

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

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

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR GRAHAM (Pilbara) [7.01 pm]: Shortly before the suspension and private members' time, I had been through the chapter and verse of what is happening in other States. I listened with interest to the response by the Premier and the responsible minister during private members' time. The thrust of their points in the debate was, firstly, that it was not the Government's fault that Ansett collapsed. All members agree with that. I do not know who suggested that the collapse of Ansett was the Government's fault, but we absolve the Government of blame.

Mr Kucera: It was the member for Nedlands.

Mr GRAHAM: Okay, the member for Nedlands is out of line. We absolve the State Government of responsibility for the collapse of Ansett. The second series of points they raised seemed to be that the Government had taken dynamic action to get regional air services back together and that this had been at the forefront of the Government's thinking. I am paraphrasing the Premier and the minister. The Premier pointed out his little five-step plan, which clearly showed, in his mind, what the Government had done. What that boiled down to was that the Government would do these things this evening or tomorrow. I wish the Premier were still here because I would like to talk to him about the things he has done. However, I excuse him.

The services now flying into remote and regional Western Australia fall loosely within the package that is in place in basically every State in Australia. That is a result of negotiations between the federal Government, Qantas, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and other responsible organisations. I am not close enough to it and I am not the responsible minister, so I cannot say who did what and who said what. It is hard to find a glaring difference between the services in this and other States.

As usual, it is of great concern to me that city members clearly do not understand what is happening in the north west of this State. I listened to the inane interjections made during private members' time. Members said that Skywest does not fly to Broome. Nobody said that Skywest does fly to Broome. However, about 67 per cent of the passenger capacity to Broome has been removed. It is not open to debate and it is not a fine point; nearly two-thirds of the tourism industry's potential customers have been removed from what is already a shallow market. Anyone who does not understand that needs to get his head examined. The Premier said the other day that we should not be talking doom and gloom about the tourism industry. I interjected and said that the industry is in crisis and is suffering. The day before yesterday, I had three people in my flat in Port Hedland who had lost their jobs in Broome as a result of the Ansett collapse. That is not a big deal. They are people I know who are now working their way back to Perth and who were using my place as a stop-off while they tried to find some work in Port Hedland. I hope they do. They are just workers. One was a pilot who flew for one of the small firms in the Kimberley. His job is gone; it is finished, end of story. There was a little note in his pigeon hole that said, "Don't come to work tomorrow, sport; this business is gone." That is a huge problem, but it is not the biggest problem confronting the north west of the State.

The Government is not listening. It is talking and arguing at times, but it is not listening. If it is listening, it does not understand what is being said. The responses by the Premier and the responsible minister in *Hansard* are frightening. On Tuesday, 18 September, the Premier said -

Qantas advises that it has picked up all regional flights that Ansett Australia-Skywest Airlines Pty Ltd covered, except the hop from Broome to Derby.

That is wrong. It is not semantics nor is it a play on words; the information given by the Premier of Western Australia was incorrect. If he was advised that way, he should sack his adviser. If he was not advised that way, he misled the House, because that airline has not picked up all the regional flights in any way, shape or form in any town. Broome is a classic example. There has been a 67 per cent drop in seats. Port Hedland is also a good example. There were two flights each day from Port Hedland and three on Friday. There have been four flights since the Ansett collapse. The flights have not been replaced. It is not open to the Premier to argue that case. The Premier said just before the break that he is concerned about planes flying empty. The Premier should put himself in the position of a normal person and get on the phone and try to get on a plane. I congratulate the Government for starting the webpage on the Department of Transport's Internet site. People can go through the quick links to obtain information on flights. However, the information on that site is wrong. It does not reflect what is happening. If the Premier's government departments cannot get it right, what hope has some poor bugger who is stuck out in the middle of nowhere, standing in a public phone box for two hours waiting to get through to a Qantas number. This place and this Premier have lost touch with reality. This is a guy who promised that he would listen to regional Western Australia and would take its concerns on board. He is the

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

chairman of the cabinet subcommittee. He is our man in Cabinet. He is the senior man for regional Western Australia in Cabinet and he is not doing his job.

Mr Ainsworth: I phoned my local travel agent on Monday to find out what flights were available to Perth that night and the next morning. It was mid-afternoon before the travel agent could get information about which airlines were flying when, so that the agency could advise its customers. What you are saying is absolutely correct.

Mr GRAHAM: The member for Roe should thank his lucky stars that he does not use Business Travel International - the government travel agent - because it does not have a clue. Unfortunately, when Ansett collapsed, my parliamentary account with Ansett also collapsed, and I am back in the hands of the government travel agent.

Mr Ainsworth: I have never used it and I refuse to.

Mr GRAHAM: Yes, well good luck.

Mr Ainsworth: I still have a local purchase order arrangement, and it works.

Mr GRAHAM: The Government is working on a tourist package, but this issue is not simply about tourism. A range of initiatives has been taken in other States, but Western Australia is well behind. Western Australia is lagging behind convincingly. We have yet to take any concrete action. There have been meetings, discussions and deliberations, but no action has been taken. In the time that this Government has been sitting and contemplating its navel, South Australia has put in place a subsidy scheme to get its regional airline flying again. It has been funded and put in place. The administrator has agreed to it; it is up and running and working. According to the minister, the Government has not been able to meet the administrator. It is bizarre. Why is Western Australia the only State that is having trouble seeing the administrator? All the other States have. I read from a stack of press releases from other States that show the initiatives other States are taking and we are not. To see where this issue sits in the priority of things, I have obtained copies of the State Government's media statements from the past seven days. The two topical issues of the past seven days were the events in the United States - about which I would not expect the Government to be issuing many press releases - and the collapse of Ansett. The Government Media Office put out 120 press releases in the past week. Only three of them related to the Ansett crisis. One of the three statements was in direct response to an interview I had with Liam Bartlett. The Minister for Tourism issued a press release saying that despite the fact that I said there was no contingency plan, the Government would have one. Only three press releases out of 120 dealt with the Ansett crisis; that says it all.

MR EDWARDS (Greenough) [7.12 pm]: The events of last week in the United States have made me appreciate even more that I live in one of the most marvellous parts of the world. It is one of the reasons that I came here 35 years ago and did not return to where I came from. Regardless of where we live, the visitations of terrorism can arise anywhere. We need to take due note of the events of last week.

I will talk about the projected expenditure in my electorate and my criticism of the Government about funding. Geraldton and the surrounding Greenough area need some economic solutions. They have been fairly thin on the ground for some time. I recognise that the Government has faced some of the social issues and projects that needed funding; that has been done to some degree. A lot of the long-term capital projects were planned under the previous Government. A benefit that could make a change to the region in a relatively short time was the proposed Indian Ocean Drive, which was to go from Lancelin to Cervantes. It was a commitment of the previous Government and two sections have already been built. The total cost was to be about \$33 million. In its wisdom, the Government did not include that funding in this budget. The remaining 70 kilometres were to be completed by 2003, which is only a year or so away. Compared with \$1 billion for the Mandurah railway that the Government has chosen to fund, \$33 million is not a lot of money. Indian Ocean Drive would bring immediate economic benefits to the towns on that road and the greater Geraldton-Greenough area. If the \$33 million is not spent, there will be economic impacts. A construction proposal worth \$200 million was to proceed once the road was finished. In addition, the Ardross estate development proposed to put in a new residential development worth about \$1.53 million if the road was finished by 2003. The company had funding, but the funding has now been withdrawn. The Kareelya Property Group had plans to initiate drive trails off Indian Ocean Drive. A residential and resort complex was planned for the harbour. There was to be a development at North Head. In central Jurien there was a proposal to build 60 townhouses and units. Also affected is the Cervantes Keys development.

Land prices have risen and there is anticipation by local people of an unprecedented growth in the area. That is now not likely to happen, certainly not within the next two years. There were also planned tourist packages from Geraldton to be provided through federal funds. Consultants have put tourist packages together but the project is

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

now in jeopardy because they relate to Indian Ocean Drive. There was to be a spin-off to other tourist areas such as Kalbarri, which everybody knows is a holiday and fishing resort, Mullewa, which is the centre of the wildflower region, and Dongara, another tourist destination. All the projects are in limbo for however long it is before the Government decides to fund Indian Ocean Drive. The decision of the Government not to fund the road has long-term ramifications. I take the Government to task over that.

The House also needs to be aware that the construction of the road would ensure better protection of the environment, especially that of the Nambung and Pinnacles national parks. I do not know how many members have driven down that road, but I have used it many times. People need to go down tracks in order to gain access to the beaches. The tracks are used by four-wheel-drive vehicles and buses. There is a need to protect the environmental status of the area. Significant sums have already been expended by the Department of Defence in clearing ordnance from the area. There is a firing range in the area. It needed to be cleared so that people were not blown up by bombs and mortars. Proposed routes have been cleared. Access ways have also been cleared so they can be used by military equipment.

The Government should think long and hard about changing a very poor decision to not include Indian Ocean Drive in its budget. There will be long-term ramifications.

I raise another tourist issue that is located in the mid west region with which I have had some involvement. Neither this State Government nor perhaps the previous one had a lot to do with it. However, I raise it as an issue to show that local people and local initiatives can make things happen. I bring to the attention of the House the Greenough Hamlet. It is a nineteenth century village that is still in its original state. It is the only one of its kind in Australia. The first buildings were constructed in about 1860. In 1991, I became involved in the Greenough Hamlet. I chaired a committee known as the friends of the hamlet; however, sadly, it became politicised and its demise came within 18 months to two years after that.

From then on, as a councillor on the local shire, I was involved in it from within the boundaries of the local shire. I negotiated some land purchases to protect the integrity of the heritage value of the hamlet. I have a close relationship with it. In discussions with the National Trust, the Shire of Greenough negotiated a partnership agreement to manage the hamlet. It is a national precedent that has not been done anywhere else in Australia. I encourage other councils who have National Trust properties within their sphere of influence to consider that precedent.

Funding of approximately \$900 000 has been sought for construction of an interpretive centre, information centre and tearooms and the like for the hamlet. The funding has come from local government, the federal Government, the Lotteries Commission and the National Trust. There is no impost on the State Government because, as I said earlier, it has no involvement. However, I wanted to raise the issue of the hamlet as a part of the greater tourist industry in the mid west region, particularly on the coastal strip. The village sits on the Brand Highway and has the potential to be one of the premier attractions in the mid west region that leads into Geraldton and its hinterland. It will make a significant contribution to the local and regional economy. A request for funding for the hamlet should be considered in the next budget.

Another area that I know the Government has become involved in is the Abrolhos Islands. The Abrolhos has the potential to rival the Great Barrier Reef, although it depends on what time of year one visits them. The best time to take a holiday there is in the middle of summer when the southerly wind blows. However, on the leeward side of the islands one can set a boat without any problem. I am not sure how much of the \$720 000 earmarked in the budget is for tourist activities or for fisheries. I note that that sum is made up of fisheries and tourism finances.

I believe the timing is right for tourism in the Abrolhos Islands. If the Government is serious about tourism issues, that is one location that would gain it some kudos. Airstrips and boating facilities are already located there. Obviously, the tourism industry would need to work in partnership with the fishing community to make it work. Portable, modular or self-contained services would be necessary to make sure that nothing is left there that might ruin the environment. That type of tourism operation works successfully on the west coast of Canada off British Columbia. Barges with portable self-contained units are towed off the coast that can be leased for a time. Alternatively, floating hotels could also be operated. Investors would also be needed for these types of projects, and I am aware that a couple of groups are considering the idea. Shortly, the Government might be approached to provide some involvement.

Another tourism site in the Geraldton-Greenough region is the HMAS *Sydney* memorial. An amount of \$1 million has been provided for the construction of that memorial. The Government is being petty by not providing the remaining amount of \$85 000 that is needed to finalise the construction of this fine monument to 645 sailors from the ill-fated HMAS *Sydney* that was sunk in the Second World War. I am aware that the federal Government has provided \$200 000. The previous State Government also committed funds to match those of

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

the federal Government. Either this State Government or the previous State Government contributed \$115 000 to the memorial. It has had enormous support from the local community through service groups, local government and, as I said earlier, the federal Government.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr EDWARDS: I will describe the memorial of the HMAS *Sydney* to the House because it is worth describing. This memorial is made up of a memorial wall and it has a cupola with 645 silver-backed seagulls depicted in its roof. I will stray a little from my original topic. The seagulls depicted in the roof were inspired by the first memorial service that was held for the sailors. That memorial service was held late on a summer evening. The playing of either the *Last Post*, or "taps", had finished and we stood for a minute's silence in memory of the 645 sailors when a flock of about 100 silver-backed seagulls flew over the top of us, wheeled around and went back out to sea. Those of us who have a good imagination thought that perhaps the seagulls were the souls of the sailors. The idea for the seagulls in the cupola came from that incident. The cupola also depicts a statue of a woman looking out to sea for her husband, brother, son or father.

