beginning to take advantage of tourism. There are many fine tourism groups in WA and many fine new tourism initiatives going on across country WA. I mentioned previously in a statement to the House some of the initiatives in my region, such as Kodja Place that is being constructed on the Albany Highway in Kojonup. It is a state-of-the-art facility being built in association with the local Nyoongah community to promote not only the history of the town but also the Nyoongah people in the region. The Nyoongah and European populations in that area are working together, which in itself is of great benefit to that town. We see Nyoongah people in Kojonup taking leadership roles and working along with the rest of the population.

Another great initiative in my region is the Dryandra tourist group, which involves six or seven shires working together to promote tourism. Shires that sometimes do not pull together are now doing so for the benefit not just of their own patch, but of the whole region. This is extremely good for tourism. Other initiatives include the heritage trails, the Bluebird festival, Albert Facey House, the giant ram and the historical village in Wagin, all of which need continuing support. The Premier said today in this House during question time that we needed to talk up tourism, and I am prepared to do that, but it is one thing to talk it up and quite another to support tourism by backing it up with adequate funding. A leisure rail project is proposed for the great southern. I am not sure what stage that has reached at the moment, but I would urge support for that project, which will really set tourism alight. One of the problems in the great southern is that there is good transport travelling north and south, but we have problems with routes from the coast inwards - from the west into the Albany and Great Southern Highways through that region. Two roads that would greatly assist tourism - the Cervantes-Lancelin road and the Corrigin-Hyden road - are not proceeding. The continuation of these roads, as had been proposed, would certainly be of great benefit to tourism, not to mention road safety.

In the past few weeks, during the course of the debate over the one vote, one value legislation, I have continually heard the argument about equality. Equality should be applied in every area, not just a few selected areas. There is no equality in this budget between the city and the country. Equality is not always possible across the board. Country people in Western Australia do not expect equality right across the board. They realise that they will be disadvantaged in some areas because of where they live. They realise it is not possible to have the same services as city people, and they do not expect the same standards as people in the metropolitan area. Anyone who knows country people will know that is the case. What country people get upset about is being overlooked. Many parts of this budget overlook country people. There is not a lot in it for my electorate. The Leader of the National Party quoted the figures from the electorate of Avon. It appears that country Western Australia has

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been disadvantaged by this budget, and that is not fair or equitable. All country people want is a fair go. They provide a lot economically to this State, and put up with a lot. They want services, and this budget fails to deliver a lot of the everyday services we are used to in the city. As in the one vote, one value legislation, country people feel that they have been disfranchised. Country people are beginning to wake up to what it really means, and they feel bad about it. If the Government places this budget on top of that legislation, it will become clear why country people get upset. The Government needs to look strongly at what it is doing in regional areas, especially in many of the smaller centres. I am talking here about reality, and helping people on the ground. Country people do not want handouts from the Government, just realistic support, constructive assistance, and leadership. This budget does not show them the leadership they are looking for. It has been a tough time out there, and country people have been let down by this budget. I look forward to learning more in the estimates committee hearings.

MRS HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [8.46 pm]: Before turning my attention to the legislation before the House, I will make a few remarks about the tragic events of the past week in the United States. Life as we have known it will never be the same again, and the freedoms we have enjoyed should never be taken for granted by any of us. I add my heartfelt sympathy to all those who have been touched by this senseless tragedy. So many innocent lives were taken in such a cold and calculating act of terrorism. Never before had I felt such a great sense of sadness and despair. Many of us take for granted the very freedoms and securities our democratic country affords us. This should be a time for deep reflection about what we value and hold so dear. I am sure I am not the only one in this place who hopes for world peace, yet these tragic events have me questioning the likelihood of this, when there are those who do not respect and value life the same way as we do, and who are prepared to sacrifice themselves in such an evil and despicable way. I have never felt more certain that we need to be more vigilant in ensuring proper processes for entry into Australia. I wish to record my sadness and condolences to those families affected by this most tragic event.

I will refer to a number of matters in my speech tonight on the Labor Party's first budget since its election in February, its impact on my electorate, and a number of matters relating to the area for which I am opposition spokesperson. I will begin with my pet project, the Reid Highway. This falls within the responsibility of my shadow portfolio, but it also impacts on my constituents, and it is very important to them. The road has now been operating for some time, and I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge Main Roads staff for their ongoing support, commitment and cooperation in dealing with a number of issues that have impacted on residents living adjacent to this road project. Main Roads has at all times undertaken these tasks in the most professional way, but one matter remains unresolved; that is, the sealing of parts of the road. Currently, sections between the high-grade surfaced intersections are sealed with primer, the surface of which causes noise disturbance to residents living adjacent to these sections. I recently visited a number of homes in the affected area to hear first-hand the noise that emanates from that section of the surface as vehicles drive off the shoulder onto the primer seal. It is indeed noisy, and clearly causes these residents much angst. The surface has a limited time span and will ultimately require resealing. The best outcome would be to seal the road surface with the same surface as the intersections. I urge the minister to consider that as a priority. I have been unable to establish from the budget papers if there is provision for the resurfacing. I hope that the minister will give me an assurance that I can take to the local community that the road will be sealed. It is critical that the sealing takes place as soon as possible.

I noted with interest the material distributed to me regarding works in progress in my electorate. It states that the extension will be a dual carriageway between Marmion Avenue and Erindale Road. The only section that is dual carriageway is the Everingham Street connection and Marmion Avenue. Apart from that, the rest of the road is a single carriageway.

Another matter that has engendered much concern in my community is the uncertainty shrouding the infill sewerage program. I am endeavouring to establish the timetable for the sections of my electorate that were previously programmed to commence this financial year and those scheduled for 2002-03 and 2003-04. Delaying the scheduled program will be a major setback for the coastal strip of my electorate and clearly sets back the environmental benefits the program has realised. I take this opportunity to place on record my concern that this is being overlooked and not being seen as a priority. I hope this is not the case and does not materialise. However, I am yet to be convinced that the Government is committed to the infill sewerage program in the same way that the coalition Government was.

Earlier this year I supported the inaugural breakfast promoting chaplaincy in schools. Hon Ray Halligan, the member for the North Metropolitan Region, the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection, the member for Girrawheen and her predecessor, Ted Cunningham, supported the breakfast in a bipartisan way. It was a

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wonderful show of support for the work that is carried out by chaplains in schools. There was a great sense of partnership between members in an endeavour to raise awareness of the work carried out by chaplains in the state school system. As I mentioned, the members supported the breakfast and sponsored it financially. We sponsored tables and invited members of the business community in our electorate to hear first-hand the valuable work carried out by chaplains. Marcus Holt and Darren Birch, chaplains of Carine Senior High School and Balcatta Senior High School, gave an informative address explaining the benefits realised from their work. I cannot begin to describe the work they undertake in a way that adequately acknowledges their commitment to students, their energy and their faith. It is fair to say that school chaplains are not motivated by financial reward but by improving the lives of students and providing exceptional pastoral care. In the past, chaplains have received some government funding, yet it is my understanding that funding to chaplains is likely to be cut by \$100 000 per annum. This would be an inexcusable setback. Chaplains would be the first to say that they do not expect government funding and that it should be a community responsibility. The Churches Commission on Education has ongoing fundraising to ensure the continuation of chaplains in our schools. Needless to say, donations come invariably from the same core group of people. Cutting the small amount that Governments have funded to school chaplains in the past is a retrograde step and one that I hope is reconsidered seriously by the Minister for Education. I hope that members of the Government support me in this regard.

Another area relating to the education budget is funding for children with special needs. For some time I have been endeavouring to have Duncraig Senior High School's education support facilities upgraded from a unit to a centre. I regard it as an issue of equity. I understand that there are a number of other schools in a similar situation. I have never advocated having the school promoted to the top of the list for an upgrade, nor have the parents of the students of that school. However, there is a growing deficiency and it should be clearly addressed as a priority. The students are disadvantaged when compared with students in other schools that are treated in a totally different context. Duncraig Senior High School's education support unit was set up in 1994. At that time it catered for 20 students. In July 2000, it had an enrolment of 35 students. Currently it has 33 students. It had two full-time teachers, two part-time teachers and one part-time aide. Children in wheelchairs also had their own aides. Duncraig Senior High School is in the Perth education district. The district does not have one support centre for senior school students with disabilities. This is most likely one of the reasons that the Perth education district office determined that it should be classified from a unit to a centre and that it should be upgraded. In upgrading the unit to a centre, I understand that little construction needs to be done because the basic infrastructure is already in place. In the interim, students need resources that will give them the same level of staff and facilities enjoyed by their peers at other educational support centres. An example of this is Belridge Senior High School. When I was investigating this matter, the school had 50 students and a staff that comprised a principal, nine teachers, three social trainers, eight teachers assistants, a registrar and two library officers. It is an excellent example of a staff-student ratio. Duncraig Senior High School's unit falls well short of this. It currently has 33 students and 5.5 full-time employees.

In July this year I wrote to the Minister for Education to bring the matter to his attention. In his response dated 9 August, he confirmed that it remained a priority in the education support capital works sub-program for 2002-03. The students are still no closer to a positive outcome. In his response, the minister also outlined that a comprehensive review of educational services for students with disabilities in government schools was being undertaken that may result in changes to services and facilities. I hope this is the case; however, given the time that reviews invariably take, I am most concerned that this is yet another delaying tactic in addressing an issue that is critical to the well-being of the students. I urge the minister to deal with the review posthaste to provide the equity that the students rightly deserve.

I now address the change of route for the south west metropolitan railway, which the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has determined is a better option for public transport commuters. I am yet to be convinced by her that re-routing the railway is the best option, given that there are no studies which substantiate the change and which support the delay of the project. The cynic in me would suggest that the change of the route is a strategic calculation by a desperate Government to ensure that it did not jeopardise its AAA credit rating as it delivered its first budget. The State's credit rating would have been put at risk had the budget included the funds for the project. It is my view that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure changed the route to ensure that the State retained its credit rating. I firmly believe this demonstrates that the minister has misled the community about her real motive behind re-routing the railway. The project is not about delivering a better transport network, but about delaying the project to better place this Government to deliver on its election promises that it is struggling to meet. When a serious examination of the minister's proposal is undertaken, it is evident that the minister has not fully comprehended many issues about changing the route of the railway.

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The minister has totally disregarded the proper planning process that we undertook when we were in government. As I have said before in this place, when we were in government, we took the community and the local authorities with us in our endeavour to deliver a rail network to the growing communities in the southern corridor. The minister has undertaken no public consultation. Although she continues to state that she wants to address community expectations, she is totally out of step on this issue. The minister has made a decision on the run without any proper consultation process. As has often been said in this place, and I will say it for a long time to come, our master plan was overseen by a steering committee that comprised experts in the field. That committee included the Director General of Transport, the chief executive of the former Ministry for Planning, the Under Treasurer, the commissioners of Westrail and Main Roads, the chief executive of the Environmental Protection Authority and a representative of the local government municipal association.

The master plan provided for an important group within that structure; that is, the local government planning and liaison group, which consisted of the mayor and chief executive officers of the Towns of Victoria Park and Kwinana, and the Cities of Gosnells, Canning, Cockburn, Rockingham and Mandurah. Interestingly, today I came across a community opinion survey that was distributed by the City of Canning entitled the "South West Metropolitan Railway Master Plan". Its introduction refers to the history of the issue. With the indulgence of the House, I will quote from that document, as I am sure that members on our side will allow me that opportunity. It states -

In 1996 the Department of Transport introduced the Metropolitan Transport Strategy. Its primary objective was to encourage people to use public transport on trunk routes and to major activity centres.

One of its main objectives was to provide "fair access to a reasonable level of transport services for all individuals, businesses and communities".

The preparation of the original South West Metropolitan Railway Master Plan commenced in 1997 and was completed in April 2000.

The Master Plan took three years of intensive research, consultation and negotiation . . .

That was between all those people that I mentioned earlier. It continues -

It incorporates information from major studies on land use and travel needs of the South West Metropolitan Region, the environmental and social implications and the infrastructure and operational requirements of the service.

The Plan provided for a high quality, easily accessible urban rail service. It provided both business and residential opportunities across the South West Metropolitan Region and has already been incorporated into the future planning strategies of seven local governments.

The City of Canning believes that Local and State Government need to work closely together to achieve the best possible outcome for communities in Western Australia.

The scrapping of the South West Metropolitan Railway has both positive and negative aspects for the City of Canning, however the City believes it will have far-reaching consequences for the South East Metropolitan Region. The City believes the present Government's decision to move the railway directly down the Freeway will not provide adequate public transport to the community in the South East Metropolitan Region, now and in the future.

The City of Canning plans to negotiate with the Government and is seeking the community's comments in support of its position. Please complete the opinion survey and return in the postage-paid envelope enclosed.

Your opinion is valuable.