As I said, it is a pity that only \$85 000 is required to finalise this construction of this worthwhile memorial. It is not a lot of money in the scheme of things. Lottery funding is being sought; however, the Government should see its way clear to fund a memorial as moving as the HMAS *Sydney* memorial. It needs to be remembered that the memorial will be an enormous attraction to the Geraldton region and to Western Australia due to its national significance.

I will now refer to some of the projects around the area such as the southern transport corridor. I note funding of \$4 800 000 in this year's budget, and that the projected total estimated investment for the rail component is about \$46 million. I have said before, and I will go on repeating it, that it is imperative that the Government allows for the road component. I have to be honest that I have not noted it in the forward estimates. At the moment there seem to be some conflicting figures on how much is needed for that rail funding. It may have blown out somewhat. I recall saying a couple of months ago that the figure had probably blown out. The Government and the community must not be sidetracked with the conveyer belt option, which somebody has suggested. It was a good idea at the time, but the pragmatic view and the reality is that it will not work. It has been tried before. It will involve too many problems such as different grains, different minerals - even breakdowns. It would not matter because a conveyor belt is not the answer; people want the road-rail option. That is what the Geraldton area has been looking for and the community has been chasing. I again say to the Government that it should not make that an excuse to delay the southern transport corridor.

I now refer to some of the capital projects. I recognise the Government's role in bringing some of those issues to fruition - particularly the social issues. However, I need to remind the House that the previous Government initiated some of the capital projects that have been finalised or constructed in the past six to 12 months. Those projects include the Kalbarri High School, the Kalbarri airstrip, the Kalbarri multipurpose service, the Greenough passenger terminal at the Geraldton airport, the Geraldton maritime museum, the police and citizens youth club, the Geraldton Police Station and the Tenindewa-Binnu road, 12 kilometres of which is still unsealed. I suspect we will be waiting for many years for that, because I do not expect too much road funding will be directed to country areas if the Government is building a billion-dollar southern rail corridor to Mandurah. A commitment was made for a new Geraldton hospital. I look forward to that coming to fruition in three years, and I note an allocation of \$410 000 for drawings and architectural design. The new premises for the Department of Agriculture are currently being built. A commitment was made to the Dongara multipurpose service and Dongara District High School administration block. The former Government put all of those capital projects in place and some are now coming to fruition. I would like to think this Government could have the same record at the end of its term.

Some of the future areas of growth projected for the Geraldton-Greenough area include animal exports and airfreight. I may bring some of those matters to the Government's attention at a later date.

Farmers in the Greenough area have raised with me the salinity problem. I know the Government has innumerable committees, and the Minister for the Environment has put in place some of those committees. One of the criticisms I hear is that while farmers recognise funding is being made available, they are frustrated at not receiving money for on-the-ground work. Some of those farmers have been dealing with salinity for 25, 31 and 41 years. I attended a salinity seminar three or four weeks ago and some of those farmers are frustrated because they know what to do, and they do not need another review committee to tell them. They are growing saltbush and various trees that suit their conditions - they know what they are doing - and they are feeding their animals on them. They need on-the-ground funding to help them combat salinity. It is a problem for the whole State - including the metropolitan area - not just the farming community. The area I am talking about in particular is Morawa-Three Springs.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

I will move on to some of the areas that I have not seen in the budget. The SaferWA program was a successful initiative of the previous Government. The Office of Crime Prevention has now been established and may be filling the role of SaferWA; I am not sure. It would be a pity if the SaferWA scheme was lost. It was an extremely good scheme that worked well with local government and the State Government.

It is a tragedy that the immobiliser scheme has been done away with. That \$40 subsidy probably did a lot of good in inhibiting motor vehicle theft. I am sure the Minister for Health in his former life would agree with that. It was a particularly good program, and it is short sighted of the Government to have scrapped it.

The member for Wagin yesterday raised funding of business enterprise centres. I also support business enterprise centres, which have always suffered from lack of funding. I know that in my area the council that I sat on was very much a supporter of BECs. However, I could not say the same for the neighbouring council. Business enterprise centres do an enormous amount of good. They are a great help to country business people. They are there for a reason and they are an advantage to country Western Australia. They play a leading role in regional areas.

While I am on regional issues, we had a heated debate today on regional air services and I could not let this debate go by without throwing in my two bob's worth. The Government needs to get a better handle on the current situation. I do not think it has handled it well and shown the leadership it should have done. Some other aspects of this issue have not been mentioned here today. I was speaking to the manager of a regional airport that is run by a local shire. Their financial situation has not been considered. This airport had passenger receipts of \$131 000 in June, \$76 000 in July and the projected figure for August was \$80 000. It will lose \$287 000 with the demise of Ansett and Skywest. That will be reflected throughout the community, and I do not think that has been taken into consideration. About 5 000 passengers use this airport on a monthly basis, but the number for September is likely to be fewer than 1 000. That will have an impact on a regional centre. There will be no guesses as to where I am talking about. The Government needs to take a greater leading role than it has. It has failed miserably in showing leadership. Members opposite have sat on their hands and delayed for too long.

I will not say a lot about heritage, which is my shadow portfolio, because I will have an opportunity during the estimates debates to question the minister; however, I shall make some comments. The budget for the Heritage Council of Western Australia is woefully inadequate to allow the agency to meet its statutory obligations. The exponential growth in the area of development referrals of 700 per cent will lead to increasing backlogs and create further financial pressures on the Heritage Council's capacity to meet its obligations. The backlog of 850 places awaiting assessment is untenable.

If the Government had a genuine concern for conserving this State's heritage, it would strategically plan to ensure adequate funds for present and future heritage conservation. I understand the difficulty in balancing projects between people and history. If one takes an objective view, in light of the problems the Minister for Health is having with his portfolio and trying to meet health needs, my argument that we should spend more money on heritage, which is our history, presents a conundrum. Whether we like it or not, our heritage is our history, and it is something about which we need to be more aware. The Heritage Council of Western Australia has four regional advisers, which is inadequate. Each adviser works about 16 hours a month. That area should be looked at long and hard. New partnerships should be sought. Partnerships have been established with local government, but other community organisations should also become involved.

The Leader of the Opposition eloquently addressed the impact the premium tax will have on ownership of heritage places, and I again draw the House's attention to that issue. The premium tax will burden the owners of heritage properties with a great impost. I think of places such as Le Fanu and Burt's summer palace, both of which are on prime ocean-front land in Cottesloe. No funding for restoration work has been made available. They are very good examples of people who are sitting on major assets and who will have to expend a lot of money as a result of this premium tax. The land value of those properties would be in excess of \$1 million.

Mr D'Orazio: It is calculated on land value.

Mr EDWARDS: I am talking about land value. I suggest that the land value of the Cottesloe properties is in excess of \$1 million.

Mr Board: The member for Greenough is saying that people need incentives. Other States have developed a range of tax incentives to encourage people to invest in heritage properties. We are doing exactly the opposite; we are taxing people sitting on heritage properties through the land value.

Mr EDWARDS: The member for Murdoch sums up the issue well. That is what I am saying: if we want people to invest in heritage areas, such as the ones I mentioned, we must provide them with incentives rather than taxes.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

While on taxes, I raise the "no increase in taxes and charges" issue. That was a dishonest statement made before the election. The public has a fairly dim view of politicians. As a cynic, I ask whether we can blame them. What a dishonest statement that was.

How many elderly people living in a family home on a highly valued piece of land will now struggle to come to terms with paying those enormous sums of money, which they do not have? More often than not, as the Leader of the Opposition described, they are people who have worked hard, saved and paid their taxes and are not a burden on the State. This Government will make them a burden on the State. The iniquity and unfairness of this tax flies in the face of what I believe Australia and its people represent. It is iniquitous. Why should someone who is successful and has worked hard not benefit from his labour? Why should he not work for his children and try to improve their lives? We should not always have to go to the lowest common denominator. We all need to aspire to something; these people have aspired. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about those people who played a role in the Second World War and who will be hit. The younger people who inherited places from those war veterans will also be hit. I see no fairness in that. Like many on that side of the House, those people worked hard for what they have. Why should the Government put a premium tax on that?

Mr Board: The Government has forgotten about the strata and high rise developments. People are living in \$150 000 units that sit on riverside land which is worth \$4 million. They will be affected by the tax. The Treasurer was not able to explain that yesterday. He has not thought it through.

Mr Whitely: The Leader of the Opposition said that the rate of capital growth of those premium properties is in the order of 25 per cent. Based on the minimum value, the wealth of property owners is increasing by \$250 000 a year. The premium tax on a property worth \$1.4 million will be about \$8 000 a year. That represents an annual net increase in wealth of \$240 000. It is not earned income.

Mr EDWARDS: I hear what the member is saying. However, some people do not have that sort of money.

Mr Kucera: They can defer it.

Mr EDWARDS: I will not go into the semantics. I simply do not believe it is a fair tax. People work hard, they are taxed anyway -

Mr Kucera: Is the goods and services tax a fair tax?

Mr EDWARDS: That is a completely different issue. However, I make that point.

I move on to the increase in payroll tax. Having run my own business, I know how iniquitous it is. I employed 45 people, and it was always a struggle to pay the wages at the end of each week, as most businesspeople would know. The member for Ballajura has probably also been in that position.

Mr D'Orazio: The GST kills you more.

Mr EDWARDS: I do not know about that.

Mr Board: You have forgotten about all the tax cuts people received under the GST.

Mr EDWARDS: The payroll tax is iniquitous. Businesspeople must pay mortgages, wages, workers compensation premiums and everything else. Raising payroll tax hits the wrong people. Business is the backbone of a nation and a State. I know I am generalising, but I believe it is an unfair tax. It should be applied on a broader basis. It should be applied across the State.

The farmers in the eastern part of my electorate had some good rains until four weeks ago. They have not had rain since. They are suffering. It is unlikely that we will get more rain. It is vitally important that the special circumstances funding and any other funding that can be stitched together is made available to those people. Some farmers who have been farming for two and, in some cases, three generations are looking down the barrel of a gun. If they do not make it this year, they will walk off their farms. It started off as a bad year, and for a while it looked like it would get better. However, in Morawa and Perenjori and up to Mullewa, conditions have gone back to what they were originally. I ask the Government to consider that issue carefully. Those people are looking for help. I am aware that the Minister for Agriculture has put some funding in place.

MR AINSWORTH (Roe) [7.48 pm]: I take this first opportunity since the events in the United States last week to make a brief comment on those events. I make these comments during the budget debate partly because I wanted to speak about it anyway, but also because, as we spoke about it earlier today, air travel has been affected, which also affects the economy and possibly the budget of this State. In that context, it is certainly a budgetary item, although I am probably drawing a long bow.

I share in the sorrow and in the comments of support for the people of the United States in the tragedy they have suffered. I also reflect on the unfortunate response in both the United States and other parts of the world,

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

including Western Australia, I am sad to say, in which people have attacked the property and person of individuals associated with the Muslim faith. I was reflecting the other day that if the things that have happened in the United States had happened in Great Britain, and if the perpetrators of those terrorist acts in Great Britain had been alleged to be members of the Irish Republican Army, people would not all be rushing around saying terrible things about those darned Christians and driving cars into Christian churches in Australia, and things like that. However, unfortunately we are seeing the actions of a small, radical element in this community, who do not think before they act and have prejudice that is just waiting to burst out. Their excuse for their actions is flimsy indeed, because a group of Muslim people who represent hundreds of millions of Muslim people around the world can hardly be blamed for the actions of a handful of radicals who are probably as representative of the Muslim faith as are a few crazy Irishmen of the whole of the Christian faith.

Mr O'Gorman: Watch it!

Mr Ainsworth: Present members excepted! The people who take those actions are crazy; they are certainly not acting in a rational and sane manner. Regardless of the religious cloak with which they cover themselves, these people who pretend that they are doing these things with the support of God, or whoever else they claim supports them, clearly are radical and not normal, sane individuals. The fact that some members of this religious group have done these things should not be a reflection on all the other people in the same religious group. It is a shame on all the people in this country that a few people have chosen to take that attitude to Muslim people. I know many Muslim people who are appalled and have the same disgust and fear that we have about what has happened in the United States, and they too think about what they would go through as ordinary members of the public if the same thing were to happen in their city. People should sit back and think about what has happened in the United States, and not make judgments about people whom they do not understand.

I turn now to the budget and to things more close to home in my region. When I say "my region", I mean my home region, because I live in Esperance. Esperance is part of the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission area, which, as the budget papers state, represents 32 per cent, or nearly one-third, of the land mass of the State. I agree with the comments in the budget papers about some of the major outputs of that area. The budget papers state that the value of mining production was over \$3 billion in 1999-2000, and that the goldfields and Esperance areas boast a significant agricultural sector. They do not mention the monetary value of that sector, but it is also significant. The budget papers refer to the fishing industry, which is claimed to be abalone and scallops. The fishing industry is a lot larger than just abalone and scallops, although the abalone industry is very important. Other types of fishing undertaken in that area are deep-sea crab, lobster and a range of scale fish, as well as shark..

The budget papers refer also to the timber industry, which is classified as sandalwood. Sandalwood is found in the goldfields. There is a timber industry in Esperance, but it is not sandalwood; it is pine and eucalypt plantations. Esperance even has a copper chromate arsenic pine treatment plant. The timber industry in the region is greater than just sandalwood. That is really just a slightly pedantic statement. The real message in the budget papers as they refer to the part of my electorate incorporated in the goldfields-Esperance region is that it is an extremely important economic area for the State.

I turn now to the investment highlights in the goldfields-Esperance region and the new works that will commence in 2001-02. One of the items of new investment in my part of the world is \$2 million for the commencement of a regional distribution system upgrade for Western Power. That is the only new work that will commence in this financial year at the Esperance end of the goldfields-Esperance region. The budget papers refer to three items of new works with a total value of over \$1 million: residential subdivision in Kalgoorlie, town water supply improvements in Leonora, and other works. Given the size and economic output of that area, and the needs of some of the communities in that area, the capital works commitments for this financial year are quite paltry.

One obvious omission in the budget for the goldfields region is funding to improve the road crossing at Lake Raeside. The funding for that crossing has been brought forward by one year, so I suppose I should not complain, but it should have been brought forward by more than just one year. The community of Kalgoorlie and the northern goldfields region has told me on many occasions that we need to do something about that crossing, because whenever there is major rainfall in that area, which happens frequently, that crossing becomes impassable. That has significant economic effects on the northern goldfields and the goldfields generally.

The education budget contains no allocation for major capital works in Esperance. Esperance Senior High School is currently bursting at the seams and has a lot of transportable buildings. The previous Government earmarked some money from the sale of AlintaGas for the establishment of a middle school on that site. However, that provided only part of the funding required for that project, and additional funding is needed urgently. The Castletown Primary School also has transportable buildings, yet no capital works have been

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

forecast for that school, and that is of great concern to the people of that area. The number of transportable classrooms seems to be growing like mushrooms. The previous Government had a policy of putting transportable buildings on school sites up to a certain percentage of the student population, on the basis that investment made in the past in capital works in some of the older suburbs in Perth was now becoming redundant, because the children had grown up and there were fewer young children to go to those schools; therefore, in some schools up to 40 or 50 per cent of the classrooms were not being utilised.

That is not likely to happen in Esperance, because even if the older areas of the town were to go through the same process that the metropolitan area has gone through, in which the number of school-age children as a percentage of the total population in the area has diminished, that would not affect the school population in Esperance. Esperance Senior High School is still the only high school available to children in Esperance and the outer suburbs of Esperance. Therefore, a policy that may have some relevance in the city does not have the same relevance in the situation to which I am referring. We need to bear in mind also that if parents are looking for an alternative because Esperance Senior High School cannot cope with the student numbers or they are not happy with the facilities, the nearest senior high school to Esperance is at either Kalgoorlie, which is 400 kilometres away, or Albany or Katanning, which are an equal distance away. Therefore, it is totally unreasonable to even take that alternative into consideration. Esperance Senior High School has what one might call a captive audience. All high school students who live within a 400 kilometre radius of that school and are within commuting distance attend that school if they are not sent to a boarding school in Perth. It is imperative that we get some money into that school to improve the facilities and to follow up on some of the very good work that was done under the previous Government when we saw the establishment, as I mentioned before in this place, of the Esperance Community College. That college is organised on a cooperative basis between the high school, the Department of Education, Curtin University and the TAFE sector. It is highly successful, but we need to build on all of the facilities to make the process work properly. The Esperance Senior High School is at the core of that and certainly needs funding sooner rather than later.

Another area that urgently needs funding and is not included in this year's capital works program - I do not see anything in the out years either - is the upgrading of the South Coast Highway between Ravensthorpe and Esperance. Part of that road has been upgraded in the past and is a very good quality road. However, this is highway 1, the national highway, as well as a local service road. More and more mineral traffic uses that road as well as the usual grain, tourist and general traffic. The Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation Pty Ltd project, which will make a huge difference to that region, is on the drawing board and on track to be established in the next year or so. In the start-up phase it will need about 1 100 or 1 200 employees to establish the mine and the infrastructure that goes with it. A great deal of mine material will come by road. The poorer patches of the Ravensthorpe-Esperance portion of the South Coast Highway will further deteriorate and the safety of the travelling public will be put in jeopardy as a result. It is something that needs to be planned for now rather than when the mine is established, because it is a little late to put in the support infrastructure for such a project once the mine is up and running.

The same situation applies to the Ravensthorpe hospital. In February this year, when the state election was held, the Ravensthorpe hospital was planned for replacement. I understand that the Department of Health suggested that to the community, rather than repairing and maintaining the existing facility. That decision was made when the major nickel mine, which I mentioned, was being talked about only vaguely, if at all. The previous Government had gone so far as to have the plans drawn up for a replacement hospital, and that whole process was due to go out to tender in February. I understand that that process had to be put on hold during the election period, which is quite normal and correct; but subsequently I asked in this House for the Minister for Health to give me an assurance about the future of that hospital building. He told me to wait until the budget came out. I did wait, and the budget contains no mention whatsoever of the Ravensthorpe hospital. That is a major concern because the situation that applies here is the same as that to which I referred a moment ago in relation to roads. It will be too late to start putting money into constructing a site-built hospital. Transportable buildings can be rushed in, but that is not what we want. This was to be a site-built hospital catering for the future needs of the region, and it will be needed sooner rather than later.

Mr Kucera: Member for Roe, will you take an interjection?

Mr AINSWORTH: I certainly will, and if the minister is going to tell me that the hospital is in the budget, I will be delighted.

Mr Kucera: I am not sure, but there are two items in the budget. They are stages 1 and 2 of the south east coastal multipurpose service. I am not sure if that is what you are talking about, but I can certainly have that information for you by the estimates week.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

Mr AINSWORTH: I will certainly raise it with the minister in the estimates hearings. Is the figure about \$3 million?

Mr Kucera: It is \$3.2 million, but there is provision this year of \$363 000 for planning. I presume that that is what you are talking about, but I am not sure.

Mr AINSWORTH: It may be, but I certainly could not find it as a major budget item, which one would assume it would be had the process that was partially undertaken by the previous Government been picked up and continued on. The plans were already done and, as part of the normal process, the calling of tenders would have been the next step. That would have required a current budget allocation of \$3.1 million or \$3.2 million. However, I will certainly ask the minister about that in more detail during the estimates hearings because that hospital definitely needs to go ahead. I am pleased there is some indication of funding, but I must say that I had not found it -

Mr Kucera: It is on page 1263.

Mr AINSWORTH: I will certainly look that up because if that is the case, I will be delighted to say I was wrong.

Mr Kucera: I am not sure if that is what you wanted, but I will check for you.

Mr AINSWORTH: I am hopeful that I am wrong, because my interest is not to make political points against the minister, but to get the resources my electorate needs. I will be the first to congratulate the minister if it is in there.

I have read the handout entitled "Budget 2001-02, getting the priorities right". I assume all members have received that handout relating to their individual electorates. It includes new works as well as works in progress. The only allocations made for the western part of my electorate are \$120 000 to Lake Grace and \$1 million to Hopetoun, both for works under Western Power's banner. Although it is government-associated money, it is not the same as a direct budget allocation. Those are the only two allocations in the budget for the entire western part of my electorate with one exception - it is hard to ascertain exactly how much is for my electorate - and that is the allocation of \$3.5 million to the wireless south west project to fill the gaps in the mobile phone service. That amount is for the whole south west, so how much of it relates to my electorate is a good question. However, in essence, the new works allocation for a significant part of my electorate is very thin indeed. In fact, it is almost nonexistent if normal agency expenditure is taken out, which one would expect would happen anyway. The situation is very much the same for the works in progress allocations. Putting works in progress in budgets gives a false impression in some cases. In this case the previous Government did facilitate some of these things. However, taking as an example the Esperance Port Authority fund, in which there is probably \$14 million, that was organised by the port authority, with government sanction admittedly. It is not a direct initiative of government, and I have always argued, both with my own Government and the previous Labor Government, that those items should not be seen in the same light as direct government contributions to fresh capital works that come under the direct influence and involvement of the minister and his or her department.

The glaring omission in this budget is that there is no allocation for expenditure by Western Power on the upgrading of lines for the distribution of electricity in the western part of my electorate. I have spoken in this place before about some of the severe difficulties that are experienced in places like Bremer Bay, where there is a major influx in tourists during the summer and the population multiplies by about six. Significant expenditure is also being made on the establishment of three new abalone farms that need large amounts of power to operate pumps and other infrastructure. Despite this, there is no commitment whatsoever by Western Power for the expansion or improvement of those lines. The same concern could be expressed about the quality of some of the Western Power infrastructure throughout the whole south west of the State. I have said that Western Power is a semi-government instrumentality and money allocated to it is not the same as a direct budget allocation through Treasury; however, since Western Power is included in the budget, it would have been lovely to see something more than just the regional distribution upgrade at Esperance. I would have loved to see a similar upgrading of the distribution system across the whole of my electorate, particularly as the western end is probably in the worst condition. That section has had significant problems over the past few years and has been patched up repeatedly, to the point that it should be rebuilt. We should really have a higher quality distribution system across the whole south western corner of the State to cater for the needs of growing industries that are trying to get started, despite their difficulties with this sort of infrastructure not meeting their needs.

I will touch briefly on the health budget. I was pleased to see one item in the health budget, even though it will be modest in its impact - it is certainly modest in its amount - and that is this year's \$1 million from the \$4 million worth of additional funding for the patient assisted travel scheme. At least we are seeing additional

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

funding in that area. My only concern is that the feedback I am getting from health boards and other people involved in regional health - I know the minister will not agree with me, because he has a different viewpoint - is that there are real cuts in the operating budget. While the overall budget is up, when they looked at it like for like and compared last year's figures with this year's, they are of the opinion that they will have less to work with. If that is the case - I believe it is - fewer services will be provided by visiting specialists, and that will mean an extra call on the scheme's budget to send people to the nearest specialist. In the case of people in my electorate, the nearest specialist might be in Kalgoorlie, or most likely Perth.

Mr Kucera: Is the lower great southern district yours?

Mr AINSWORTH: The lower great southern would touch a little bit of my electorate, and then the Narrogin health district; and the south east coastal district is the one at the eastern end.

Mr Kucera: The lower great southern has gone up 11.6 per cent this year, from \$29.4 million to \$32.8 million. The \$29.4 million received was the top-up that you got last year; it is well above your previous budget top-up.

Mr AINSWORTH: I know the figures appear in that fashion -

Mr Kucera: Sorry, south east coastal has gone from \$10.2 million last year to \$11.1 million this year; it is up 9.2 per cent. Again, that 10.2 million includes any top-up you would have got last year. I am really doing your work for you here!

Mr AINSWORTH: That is good of the minister, and I hope he keeps doing it, because if he can get the sorts of results that I have been getting, he we will do really well.

I am afraid that as late as yesterday I was receiving comments from people within the health industry - who have been to the minister's briefings, and who have been told what is required of them in the ensuing 12 months - that once they take out all the extra items for which they are responsible, they will have fewer funds to work with to deliver on-the-ground health provisions. I do not want to go through this debate with the minister right now. Perhaps we can get into that in more detail next week. However, it certainly concerns me that these things are apparently - I say apparently - still happening.

I mentioned the PAT scheme a moment ago. I now refer to the brief ministerial statement on that scheme that the Minister for Health made today, and the community forums that will be held around the State in October. I am the first to applaud the minister for having any kind of country forum. However, it is the places in which these forums are to be held that are of concern. Firstly - I mean no disrespect to the city itself - Mandurah is so close to Perth that I hardly see it as a major centre that needs a lot of PATS attention. With the exception of Albany, Collie and Kalgoorlie, the other areas - Newman, Derby, and Karratha - are all in the north west of the State. Therefore, basically the entire wheatbelt of Western Australia, including the city of Geraldton, is not included in these community forums. If the minister intends to have these community forums, I urge him to have them more widely spread across the whole of the State, so that more people have a chance to attend.