The survey has five questions on the reverse side. As I have said, we took the community with us in the planning process for the railway. This is yet another example of how out of step this minister is, especially given her stand on public consultation. The decision to change the route of the south west metropolitan railway is not good transport planning, and it certainly will not provide value for money. I will probably repeat those two points for a long time to come.

Mr McGowan: Do you not support the freeway route? Is that the position of the Opposition?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: It is my position, given that this minister has not undertaken the proper process. I supported the Kenwick route. A number of issues are not being dealt with, not the least of which is the median strip along the middle of the freeway. There are important and critical issues that must be addressed.

Mr McGowan: That must be the Opposition's view if you are its spokesperson.

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Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: The Opposition supports me, as it supports the Kenwick route. If the member had been listening, he would know I was explaining that we had embarked on a proper process with the master plan over some years to get the best possible route for the south, west and east corridor of the community. However, this minister has not delivered.

Mr Whitely: What consultation? People who live on Williams Street would have been locked away from access to Albany Highway because of the fact that 20 train movements now run through -

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: The local authority supported that proposal. The minister has not consulted with the community. She has received only the messages that are being given to her in the party room. If the member had been listening, he would have well understood that local authorities supported the Kenwick route.

Mr Whitely: The people of Beckenham welcome this decision. They have access across the rail line because there are fewer train movements per hour than there would have been under your proposal. There are eight train movements an hour under the current regime, and there would have been 20 train movements under your proposal. They were concerned that your group would lock them away. What consultation did you conduct with the people of Beckenham?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: The member was not listening to what I said. We undertook a proper master plan whereby we consulted with all the local authorities in those areas. Some issues were being dealt with, including grade separation. A great deal of investment made in those areas will be wasted. There was no consultation in the community from this minister either. There is currently no consultation with anyone. Within only a couple of hours of notifying seven local authorities, the minister made a determination that she would change the route. Where was the consultation?

Mr Whitely: The people of Beckenham welcome the decision because it means that they can get across the railway line and they can access Albany Highway.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I take those points on board. Does the member believe that other residents should be denied access to an effective rail system because the minister proposed to change the route? The minister has not proposed to change the route because it would provide more commuter patronage for people in the community; it is all about delaying the project for one year so that the Government can deliver on its budget.

Mr Whitely: Surely it will increase patronage if commuters get to Perth from Mandurah 12 minutes earlier. The fact that a person can get to Perth 12 minutes earlier will be an enormous boost to rail patronage.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: For 12 minutes? Is the member for Roleystone saying that saving the people of Mandurah 12 minutes will deliver a benefit to every other commuter in the community? I hazard a guess that this proposal will add 12 minutes to the travel time of all those people who live in the inner suburbs. I want to make some comments during this debate -

Mr Whitely: I thought you might need to be across the top of these issues when you are being so critical.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: The member for Roleystone might need to be across some of these issues as well. He is representing his community and I am trying to take a big picture approach to this matter.

Mr Whitely: Big pictures are made up of little details.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Absolutely. If the member for Roleystone wants to talk about detail, he should talk to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, because that woman has no idea about detail. He should not get me started on that.

Mr Whitely: She certainly knows about the detail. I welcome her decision, as do the people who live in my electorate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr Sweetman: The member for Roleystone's electorate is an island by the sound of it.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Yes, it is an island. I will move on.

Mr Whitely: If you feel threatened by detail, please do.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I do not feel threatened by detail at all. In fact, the member for Roleystone and I can take this matter up on another occasion.

Mr Whitely: We can do it now if you like. I do not care.

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Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Mr Speaker, as I said, this is not good transport planning. I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am delighted to see you in the Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Carine has been a bit busy.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: This proposal is neither good transport planning nor value for money. As the issues become more apparent and the proposal unfolds, not to mention the minister's ability to fabricate the detail, I am finding that the proposal is an outrageous disregard for the investment that has already been made. I am also concerned about the taxpayer funds that will ultimately be wasted if the minister has her way and the proposal goes ahead. The investment in the tunnels, bus ways, Canning Bridge and the freeway will all be wasted by this decision by a minister who lacks vision. That is all I can conclude about this minister. The investment the coalition Government made in the freeways to provide choice for commuters has been negated. There will clearly be ongoing delays, confusion and congestion on the Kwinana Freeway for years to come.

Mr Board: Years!

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Definitely! I believe that the issues I have raised briefly underscore my premise that this change of route is just a smokescreen to deceive the community about the real motive and purpose for delaying the project. It is an ill-conceived proposal made on the whim of a minister who is sadly lacking and who has no studies to support her decision to change the route of the railway. Her whimsical decision will replace a long-term, carefully considered plan with one developed at the time of her announcement - I understand it was just over four weeks - and which will ultimately service only half the number of passengers that the Kenwick route would have done.

Mr Barnett: Do you recall that even a month afterwards, she could not explain whether it would be a tunnel or an excavation through the centre? She had no idea.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: That is right. She had no idea about the detail to which the member for Roleystone keeps referring.

Mr Whitely: Let's debate the detail.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: There will be opportunities for that in this place on many occasions. The member for Roleystone should not think that this is the last time he has heard from me on this issue, because it is not. I am enjoying the fact that this minister has no vision.

Mrs Edwardes: The minister is not in the House.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: She is not in the House; she is never in the House when it is dealing with issues that relate to her portfolio.

Mr McGowan: Hang on, this isn't a motion concerning her portfolio. How was she to know what you were going to talk about?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: It is an important Bill. The Labor Party has only one minister in the House, but I add that he is a good minister.

This change of route denies rail access to residents in the broader south eastern corridor. As I have said, I am certain that this change to the half-completed bus ways and to the service of residents in the inner suburbs will cause the same problems as those suffered by people living close to the city in the northern suburbs. By the time trains reach Glendalough and Stirling stations, there is no room left on the railcars, so the commuters at these stations are left stranded or waiting for the next train. The same will happen at Canning Bridge. It is an absolute nonsense for the minister to propose a bi-directional lane on the eastern side of the freeway, which in my view will severely compromise safety.

Mr Barnett: Motorists will panic when they see a vehicle coming from the opposite direction.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Absolutely; they will panic. The dual gauge railways will be elevated in the 10.2-metre corridor provided in the southern area. I made a mistake in the matter of public interest when I said that there would be an 18-metre corridor in the south; in fact, it is 10.2 metres. As the minister appropriately corrected me at the time, it is an 18-metre corridor in the northern suburbs. This alarms me because not enough attention is being given to the safety problem that will be experienced in the delivery of a dual gauge railway in a 10.2-metre corridor of land, with a bi-directional lane on one side between Canning Bridge and the central business district.

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While the minister keeps talking up the saving of 12 minutes for commuters from Mandurah, she fails to deal with the obvious weaknesses that will result from this route change. As I said earlier to the member for Roleystone, there is every likelihood that the decrease in travel time from Mandurah will add extra time to everyone else's travel. Changes to bus services are expected, not to mention the difficulty commuters will have endeavouring to find room on railcars when they are taken off the efficient bus services that are currently provided. As I have already said, the change of route will delay the project by more than a year, and that makes me question whether this minister will ever be able to deliver on this project and on the commitment she made to the community of Western Australia. I am not convinced that this decision will get more commuters out of cars and onto the rail service. For the most part, it offers fewer railcars and denies commuters from the industrial centres of Kewdale and Canning Vale the opportunity of a direct route to their place of work. As I have said, much of the discussion to date implies that the direct route will provide a quicker service and will encourage better patronage.

I have touched briefly on my concerns about safety hazards. These include the 10.2-metre corridor, which is clearly narrower than the corridor in the northern suburbs. That is of great concern, and something to which the minister has given only scant regard. As members can appreciate, there will be no maintenance track, which in itself is a critical issue and one that should be of major concern. I have already referred to the bi-directional bus lane and the conflict with other traffic in peak periods. I find this alarming; it needs serious investigation. I hazard a guess that this suggestion is yet another made on the run by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, to get her out of the difficulty over the \$33 million investment in the Canning Highway bridges. That will largely be wasted if her proposal goes ahead. The previous Government undertook extensive studies, and in this regard we did not propose to displace commuters from the existing efficient bus services. The minister's proposal will displace commuters from efficient bus services onto the direct rail, and that will cause problems for those commuters previously serviced by the efficient bus services. Good public transport is about providing a service close to the area in which people live. This proposal is contrary to all expert advice and, as I have stated, we undertook extensive studies in the master plan process. We did not displace those commuters. I believe that this will have huge ramifications for the bus services and the proprietors in the southern corridor, another area for which the minister has shown scant regard. I am not convinced that this minister has a true understanding of the issues that face her due to the change in route, and her total disregard of the community. As I have said in this address, it is my intention to pursue this minister over her whimsical decision - one that I believe is a smokescreen to ensure that the Government delivers the key election promises that it is struggling to meet - and I will pursue her for a long time to come.

MR MCGOWAN (Rockingham - Parliamentary Secretary) [9.24 pm]: Principally, I shall talk about a few issues that concern my electorate of Rockingham. It is traditional in these budget addresses for members to raise issues relating to their electorates. The Treasurer is within eyesight, and I congratulate him on the job that he has done. A Treasurer goes through a lot of pain, particularly during the preparation of a budget, which is an enormous task. In all honesty, the Treasurer has done a fairly good job in balancing the public's interests with the economic imperatives with which the Government was presented.

It is a difficult task for a Labor Treasurer to bring down a budget that meets the spending wishes of the members within the Caucus. As we know, many of our electorates have a great deal of need, and they often have social demands and infrastructure requirements that are difficult to provide for in any budgetary context. A Labor Treasurer has a range of colleagues who nip at his heels like a bunch of angry fox terriers, in an attempt to get the projects and social needs of their electorates addressed. Of course, the Treasurer has had those angry fox terriers nipping at his heels for the past six months during the preparation of this budget. He had not only that difficult task, but also the difficult task of dealing with the financial rating agencies that were coming at him from the front. Those financial rating agencies examine a State Government's budget in a very non-emotional way. They look at it without any regard for the social needs and requirements perceived to be in the suburbs, towns, and villages throughout our State. They look at the budget on the basis of whether the financial year's debt, as presented in the budget, will exceed 43 to 44 per cent of the revenue. If the net state debt exceeds 43 per cent of the revenue of the budget, the State's AAA credit rating is brought into question. When the State's AAA credit rating is brought into question, the Government must pay more to service that debt. When more is paid to service that debt, less money is available to spend on the programs that colleagues would like to see implemented throughout the communities, towns and villages in this State. It is a difficult balancing act for a Treasurer, particularly a Labor Treasurer. I believe the Treasurer has done an exceptionally good job of achieving that balance. He has put in place some revenue measures to ensure that the Government not only delivers on the commitments it made in the election campaign, but also maintains the AAA credit rating. That goal is an imperative of this Government, and it will remain so throughout the time in which the Labor Party is

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in office. I am pleased with the job the Treasurer has done, and I believe that the general public should also be particularly pleased.

The Treasurer sat through 75 expenditure review committee meetings. That committee, which was recently reinstated by this Government as an institution to cut down the spending demands of departments and agencies, is a great reinvention, and a great way of dealing with the demands placed on the Treasurer by agencies, departments and his colleagues. I ask members and the general public to remember that this is the first budget of a four-year term. Once the growth in spending is brought under control, as it has been by this budget, there will be further budgets down the track. When the Government attempts to deal with the communities' needs during the next three years - my community has some needs to which I will refer later - the sound financial management put in place by the Treasurer will enable the Government to address those needs, whether they be recreational, public transport, hospital needs and so on. A term of government is a four-year marathon; it is not a one-year race. I am pleased that the Government is laying a foundation that will allow it to address those needs in the next four years.

In one respect the past six months in government have been particularly enjoyable for me, because I know that some of the things I care about are being done and put into practice by the Government. The member for Carine spoke about her concern over the southern corridor rail link and attacked the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. As a member who represents the southern corridor, and one who is keenly aware of the needs of that area, I believe that the changes made by the Government are absolutely outstanding. Despite the attacks made by the member for Carine and the Leader of the Opposition, I went to the extent of issuing in my electorate a newsletter that was completely devoted to that issue, because I am so proud of it and so pleased about what has taken place. The front page of that newsletter read "Victory for Rockingham". The Leader of the Opposition attacked me on radio and said that in the light of the Government's decision, it was a grave day for the member for Rockingham, and that I would not be here much longer. The members for Carine and Cottesloe have completely misread the public mood in the southern suburbs of Perth, in which about 450 000 people live. Those members are both northerners. We all know that northerners cannot see south of the river.

Mrs Hodson-Thomas: That is not true. I spent 10 months living in Secret Harbour.

Mr McGOWAN: I know that some members of the Government have their holiday houses in the southern suburbs, but for those of us who live there -

Mr Sweetman: They cannot afford to live in Margaret River.