Mr Kucera: As I said in my statement this morning, I am more than happy for you to run a forum in your area, and the Government can probably provide you with material that will cover the kinds of questions being asked.

Mr AINSWORTH: I would appreciate it if the minister could do that for me - and other members, because I am sure they would want that - because the towns listed in the minister's statement, which is all I have to work on, certainly miss quite a big part of the State. I am happy to take on board what the minister is saying, and if he can assist in providing that service to other places, I would be most happy to participate. As I have said in this place to the point of tedious repetition, this is a major issue for people in my town because we are 720 kilometres from Perth, the main place where these medical facilities are available if they cannot come out to us. Therefore, PATS has a much bigger impact on a patient from that area than on one who lives within a 150 kilometre radius of Perth. I am not suggesting that those people should not have PATS. However, if we look at the costs involved, particularly for low-income people, we certainly need the scheme more.

I was going to touch briefly on the Skywest issue, but I think I have probably said enough about that today, except to reiterate the vital importance of the quality of that service, and the number of seats it was providing. The Premier said his Government was able to get Qantas to take on the service through Skipper Aviation. I do not know if he was correct in saying that. I am not convinced that that is the case, because I think the federal transport minister had a major role in that. However, it does not matter. The fact is that it happened; whoever was responsible for it is not the point. The point is that although the services will be a great fill-in when we have nothing, in the long term they will be inadequate. We must do something quickly before the momentum that we are already losing in the air travel industry is totally lost. We must reinstate the Skywest service back to where it was before, otherwise the losses to this State will be far greater than any costs involved if the Government becomes a part of the rescue package.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

I want to touch on another item that might initially surprise some members because again this issue is, in a sense, outside my electorate. I refer to the current debate between the University of Western Australia and the Western Australian School of Mines in Kalgoorlie over mining industry courses. Members will be aware of the Western Australian School of Mines, which is now under the umbrella of the Curtin University family - if I can call it that - because that university has branches, or external campuses, of different forms in various parts of the State. The Western Australian School of Mines has been a major provider of high-quality mining engineering courses for a great number of years. I am told that it has a world-class reputation. It has been offering mining engineering degree courses for a number of years, and these courses have been appropriate to the industry they serve, because courses are undertaken on site. Not every mining area is exactly the same as the Kalgoorlie area, but this gives students more hands-on and practical mining engineering opportunities, because they rub shoulders with participants in the industry, and they can experience first-hand a range of mining activities in the eastern goldfields area. It is also a great decentralised educational institution, and that is the way we should be going with education in this State, rather than have four or five universities in about 0.1 per cent of the land area of Western Australia. An agreement was reached that allowed the University of Western Australia to introduce a mining-related course that would not directly compete with the Western Australian School of Mines, because there is not enough scope for duplication or for having similar courses at various universities throughout the State. The number of students that undertake mining engineering courses is limited.

It is important that I refer to a Mineral Council of Australia publication. The council had a national tertiary education task force which released a document titled "Back from the Brink". This was a review of Australia's minerals tertiary education. That was released in February 1998. I have read that report with some interest, and one of the key points it makes is that because of the limited number of students, and to ensure that we have a degree course that is of sufficient stature to make it worth undertaking, we must have two or three centres of excellence across the nation. It should be limited to that. If any institutions provide additional courses, they should complement or work in conjunction with those centres of excellence. The institutions should not compete with one another, which would water down the quality of the courses at certain institutions to the detriment of not only the institution, but also the students and industry as a whole. It is interesting that the "Back from the Brink" review of February 1998 came out at about the same time as the University of Western Australia initiated its first mining course. UWA, Murdoch University and Curtin University of Technology also signed a memorandum of understanding to commit to a cooperative approach to mining and other educational developments in that year. That all seemed fine and it has gone along in that fashion for a while, but UWA recently decided to change its course. That course has been split in three and made so close in character to the ones available at the Western Australian School of Mines that to the casual observer, they are not any different. Those courses have appeared in the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre handbook. UWA has effectively become a direct competitor of the WA School of Mines, which is in direct conflict with the agreement signed with the WA School of Mines. More importantly, it brings the funding for tertiary institutions into question. Although most funding comes from the federal Government, States have a responsibility to partially fund university activities.

Mining has an enormous impact on this State's economy. If all the mining activities are taken into account, the size of the industry is enormous. Having said that and having examined the important mining areas in the rest of the country, there is still only a set of mining-related tertiary courses that are accessed by a limited number of people in any given year. The review clearly stated that this State could not afford to have courses fragmented and duplicated, because that would diminish the value of the courses generally. The University of Western Australia is the most richly endowed university in the whole of Australia - it has hundreds of millions of dollars worth of assets - so it cannot be said that it is undertaking these courses to attract a little more income because it is going broke. It is not doing it for that reason. I do not want to go into what I believe are the reasons because that would miss the point in some way.

What is important is that the mining industry itself is opposed to what is being done. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy in Western Australia commented on this matter in today's *The West Australian*. President Peter Laylor confirmed that a letter to the University of Western Australia on behalf of the Minerals Council of Australia had said that the chamber wanted UWA to back off and that it would not tolerate any duplication of current courses. The mathematical sciences executive dean at UWA, Barry Brady, said that the changes did not duplicate Kalgoorlie's courses. While I am not competent to argue about the finer points of various university degree courses in this Chamber, I am able to say that I have had extensive discussions with people from the Kalgoorlie School of Mines and elsewhere. They have clearly explained that although there are fringe differences in these courses, the core elements are the same and they are in direct competition with the courses offered at the WA School of Mines, which is contrary to the agreement that is in place. I urge the State Government to intervene or to at least act as a mediator in this process, because it is imperative that the quality

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

of mining engineering and mining-related courses in this State are maintained at the highest level, so that they are recognised internationally.

It is particularly important that the regional service provided by the WA School of Mines be maintained in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. It is important not only for the reasons I have outlined, but also for the economy of the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The Western Australian School of Mines and other associated Curtin University of Technology activities in Kalgoorlie-Boulder have a major impact on the economy of that city. For that to be diminished in any way by the downgrading or, heaven forbid, the cessation of those mining courses in Kalgoorlie-Boulder would be a tragedy of the highest order.

Mr Masters: As a geologist, I can say that the great value of the Kalgoorlie School of Mines is that the courses are run in a mining town and students get first-hand experience that is not available in any other mining course in Australia.

Mr AINSWORTH: I agree wholeheartedly with the member for Vasse. It is an important point to remember, because people in academia can sometimes be a little cloistered from the realities of the world. That does not matter with some courses, but it does matter in a course such as mining, which is practical and hands on. The point made by the member for Vasse was absolutely correct. I urge the Government to take whatever action it can to help sort out this problem.

I am interested and concerned for another reason. As I mentioned during an earlier part of my speech, the Esperance Community College, which is a partnership between various educational sectors, has an important association with the Kalgoorlie portion of Curtin University of Technology. Anything that diminishes the presence of Curtin University of Technology in Kalgoorlie will effectively diminish what is available at the Esperance Community College. With all the best will in the world, that cannot be prevented from occurring. Like any organisation, if funds are reduced because activities diminish, its budget will be less. The Kalgoorlie end will want to retain as much as it can for its existing operations. It is important for two reasons. The most important reason is that the integrity of mining engineering courses must be maintained in this State, because it is an important industry. To diminish this world-class facility would be unsupportable.

Mr Bowler: Just a little bit of empire building, Ross.

Mr AINSWORTH: That is all I see it as. I will not go any further than that. This budget unfortunately lacks that bit of vision for the areas that I represent and all regional areas, that we hoped would come from a fresh Government. Members, regardless of whether they are part of the Government or on the opposition benches, hope for good things for the State. This budget does not, to my mind, show that bit of vision one hoped would be displayed by a new Government that was keen to get on with the job it was talking about doing. The Government said that the regions were an important priority. I do not see that reflected in the budget. Some strategic capital investment is needed in regional areas to assist and encourage people to move to those areas. That would increase populations and hopefully get some industrial activity happening in agricultural areas. That would make it easier for people to establish themselves and to generate wealth in the country to supplement and complement existing activities. I regret that this budget does not appear to have that spark of imagination. I hope that we might see that in the future. If we do not, I will certainly say so. It is what is needed if we are to get this State up and running and make a difference where it matters. I am parochial enough to suggest that a lot of what matters happens in the country. To see that happen we need some entrepreneurial activity, vision and daring by the Government in what it does. If that happens, it will be fantastic, but it is not present in this budget, and the lacklustre list of items under capital works highlights what I am saying.

MR O'GORMAN (Joondalup) [8.30 pm]: I concur with the member for Roe's sentiments with regard to the terrorist attacks in the United States. I want to apologise to the member about the interjection I made when he was talking about the terrorist attacks in the United States. I made a loud interjection; it must have been my Irish nationalism coming to the fore. If the member had talked about crazy terrorists rather than crazy Irishmen, I would not have jumped in so quickly.

I will speak tonight about the effects of the collapse of Ansett Australia Ltd on my electorate of Joondalup. Joondalup was the location of the call centre for Ansett in Western Australia. The call centre provided employment for between 360 and 400 people in Joondalup. It represented at least \$8 million to the local economy, and the effect of taking that amount of money out of the local economy in one hit will create a domino effect among many of the small businesses in the area. The majority of people employed at the call centre were female. The centre employed 166 trainees. A large number of call centre staff have contacted my office fearing that if something is not done to find alternative, large-scale employment, they will not be able to maintain mortgage payments on their family homes. This has come at a time when the Opposition is criticising the Labor Government's premium property tax that is being imposed in this budget. The Opposition is concerned that the wealthy are being taxed when my constituents are being forced to sell their homes. I will detail one such case.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

A 21-year-old woman and her partner have entered into a mortgage contract for \$160 000 and have just moved into their new home in Yanchep. The couple have no option but to sell their house and they will probably lose money on the transaction. The couple will have to start again and seek Homeswest housing, which is already in short supply, particularly in the Joondalup area. It will be an additional cost to the State.

Local businesses in Grand Boulevard that provided lunches for a large number of people working in the call centre are looking at a major downturn in their business following the withdrawal of the 400 positions in Joondalup. The ramifications go on. The collapse of Ansett and the closing of the call centre comes after the closure of 43 businesses in the Joondalup central business district and the business park. On Tuesday morning Joondalup woke to hear that another landmark business had been destroyed by fire. That resulted in the closure of a number of co-located businesses to allow proper assessment of the damage. During its eight-year reign of destruction, the previous Government saw the removal of many government offices from the Joondalup area. How much more can we take?

Joondalup has had a short but very proud history of being the major regional centre north of Perth. There has been an enormous amount of investment by Governments and businesses. The level of investment has been necessary to establish not just a suburb, but a new city. Unemployment figures at 31 March this year show that Joondalup has an unemployment rate far higher than the national average. The effects of the closure of the Ansett call centre are yet to be taken into account.

The West Perth Football Club made an entrepreneurial and risky move to Joondalup in the early 1990s. It is now finding it very difficult to maintain itself in Joondalup and it is looking at alternatives. The club approached the local council for assistance but was flatly refused. Joondalup may be facing the loss of the West Perth Football Club to another area in the northern suburbs.

With any new venture there must be a certain amount of support in the early stages. New ventures have to be able to stabilise and find their own feet. When there is a stumble or fall, such as is being experienced at the moment, further support and encouragement are needed. Joondalup is still in the very early stages of development in establishing itself as a new city. It is now finding itself stumbling through no fault of its own. Joondalup needs additional support to allow it to weather this period of turmoil. I have had some discussions with the Premier about this and we have decided to commission some local people and government officers in the Joondalup area to start planning for a much brighter future. There has already been some success with expressions of interest from companies contemplating moving into the Joondalup area. There is the possibility that the call centre may be used by another company. Despite all the gloom and doom there is a bright future for Joondalup with the impending opening of the police academy and the relocation of the Edith Cowan University Churchlands campus to Joondalup. Both projects will assist Joondalup to become recognised as a true regional centre. In the meantime, a coordinated whole-of-government approach is needed to continue the excellent development of Joondalup.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [8.36 pm]: In the first instance, it has to be said that, given that we are seeing a shift to accrual accounting and other aspects that the Under Treasurer and the Treasury team have wanted to introduce into the Western Australian budget for quite some time, it has made it very difficult for members to make comparisons between this budget and budgets from other years. The Treasury has tried to standardise appropriations with estimates and actuals. In the 2000-01 estimated actuals, it has included the capital user charge. The figure differs from that in the 2000-01 budget. It makes it difficult for members to draw comparisons. When that is taken into account with the Government's restructuring of departments and the reallocation of responsibility for the delivery of services, it makes it virtually impossible to come up with comparative data about where the Government's main focus of attention appears to be. A number of issues give rise to a degree of suspicion about whether the spin that has been put on this budget for the past six months has any substance. We went through the first three or four months of that with the Treasurer talking about the black hole that had developed in the budget. The printed document shows that the appropriation needed to balance the books through the Treasurer's Advance is no more or less than it has been in other years. In other words, the items of expenditure that have not been budgeted, but which must be included in any statement, are accounted for. They are only marginally greater than previous years. So much for the black hole. All of the discussion about deficits was somewhat misleading because the budget returned a very small deficit.