Mr McGOWAN: Some are in the deep southern suburbs, if Margaret River can be called that.

Those of us who live in the southern suburbs know that the Government is on a winner with this project. I will not produce only one leaflet; I will regularly send leaflets to my electorate claiming victory. I harassed, cajoled and urged the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to make the change.

Mrs Hodson-Thomas: Are you not worried about the safety concerns?

Mr McGOWAN: I will deal with those in a moment.

I harassed, cajoled and urged her to do it, but she did not need much urging, because she was completely on side with this decision, as were people like Professor Peter Newman. He is a great supporter of the changes the Government made. The public transport and infrastructure planners are behind what we did. In simple terms, the change means that the railway will be one that is used by the people of Perth, as opposed to one that is bypassed by the people of Perth. That is a simple point: if the rail link were to follow the route proposed by the last Government, it would be a ghost train. It would not be used. People can make all the arguments they like about the planning process and other things that went on under the last Government -

Mrs Hodson-Thomas: Do you not think consultation with the community is important? I took interjections from one of your members about whether we consulted with the people of Beckenham.

Mr McGOWAN: I was in public life in 1994 and 1995 when the original decision to go via Kenwick was made. I was a councillor of the City of Rockingham.

Mr Hyde: And deputy mayor.

Mr McGOWAN: Yes.

Mr Hyde: Will you take the interjection that you were an esteemed and respected deputy mayor?

Mr McGOWAN: I thank the member.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

I was in public life at that time. The people of my city were not consulted about the route through Kenwick. It is not true that consultation took place. No-one was asked, and everyone objected. I put together petitions about this matter that were signed by between 13 000 and 15 000 people within my area and in the greater Rockingham area. Local members of Parliament know what the people in their electorates are thinking in a general sense. People should at least ask members of Parliament about the thoughts and views of their electorates, because they will find few more informed barometers of public opinion in those areas. Ninety-eight per cent of my electorate supports the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure's decision about this rail link.

The other points raised by the member for Carine were -

Mrs Hodson-Thomas: At least you were in the Chamber listening, unlike your minister.

Mr McGOWAN: I was listening. The member has been here as long as I have. She knows that if a member is to make a speech on an issue that does not relate to debate on a specific Bill or motion, and she wants the responsible minister to listen, she should tell that minister beforehand. Most ministers are not always here. The member knows that. She acts like the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure should have ESP and know what the member is thinking and what she will talk about in the midst of a general speech. I heard the member talk about a few things. She spoke about recent events in the United States, the Reid Highway in her electorate and the railway. I am not sure how the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure was supposed to determine that when she was in another building. Maybe she was supposed to pick up her thought waves. It is obvious she did not. I listened intently to what the member had to say, and I will talk about the points she raised.

A comprehensive master plan is completed after the route is determined. That happened with the Kenwick route. The coalition Government completed the comprehensive master plan after the route had been determined. The Government's decision on the so-called loop through Rockingham was made about four years after the decision on the route through Kenwick. It was added on towards the end. To say that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure should know every detail about curves and grade separations, and where the line might go into a slight cut -

Mrs Hodson-Thomas: She should know the details. I, as the opposition spokesperson, was criticised for not being on top of the detail. The minister should certainly be on top of the detail.

Mr McGOWAN: I am sure the member for Carine can have a briefing. The minister will let her speak to her advisers, who are engineers and railway and town planners. The member for Carine knows that most members are not engineers. She was involved in public relations. The member next to her was a contractor. We do not know those engineering details because we are not trained in that area. It is a big ask to expect a minister to know every detail about a \$1.2 billion project. I am sure that if the member has a cup of coffee with the minister and her advisers, they can go over those details.

I totally support the position. I am pleased that money has been set aside in the budget. The budget papers a number of times mention the route along the freeway. I am pleased about that. People in my electorate, and the electorates of Peel, Dawesville, Mandurah, Murdoch, South Perth, Perth and Willagee will benefit. A spur line will go close to the electorate of Southern River. This decision will impact on a range of electorates. People in electorates north of the river will enjoy the fact that if they want to go to Rockingham for a lovely day out, they will be able to go straight down the freeway and not have to go through a horrible skew in the line out through Kenwick, which no-one in my electorate wanted.

Mrs Edwardes: We want to be able to see the river. The foreshore will be blocked by the rail line.

Mr Kucera: If we do not put in the railway, people will not be able to see the river for the smog from the freeway.

Mr McGOWAN: That is a very good point. I am pleased that someone has brought that into the debate.

I was reading the daily *Hansard* for Wednesday, 12 September. The Leader of the Opposition, when responding to the Premier in relation to a budget debate, said that the Opposition would change the southern railway and not seal the Tom Price road. I will make sure that is brought to the attention of the member for Burrup. The Opposition would change the route of the railway, which has the overwhelming support of the people who live in the southern suburbs! I urge it to change this policy, because it is destructive and does not take into account the wishes of the people down my way. We are determined to see the policy introduced by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure continue.

The other issues -

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr Barron-Sullivan: You did not talk about the rail links within Rockingham. Since the loop has been taken off the plan, it is important that a light rail link go through Rockingham. Will you be pushing for that, and is the Labor Party committed to it?

Mr McGOWAN: I am pleased that the member for Mitchell said that. I have presented a grievance to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure; I have had a number of meetings with the director of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, as well as with the City of Rockingham; and a committee is in place that will work out the appropriate routes and method of transport from the two stations in my electorate, through the city to connect its great assets such as the beachfront, the shopping precinct and the university.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: A committee?

Mr McGOWAN: The member for Mitchell asked me a question, and I would like to answer it. The member for Peel and I are co-chairs of that committee. The committee comprises the director of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, representatives from the minister's office, and the mayor, the chief executive officer and engineers and planners from the City of Rockingham. The role of the committee is to work out the appropriate routes and means of transport around the city. I have an open mind on the routes that will connect the city with the railway. In Perth the central area transit buses collect people from around the city and connect them with the railway station. The northern suburbs bus services connect the residents who live in proximity to the railway line with railway stations. The committee will look at all these things. I am pleased with that outcome, and so is my electorate.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: Are they included in the \$1.2 billion?

Mr McGOWAN: Considering that the railway line will not be in operation until 2006, it is probably too early to start talking about those sorts of arrangements.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: So this is not budgeted for; it is an extra cost.

Mr McGOWAN: The member for Mitchell started with a constructive interjection, and now he is being nasty. I have answered his interjection, and I will leave it at that. I am in a sombre mood, so I will leave the member for Mitchell with that thought. We were being nice to each other, so we should leave it at that.

The other points I raise concern my electorate. I will present a grievance motion to the Minister for Health about this issue on Thursday. The Rockingham-Kwinana District Hospital requires additional funding. That hospital is 25 years old. When it was built it was too big for the size of the community it serviced. However, in the intervening period the community has expanded tenfold and some aspects of the hospital, such as the emergency department and the number of beds, are in need of improvement. The budget contains some money for capital works for hospitals and staffing; it provides for 400 extra nurses. I flag this issue because it is relevant to the budget, and I will be grieving to the Minister for Health on Thursday in greater depth on the point.

I said earlier in my address that I am proud of what the Labor Government has done. Firstly, I am proud of the decision on the southern rail route. Secondly, I am proud that money has been set aside for capital works for hospitals. I am proud of the Treasurer, who has managed to bring the budget in with a surplus, and, more importantly, that surpluses have been projected for each of the following three out years, as opposed to the deficits that were projected. I am proud of those three points, because they put us on a sound financial footing to pay for future government expenditure throughout the State.

I am also pleased that money has been set aside in the budget for items such as the forest commitments. I was involved in the emotional debates on old-growth forests in the term of the last Government. The Labor Government managed within days of being elected to -

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is far too much discussion going on in the Chamber; please show some consideration for Hansard. I draw your attention to the member for Rockingham.

Mr McGOWAN: The fact that the Labor Government was able to cease logging in old-growth forest within three days of its election to office is a source of great pride to me. I know when I finish my time in this place, and I go to the south west to visit the holiday homes of my colleagues opposite, I will be able to drive through some of those magnificent forests that would not exist but for the decision the Labor Government made following its election; a decision that has been funded to a large degree in this budget. The Leader of the Opposition said at one stage - last year or the year before - that old-growth forests was the issue that had been of concern to more Western Australians than any other issue in the past 10 years. The Labor Government dealt with that issue overnight. We met the demands of more than 90 per cent of Western Australians who were concerned about the preservation of a tiny belt of these magnificent forests in the south west of Western

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Australia, a State four to five times the size of Texas. The Labor Government also included in this budget worker assistance and business exit packages that will meet the needs of people who have been affected by the Government's decision. A lot of people will not be happy about it, but the vast majority of people in this democracy will be happy with that decision.

I am proud to be part of a Government that has done all those things. It brought the budget in with a surplus; changed the rail route to meet the needs of our city; provided a substantial increase in health funding; saved the old-growth forests; and introduced one vote, one value legislation, which I have always believed in. I lived in Queensland for a substantial period of my life. I saw the effects of a corrupt electoral system; what that can do to a Government; how that can skew the Parliament so that it is possible for a minority to rule a majority; and how that is in essence the antithesis of a democratic system of government. The Labor Government has introduced laws along those lines. We have managed to continue our opposition to One Nation. The Australian Labor Party has given One Nation no air. In contrast to our opponents, we have lifted the minimum wage under the Minimum Conditions of Employment Act to the national benchmark. What is more, we have done all this within six months of being elected to office.

The Leader of the Opposition addressed one issue in his remarks that I would like to touch on briefly. First of all, he commenced his remarks by railing about the fact that some journalists were taken to dinner to be briefed on the budget. I thought it was rather unusual and ill-advised of the Leader of the Opposition to start his remarks by railing about journalists. I would have thought that was not the principal issue, and certainly it was inadvisable for the Leader of the Opposition to commence his remarks in that way. He then went on to the issue of the premium property tax. He set it out as his principal point of opposition to this budget. The premium property tax sets out in stark terms that ideological difference between the Labor Party and the Opposition. There are other issues, of which I have mentioned a few, including the forest issue, raising the minimum wage, our opposition to One Nation, our support for one vote, one value, and our commitment at a practical level to a decent public transport system in Western Australia. However, the premium property tax clearly sets out the Government's ideology. We know that there is a requirement for revenue to fund our health, police and education systems. They cannot be funded without revenue and must be funded from somewhere. In addition, the budget must be kept in balance or surplus to satisfy the ratings agencies around the world; if we do not, they will kill our economy.

The Treasurer is aware, as are all members, that New South Wales now has in place a premium property tax. The New South Wales Opposition will not remove that tax. It knows that it is a just and equitable funding measure for all the things that need to be funded in the State. The Government has a choice about how to raise revenue. Does it raise it from those least able to afford it or from those most able to afford it? A plethora of families are struggling on one income in my electorate and other electorates, including the electorates of some members opposite. Some people own a house worth \$100 000 or less or are in rental accommodation with very little means to meet tax burdens placed on them by Governments. How do we raise the revenue? The Treasurer has examined the New South Wales system, and decided that it is a fair tax that accumulates against properties that historically have grown enormously in value. The tax has a deferment mechanism to allow people to pay it either on the sale of the property or when the property is passed on to the owners' heirs and successors. If I had a choice between taxing the people at the bottom of the scale and taxing the people who own land in a non-productive asset worth more than \$1 million, I would choose the latter because it is a just and equitable way for a Government to raise funds needed for education, health, police, saving the forests, a decent public transport system, planning for the future and salinity strategies. We must find the funds for those things; a premium property tax is a great way of doing that.

I do not believe an analysis has been made of the 900 people who will be affected by the tax; however, I would be surprised if more than a couple of dozen people are in the position outlined by the Leader of the Opposition. There will be a capacity to defer the tax. Their relative suffering therefore will not be great compared with the suffering of, say, a truck driver in my electorate who struggles on very little income to support a family. It is fine by me if people with \$1 million worth of land assets, excluding the houses on them, are required to meet that debt as opposed to people at the bottom of the scale.

Mr Board: Can you shed some light on the application of that tax? There is nothing in the budget papers. Will strata title holders also pay; that is, people in high-rise buildings who are sitting on a \$3 million or \$4 million block of land?

Mr McGOWAN: I am not exactly sure of the detail in that respect.

Mr BOARD: If they do, tens of thousands of people will be affected.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr McGOWAN: The member asked me a question. I am unsure of the detail. I have considered the question, but the Treasurer is a busy man and I have not had time to ask him that question. The member for Murdoch is correct: there is potential for an anomaly in some areas.

Mr Board: It is a huge anomaly and inequitable.

Mr McGOWAN: Any taxation system has potential for an anomaly. As we have all seen on television, some billionaires pay no tax. A bottom-of-the-harbour system was exploited in Western Australia, which resulted in a great many wealthy people paying very little or no tax. There will always be anomalies in any taxation system. I am pleased that the member raised the issue because the Treasurer, in consultation with Treasury, can examine that matter and bring into the Parliament amendments to the legislation next year if deemed appropriate. I am pleased the member for Murdoch raised that matter, because he reminded me that I intended to raise it with the Treasurer.

I am very pleased with the budget. It is a Labor budget that delivers on the major commitments made in the election campaign. I believe it will do a lot for the people of Western Australia.

MR D'ORAZIO (Ballajura) [9.55 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to stand on the occasion of the first budget of the Gallop Government to thank the Treasurer, the Premier and the Cabinet for delivering a budget of which we can all be proud. More importantly, it indicates to the community and to new members in this place that campaigning on promises and delivering them are now part of the new political scheme.

During the election campaign it became obvious that the issues hurting the community, especially in my area of Ballajura, were health, education and police. I congratulate the Minister for Health for record spending in health. It is important that members understand the expectations of the community. No member would be concerned about spending more money, provided it was spent in the right areas, especially health, education and police. However, in the short time that I have been elected, I have noticed some of the issues that matter to the "little" people of our community who have suffered so long under the Liberal Government. It is a great thing that this Government is remedying some of the situations, especially by increasing the minimum wage, which will be of great benefit to those who need it most.

During the election campaign a matter that came to my attention was drug use in our community. The Drug Summit was a great success. Some views expressed at the summit were radical, and I believe all members will eventually have to make hard decisions on them. However, it was courageous of this Government to hold the Drug Summit, which allowed different views to be expressed. After hearing the speakers from Sweden and Switzerland, I was unsure about which view I supported.

Mr Bradshaw: I heard both of them at a health forum in a lecture theatre, and the problem was they were not comparing apples with apples.

Mr D'ORAZIO: They were not. However, the views expressed were interesting, in that it appeared not to make too much difference which system was used. The message from the Drug Summit, and from both those speakers in particular, was that the Government must do something about drug use and not sit around talking about it.

Mr Board: It would be a good start if you put some money towards the recommendations.

Mr D'ORAZIO: There will be some outcomes in future. The Government will consider that. However, it was important that the community was able to voice its opinion. Interestingly, opinions came not necessarily from the same people from whom we have heard over the years. It was encouraging that people who had been at the coalface, and a number of people who would not normally have been listened to, came into this place and expressed a view on drug use and its implications. As a pharmacist, obviously I have a close interest in the outcome of the Drug Summit. Sometimes I see the legal side of drug use and the effect that legal drugs have on individuals, which most people do not talk about. Sometimes those effects are just as devastating as the effects of illicit drugs. As a community we must address those issues, and I believe that will happen.

Banning the logging of old-growth forests was again a courageous decision by the Government. When the idea was first floated, members opposite talked about how crazy it was. The community answered that question for them.

A number of residents in Ballajura were affected by the finance broking industry scandal. I heard some stories from people who believed they would have an easy life but, all of a sudden, were plunged into an unknown area and were scared of living from day to day because all their savings had disappeared as the result of the actions of a few people. The extension of concessions to seniors and self-funding retirees made a big difference to people who needed the support. The Government has sat down and analysed some of the issues that affect those people

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who tend not to be heard. The launch of the behavioural management program in high schools is another great initiative. I regret that it has not been introduced in my electorate, but the program is fantastic, and shows results. I hope it will be extended to all schools. The support for the nurses was another huge decision. All these decisions require money, and it is great that the Government has its priorities right. A criticism of the previous Government was that it had lost touch, and it had also taken the community for granted.

Some initiatives in this budget in my electorate will be of tremendous benefit. The Malaga fire station will be constructed, at a cost of \$809 000 this year. The Malaga industrial area is growing rapidly, and a fire station in that area will be of great benefit and will enable service to be provided very quickly. As that area expands, it is important that this facility be available. Extra police will be allocated to Ballajura Police Station. Even though this is not directly linked to the increase in police numbers, it has occurred because of the change that has taken place in policing, which means that police are allocated according to local government boundaries. This will make a huge difference in my electorate. Ballajura had one sergeant and six officers. Numbers have now been increased to one sergeant, 10 officers, and a non-commissioned officer. The number of vehicles has been increased to two, and they now provide patrols seven days a week, including all-night patrols. Ballajura has been screaming out for more police for so long that I thought it would never happen. Under the previous Government, Ballajura, as the most marginal seat in the State, seemed to attract money from all sorts of different departments for all sorts of things, but it was unable to get extra police. The change that occurred three or four weeks ago has already shown that extra police services and patrols in the community have enormous effect. There has been a huge reduction in the crime rate in the Ballajura area, and, more importantly, in the Malaga industrial area. The extra car allocated to the Ballajura Police Station has enabled the Malaga industrial area to be patrolled during the evening, and this has resulted in a huge reduction in the number of break-ins in that area. The business proprietors are happy, the community is happy, and the message it sends to all of us is that extra police on the streets will reduce the crime rate. Their ability to follow up break-ins is improved, as is their ability to help the community combat youth problems.

Ballajura is a recipe for disaster; it is the area with the greatest number of children per family in the metropolitan area and in which local government provides very poor recreational facilities for youth. No-one wants the police to be nursemaids for young people, but it is important that the youth also understand that the community expects to be protected by the laws of the State. There have been some horrific stories in my electorate about youth creating mayhem with women living on their own, kids breaking into houses during the day, truancy, and the list goes on. The increased police presence at Ballajura has resulted in a substantial decline in those problems.

I shall identify one of the problems that occurred under the previous Government. The Ballajura Police Station is located in the Ballajura shopping centre, and has parking for only one vehicle. When a second vehicle was allocated, it had to be parked at the Kiara Police Station. This shows how poorly planned the location of that police station was, with the lack of provision for future expansion. It is expected that a third vehicle may be allocated to Ballajura and, if that happens, facilities will need to be upgraded. I have already spoken to the Minister for Police and asked her to look at the possibility of building an extension to the premises to house the cars. It is a waste of resources when police officers have to travel 10 kilometres to collect a police car to do patrols. When police stations are planned in the future, especially in areas with an increasing population, future needs should be examined and provisions made when the station is first opened.

Another issue raised by the community is the lack of bus shelters. The previous Government decided to scrap the subsidy program for bus shelters, which was jointly funded with local government. In Ballajura, this has caused massive problems. Senior citizens complain that in the winter they have to wait in the open in pouring rain, and in summer they must wait in blazing heat. Before the election, my predecessor made a big point about the requirement for a bus shelter on Beechboro Road. She said that it was terrible that bus shelters could not be obtained, but she forgot to tell everybody that the previous Government got rid of the funding. In the case of that particular bus shelter, I organised it through the City of Swan, and then the previous Government tried to take credit for something that we did while in opposition. It is great that \$2 million has been allocated to upgrade bus shelters throughout the metropolitan area, and I will be putting in a request for my area very quickly, because it is a very important issue to some of the elderly and the youth of Ballajura. It might seem a minor request, but it is an absolute disgrace that senior citizens must wait in the searing heat for a bus.

Other improvements occurring in my electorate include \$1 million for an extension to the Morley Senior High School. There will be a further expansion of the sewerage program in Morley, and Western Power will be busy completing the \$3.1 million worth of work at the northern terminal, which is part of the \$8.1 million project. Also, \$300 000 has been allocated to a north metropolitan dental clinic, which will be of great benefit to the region.

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I turn now to transport. It is pity that the member for Carine is not in the House. I have sat in this Parliament for six months and heard her and other members opposite berate our Minister for Planning and Infrastructure about the railway line between Mandurah and Perth. Tonight I heard about the master plan, how wonderful these things were, and how much detailed planning had gone into it. Between 1994 and 1996, I was a commissioner, then deputy chairman and then chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission.

The member for Rockingham made the comment that the master plan occurs after the option is selected. I support him on that. I point out to members opposite that the decision to go through Kenwick was made on the basis of dollars - it had absolutely nothing to do with the preferred route in relation to the use of the facility. When that option came before the Western Australian Planning Commission, I said how stupid it was to have a rail link to Mandurah going through a detour in Kenwick.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: Is the member saying that the Government's proposal is no more expensive than the Opposition's?

Mr D'ORAZIO: No. The proposal to go along the middle of the freeway is far more expensive than the Kenwick route.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: The member is saying that the two proposals cost the same.

Mr D'ORAZIO: No. The member should let me finish. The original proposal to go along the middle of the freeway is different from the current proposal by the minister. A decision was made to go via Kenwick. I remember saying at the commission meeting that it was a stupid option. To this day, I support that view. In the end, I supported the route through Kenwick because a rail connection to Mandurah was better than none. A deviation through Kenwick is ridiculous. It was not supported by the planners of the planning commission of the day. In the end, the decision to go through Kenwick was based on cost. The two main proposals considered at the time showed that the Kenwick route would be far cheaper. That was why the Premier, the minister of the day and the planners supported that route. The decision proceeded through the various planning structures and the master plan. In my opinion, it was always the preferred option to go along the middle of the freeway. I commend the minister for making that decision. There are details that still need to be worked through, and there are problems of visual intrusion and aesthetics. There are noise problems. They can be addressed. When more than \$1 billion is being spent on an infrastructure project, there is a need to make sure that people get it right. I commend the minister for making the hard decision and taking the route along the middle of the freeway.

It always bugged me that it was proposed to construct a railway line from Perth to Mandurah through Kenwick. It would involve a massive, unattractive detour. It is a pity that so much money has been spent on the various planning options, creating a master plan, having consultation and councils constructing their town planning schemes around the expectation of that route. I understand all that. It is a pity that money has been wasted. Members should remember that this facility will be there for a very long time, and it will provide the best solution for the community rather than provide an option that will cost less money. If this proposal achieves the end of being the best possible route and comes close financially to meeting the other proposals, it is a great decision. The Premier, the minister and the Cabinet should be congratulated on making that hard decision. The planners considered three options at the time. The decision was made to support the Kenwick route, but it was based on the fact that it would cost less and there would not be much difference in the travel time. I remember receiving public submissions after that decision was made and changing the various reservation routes. I was part of those hearings. The member for Carine said that the decision was made after consultation with all the various groups. The decision was made on price alone.

I will address some other issues affecting the health expenditure budget. I have attended a number of morning teas over the past six weeks organised by the federal member for Cowan. Interestingly enough, an issue that was raised consistently by many people in the community is aged care. A number of people who attended the morning teas said that people who were dear to them were being housed in hospitals because they could not find suitable aged care accommodation. That creates two problems. It takes up beds in the hospital system and puts more pressure on the state health budget. More importantly, it is something for the federal Government to address. Members of both sides of the Parliament need to put pressure on their federal colleagues to make sure that this issue remains high on the agenda at the next federal election, to ensure that adequate funding is put into aged care. Not only is funding needed for aged care, but also we need to make sure that the requirements placed on the providers of aged care are fair and reasonable. A number of providers have made representations to me that the bureaucratic requirements on providers have become so onerous that it is very difficult to provide good aged care for the community without incurring major costs and making it very unattractive to provide aged care. We need extra federal funding for aged care and we need to look at the bureaucratic process that is in place to assess the provisions. In one case it cost about \$100 000 to comply with the requirements under the new criteria.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

It had nothing to do with providing better aged care and there were no complaints about the aged care being provided. The problems related to compliance with the requirements of the bureaucracy.

Dr Woollard: The federal Labor Party's five-point plan to address aged care does not address the issue the member has raised. It does not deal with excessive documentation and the standards of care being provided.

Mr D'ORAZIO: I said that both sides of the House need to apply pressure to solve the problem. It is not a political question; it is a real problem in the community. If we do not address it, we will pay the price for a number of years to come. It will be difficult for the people receiving the care, as they will receive care that is not appropriate. There will be increased pressure on the state budget, and the ability to provide other services in the community will be reduced.

Another issue that was raised relates to education. It was pointed out to me that not enough places are being made available at the senior campuses in this State for the courses that students want to undertake. The issue is about providing adequate funding for education.

Mr Barnett: The Government is cutting education funding.

Mr D'ORAZIO: I am talking about university places in premium courses, especially in the area of health care. It is something of which I have personal knowledge. The entry requirements are very high for pharmacy, medicine, physiotherapy and other professions in which there are shortages, and few places are available in the universities. The community needs to make representation to the federal Government that there are huge shortages of health care professionals. Unless we address the availability of positions in university courses, the situation will only get worse. It is almost impossible to obtain relieving pharmacists. Colleagues of mine who have been in the industry for years are coming out of retirement at the age of 65 or 70 as there are not enough pharmacists to provide services.

Nurses also tell me that the requirements they must have to get through the process or to get a position are now very high, and that is why we are suffering from a lack of staff. In my time, to get into the pharmacy course one needed to be in only the top 20 per cent of the population. However, last year the entrance requirement needed a TER score of 95 per cent. One would need to be in the top five per cent of the State to get into the course. I will not denigrate pharmacists; however, one does not have to be that intelligent to stand behind a counter and dish out the right medicines for problems.