Notwithstanding all that confusion, I have some difficulty coming to terms with the way in which the Government has been able to make statements, which have gone unchallenged by many members who support the Government in this place, that do not deliver what has been stated in the rhetoric. Firstly, to demonstrate my argument, I refer to an area in which I have a great interest; that is, regional development. Some time ago, a regional development policy was developed, which was widely circulated on the understanding that it ensured community ownership of the policy to develop regional Western Australia. That policy called for an investment

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

of \$75 million to ensure that it was implemented. However, in this budget, the Department of Local Government and Regional Development has been appropriated \$15 million - it should receive more than that - for a regional development trust fund. I searched through the budget figures to find out whether that was new funding or whether some projects that were appropriated for in previous years would be axed. I acknowledge there has been an increase in funding for regional development; however, it is nowhere near the \$50 million that was to be allocated. If I could find where it was among my papers, I could give members the right figure.

The SPEAKER: It was \$75 million.

Mr COWAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will give members an example of how that value can depreciate. When considering the appropriation for outputs by the regional development commissions, I will again take the standardised numbers that have been applied by Treasury officials to give us some comparative data.

In 2000-01, the regional development commissions were allocated for recurrent purposes some \$26.782 million. However, in this financial year, the allocation of the development commissions has been reduced by over \$6 million. The development commissions have been allocated \$20.722 million. Immediately, there is a deficit in the recurrent expenditure or output. The regional development commissions will not have the same capacity to deliver the outcomes that the regions want because of the \$6 million deficiency.

Of the programs that have been appropriated funds through the Department of Commerce and Trade prior to this financial year, at least \$17.5 million has been appropriated for programs including telecentres and the community resource centre project. Funds have been provided for regional grants for the purposes of agricultural societies or small town economic planning projects. A range of services attracted a minimum of \$17 million annually. That also included much needed projects including the regional headworks fund, which was necessary to enable people who live in country areas to develop land so that some progress could be made. It is important that those funds be continued.

I did not examine the Department of Transport and consider its road funding. Nor did I consider the regional airports development fund, which also provides additional funding for some local government bodies or other private sector companies that maintain air services - notwithstanding that they do not have companies that are able to use them at the moment. I also did not examine health or education because they are separate issues that do or do not attract money.

When a previous speaker commented that it was difficult to identify what funds might be allocated to his electorate through the budget, I heard a considerable amount of constructive debate, through interjections by the Minister for Health, about what may or may not have been allocated for a particular region. A regional policy was already developed that had a price tag attached to it. Most people understand that without money, action does not follow, and that it is necessary to provide funds to implement the regional development policy. In this case, a regional trust fund of \$75 million has been established. However, to dampen the impact of that - although it is wonderful publicity for the Government to say that it has delivered a \$75 million fund - the budget shows that \$6 million has been taken off the regional development commissions' recurrent expenditure. At least \$17 million, and probably closer to \$20 million or \$25 million, has been appropriated through other items in previous budgets. It makes one wonder how much of the \$75 million is new money. That will unravel over this financial year. In the final analysis, many people will be disappointed about the appropriation funds for regional development in Western Australia.

Mr Barnett: A lot of projects have been renamed and repackaged.

Mr COWAN: I am certain that that is the case. If they have not been renamed or repackaged, the funding was already there and they have merely been absorbed into one big fund. It reminds me of what happened in Victoria when the Bracks Government came into power. It went to every government agency that delivered services or infrastructure in regional Victoria, amalgamated the entire pool of funds and talked about a \$350 million-plus regional fund. From that fund, moneys were then reappropriated back into those government agencies that were delivering infrastructure or services. In time, I suspect that we will find that effectively that is what this Government has done to regional development.

There will not be a great amount of new funding for new and much needed projects in any of the regions. That is a pity because over a period of many years in this State, and indeed across this nation, much effort has been expended by government and government departments to make sure that they deliver services in those areas where it is important to do so.

I refer to infrastructure, government services and those other important areas that effectively deliver a community service obligation - Treasury officials prefer to call it a subsidy - that provides some equity in certain areas. The Australian psyche has been built around delivering some equity. I do not think people have caught up with the fact that over the years, there has been a gradual transfer of those people who need a lot of support -

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

not income support necessarily - in the delivery of essential services normally provided by Government or the delivery of infrastructure. The need has moved from urban areas of Australia to the regions. If members want proof of that, all they need do is examine some of the statistical data provided by bodies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The data will show that of the 12 poorest federal electorates in terms of income, service delivery or infrastructure, 10 are in rural Australia. I do not think government has been able to deal with that.

For many years it has been acknowledged that the greatest part of the creation of the wealth of this State occurs in the regions. Unfortunately, the revenue through taxation on the creation of wealth is distributed where the votes are. That is exactly what has happened in Western Australia. We now find a great lack of equity in the delivery of services in Western Australia, particularly in the regions. It disappoints me that not only is there lack of equity in the delivery of services, but also lack of equity and fairness in the representation of people in this Western Australian Parliament. I will not go into that in any further detail, because we have had that debate.

The final analysis of this budget, and whether there has been an increase in expenditure to achieve the delivery of services or the development of infrastructure in regional Western Australia, will be made as we get closer to the end of the financial year. I strongly suspect that, although the Government has restructured the department and established a regional fund, in the final analysis it will not result in any greater delivery of service than occurred previously. The simple reason is that a range of programs that were already in place have been consolidated. Although they may be revamped or renamed, very little new money will be made available. There is no question that the regional development commissions will not have available to them the \$6 million they had in previous years.

Another example of the spin that this Government has put on the budget is the capital works program. The Treasurer proudly boasted that the capital works program of \$3.3 billion was the largest capital works program this State had ever committed itself to implement. That is commendable not only because of the sum of money being appropriated, but also because I am of the view that Western Australia will experience an economic downturn. I know that the Treasurer's projections do not necessarily reflect that, but I think we will see a tightening of expenditure by the private sector; and companies will not be keen to invest in new projects or do those things that are necessary to boost the economy. Mr Speaker, you know how much the construction stage of a project contributes to the economy of any part of this State, but particularly regional areas. The construction crew of a major project may involve 1 000 or 2 000 people, even though the completed project may employ a continuing work force of no more than 200 to 250. The construction phase has a significant consequence for the economy of any region. Expanding the capital works program - albeit by only \$200 million - is the right step by this Government. It may help to soften the fact that the private sector may not continue the level of investment this State normally enjoys, and the consequences of that for the economy of the State.

When members look closely at the budget, they will see that Treasury has indicated that the capital works program now includes a sum of money that normally would be appropriated through the recurrent account. My reading of the budget, and I will get the answer to this during the estimates debates, is that it amounts to around \$107 million. When members identify the funds made available to the State by the Commonwealth through commonwealth grants, for purposes associated with a capital works program, they will find that, effectively, this State - even though any money that comes from the Commonwealth could be regarded as our money - has a \$3.3 billion capital works program that looks better than it should. Not only has there been a significant additional contribution from the Commonwealth, but also it contains an amount of \$107 million that would normally be in the recurrent account. When members add those numbers together, they will find that the State's commitment for capital works is effectively no greater than it has been in the past. Nevertheless, it is not a bad spin to say that the Government will implement the largest capital works program in this State's history. Once again the Government has taken a particular line that does not necessarily indicate the facts. The facts are that although the Government's capital works program is shown in the budget as \$3.3 billion, an amount of \$107 million of recurrent expenditure can be subtracted from that figure, as well as in excess of \$250 million in additional funds from the Commonwealth to the State in either specific purpose payments or commonwealth grants. I do not for one moment begrudge the State Government its ability to get that money. I think Western Australia is handicapped to a great extent by the Commonwealth. Those members who have read the commonwealth budget papers will know the substance of that, in the way in which the Commonwealth arranges its allocation of funds to the States. The State of Western Australia on a per capita basis pays more than any other State for the purpose of some fiscal balance, according to the theory of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Western Australia pays in excess of \$1 400 on a per capita basis, when New South Wales pays only \$450.

This State makes a significant contribution to the Commonwealth's ability to apply a formula that supports those lesser States, and it is time we received a better appropriation of funds from the Commonwealth either for the capital works program or to meet costs such as health.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

While the health minister is in the House, I urge him to ensure that he does everything he possibly can to recoup from the Commonwealth the funds necessary to not only operate the health system but also meet the increasing demands for aged care. The Commonwealth pays aged care funds to the States on the basis of bed allocation. If the States do not get that particular bed allocation, it is very difficult for them to provide necessary services to seniors. That is a serious issue. Another matter of significant importance is that it is very difficult to get funding for the infrastructure necessary to provide those beds. The Commonwealth often makes the point that that is the responsibility of the States. If the State of Western Australia is to get an allocation of funds that is more in line with what it deserves, it must receive a considerable increase in the commonwealth grants for both health purposes and the purpose of offsetting the cost of the provision of beds for this State's elderly. In addition to that, the Commonwealth and the States must come to some arrangement for the provision of infrastructure that allows for the development of facilities that people regard as appropriate for the care of the elderly. If we do not deal with that immediately, the overrun of costs will be so great that the Minister for Health will be faced with the double whammy of major problems in both the health and aged care areas. Until some resolution of those problems is achieved, health will be the portfolio that no minister would ever aspire to hold. In fact, every Premier who believed his position was threatened would ensure that the person who threatened him the most would find his way to the health portfolio.

Mr Kucera: The first hurdle is Minister Bishop. It would be a wonderful step forward if you could get her to realise that what you have said is the reality.

Mr COWAN: I concur with the minister entirely. It is an issue, but in the broader scheme of things, we should do more than identify one individual within the federal Cabinet. I could spend the rest of my time running up a list that probably would not do me any good, given that I am about to embark upon another career.

Mr Kucera: I trust you will remember us if you end up in another place.

Mr COWAN: That will certainly be the case, but it is a long shot. It is important that I take up a couple of other current issues during the budget debate. I commend the member for Ningaloo for his comments during the airline debate earlier this afternoon. As I was not able to become involved in that debate, much as I would have liked, I will take the advice of the Leader of the House that we can use the budget debate to talk about current issues. The first issue is the fact that Ansett Australia Ltd and Skywest Airlines have collapsed. It is not appropriate that we rely entirely upon Qantas Ltd, QantasLink Pty Ltd, National Jet Charter, Skippers Aviation Pty Ltd or any other air charter service or company that provides regional public transport to deliver the services that were delivered by Skywest. Those companies that are already in business do not have suitable aircraft, nor do they have pilots who can deliver the hours that would compensate for the loss of the services provided by Skywest. The only option is to get Skywest and its planes back into business as quickly as possible. The only way that can be done is by presenting to the administrator a feasible proposition, backed by a good quality business plan, of getting Skywest back into the air.

I listened with a degree of incredulity to the Premier telling everybody in this State that we should take to the skies, that we need to talk up the tourist industry because the Opposition was trying to talk it down. The fact is that Skywest has been grounded, and until those aeroplanes, with their available seats and pilots, are back in the air and delivering that service, no matter how much rhetoric we apply in this Chamber or how much we try to talk up an industry, the people who want to fly from one place to another will not be able to do so. I have no doubt that, even though it will be difficult for the people of Broome, Karratha, Paraburdoo or Kalgoorlie to make alternative arrangements on the basis that there is one airline fewer than the two or three that used to service those areas, they will be able to make some arrangement. They will be greatly inconvenienced; however, imagine the inconvenience suffered by those people who live in towns and areas that had no flight services other than that delivered by Skywest. We cannot expect a company like Skippers Aviation, which employs enough staff and leases or owns enough aircraft to meet its obligations to contracts with mining companies or charter services, to suddenly fill a gap that is left because an entire small airline is not operating and five Fokker Friendships, each of which seat 50 people, have been grounded. It cannot be done. It would be appropriate for this Government, even if it has to go to the federal Government and ask it to provide some support in the form of matching funds, to offer a company a guarantee that would satisfy the administrator and allow it to more rapidly make a decision about getting Skywest back in the air.