More university positions must be made available. At this morning tea, a number of parents referred to the twofold effect of these high entrance requirements. First, their sons and daughters cannot choose the courses they would prefer; and, secondly, it is putting extra pressure on them to achieve a higher level. They have to work much harder to achieve the same outcome, and that is causing problems in their families. The community lacks people in these specialist areas, which increases the salaries that are paid to qualified people. That situation then creates a protectionist industry.

This issue must be considered on a bipartisan basis. There is no point in our point scoring on the issue. Those of us who deal with the industry must understand that the lack of health professionals is causing a major problem. It is important to address the issue. I hope that the Minister for Health considers this issue and puts some pressure on his federal colleagues to make it an issue at the forthcoming federal election.

Finally, it gives me great pleasure to strongly support this budget. This budget supports the needs and wishes of the community who can least afford to pay while, at the same time, it is fair to the rest of the community. More importantly, it delivers what the Labor Party promised it would deliver. In public life, to do what one says that one will do is the greatest compliment.

Mr Birney: Is the member referring to the promise not to put up taxes and charges?

Mr D'ORAZIO: The member for Kalgoorlie will keep.

Mr Barnett: That was a lie. There is no other word that describes it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr D'ORAZIO: For a minute I thought I was no longer standing on my feet and speaking. Would the Leader of the Opposition like to carry on the conversation while I stand?

Mr Barnett: I will stay here, thank you very much. When you have earned your stripes, you can stay here too.

Mr D'ORAZIO: I intend to stay here and to finish speaking. I would appreciate it if the Leader of the Opposition would listen. A number of areas must be addressed.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr Barnett: The member has lost the plot. He is a bit touchy.

Mr D'ORAZIO: I am not at all touchy.

A number of issues within the community of Ballajura must be addressed. Public transport is an important issue for the community of Ballajura. Some increased expenditure has been allocated for transport within the metropolitan area. I know that extra money has been allocated for expenditure on public transport, but we need funds to specially target public transport. I hope to work for the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to find ways, not necessarily to provide extra services, because that could not be done under the current budget constraints, but to better target the transport facilities that are already in place.

It is absurd that one can travel in a bus from Ballajura to Perth, but one cannot get a bus from Ballajura to the Galleria. I would like to address that issue. Extra facilities would not be necessary if better-targeted public transport facilities were provided. That issue must be worked through with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. I look forward to doing that and I look forward to making sure that our community is looked after.

It is a privilege to be part of this Government and to be involved in this budget process. I look forward to working within the budget framework to make sure that the people who can least afford services within our community are looked after, and we will deliver on those promises we made during the election campaign.

MR BIRNEY (Kalgoorlie) [10.25 pm]: This is the first budget with which I have been involved. I was drawn to page 186 of budget paper No 3, which is the general government operating statement. Over the past few weeks in the media, the Treasurer has said that the Government has a \$51 million budget surplus. Given that I am somewhat new to this process, I decided to examine the budget. I have not examined many state government budgets before, albeit I have been in the business sector for some 10 years and have grown to understand financial statements.

The general government operating statement says that revenue is \$10.713 billion and expenses were some \$10.661 billion, which leaves a \$51 million surplus, to which the Treasurer has referred for some time. I note the estimated actual net operating balance of \$255 million is the operating surplus left by the previous Government. It is a foregone conclusion that the Treasurer did backflips on that issue. He said that the previous Government had left Barnett's black hole, when that was not the case. I was also drawn to page 188, which is the general government cash flow statement. My understanding is that the first statement to which I referred is based on an accrual accounting system and the second statement to which I referred is based on a cash flow accounting system, which is the real position of the Government. The general cash flow statement says that receipts from operating activities total some \$11.331 billion, the payments for operating activities are some \$10.736 billion and the difference is some \$595 million, which is a substantial figure. It appears that that figure is significantly higher than the accrual accounting method because of the depreciation and amortisation, which is \$496 million. The cash surplus appears to be \$595 million. However, it has always been my experience in business that one should not stop reading at the middle of a statement; one must read all the way to the bottom of it. A list shows what the Labor Party intends to do with investments in non-financial assets. I assume that that phrase refers to capital expenditure. The capital expenditure is \$1.023 billion.

Given that the cash surplus is \$595 million and the total capital expenditure is \$1.023 billion, that leaves a cash deficit of some \$428 million for the year. As I said, I am fairly new at this. However, examination of this statement makes it clear that the Government has a cash deficit of some \$428 million. The accrual accounting method of page 186 refers also to depreciation and amortisation that are not cash costs. Although they are not imaginary costs - they are real - they do not come out of the bottom line. Even in that scenario, the Government is not left with a \$51 million surplus. After capital expenditure, it is left with a \$385 million deficit. The Government does not have a \$50 million surplus. The cash statement clearly shows that the Government has a \$428 million deficit. Under the accrual method, there is a \$385 million deficit after capital expenditure items are taken into account. It seems extraordinary to me that the Treasurer has said that he has a \$51 million surplus. He is not running around saying that it is a \$51 million operating surplus. I wish I had brought down from my office with me a clear statement from the Treasurer that the Government has a \$51 million surplus. It does not mention anything about an operating surplus. That is not the case. The Government has a \$428.2 million cash deficit for the year. I want that clear from the outset.

This is an interesting budget. There are no real surprises about where the Labor Party plans to raise most of its money. The Labor Party has a funny philosophy that tends to penalise people who have managed to make some headway in life. I am reminded of the communist regime of many years ago, which had a similar view. It would penalise people who tried to get ahead or who had made some headway in life. I refer to two points in the Labor Government's latest budget. The first is land tax, which the Government intends to use to tax the family home,

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provided that the land component is valued at more than \$1 million. I will raise a good point that was made in the newspaper the other day. Some of the people who will be affected by this land tax live in Cottesloe, Peppermint Grove, Dalkeith or some of those upmarket suburbs, but it may well be that they have inherited property and have little money or income themselves. It may also be that those houses have a significant property value. However, as I said, the owners and occupiers of those homes may not have an income that matches the value of the land. During question time, the Treasurer spoke about the concessions he intends to give some of those people who may not have an income large enough to cover this ridiculous tax. I might stand corrected, but I think he said that if a single person has an income of less than \$50 000 a year, he will be able to defer payment of the tax until he sells the property. A person with an income of \$60 000, who inherited a property with a land value of \$2 million, would be \$10 000 above the threshold limit of \$50 000. That person will be required to pay two per cent of the value above \$1 million, which will amount to \$20 000. He will have to pay \$20 000 when his income is \$60 000. The Labor Government proposes to knock off one-third of that person's income, simply because he was unfortunate enough to inherit a property with a reasonable land value. That is a good point in the context of this debate. If this guy has a \$60 000 income and a \$2 million house, the Labor Government will rip \$20 000 out of his \$60 000 income. That is utterly ridiculous.

Payroll tax is the second matter of concern. The Labor Government is intent on hitting what might be perceived as the top end of town, or the employers. All members know that the Labor Party is no friend of employers; it never has been and does not intend to be. There is a good argument to abolish payroll tax. I have heard that argument put at a number of forums over the years. People have said that payroll tax is an anti-employment tax - it stops an employer from significantly expanding his work force. Why does the Labor Party not realise that payroll tax is an anti-employment tax that will have an upward effect on the unemployment rate? That is not the only thing the Labor Government is doing to businesses.

Mr O'Gorman interjected.

Mr BIRNEY: No speaking from the public gallery! Mr Speaker, can you please call that member to order?

That is not the only thing the Labor Government has done to business. HIH Insurance went belly-up and the Labor Government once again needed some money. What did it do? The first thing it did was to get hold of the small business man and whack up workers compensation premiums by five per cent. The Labor Government has introduced parking levies and all sorts of things. This mob is no friend of business, be it big or small.

Unfortunately, I do not have much of a life. On the odd occasion, I sit at home and watch political videos.

Several members interjected.

Mr BIRNEY: I should clarify that. I have watched the debate between the former Premier, Richard Court, and the current Premier Geoff Gallop on many occasions. The current Premier was the Leader of the Opposition at that time. He went on statewide television - it might have been national television, I am not sure - and made some assumptions. He was trying to endear himself to the people of Western Australia. The former Premier had Geoff Gallop on the hop and asked him whether he would increase taxes and charges. The response was clear and unambiguous - it was "no". The current Premier of Western Australia, while Leader of the Opposition, clearly said in a debate televised statewide that he did not intend to increase taxes and charges. That is the most deceitful behaviour I have seen on video. If members are bored on a Friday or Saturday night, they might do well to watch the video of that debate, because there are some other anomalies that people would be interested to learn about. I intend to raise some of those anomalies in due course. The Premier said that he would not increase taxes and charges, yet he has increased taxes by \$150 million. He increased charges back in July or August by about \$40 million. If this is not the biggest act of deceit ever seen in an election campaign, I do not know what is. He went head-to-head in a debate. This is crunch time; this is when the Government must put all its cards on the table and come clean with the people of Western Australia. What did the Premier say? He said that a Labor Government would not increase taxes and charges. What did he do? He increased them by more than a couple of hundred million dollars. It is ridiculous.

I refer members to some of the core areas of this budget. Education has had a modest funding increase of about 2.4 per cent. However, when inflation is taken into account, this is in fact a decrease. Law and order has decreased by about three per cent. Health has had a modest real increase of less than one per cent, when inflation and a couple of other pressures are taken into account. The capital budget for health is down by about 10 per cent. I guess it is probably important that we not only talk about what the current Government is doing, but also compare it with what the previous Government achieved in some of the core areas. When the coalition took government in 1993, about \$900 million was being spent on education each year. I am pleased to tell the House that at the time the Labor Party won government, about \$1.5 billion was being spent on education. Spending on education increased over that period by 61 per cent. The 2.4 per cent increase provided in the

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current education budget is in an environment in which inflation is running at about three per cent. Members will agree that the Government will never get to the stage at which it will be able to increase spending on education by 61 per cent.

There were other major developments in education. The previous Government built 47 schools, 10 or 11 of which were high schools. The rest were primary schools. Under the coalition Government, the health budget increased by an average 6.5 per cent a year. It spent \$600 million more in health than did the previous Labor Government. Even when inflation is taken into consideration, Labor government spending went nowhere near the figure of \$2 billion, which is what the coalition Government was spending on health annually when it left government. It also built four hospitals. What is the Labor Party's claim with regard to the building of hospitals?

Mr Board: Five, when the Armadale-Kelmscott Health Service opens.

Mr BIRNEY: I have been told it built five hospitals. What can the Labor Party say about its hospital-building record when it was last in power? It built no hospitals; the coalition built five. The coalition Government built 28 new police facilities, and the previous Labor Government built nine. Why could the Liberal Party do this but the Labor Party could not? It mismanaged the economy and the state budget.

I refer to some employment and economic statistics. Unemployment under Western Australian Labor reached seven per cent, and under the coalition Government it was reduced to 5.9 per cent to six per cent. That is a significant difference. Under the coalition Government, 190 000 jobs were created in Western Australia, largely, in my view, due to workplace agreements and the flexibility the Government introduced to the labour market.

One achievement of the coalition Government that stands out like a glowing beacon is the reduction of state debt by almost half. The coalition Government reduced the State's debt from \$8.5 billion when it came to power to \$4.6 billion when it left government.

Mr Bradshaw: Will that happen this year?

Mr BIRNEY: That is a very good point. We are now going through the second part of the cycle. The Liberal Party comes to government, manages the economy well and reduces state debt by \$4 billion; the cycle turns and the Labor Party comes into power. I will be interested to see what that state debt figure will stand at -

Mr Barnett: It will be far more than it is suggesting.

Mr Bradshaw: State debt will rise this year.

Mr BIRNEY: I would not be surprised. I make this clear: the coalition came into government when state debt was \$8.5 billion and it reduced it to \$4.5 billion. That in itself is an achievement that should not go unrecognised. I am very concerned about what state debt will be in a few years.

I will now talk about the nine development commissions in Western Australia: the Gascoyne, Goldfields-Esperance, Great Southern, Kimberley, Mid West, Peel, Pilbara, South West and Wheatbelt Development Commissions. Although the mission statement of each development commission is slightly different, they all talk about enhancing economic growth and creating jobs and employment opportunities for those regions. We were all here for the one vote, one value debate. The people of Western Australia are starting to realise that the Labor Party does not have the best interests of country people at heart. It has sold out country people in favour of the city with this ridiculous one vote, one value policy. It is not only me who is saying that. I have the facts and the figures to back that up. Members might be interested to know that the Labor Party has ripped out \$6.289 million from those combined regional development commissions. I guess that when one thinks about the Labor Party's views on regional Western Australia, one cannot really be surprised. It is only interested in St Georges Terrace and the views of city people.

However, this is the cold, hard reality of what the Labor Party is about. It has ripped \$6 million - that is, 23 per cent - from the budgets of those regional development commissions. Once again, the country Labor alliance has said nothing about that. I wonder whether it even raises that matter in its meetings. The Kimberley Development Commission, for instance, has had its budget reduced from \$1 507 000 to \$1 437 000. I wonder whether any of the country Labor alliance members who represent the mid west region have raised in their meetings the fact that the previous budget of the Mid West Development Commission was \$5 409 000. The budget this year - wait for it, Mr Speaker - is \$1 511 000. I wonder whether any of the country Labor alliance members who represent any area near the mid west region are aware of that, or even care about it. The budget of the Peel Development Commission has been reduced from \$1 948 000 to \$1 738 000. The member for Dawesville would not be happy about that.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr Bradshaw: Neither am I. The Government not only reduced that commission's budget but also pushed out the chief executive officer who has done an excellent job.

Mr BIRNEY: Is that right? The Wheatbelt Development Commission's budget has been reduced from \$1 601 000 to \$1 294 000. That is the cold, hard reality of what the Labor Party is about. It has no intention of supporting the people who live and work in rural Western Australia. In fact, five out of nine of the operating budgets and eight out of nine of the capital works budgets of those development commissions have fallen significantly.

The Labor Party came up with a regional development fund of \$1 million during the election campaign. I believed that was a good thing; I still do. The fund was intended to be new money. The Government allocated \$250 000 a year for the next four years to that fund, which I am happy to say is one promise it has kept. However, the amount spent by the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission last year was \$1 707 000. This year its budget is \$1 577 000, a decrease of some \$130 000. On one hand, the Labor Party said that it would allocate \$250 000 from the regional development fund but, on the other hand, it has reduced the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission budget by \$130 000. That is one of its sleight of hand tricks reminiscent of an old card player.

The Government has failed to keep a number of other promises made to the people in my electorate of Kalgoorlie and I plan to talk about them now. I shall also talk about the commitments made to the people of my electorate by the previous Government which, unfortunately, this Government has failed to uphold. Some members may be aware that the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital has been in need of a major upgrade for some time. The previous Minister for Health was well aware of that and decided to do something about it. He allocated \$14 million to upgrade the hospital with, among other things, a new emergency section, a new administration section, a new medical imaging section and a new children's ward.

Mr Kucera: You cannot staff the wards you have there now in Kalgoorlie.

Mr BIRNEY: Why can the minister not do something about that? Let us talk about that. Kalgoorlie hospital is short 30 nurses. What is the minister doing about it? In fact, 20 nursing positions are currently staffed by agency nurses, which is murdering the local budget. Why does the minister not increase our budget if he is aware that we are 30 nurses short? Why does the Minister for Health not increase the budget of the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital so that it can pay for those 20 agency nurses? My information is that it will stop employing agency nurses very soon, and we will just have a major vacuum when it comes to nurses in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

The crux of what I am saying is that by election day, we had spent \$6 million of the \$14 million that the previous Government had committed. There is still some \$8 million left to be spent. Every one of those projects on which the \$8 million was to be spent was a worthwhile project. However, what has the current Minister for Health done? He has brought down his budget. We have had a good, long, hard look at the budget, because we did not want to get caught out on this. I know the budget papers are fairly hard to read. Of course, this is the first budget I have read. I looked at it from front to back and upside down. The only figure I could find that the Minister for Health has given us had the figure "8" in it. I was looking for the \$8 million figure, and that is what drew my attention to it. The figure is \$880 000. We thought that we would be able to continue with the capital upgrade of the hospital to the tune of some \$8 million, but the Minister for Health has given us \$880 000. Once again, that is a good indication that the Labor Party has absolutely no intention of supporting people in country Western Australia.

For quite some time, the South Kalgoorlie Primary School has required an upgrade in classrooms. It has a couple of older, run-down transportable classrooms. During the election campaign, the Labor Party marched into town and said that it could see that the school needed an upgrade and that it would give it \$2 million for the upgrade. It also said that it would put it in its "Working for the Goldfields" policy. I think some members are now regretting that they wrote the "Working for the Goldfields" policy. Once again I looked through the budget papers for the \$2 million and once again I was very disappointed. The Minister for Education has made a number of commitments to upgrade schools in Western Australia. In fact, he has committed some \$140 million for new capital works for schools in Western Australia. On the one hand, he is committing \$140 million; however, on the other hand, he cannot even give us \$2 million to honour an election commitment that he made to the people of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

The Labor Party also came up with another fairly novel idea during the election campaign, which is also in the "Working for the Goldfields" document. It said that if it were elected to government, it would supply the people of Kalgoorlie-Boulder with a permanent mounted police unit, which would be based in the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. That was in response to a number of concerns that people had with the suburb of Adeline.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 18 September 2001]

p3849b-3917a

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Unfortunately, over a number of years, Adeline has developed a number of social problems. The police are having trouble using conventional methods to catch some of the people who perpetrate crimes against others in that suburb. It became evident that a permanent mounted police unit would go some of the way towards solving the crime problems in Adeline. What did the Minister for Police say when pushed on this issue? She made a fairly clear and unambiguous statement. She said that the Government had reviewed the issue and had decided that those funds would be better spent elsewhere. I must give her some credit for that, because she did not try to fudge it, do little backflips and trick the media. She just said that the Government would spend that money elsewhere. I have not seen a minister do that for some time.

The Minister for State Development was here earlier. It is a shame that he has left the Chamber. He also made a promise in the "Working for the Goldfields" document. He said that if the Labor Party were elected to power, it would recognise that native title continues to be a significant problem in Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the goldfields region. In fact, he said that he would immediately double the amount of staff currently at the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. There are 11 staff at the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources. The minister said that he would immediately double that to 22 to clear some of the backlog of native title claims. When pushed on the issue some months later, he said that the Government had decided to undertake a review or a task force and will not do anything until it has those results. When I asked him when that would be, he said that it would be on 31 July. That date has now been and gone, and we still have not seen the doubling of staff at the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources. Once again, it is a promise given and then broken. The Labor Party made a number of commitments in the area of family and children's services, which were welcomed by the people of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. In fact, nearly half the people there voted for the Labor Party, and I am sure some of those people read the document "Working for the Goldfields". One of the commitments the Labor Party made was for \$400 000 to fund a pilot extended-hours child-care facility in the goldfields, which was to be done in conjunction with existing child-care facilities and family law access hand-over services. There are many working parents in the goldfields, and some eight or nine primary schools. The goldfields has a fairly significant number of children. When the Labor Party pranced around during the election campaign and told people it was going to fund a pilot extended-hours child-care facility, it is not surprising that nearly half of the people voted for it. Once again, I have had a good look through the budget statements and cannot see any commitment of \$400 000 in this year's budget for that facility. The Labor Party also made a commitment of \$250 000 to build a respite facility for people with disabilities. I assume this was an initiative of my predecessor, who was fairly strong and supportive in this area. Once again I cannot find in the budget papers any reference to this commitment. My colleague, the member for Eyre, whom I see is reading the newspaper, came up with a pretty good idea, which I support wholeheartedly. He wanted to undertake a feasibility study into an artificial wave pool in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. I did not think it was a bad idea. I would love to see a wave pool in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, and I am aware that similar facilities have been built in other places around the world. I have not managed to find any money in the budget for that feasibility study. The member for Eyre did not just come up with that idea and tell a few people; he put it in the "Working for the Goldfields" document, and everybody in town during the election read that document, and could be forgiven for thinking that they might have been getting a feasibility study into that artificial wave pool. That has not happened.

I would like to touch briefly on the issue of regional development in Kalgoorlie-Boulder and all that it has to offer. For quite some time Kalgoorlie-Boulder has been undersold in its tourism potential and promoting the region in general. The Labor Party came up with a concept of having a shopfront in Perth for regional areas. Members may not know that, and I am sure members of the country Labor alliance do not know that either. The Labor Party wanted to call it the "regional Western Australia on display shopfront", and it was to be housed in Perth. It was to undertake things like promotions for regional areas, tourism and recreation, and was to become a visitors' centre in the city of Perth that would promote regional Western Australia to tourists and city people interested in moving out to the regions. Once again, I have not seen that one, and I am very disappointed that it is not in the budget, because it is something that the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission has been working on for at least two years. I am certain that it would have been a very good concept, leading ultimately to an influx of visitors, not only to the goldfields, but also to wider regional Western Australia.

Another commitment that was made - I know I sound like a broken record, but all of this is true; I am not making it up -

Mr Dean: Where is your vision? Tell us about your vision for Kalgoorlie.

Mr BIRNEY: I will get to that. I am responding to the Government's budget. It is our right to respond to the budget. The Labor Party committed \$1.2 million during the election campaign for a skateboarding facility for youth at Kingsbury Park in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. It is no secret that some of the kids in Kalgoorlie are a bit out of

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

control. We are told they are out of control because they have nothing to do and are bored. This commitment was also welcome. I should be honest and say that the Labor Party has adhered to this commitment: it has allocated \$300 000 in this budget, and it has allocated \$300 000 for the following three years. The local council will put in another \$1 million or \$1.2 million. This facility will cost some \$2.4 million. It is very difficult to build such a facility in stages. If we are to be given only \$300 000 this year, does that mean we will have to build one-quarter of the facility this year, and one-quarter of the facility in each of the next three years? I am being genuine when I say that I accept that the Labor Party has met that commitment. However, a commitment of \$300 000 a year will allow us to build only part of that facility. It will take only one year to build that facility in its entirety.

Mr Bradshaw: It will cost money to stop and start the work. It will be cheaper to build it in one go.

Mr BIRNEY: Yes. We cannot build just part of the facility and expect the kids to ride their skateboard to the edge and then stop. It does not work. These four-year commitments look good in the budget papers, and I know they help to balance the budget at the end of the day, but from a practical point of view they do not work.

Another item in the budget that attracted my attention is the Labor Party's decision to reduce by \$1 million the amount of money that it spends on native title litigation. That is interesting. That tells me that the Labor Party has rolled over on the issue of native title. It no longer wants to challenge some of the claimants who perhaps are making questionable claims. It wants to continue to sell out the mining industry on a daily basis with regard to native title. The proof is that it has pulled \$1 million out of the budget for native title litigation. I will give a good example of how native title litigation can work. In the Miriuwung-Gajerrong case, the former Premier, Richard Court, challenged the Miriuwung-Gajerrong people, who had been awarded a vast tract of land in the north of this State. I think Richard Court spent some \$10 million on that challenge, but he won.

The Miriuwung-Gajerrong people then saw fit to appeal to the High Court. However, the former Premier gave his lawyers clear instructions that in representing the State in that High Court appeal, they were no longer to challenge the facts of a claimant's connection to the land. Those were the instructions that the former Premier of Western Australia gave to his lawyers, who were attempting to defend the State's position. In my view, those lawyers were blindfolded and handcuffed, because we all know that is the crucial point. It is very difficult for claimants to win a native title case if they cannot prove that they have an ongoing connection to the land. There it is in cold, hard, black and white figures: \$1 million of support for the mining industry has been pulled out of the budget.

There are a couple of other things that I am not sure are in the budget. I am sure I will get to those items next week. I will put a few of them on the record. The Government was of a mind to increase funding for regional domestic violence committees by \$1 million over four years. I could not see that figure in the budget papers, albeit that I might have been looking in the wrong spot. It was also of a mind to increase the money available for women's refuges by \$1 million. It will also provide a further \$1 million for women leaving the refuges. All these items are in the document entitled "Working for the Goldfields". Although I cannot find the items in the budget papers, I accept that they are there. I will have a good look at them next week. The document also referred to \$400 000 being provided for the counselling of children exposed to domestic violence. A further \$1 million is to be allocated for a 24-hour helpline for the victims of domestic violence. I am aware that the helpline is on the cards, but I am not sure whether \$1 million will be spent on it.

The Government has made a number of promises on health. It has allocated \$1 million toward the increased availability of specialist services in rural areas. Kalgoorlie-Boulder is experiencing a crisis in specialist services as it now has only one paediatrician, whereas it used to have two. The paediatrician wants to work only part-time. Kalgoorlie-Boulder no longer has a speech pathologist. It is down by two physiotherapists and it no longer has an audiologist. As the Minister for Health rightly knows, the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital is short 30 nurses. A further development today is that the only obstetrician in Kalgoorlie-Boulder has decided to quit delivering babies. He has decided that because he has an insurance bill for \$54 000. He has decided to call it quits and he no longer intends to deliver babies in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. I call on the minister to undertake a trip to Kalgoorlie-Boulder and to sit down with the people involved in the health industry and me with a view to sorting out the crisis.

Mr Kucera: Who are we talking about?

Mr BIRNEY: Barney McCallum.