I keep returning to the spin that the Government seems to put on a range of things and that, for some reason, those people reporting the news seem to swallow hook, line and sinker. The ABC news is about the only news I watch. It is certainly my first preference. Yet, I heard a newsreader say that the Government of Western Australia was working to make sure that Skywest is back in the air within a fortnight. Mr Acting Speaker, you may be able to tell me, because of your previous profession, when the school holidays begin; it is certainly a lot sooner than a fortnight. It is about time someone got the Government off its bottom so that it did something; and, secondly, convinced a few people who report the news to this State to look beyond all of the glossy words

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

and rhetoric and at the reality. It is very important that we get a company such as Skywest in the air again before the end of this week.

Mr Watson: Absolutely!

Mr COWAN: Yes!

Mr Sweetman: I wonder what the Road Safety Council would think about people from the north coming to Perth to pick up their kids when they break for the school holidays.

Mr COWAN: I do not think it would take a very kind view of that. Today, I had the privilege of having lunch with a longstanding friend of mine who now manages a boarding hostel or residential college, or whatever the terminology is these days, for country students who wish to come to Perth to take up scholarships that are being offered to them in special areas of curriculum, or to pursue some curriculum course that is not readily available at a school in the area in which they reside. About 44 of those students need to get back to their regions. However, at least half of those students do not have a scheduled bus service, and now they do not have a scheduled air service, and they will not be able to get back home unless their parents are prepared to come to Perth to get them. We need to address these issues.

It is very disappointing that the Department of Transport in this State is not in a position to identify those companies, businesses or groups that have indicated their preparedness to get Skywest flying again by getting behind it and offering it whatever it needs, and by making sure that the federal Government plays its part, and that can go to the administrator and say, "This is the deal." I am sure that will expedite the decision of the administrator - I recognise that it is his responsibility - to get Skywest in the air again. Today I heard a brief ministerial statement from the Minister for Health about how the Government is concerned about the patient assisted travel scheme and will implement the much-touted policy of the Labor Party on the PAT scheme that was part of the platform upon which the Labor Government was elected. That is terrific. However, how can the Government do that without an airline such as Skywest? The silence from members opposite indicates that they agree with me. The Government cannot do that.

I turn now to petrol pricing. I recall that last year, the Opposition continually advised us that we were not doing anything with regard to petrol pricing. I have been in this Parliament for six months of this year, and I have seen all of the legislative processes and regulatory provisions that have been put in place, and I have seen all of the claims about transparency, openness and accountability, and about how the Government will take a stick to the oil companies. However, so far I have not seen any petrol prices in the metropolitan area that do anything other than reflect the international oil prices or the whim of the oil companies. I have seen nothing in regional Western Australia to indicate that the price at which fuel is sold at retail outlets has in any way shifted in favour of consumers.

Mr Watson interjected.

Mr COWAN: I do not know why people have suddenly taken that on board. I am sure the Acting Speaker will determine whether an interjection is contributing to the debate and will make that decision.

Mr Watson: Since price boards have been put up in Albany, petrol prices have dropped by 2c a litre from the regular Perth prices, so in Albany we are happy.

Mr COWAN: That tells me two things: the member for Albany is very easy to please; and the city of Albany is one of the places that never published its petrol prices. I will not use the word "conspiracy", but there was some agreement or arrangement between the people who retailed fuel not to publish for the public the prices that were available at the pump at those outlets. Although the member for Albany may be very pleased that the publication of prices has reduced the retail price of fuel in Albany by 2c a litre, I do not think many people in regional Western Australia will ever say that all of the legislative claptrap and all of the regulatory provisions that have been put in place have resulted in any change to the cost of fuel for those people who live in regional Western Australia. I do not want to be one of those people who joins in all of the rhetoric that comes from the other angle. I will let the electors make their judgment. With the exception of the people of Albany, who think it is fantastic that the price of fuel is now on the board and has been reduced by 2c a litre, I think everyone will agree that the price of fuel in regional Western Australia has not experienced any great movement other than the movement that is brought about because of international oil prices or the decisions about supply that are made around the table of the major oil companies.

One issue that we went through when we were in government was the delivery of support packages for the agricultural industry, given that it was experiencing a pretty tough time, because commodity prices were extremely low, and production was also at one of the lowest levels that we have experienced in many years.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

That applies particularly to the broadacre farming areas of Western Australia. I recall that our Government put together a \$22 million package for agriculture to provide support for those people who had suffered from the economic downturn associated with the poor season and poor commodity prices. I recall clearly that the people involved in the industry and the representatives of the industry, such as the Western Australian Farmers Federation, said that that package was nowhere near enough. The then opposition spokesperson on agriculture also said that it was not enough. When he came into government, he made no changes to the agricultural package to support those people in that area apart from extending the programs beyond 31 May. The previous Government, in its wisdom - or perhaps lack of it - believed the drought would end by 31 May this year, when most of the programs were due to be terminated. Those programs had to be extended beyond 31 May.

Mr McRae: What is in the forward estimates for the drought package?

Mr COWAN: There is a small package to provide funding for an investigation into multi-peril crop insurance. Members should compare that with the agricultural budget, which has been reduced by \$16 million. All I can say is that this Government in the delivery of its budget has been strong on rhetoric. The people responsible for reporting to the public have accepted that there has been a lack of ability by the Government to implement any changes. I doubt that there is a great deal of new money in many of the projects and the Government will be found wanting.

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [9.21 pm]: In the time available to me to make comments about the budget, I wish to digress initially to talk about the consequences of what happened in the USA on Tuesday last week. I also wish to refer briefly to forest management and, homing in specifically on the budget, I want to talk about what the budget means to my electorate of Vasse and what it means to my two opposition portfolio responsibilities; namely, science and the environment.

The tragedy that occurred in the eastern States of the USA on Tuesday last week is beyond description. The sights we saw on television and in the newspapers almost defy imagination. The crimes perpetrated on that day were so horrendous that they could almost be described as inhuman. They were, in my view, subhuman. Every time I sat down to figure out words to use to describe both the happenings of that day and the reactions from America and Australia as a consequence of them, different ideas kept going through my mind. It was almost impossible for me to decide that any one set of thoughts or feelings was most appropriate. The words I finally wrote down were -

There is no justification for these actions that occurred on Tuesday of last week.

As I wrote those words, I thought that I should consider what happened in recent human history that puts a lie to the claim that there can be no justification for what happened last week. A large proportion of fatalities and injuries occurred in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, which I believe involved loss of life and injury to civilians in the tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands - much larger numbers of people than were affected by either death or injury last week.

During the Second World War in Europe, the Germans bombed London. Obviously, London was an urban conurbation of dwellings and the bombing was designed to break the spirit of the urban population of the United Kingdom, with very great consequent loss of life. One can therefore understand, to a degree, the response of the allies to bomb Dresden. I understand that town in one night was put to the torch courtesy of a large number of allied bombers that dropped a huge tonnage of explosives onto it. Clearly, if one looks back in human history, although there is no justification for what happened on Tuesday of last week, one finds that there have been many similar examples. It is important now, eight days later, to use our cool heads to try to analyse what we should do in response to the four jets that were hijacked and commandeered, three of which were flown into public buildings.

Before I conclude my reaction to the activities of last week's actions, I shall quote someone else. I will not tell the House yet who wrote the words I shall read. He talked about the shock and horror at the acts of terrorism against the innocent people of New York and Washington in the United States. That same person offered heartfelt sympathy and prayers to the families of those who lost their lives in the senseless and barbaric action that was described as a crime against humanity. The author of the statement called on all Governments, including Australia, to address the problems of terrorism by getting to the root of the problem. The author called upon all Governments to hunt down the real culprits and deal with them in the most severe manner possible.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Andrews), those words I have read came from the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils. I could not have chosen better words myself. Everything that council said is in full sympathy with the words I would have chosen if I had written a similar missive.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

One conclusion that the entire world must draw from what happened last week and the attitudes that have since been displayed by people around the world is that the actions that occurred on Tuesday last week were not religion based. I am implying, in other words, that it was not an Islamic, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or any other religion-based organised group that committed that horrible crime. Instead, it must be conceded that it was an act by a small group of zealots who may have used religion either to justify what it did or to give it the moral support to do what it did. Nonetheless, it was not an act that was in any way supported, condoned or encouraged by any religious belief.

On that basis, it is important to recognise that tonight's news brought reports of a religious response to the possible reaction of the US Government to last week's carnage. I hoped that it would not be a religious response. Whoever was responsible for last week's actions must be brought to justice. However, it is important that the response not be mixed with religious teachings or beliefs, or an expectation that religion will help fuel the fires of discontent and terror that we saw last week. Instead, we must accept as a society that there are real and perceived injustices around the world that may have acted as justification in the minds of a small group of zealots for those actions.

Two sets of injustices immediately spring to mind. The first relates to the so-called threat of globalisation, about which there have been many protests in the past 12 to 18 months, commencing, if my memory is correct, in Seattle in the USA. There have been violent protests. One person is dead as a result of anti-globalisation protests. The people who have been involved in those protests have not called upon religion to guide them or to give them succour or support; they have looked at the consequences of what they believe to be the negative impacts of globalisation. My response is that the sort of terrorism we saw last week is clearly not an appropriate response to the perceived or real threats of globalisation. At the end of the day, I am not aware of any single consumer anywhere in the world who has been forced to eat at McDonalds, to wear Nike shoes, to drive a General Motors car or to do any other economic action just because a corporation or other people supporting the forces of globalisation around the world believe that it is the important thing to do from an economic perspective. Globalisation and the problems arising from it, whether they are real or perceived, are no justification for last week's actions. Nonetheless, there is a perception that globalisation is a problem which must be addressed.

A second area of conflict or global concern that immediately came to my mind is the conflict between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East. I will say some things that are not particularly complimentary to Israel. However, I say those in the belief that I am the only person in this Parliament who has Jewish ancestry. My father was a Jew. He left Austria in 1938 just before the Nazis marched in and took over that country. I was brought up as a Catholic and today I call myself a non-practising Christian. Nonetheless, half my ancestry is Jewish. For that reason, I have taken a fairly keen interest in what has happened in the Middle East over recent decades. Israel is not trying to solve the problems that exist in the fight between it and the Palestinian people. The nation of Israel was born from terrorism. My understanding is that it gained independence in the 1940s from the United Kingdom, partly as a consequence of some absolutely terrible terrorist acts against civilians and the military. Israel is not an economically viable nation. Again, my understanding is that it receives foreign aid from the taxpayers of the United States to the tune of between \$US4 billion and \$US5 billion, which is somewhere between \$A8 billion and \$A10 billion. I believe that the religious overtone of the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians is clouding the judgment of people on both sides of that argument. That may well have been one of the justifications in the minds of the zealots who undertook the terror of last week.

Globalisation and the Arab-Israeli conflict are two of the main issues that I believe may be responsible for what happened last week. I believe that the United States and the entire world have a responsibility to collectively address these and other problems. The world will be a poorer place if nothing good comes out of the deaths of the 4 000, 5 000 or 6 000 people in Washington State and New York City last Tuesday. Now that a lot of the emotion has cooled in the eight days since that event, I hope people will use cool heads when they agree that there are problems in this world. I have mentioned two, but there are many others, such as global poverty, the supply of water, greenhouse gas, climate change and so on. All these issues must be addressed on a global basis, so that any justification that future groups of zealots might possibly have to carry out similar acts of terrorism can be removed or at least diminished.

It is important that people in Western Australia and around the Christian world listen carefully to what the Islamic councils are saying. The press statement of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils said -

... the teachings of Islam do not condone the taking of innocent lives and the destruction of property. "Our religion demands severe penalties such as death for such crimes. Muslims of Australia and elsewhere do not support and condone what has happened in America. Many Muslims migrated to Australia to escape from political strife and for peace, justice and democracy. They do not subscribe to

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

terrorism or violence as means of addressing political problems and have demonstrated their resolve for peace despite always facing severe backlashes in similar situations in the past," . . .

I do not in any way support any acts of intimidation or violence against anyone in the Islamic community in Australia. As I have said, this is not a religious issue, despite its portrayal in the media or by some people in our community. It is an issue of a small group of zealots who believe that there is a serious problem somewhere in the world that can be solved only by implementing actions like the ones we saw last Tuesday. Those people must be punished in the most effective way possible, but we cannot allow our community to be diminished while we seek justice against a small number of people.

I will talk briefly about forest management. The reason I raise that issue is that the Australian Labor Party clearly won the hearts, minds and votes of many people at the last election on the issues of old-growth forest logging and forest protection. The ALP took a certain amount of naivety to the electors eight months ago. Whether the ALP believes it remains to be seen, but that naivety was a belief or statement that the way to protect our forests is simply not to log them. The Australian Labor Party's policy titled "protecting our old-growth forests" said -

Labor is committed to the full protection of all our remaining old-growth and high conservation value forests . . .