Mr Kucera: Let us talk about Dr McCallum's fees. Last year, he earned \$286 213 from the Department of Health. In addition to that he has a private practice that earns about the same amount. We are talking about a doctor worth about half a million dollars a year. He asked the department to pay a \$48 000 indemnity insurance

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

bill, which every other contractor pays. If he signs a Medicare provider agreement, he will receive 100 per cent of the schedule fee. He currently receives 98 per cent of the schedule fee. In addition, he would receive a rural incentive allowance of six per cent on an average income of \$300 000, which would give him a further \$18 000.

Mr BIRNEY: I have only two minutes left. I am genuine in my offer to the minister to come to Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Mr Kucera: Does the member support the views of the doctors?

Mr BIRNEY: Hang on a minute. I am simply telling the minister that there is a crisis in both allied and mainstream health services in the goldfields. I invite the minister to come to the goldfields and discuss the issues associated with allied health. Will the minister accept the invitation? It is a genuine invitation.

Mr Kucera: I am happy for the member to take the side of the doctor.

Mr BIRNEY: I have not taken anybody's side. I am bringing to the attention of the minister that there is no longer anyone to deliver babies in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The Minister for Health should be very concerned about that.

Mr Kucera: Dr McCallum's comment was that he wanted \$500 a session and to be paid for 10 sessions.

Mr BIRNEY: No-one is delivering babies in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. Will the minister come and work through the issues?

Mr Kucera: I do not have to be invited. The member does not realise what these doctors are doing.

Mr BIRNEY: Will the minister accept the invitation to come to Kalgoorlie? The minister will not come to Kalgoorlie-Boulder and sort it out. The minister has wasted two minutes of my time. The coalition Government was very committed to Kalgoorlie-Boulder. In fact, it committed some \$6 million to the drill core library, \$3.5 million to the Oasis Recreation Centre, \$12 million to the golf course, which the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is trying to wriggle out of, \$59 million to the *Prospector* train, \$3 million to the Hall of Fame, \$5 million to the O'Connor Primary School, \$570 000 for the nurses' quarters, \$14 million to the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital, \$7 million to the golden pipeline project, \$1 million to the arid land management centre, \$12 million to the high school, \$3.3 million to the courthouse and \$11 million for the Homeswest housing in our region. This budget does not deliver anything to regional people, and I urge the House to take that on board.

MR LOGAN (Cockburn - Parliamentary Secretary) [11.10 pm]: Before I congratulate the Treasurer on such a wonderful budget, I want to talk about the member for Kalgoorlie and one of the saddest things I have heard here tonight. The member has outlined to us the things that he believes are missing from the budget for Kalgoorlie. He may feel that is sad, but one of the saddest things I have heard tonight is the fact that he spends his Friday and Saturday nights inside watching political videos.

Mr Birney: I did not say every Friday and Saturday night.

Mr LOGAN: The member indicated that he leads a very sad and isolated life in Kalgoorlie, watching political videos. That is one of the saddest things I have heard from the Opposition today. My offer to the member for Kalgoorlie is this: because he comes down to Perth a lot, and if he gets sad and lonely like that again, the member for Swan Hills and I, and maybe the member for Mandurah and the member for Collie, will take him out and show him the bright lights of Perth -

Mr Birney: A strong country Labor alliance!

Mr LOGAN: I know that the country member from Kalgoorlie does not see much of the bright lights of Perth, so we will take him out to show him, and in doing so we might enlighten him -

Mr Birney: Maybe a bit of your toughness will rub off on me.

Mr LOGAN: What I was hoping might rub off onto the member was some enlightenment about Aboriginal land rights.

I must congratulate the Treasurer, particularly on behalf of the constituents of Cockburn. The constituents of Cockburn would probably say that Hon Eric Ripper is the best Treasurer Western Australia has ever had.

Mr Sweetman: I hope you're not going to do that for 45 minutes.

Mr LOGAN: Yes, absolutely. I cannot say he is the best Treasurer in the world - not yet - because the banks, particularly the international banks and the credit agencies, have to assess his performance over the next four years. However, if this budget is anything to go by, he will be the best Treasurer Western Australia has ever had. I say that because of some of the things that this budget contains for Cockburn. I will tell members how

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Cockburn has benefited from a Labor Government. One of the first promises made was to pay back the money and cancel the outstanding money from the \$1.7 million penalty that Cockburn City Council received from the previous Government following the outrageous inquiry into the council. At the time, it was the only council in the country that was required to pay for an investigation into its processes. The Labor Party gave an election commitment that if it attained government, it would cancel that debt and it would also repay the moneys that were paid by the council, which totalled more than \$600 000 dollars. That was done within the first two or three months of Labor attaining office. This Government fulfilled that commitment it gave during the election.

The infrastructure that will go into Cockburn and some of the other infrastructure that was identified in this budget will certainly help the development of that area, and it will help the South Metropolitan Region in general.

I will deal firstly with the railway; that was a magnificent decision.

Mr Birney: Is the member for Armadale the best Minister for Planning and Infrastructure?

Mr LOGAN: I will refer to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. Despite the continuous criticism of the carping members of the Opposition about the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, she is a brilliant, hardworking minister who makes courageous decisions. We have listened to the rhetoric about what a terrible decision the change in the railway route is, how it will affect people in South Perth, how it will affect the views of the foreshore and that the costs will overrun in the budget. However, members of the Opposition should ask the people who live in the south metropolitan seats, including Dawesville, Mandurah, Kwinana and Rockingham, what they think about it. The answer is the same. The people say that it was a great decision.

It is a courageous decision that the previous Government had welshed on, and that this Government has delivered. It is a magnificent piece of infrastructure that will hopefully be operational by 2006. The people of Cockburn will be able to go down to the Thompson Lake city centre at the corner of Forrest Road and the freeway, get on the train and be in central Perth in 16 minutes. That is faster than travelling by car. People will take the train because it is faster than travelling by car, and that means a saving of transportation and fuel and fewer greenhouse gases.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): The members for Albany and Cottesloe will desist in their conversation.

Mr Templeman: Which party has a great history in rail?

Mr LOGAN: The Labor Party is the only party that has built a centimetre of rail in the past 10 years. What did the other side do?

Mr D'Orazio: It closed it.

Mr LOGAN: That is right. The coalition said that it would never close the Midland railways workshop either, but it did. The Labor Party will continue to deliver the promises it made to the electorate prior to the election. It promised to continue the work on the construction of the Jervoise Bay project, which is a major piece of infrastructure. I acknowledge and give all credit to the work of the former Minister for Commerce and Trade, the member for Merredin, and for his courageous decision to push ahead with the construction of Jervoise Bay. He had a significant amount of vision to push ahead with the Jervoise Bay engineering project, and I am thankful that he did. We will continue the good work he started.

This budget acknowledges that good work and continues that commitment by committing over \$100 million for the next financial year to continue this project and ensure that it will be near completion by July 2002.

Ms MacTiernan: Member for Cockburn, in addition, there is \$14 million for the high wide-load corridor.

Mr LOGAN: That is correct.

Mr Barnett: Who announced that? It was the previous Government.

Ms MacTiernan: Who put it in the budget? We have it in our budget, mate. We would not have known whether it would have survived in your budget.

Mr Barnett: Sorry, it was already done by the previous Government.

Mr LOGAN: The interjection is that the previous Government was committed to it. There is no doubt about that; it was committed to it. However, it did not pay for it. That is the whole point. It did not budget or pay for

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

it. Again, instead of wimping out on decisions, this Government has pushed ahead. Our courageous minister has made that decision and committed the money to it.

Mr Barnett: Courageous? She is your erratic Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Ms MacTiernan: What a lot of rubbish! You just can't bear people who don't come from the western suburbs being in government. That is what you don't like. You can't tolerate Labor Party people being in government.

Mr LOGAN: I encourage members, if they have not been down there -

Mr Barnett: The member for Croydon and Swanbourne comes from the western suburbs. He has never been near Cockburn. People would not know his name down there.

Mr LOGAN: I have been called a few things but never the member for Croydon. Has the member for Cottesloe ever been to Croydon?

Mr Barnett: No, I have not been to Croydon.

Mr LOGAN: It is not a particularly pretty place. I ask the member for Cottesloe, and everybody else in this House, to take a trip to Jervoise Bay to look at the development that is pushing ahead there. It is a magnificent piece of work.

Mrs Edwardes: He probably visits it more than you do.

Mr LOGAN: The member for Kingsley suggests that he would visit it more than I do. I doubt that very much. We can talk about that another time. However, I suggest that members go down there to look at it. The controversial nature of the project related to the possibility of significant environmental damage. I went fishing off the newly constructed groyne the other day.

Mrs Edwardes: Here comes the fishing story.

Mr LOGAN: No, it is not a fishing story. The project is based around the expansion of a lay-down area, whereby the land behind the existing waterfront area is being progressively mined and pushed into the Jervoise Bay area, which has been set out by a limestone groyne. Within the centre of the limestone groyne are four pockets, which progressively get filled up. The water is taken out from the Jervoise Bay lay-down area by progressively shifting it from one pocket to another, until the lowest one pushes it out into the sea. Those pockets have been lined. If one goes into the Jervoise Bay area, and into Cockburn Sound, and goes fishing off the groyne -

Mrs Edwardes: The fish are caught for you.

Mr LOGAN: No. The good thing about it - the member will appreciate this, as a former Minister for the Environment - is that there is no sedimentation of Cockburn Sound. The whole lot is captured completely within the cell structure of the construction site.

Mrs Edwardes: It shows that sometimes you have to take a risk with some proposals.

Mr LOGAN: That is correct. This one certainly paid off, and it works well. The people of Cockburn, some of whom were critical of the project at first, are happy that it is being constructed in the most environmentally sound way that a piece of major infrastructure like that can be constructed. The dredging is now complete. The changes to the nature of the project meant that dredging was minimised. However, that has now been completed. Also, after much lobbying from various groups, the Government is now committed to the construction of a fabrication hall on site, which was never provided for in the original plans. The fabrication hall will probably be one of the largest structures in Cockburn Sound and will be seen from a significant distance. It will be 90 metres long, 60 metres high and 70 metres wide and will be built on rails. Five six-storey modules, which are part of oil and gas platforms, will be able to be constructed on the lay-down area of Jervoise Bay. They will be fabricated inside the fabrication hall. The fabrication hall - the entire workshop - will then back off the modules, rather than the modules being dragged out. That is a fantastic piece of engineering.

The project is fundamental to the broadening of the manufacturing base in Western Australia. As I said, there was some criticism about the environmental impacts of the project. The former minister will remember those criticisms; nevertheless, the project pushed ahead. The Labor Government is pushing ahead to ensure that the project is completed, because it is fundamental to the expansion of manufacturing in Western Australia and to the capturing of as many of the resource projects in this State as possible. However, the key to its success will be in its promotion and in the encouragement of resource companies to use its facilities.

Some projects are proposed and the Government believes that as much of the modular format as possible should be fabricated in Western Australia at Jervoise Bay. These projects include the infrastructure required for the

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Gorgon gas field. Those who read the *Prospect* magazine of the former Department of Resources Development would know that should Gorgon get the go-ahead, expenditure for the project will be estimated at \$8 billion and involve a construction force of 4 000. The Syntroleum Corporation project for the North West Shelf has an estimated expenditure of \$600 million and the Plenty River Corporation Ltd ammonia urea plant has a proposed expenditure of \$800 million and a construction force of 1 000. Even in the first stage of the project, the Sasol Chevron Consulting Ltd gas-to-liquid fuels plant will have an estimated expenditure of \$US1.5 billion and its work force will be absolutely enormous. The proposed expenditure of the dimethyl ether plant on the Burrup Peninsula is between \$US500 million and \$US600 million and will have a construction work force of 2 000. If any or all of these projects get the green light in the next five to 10 years, it will be absolutely fundamental that everyone in this House push those companies, their clients and their contractors to use the Jervoise Bay facility.

Mr Barnett: Would you support workplace agreements for Jervoise Bay?

Mr LOGAN: I am not talking about workplace agreements at Jervoise Bay. Why would I?

Mr Barnett: That will be an essential requirement for the works to be done there.

Mr LOGAN: That is the sort of bad news that one gets from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia about -

Mr Barnett: They will need flexible working arrangements.

Mr LOGAN: Here we go, the truth is coming out now. This is the sort of bad news that comes from the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry about Jervoise Bay. The other term I am surprised the Leader of the Opposition has not used, but I am sure it will come out later, is that it is a white elephant. That is the other catchline used around the traps to criticise the project committed to by the previous Government. The Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry was running around even under the previous Government arguing that the place would be workable only if individual work contracts were used. They will not. The Leader of the Opposition was probably running around saying the same thing under his Government, on behalf of his masters at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The then minister responsible for industrial development quite correctly negotiated and pushed for a collective enterprise bargaining agreement with the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the other unions on site. That obviously shows the problems in the previous Government and the reason its members are now in opposition. We are hearing today the same line that the site will work only with a non-union work force, which effectively is what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. Everybody in this Chamber knows that when the Leader of the Opposition talks about individual work contracts, it is code for "let us have no unions".

Mr Barnett: That is right.

Mr LOGAN: He agrees. The Leader of the Opposition has not at all learnt the lessons of 10 February when that type of industrial relations was completely rejected. The member for Riverton is here to testify to that. The Leader of the Opposition is still promoting this beautiful, nebulous free market, with no unions on the site of one of the major infrastructure projects in Australia. There will be no other facility like it in Australia. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is in the marketplace pushing Jervoise Bay with all the resource companies and engineering contracting companies in a way that reflects the collective nature of the way this Government works; that is, through consultation with the mining sector, the offshore oil and gas sector, the engineering companies and the unions to come up with an agreement that will make the place work effectively and be internationally competitive. What has the Leader of the Opposition to say? He says that the place will work only if it is non-union, and if everybody is on individual work contracts.

Mr Dean: It is a lack of vision.

Mr LOGAN: An absolute lack of vision. It proves some of the comments I have made through interjections about the Leader of the Opposition being completely controlled by his mates in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, because that is the line they put. If anything comes apart at Jervoise Bay and major resource companies do not use that facility but choose to take some of their work overseas, I know who I will blame. I will blame the Leader of the Opposition and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for talking the project down again.

The previous Government committed itself to the project. I cannot understand the contradiction. It is bizarre that the previous Government kicked this project off, and the Leader of the Opposition talked it down then and he is talking it down now. If anything will undermine the Jervoise Bay project, it is that behaviour.

Mr Barnett: You might mention the Gorgon company.

Mr LOGAN: The resource companies -

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr Barnett: You would not have a clue.

Mr LOGAN: I have a better clue than the Leader of the Opposition. Resource companies have always criticised the Jervoise Bay area, even before the expansion. They have said that Jervoise Bay is not suitable for the construction of a facility for their type of project because it is too small. The type of project undertaken in the north west requires a much larger infrastructure. The resource companies have argued that it does not have the right facilities, such as heavy-lift cranes and wharves that can withstand the weight of heavy-lift cranes for floating storage and offloading vessels that should come into Jervoise Bay. They argue that they do not have the facilities or cranes at Jervoise Bay, and that the harbour is not deep enough and large barges and floating production, storage and off-take vessels are not able to dock. The resource companies have come up with every conceivable argument about why Jervoise Bay should not be used. They have done that for the current facility, and I can imagine their arguments against the use of the expanded facility. I am surprised the Leader of the Opposition has not used them. The companies will admit that Jervoise Bay has the facilities. Jervoise Bay will have a deepwater port to bring in the barges and FPSO vessels and a hard stand on the side of the harbour to take cranes to do maintenance work on FPSO vessels. It will also have very good fabrication facilities. However, the companies will argue that they still will not be able to use it because of the costs of labour, power, transportation or anything else they dream up. They do not want to do the work in Western Australia.

Mr Barnett: If you ceased your rhetoric, you would find that I achieved a higher level of Australian and Western Australian content in major resource developments projects in this State than did anyone who preceded me.

Several members interjected.

Mr Barnett: Pick a project.

Mr LOGAN: What did the Leader of the Opposition do for the Laminaria?

Mr Barnett: Is it in Western Australian waters? It is not a Western Australian project.

Mr LOGAN: That shows how little the Leader of the Opposition knows about offshore oil and gas and resource development. Instead of the Leader of the Opposition giving me a lecture, I will give him one. The FPSO in the Laminaria is now called the *Northern Endeavour*. That is the name it was given. It is anchored in the Timor Sea. Its oil and gas modules were fabricated in Fremantle; in the Leader of the Opposition's electorate.

Mr Barnett: I arranged it.

Mr LOGAN: He arranged nothing. I was involved in the hook-up with Norway. United Construction Pty Ltd and the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union negotiated the construction of those modules.

Mr Barnett: Ask why they were done in North Fremantle.

Mr LOGAN: I do not have to ask, because I was involved in the hook-up. We negotiated for that work to be done in Fremantle. Woodside Pty Ltd, the client, did not want to do that work here. We got no help from the Government of the day. The Laminaria job was solely sought and caught from Kvaerner by United Construction, with the assistance of the union movement. It got that by itself.

Mr Barnett: It did a good job and the unions were cooperative, and I helped them achieve it. Where is the Laminaria?

Mr LOGAN: The Government of the day may have made a few phone calls to United Construction, saying that it supported the project. For the Leader of the Opposition's information, that job was done in Fremantle on time and on budget, and the FPSO sailed away. One of the things -

Mr Barnett: Where is the Laminaria?

Mr LOGAN: I have told you exactly where it is.

Mr Barnett: Where is it?

Mr LOGAN: It is in the Timor Sea.

Mr Barnett: That is not Western Australian jurisdiction. The Western Australian Government has no jurisdiction over that reserve.

Mr LOGAN: The Leader of the Opposition raised the Laminaria project, and I have explained to him how the battle for it to be constructed in Australia was won, where it was constructed, where the vessel is anchored, and

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other information he does not seem to know about. I have some further information that the Leader of the Opposition may wish to know about the construction and fit-out of the entire barge. That fit-out could have been done in Western Australia at North Fremantle. The argument once again of the client was that Jervoise Bay did not have the facilities to do it. Jervoise Bay will have the facilities to tie up a 360-metre barge and, hopefully, completely fit it out. Unfortunately, Jervoise Bay lacks a dry dock for bringing ships out of the water or constructing major steel ships. Down the track the Government may be able to consider installing a dry dock and, as the local member, I will be pushing for one to be added to the Jervoise Bay facilities. These facilities will be able to carry out jobs such as the Laminaria, if and when they come up; and they will come up. Unless we have the agreement of the Opposition and unless people from all walks of politics push hard on resource companies, those companies will not acknowledge that we have the facilities and will find other reasons, such as unions or labour costs, to ensure that such jobs are not carried out in Western Australia. This facility will be able to fabricate, construct to a modular format, and undertake spooling - that is, the winding of steel piping - up to one kilometre in length. The latest technology in the world today allows undersea steel piping to be rolled onto a drum. If members can imagine a number of straws put together that can eventually be bent, that theory applies to steel pipes. If the pipes are built long enough, they can be wound onto a drum. It appears that although the entire pipes are bent, they are straight when they are on the drum. They can then be unloaded offshore during an undersea well hook-up. That type of piping requires vast areas of land to be set aside so that one-kilometre lengths of piping can be welded together. The way in which Jervoise Bay is laid out will accommodate the undertaking of that type of work. That, along with facilities for the maintenance of FPSOs, will give Jervoise Bay an all-round capacity to maintain, fabricate and construct on site.

With the competitive dollar, a highly skilled work force and the shorter transportation routes Jervoise Bay offers because of the distance between Fremantle and the oil and gas fields of the north west, compared with travelling to Singapore or ports in northern Asia, there is no reason resource companies could not use Jervoise Bay for fabrication, construction and maintenance. My hope is to have Jervoise Bay in continuous use. The way in which LandCorp proposes to lease and sell the blocks and facilities on Jervoise Bay is unique and innovative. The dock and lay-down areas will remain in government control and will be available on a leasing arrangement for major construction and fabrication. The area immediately behind the lay-down area, which are large blocks of land for the construction of fabrication facilities, will be leased to companies that wish to locate there. Behind those large blocks are smaller blocks adjacent to the existing Henderson area that will be available for purchase on a freehold basis. The way in which LandCorp has innovatively mixed the usage of Jervoise Bay means that it will be a financial success and, hopefully, will have continued use. Again, I acknowledge the work of the previous Government, in particular the work of the previous Minister for the Environment. As a trade-off to Jervoise Bay, the Mt Brown and Woodman Point areas received funding from the previous Government for enhancement and upgrade. I am pleased to hear that money will continue to be allocated to that area over the next three years. Mt Brown is a magnificent area. Most residents of Perth have not been to Mt Brown. Did the member for Kingsley go to Mt Brown?

Mrs Edwardes: A couple of times.

Mr LOGAN: It is a magnificent area.

Mrs Edwardes: It is a nice spot to see the sunset.

Mr LOGAN: It is the last large area adjacent to the coast, apart from the Special Air Service barracks at Swanbourne, which has large stands of tuart trees and bush. I advise those people who wonder where it is that when they get to the shipbuilding facilities at Jervoise Bay, they must go round the back of those shipbuilding facilities, because the road has been blocked off. On the left-hand side they will pass the Mt Brown reserve. The Mt Brown reserve is larger in area than Kings Park. It is an enormous area and has much broader biodiversity than Kings Park.

Mr Birney: Is it the best you have ever seen?

Mr LOGAN: Without doubt, for an urban area, it is one of the best pieces of natural environment left. Despite the member's micky-taking, I suggest that he go down there and have a look. It has now been fenced off to stop the hoons riding trail bikes in the area, or driving cars into the area and setting fire to them. The bush is now starting to regenerate. Members around the Chamber are saying that it is time to go.

Several members interjected.

Mr LOGAN: I still have nine minutes, and I have not got to the beauty of Mt Brown.

Mrs Edwardes: Mt Brown is a magnificent area.

Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Colin Barnett; Speaker; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Terry Waldron; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Matt Birney; Mr Fran Logan

Mr Templeman interjected.

Mr LOGAN: No, I have not. Perhaps tomorrow the member for Mandurah can tell us about it.

Within the process of the budget and the commitment by the Labor Government to continue the good work the previous Government did in that area, the facilities at Mt Brown will be upgraded. The asbestos tank above the Alcoa refinery will be taken away, a lookout facility will be built and Woodman Point, as part of the Beeliar Regional Park, will be upgraded. That is important because Woodman Point is adjacent to Coogee Beach, one of the most magnificent beaches in Perth. I know the member for Kalgoorlie will ask me whether that is the best beach I have ever seen. It is one of the best beaches I have ever seen. It is certainly better than the beaches in Kalgoorlie. It is a magnificent beach. If the member for Kalgoorlie ever needs a wash, he should go down to Coogee and jump into the water off the beach. He will find the water is crystal clear and magnificent, as is everything in Cockburn.

Mr Templeman interjected.

Mr LOGAN: No, it is like the Peel Inlet; there are no waves at all.

The Government made commitments for infrastructure. I have highlighted the railways, the Jervoise Bay project -and that is a magnificent project - and the Woodman Point and Mount Brown upgrade. Cockburn Road runs immediately outside Woodman Point in Beeliar Regional Park. There is an item in the budget for the upgrade of that road, which is sorely needed. People who live in Coogee have a great deal of trouble getting across the road to use the beach facilities because of the volume of traffic on that road. The road is also not kerbed or guttered, and hopefully the money will be spent to allow the people of Coogee access to a wonderful facility at Woodman Point, and the beautiful Coogee beach. The Cockburn Road realignment will also go around one of the great developments in the southern coastal region - the Catherine Point development, if it goes ahead. The Catherine Point development is proposed to be constructed just south of the South Fremantle power station, and the Cockburn Road will run around it.

Mrs Edwardes: What is the view of the member for Cockburn of the Catherine Point project?

Mr LOGAN: I have stated publicly that I support the project going ahead. I know there are some environmental problems about what is left along Cockburn Road from the old tanneries and the sheep industry. There was also a CSBP facility.

Mrs Edwardes: Some of the cleaning-up work has already started.

Mr LOGAN: Yes, but very little has been done so far.

Mrs Edwardes: It will takes years.

Mr LOGAN: Exactly. Most of the clean-up has involved removal of the asbestos factory units that were along the coast, but the earthworks will cause the major problems because of the amount of chemicals that have leached into the earth. Hopefully, that will go ahead, and will give the coastal area of south metropolitan Perth something equivalent to Hillarys in the north. All the people I have spoken to in the Cockburn area, which is a huge number of people, support the project going ahead because of the facilities it will bring to the area. Some people are critical of the project because of their perceptions of the environmental damage that it would do to the coastline, and the lack of access to the coast. However, the project has been redesigned to ensure access to the coast, and with the amount of environmental damage that the previous industries did to the area, this development can only be a good thing as it will clean up the area. The Cockburn Road realignment will then take the road around that development and back into South Fremantle.

Mrs Edwardes: The member for Cockburn has not spoken about his hospitals.

Mr LOGAN: I have no hospitals in my area.

I thank, once again, Western Australia's greatest Treasurer for providing to the constituents of Cockburn some fantastic pieces of infrastructure that will improve their life and their transportation immeasurably. I thank the Treasurer for his foresight, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure for her courage, and the Minister for State Development for his further support of Jervoise Bay and other infrastructure in Cockburn. They have all done a wonderful job.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mrs Edwardes.