I emphasise the words "full protection". Forests are not simply protected by removing loggers from them, because most forests have been heavily impacted upon by human beings. In the case of Australia, that has occurred for more than 40 000 years. Many management issues must be addressed as part of the full protection of forests. I will quickly run through those issues and will then dwell on a few of them. Those issues include the inappropriate use of fire, whether in terms of their frequency or temperature, diseases such as dieback or armillaria fungus and feral animals such as foxes, cats, rabbits and, dare I say it, rainbow lorikeets. People also place pressure on our forests. Those who wish to use forests for nothing more than recreation will impact on those forests; that must be managed. Aboriginal people have a justifiable need to be actively involved in managing and using forests, which were totally under their control before European settlement. There are issues concerning management of endangered species, be they plant or animal species, and wilderness. All those issues require active management by the community as a whole if we are truly going to offer full protection to old-growth, high conservation value and all our other forests.

Let me return to the issue of fire. A number of people in the voluntary conservation movement who, because of the electoral success that they believe - rightly or wrongly - was achieved on 10 February, are starting to get a bit cocky. They are trying to exercise some political muscle. Some of them are saying that fire is not a natural part of our forest and vegetation ecosystems, and that fire should be removed or prevented from being implemented as a management tool in forests. The truth is that Aboriginal people used fire for a multitude of reasons for the 60 000 years that they inhabited this country before European settlement. They used fire to clear paths so they could move from one part of the country to another. They used fire to flush game out of thick areas of bushland. Men would wait to one side where they knew that kangaroos, wallabies, bandicoots, ducks and other animals would be flushed out of the dense vegetation by fire. The animals were caught by Aboriginal men who would kill and eat them. Fire was also used to attract kangaroos and other animals. By burning an area of grassland, Aboriginal people returning the following year after their seasonal migration would find that the old, unpalatable grass was replaced by young, fresh, green grass that kangaroos and other animals would eat. The animals would be easy prey. Fire has been part of the Australian environment for almost 60 000 years. It was initially believed that fires in this part of the world needed to be very frequent, and to occur every two, four or six years in either autumn or winter when there were lower fire temperatures. Those attitudes are beginning to change in the scientific community.

Over recent years, the Department of Conservation and Land Management has done some excellent work looking at fire scars in black boys - the *Xanthorrhoea* species. Most people believe that black boys grow at the rate of one inch a year. It is a commonly repeated urban myth. The reality is that black boys and grass trees will grow at a rate consistent with the number of fires they suffer or enjoy - depending upon one's point of view. After a fire has burned all the dead grassy vegetation from around a grass tree or black boy, it will enjoy a new growth spurt and grow higher.

Ms MacTiernan: Is the member suggesting that we should set fire to the black boys in our backyards?

Mr MASTERS: I hope the minister will listen to what I have to say. She should wait until I finish my argument. I will then welcome interjections.

Black boys are good historical records of the fire frequency and intensity that prevailed before European settlement. Over the past few years, researchers have found that the interval between fires was longer than

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

previously thought, and there may have been 10 to 15 years between fires. It is an important revelation for a number of reasons. It has changed scientists' views about the way in which native plants and animals adapted to fire over time, and it meant that human beings have had to find additional resources to manage bushland through fire in a way that was consistent with the demands and requirements of the natural environment.

For better or worse, I need to draw the attention of the House to further research revelations, even though it is still early days. On Friday, 7 September I had the good fortune to attend a half-day seminar run by the Environmental Consultants Association entitled, "Managing Biodiversity in Western Australia". The most significant paper presented at the seminar was by Dr Kingsley Dixon from the Kings Park and Botanic Garden. He told the seminar about research centred on a meteorite crater that geologists in Western Australia discovered only in the past 10 to 12 years. The meteorite impacted about five million years ago in an area to the north of Gingin, about 100 kilometres north of Perth. It was a large meteor that made a crater that took millions of years to fill with sand, clay and sediment washed in from the newly created hills around the margin. As the rain and rivers washed in sand, clay, mud and other sediments, it also brought in pollen and other material from plants that palynologists can examine through drill cores. The material goes back many millions of years, and they can work out what vegetation was present in the area over time. The drill cores show that over the past three or four million years there have been numerous instances of very saline environments dominating the south west of Western Australia. We think that the wheatbelt of Western Australia is about to be salinised and destroyed forever, yet the pollen record from the meteorite crater shows a number of periods of very intense salinisation when very low rainfall and very high salt levels in the soil caused significant changes to the vegetation, primarily vegetation that can withstand high levels of salinity.

I am trying to focus on the fire record that came from that. The fire record shows that, prior to Aboriginal settlement of that part of Western Australia, fires were less frequent than research has shown from examining black boy stems.

Mr McRae: Balga.

Mr MASTERS: Balga is an Aboriginal word for some species. There are several other species. The member for Riverton is trying to impress me. There are many species of black boy and they have many different names.

Mr McRae interjected.

Mr MASTERS: Now is not the time to correct the member for Riverton with a botanical debate. I will talk to him privately about the other species.

Drill cores from the meteorite crater show that the frequency of fire was somewhere between 15 and 25 years. It is clear that the fires were very hot and intense. The Western Australian environment may have adapted itself to new fire regimes imposed by Aboriginal people, but the truth is that the ecosystems evolved with a fire regime of 15 to 25 years between very hot and intense fires. It is a profound change in thinking that I hope Dr Dixon and the other researchers will make public over the next few months.

The Australian community tries to live like Europeans in an Australian environment. That is evidenced by the number of lawns in Western Australian gardens. However, we will not win; mother nature will win. The water restrictions have started to tell us that already. To manage our natural ecosystems, we will have to modify our fire management practices to, as closely as possible, mimic the regimes that applied prior to Aboriginal settlement of this part of the world. That will have profound implications for personnel, equipment, risks, hazards and smoke affecting the people of Perth, as well as a range of other issues. I raise that point to emphasise that forests are protected by not only the cessation of logging.

Disease is another important forest management issue. I read the policy of the Australian Labor Party titled, "Protecting our Old-Growth Forests". Its executive summary has 14 dot points, only one of which refers to forest management. The other 13 dot points state that the Labor Party will stop logging, look after the workers, put money here and there, and create reserves. However, all those things count for nothing if the forests are not managed actively and expensively to counter the various threats that I mentioned earlier. It is important that significant expenditure increases in last week's budget be made available for the new Department of Conservation to allow it to manage the forest estate. Shortly, I will talk about the failure, as I see it, of the budget to do that.

I take it as a personal compliment that the Minister for the Environment has returned to listen to my last few words. Now that the minister has returned, I repeat that the management of forests requires that we address the issues of fire, disease, feral animals, the impacts of people, the importance of Aboriginal involvement in its management, endangered species and wilderness management. All those matters require significant inputs by the Government. I hope that over the next 12 months there will be action rather than words.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

I now turn to the third topic of the implications in the budget for my electorate of Vasse. Members of the previous Parliament know that over the past four years I have stood many times in this House and pointed out that the Shire of Busselton is the fastest growing municipal area in all of Australia.

Mr McGowan: No, it is not; Rockingham is.

Mr MASTERS: Yes, it is. There is no argument. Delusions such as those put forward by the member for Rockingham do not change the truth. The difference is that Busselton starts from a smaller population base than Rockingham, so that is one score for the member for Rockingham.

Mr McGowan: You are just twisting the statistics, that is all.

Mr MASTERS: It is accepted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I am not telling untruths. The Busselton shire has experienced six per cent annual average population growth for the past five years. The population of Dunsborough grew 17 per cent in one year, again, from a small population base. That population growth creates enormous developmental pressures. A huge increase in demand is placed on infrastructure and services.

For the past four years, as the member for Vasse, I have had nothing but praise for the previous Government because it put enormous amounts of taxpayers' money into Vasse to meet those pressures. For example, during the election campaign, I produced a full-page advertisement in the local newspapers that showed a map of the Vasse electorate and all the capital investments that I could think of that had been made or committed to by the previous Government over four or five years. Excluding the \$40 million investment in the South West Health Campus, which is in the electorate of Mitchell, the taxpayer investment in the electorate of Vasse totalled \$96 million. That is not a bad effort over a four or five-year period. Unfortunately, based upon my reading of the budget papers last week, I cannot say that this Government is in any way as generous as the previous Government.

Mr McGowan: Why are you being so nasty? You were elected with Australian Labor Party preferences.

Mr MASTERS: I am not being nasty to the people who gave me their preferences, I am being nasty to this Government for not giving money to my electorate, which includes those ALP voters who gave me a higher preference than certain other candidates.

Mr McGowan: We got you elected; you are here because of us.

Mr MASTERS: No, I am not. I am here because of the electors of Vasse. They include National Party electors, One Nation electors and people who voted for the Greens (WA). I have to represent all those people.

Mr Dean: We want Beryl.

Mr MASTERS: Beryl who? When I examined this budget, it appeared as though the Shire of Capel had fallen off the map. I gleaned from the capital expenditure list in the budget papers that one minor, but nevertheless important, funding amount of \$86 000 will go into the Dalyellup Primary School. The new school cost the Government almost nothing in the last term, because it was a school in shops. However, as the Dalyellup community grows, the new Government will hopefully find the money to make sure that a proper primary school is built at Dalyellup when the population reaches the appropriate size. Apart from that \$86 000, I could not find one other funding initiative in the budget papers for the Shire of Capel, which has a population of between 6 000 and 7 000.

The Shire of Busselton fared a little better. Two areas of new works were announced in that shire. Some \$50 000 was announced for the first stage of the upgrading of the Dunsborough Primary School. I hope that is the first stage of what will be only a two-stage upgrade, and that the remaining \$1.2 million will be allocated next year. I thank the Minister for Education for approving that upgrade. However, the school does not know what the money is for. My staff phoned the school and, although the school welcomed the money, it had not asked for it and did not know what it was for.

Mr Barnett: It is possibly the lease payment to the developer.

Mr MASTERS: I am referring to the Dunsborough Primary School, not the Dalyellup Primary School. However, we will take the money, and we are very happy to have it. The second new announcement was that the Water Corporation would spend \$1.7 million as part of a \$3.6 million project. Unfortunately, when my office phoned the Water Corporation, it did not know what that money would be made available for. I would love to say wonderful things about the money being spent by the Water Corporation on projects that I and the community believe are important for Vasse; however, we do not know what the money is for. The message has not filtered down from the hierarchy.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

Other money has been allocated to the electorate of Vasse. The South Busselton Primary School will be finished this financial year at a cost of \$5.5 million; the Dunsborough volunteers fire station will receive its final payment of \$94 000; Main Roads Western Australia will spend the remaining \$500 000 on the Busselton bypass; and the Water Corporation will continue its ongoing expenditure of \$10.4 million. I presume that that money is for Busselton's infill sewage program and for flood detention basins inland of the Busselton town site.

Ms MacTiernan: So you are happy with the Government?

Mr MASTERS: I am pleased that those funding commitments are written down in black and white. The problem is the many significant disappointments in the budget for the people of Vasse. For example, no money was allocated to the Busselton Senior High School. I understand that the planning process to decide what to do with the Busselton Senior High School is about to start.

Mr Barnett: Wasn't Busselton included under the AlintaGas funding?

Mr MASTERS: Certain aspects were part of that, but not in this budget.

Mr Barnett: It was in the AlintaGas funding, so it should have been in the budget. It was a commitment.

Mr MASTERS: I will follow up that information from the former Minister for Education; I am happy to accept his advice on that.

The Busselton Senior High School is an old, tired school that has had some good funding initiatives over recent years with its music and recreation centres. The problem is that because Busselton's population growth has gone through the roof, student numbers in Busselton have grown quickly. The South Busselton Primary School is an example of that growth in student numbers; however, nothing has been allocated to the Busselton Senior High School. Therefore, I am fearful that the recently announced commencement of the planning process may be used as an excuse to delay an important and expensive decision for a year or two or three. That decision may require an entirely new government high school at possibly Vasse or Dunsborough, or significant expenditure of funds at Busselton Senior High School.

I congratulate the Minister for Health for sitting through all these boring speeches from members of the Opposition. Unfortunately, I must have another go at him, because, when three factors are taken into account, funding to the Vasse-Leeuwin Health Service has been cut. Those three factors are: firstly, the inflation rate of 2.8 to 2.9 per cent; secondly, the population growth; and, thirdly, the significant increases in funding that have been made available to cover superannuation and salary and wage increases. I am getting this information from as close to the horse's mouth as I can. When those aspects are removed from Vasse-Leeuwin Health Service's funding for this year, its budget has been cut by about 10 per cent.

Mr Kucera: I am a little concerned about any manager who cannot manage with an increase of 8.6 per cent, which is an increase from \$15.6 million last year to \$16.9 million. That \$15.6 million that the Vasse-Leeuwin Health Service received last year included the top-up it received from the previous Government. An increase of 8.6 per cent is not bad.

Mr MASTERS: I hope that the minister believes those figures that have obviously been given to him by his bureaucrats.

Mr Kucera: I would be more inclined to believe the figures as they were given to me by Treasury.

Mr MASTERS: The reality is that when one takes into account inflation, population growth and the increased funding that I admit has been provided for superannuation and salaries to doctors and wages to nurses and hospital salaried staff, what is left over represents a 10 per cent cut in the operating budget of the Vasse-Leeuwin Health Service. Time will prove one of us a liar. That is an unparliamentary word, so I should not use that, even about myself. Time will prove one of us wrong. That is the reality, as explained to me. I hope the minister's understanding and assessment is right.

Mr Kucera: Can I give the member the figures again so that he can work it out?

Mr MASTERS: I have only a few minutes in which to squeeze a 20-minute speech. Police funding has been cut in real terms by 5.8 per cent. Busselton has no chance of getting a full-time community police officer, which all sorts of people in the Police Service promised on a stack of Bibles. Not one single cent will be spent by the South West Development Commission in Vasse; instead, almost without exception, its money will be focused on Bunbury and areas that extend due south of Bunbury to the south coast through the timber areas. I have no problem with those expenditures; however, it would be nice to see the South West Development Commission focus a little on the Vasse electorate.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 19 September 2001]

p4014c-4043a

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

Almost all the projects that were forecast by Main Roads Western Australia for the Vasse area have fallen off the list of projects for the next four or five years. That includes the Bunbury outer ring road that would have allowed Perth people travelling to the south west, and people from the south west travelling to Perth, to save about 12 minutes in travel time - 12 is a significant figure. For a cost of a few million dollars there would have been significant savings in time, costs and lives because Bunbury would have been bypassed. However, that project has fallen off the list completely.

I am greatly disappointed about expenditure in the areas of science and environment, which are my two areas of responsibility. The word "science" appears once in the budget papers. I have run out of time, so I conclude by pointing out the net reduction in environment funding, when one considers the \$26 million going to timber workers.

DR WOOLLARD (Alfred Cove) [10.06 pm]: I plan to speak on the budget as an Independent. I will speak on some of the issues that were and are important to my electorate.

Mr Kobelke interjected.

Dr WOOLLARD: I will refer to Duncraig House.

The Labor Government said that it would fix the problems in health, but it has not. I do not believe it will be able to do so if it continues to ignore the fundamental problems and apply the same strategies that have failed previous Governments. Instead of talking about health as a drain on the economy and focusing on cutting expenditure, it should take the radical view that the health care industry is productive, perhaps the most productive industry. What other industry saves lives, fixes broken bones and prevents untold misery?

The health care industry is a big employer of Western Australians, so why does the Government encourage the growth of industries such as the housing industry and go to great lengths to restrain the health care industry? In his budget speech, the Treasurer stated -

But it is only too clear that no amount of extra money would be enough for a health system confronting high community expectations, increasing costs, powerful vested interests, structural inefficiencies and ineffective financial management.

Everyone in this place recognises that health finances are growing at unsustainable rates . . .

This is simply not true. Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics has confirmed that health care expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product fell last year, and has been relatively stable for 20 years. I am disappointed that the Treasurer has repeated the same old line, which is simply not true.

People are on waiting lists because the Government is saying that it cannot afford decent health care for the whole community. The Labor Government is committed to universal health care, but the current system deprives the less well off who always seem to be on the end of waiting lists. If the Government is serious about looking after the people who are less well off, it will ensure that public hospitals give priority to their needs. The community is fed up with a system that allows someone to drive his Ferrari to the front door of a public hospital and walk past the ordinary people.

I know people who have delayed their operations in public hospitals until after their European ski holidays. I reiterate that a practical solution for our public hospital is for priority to be given to the less well off, such as health care cardholders and pensioners.

The northern and eastern regions of Western Australia have public health units funded by the Department of Health, but the southern region does not. This lack of a public health unit south of the river presumably derives from the era when the Department of Health's main focus was providing services north of the river. This disparity also extends to the provision of other health services. For example, no facility south of the river provides services equivalent to the excellent Shenton Park rehabilitation hospital. This represents a significant differential in the provision of stroke management services, as was reported in the Auditor General's report tabled in Parliament a few weeks ago. People south of the river deserve equality of services. The Governor, His Excellency Lieutenant General John Sanderson, said in his speech at the opening of this session of Parliament -

The Government is committed to providing safe and secure communities, quality and timely health care . . .

I would like this imbalance to be addressed by the allocation of health budget funds to services south of the river.

Mr Kucera: Should you declare an interest here?

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

Dr WOOLLARD: I have worked south of the river for the past 20 years. I have consistently supported services south of the river. Many of the people in my electorate visit Fremantle Hospital when they are in need of health care. I believe I speak on behalf of my electorate.

Aged care is another health issue. I accept that aged care is predominantly a federal government responsibility. The member for Ballajura spoke earlier about writing to federal politicians. I recently wrote to all Western Australian federal parliamentarians regarding my concern about the lack of qualified registered nurses in aged care and the significant disparity in wages between aged care nurses and their colleagues in the public sector. The replies show that members are aware of the difficulties experienced in the aged care sector. The federal member for O'Connor replied -

I visited the sub standard facilities owned and operated by the WA State Government at Denmark Hospital. These facilities are fully recurrently funded by the Commonwealth Government . . .

This assessment suggests that either the State Government is inefficient in running the facility or that commonwealth aged care funding is inadequate. Sadly, the honourable member did not give his opinion of who was at fault. The Labor Government has received a copy of the aged care review commissioned by the Nurses Board of Western Australia.

Mr Kucera: Were you talking about the state hospital at Denmark?

Dr WOOLLARD: The comment from the member was -

I visited the sub standard facilities owned and operated by the WA State Government at Denmark Hospital.

I will be happy to discuss this with the minister later.

Mr Kucera: The federal Government does not pay for that; the State does.

Dr WOOLLARD: That information is contained in the correspondence I received.

Mr Kucera: State hospitals are funded by us. That is a state hospital.

Dr WOOLLARD: I will be happy to discuss it with the minister later.

The aged care review paints a grim picture for the elderly people in aged care homes and institutions. I am happy to show members the report. Concerns raised by nurses during the review include the excessive amount of documentation and paperwork nurses are required to do, the fact that there are not enough registered nurses to provide proper patient care and to supervise less qualified staff, and the unlawful delegation of care to carers who are not qualified for some of the duties they are expected to undertake, including the dispensation of medication. I hope that during the estimates committees next week, we will learn of some funding improvements for community nursing, particularly in relation to our elderly.

I turn to education. Labor's policy statement "investing in our schools" states -

An effective learning environment requires that school buildings and facilities be of the highest quality and maintained to that quality.

It is crucial that the Government delivers on its commitment to ensure that all schools are properly resourced to deliver our children education of the highest quality. Schools in my electorate have raised a number of concerns about maintenance and facilities, and I have met with and written to the Minister for Education about these issues. The minister's response to the enrolment pressure and shortage of classroom and teaching areas faced by Applecross Primary School was -

The Department of Education has agreed that the school is at capacity in regard to its permanent accommodation and that it requires one transportable classroom for primary students.

Ardross Primary School's four main concerns are building appearance, the school car park, carpets and cleaning -

. . . \$12 000 has been committed to upgrade the car park this financial year.

Applecross Senior High School has problems with general maintenance, needs extensions to its library and performing arts centre, and would like to renegotiate its contract with the South Metropolitan College of Technical and Further Education so that the TAFE Centre staff are relocated to facilitate the re-establishment of a school caretaker. The minister also responded to those concerns -

Although Applecross was not considered a high priority for a library upgrade or performing art centre at that time, the school will be considered when future programs are being prepared . . .

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

It has not been Department of Education policy to provide caretakers on school sites for many years. Those functions have been replaced by contract security arrangements. The use of such services provides a better outcome.

The teachers at Applecross High School do not agree. Attadale Primary School requires a covered assembly area incorporating a new canteen. The minister has said that Attadale Primary School is ranked as the number one priority for an undercover area and that these works will be considered in next year's capital works budget. Booragoon Primary School has problems with accommodation, a shortage of teaching areas and inadequate storage space. It also has lost its music and art program. The minister's response includes -

Whilst I acknowledge that music rooms are included in new schools, you would appreciate that to provide all schools with a facility would be a very costly project . . .

Booragoon was ranked as the district's number one priority for the provision of art/craft and music rooms. The needs of the school will be considered within the context of needs at schools across the state when this year's capital works budget is prepared.

Melville Primary School had three main issues of concern: replacement of the toilet block, provision of an art and craft room and purchase of land. The minister's response was that Melville Primary School was the number one priority for a toilet upgrade, and the needs of the school will be considered within the context of overall state needs when this year's capital works budget is prepared. I look forward to the estimates next week.

The main issue for Mount Pleasant Primary School was maintenance, including replacement of the ceiling in the girls' toilet in the main block. The minister's response was that an amount of \$4 000 has been set aside in the 2001-02 maintenance program to upgrade the main girls' toilet block at the school. If Labor is serious about its commitment to provide quality facilities at government schools, it will give these works immediate attention.

I turn now to police. I am pleased that an additional 250 police officers will be appointed. However, I once again draw the attention of this House to the fact that the Police Service's annual report for 1999-2000 highlights that the police to population ratio is one to 700. In my electorate, that ratio is one to 2 200. I accept that part of the discrepancy is due to the existence of special teams based at major police stations. Nevertheless, the people in my electorate are concerned for their security and do not believe the area has an adequate police presence. I want to know how many extra police will be available in my electorate and when I can expect those extra police officers to arrive.

I turn now to small business. The Small Business Alliance has approached me with its concerns about the Government's proposed amendments to the Minimum Conditions of Employment Act. Most of us would have noticed when we were doorknocking that many small businesses are folding up.

Mr McRae: The GST is unquestionably the prime reason.

Dr WOOLLARD: Small businesses are central to the health of the Western Australian economy and employ a high proportion of the private sector work force. I urge the Government to reconsider any financial policy that will place an additional burden on small business, because I agree with the member for Riverton that many small businesses have been hit hard by the GST. Another concern is the increase in payroll tax. Ultimately, payroll tax will be passed down the production line and consumers will end up paying the penalty in the form of increased prices. Furthermore, in many instances payroll tax acts as a disincentive for employers to take on more staff.

I turn to the finance broking issue. During debate in this House on Tuesday, 29 May, about measures taken by the Government to assist those affected by the finance broking scandal, the then Minister for Consumer Affairs, the member for Nollamara, said that the Government "is making a good attempt to fulfil those promises, and in the course of time will fully fulfil those undertakings." I draw the attention of the House to that commitment, because the matter is still of considerable concern to many people within my electorate and, I am certain, across the State. The community is still concerned that the people who are responsible for these problems will not be brought to justice. On their behalf, I have written to Mr Ian Temby, QC, the commissioner for the Royal Commission into the Finance Broking Industry, in the following terms -

I have recently had the opportunity to examine the terms of reference for the Finance Brokers Royal Commission. My understanding is that point 3 of your terms of reference would ensure that the Royal Commission is investigating and reporting on the responsibilities of the Ministry of Fair Trading, as it then was.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

I am requesting this reassurance because I have been given to believe that the Real Estate Consumers' Association and the Insolvency Management Fund . . . are hopeful that in the next year or two they will be able to take the government to court.

A quote from the weekend edition of *The Australian Financial Review* of 14-15 July 2001 reads -

After reviewing the evidence available, the IMF is convinced there is a prima facie case that the supervisory board was negligently inert while the finance brokers plundered the savings of unsophisticated mums and dads.

I asked the commissioner whether the terms of reference were sufficient to fully investigate the responsibilities of the Ministry of Fair Trading and, if not, whether it is possible to have the terms of reference expanded. The commissioner in response confirmed that, in accordance with term of reference 3, the royal commission is investigating and reporting on the conduct of the Ministry of Fair Trading in relation to the finance broking industry.

I therefore call upon the Government to allocate resources in this budget to implement the recommendations of the commissioner, as soon as they become available, to improve the functioning of the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection.

Mr Kobelke: If the member attends the estimates committee hearings, she will find that the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection - the former Ministry of Fair Trading - received a considerable budget increase because of the under-resourcing by the last Government which led to so many problems.

Dr WOOLLARD: I thank the minister; I will be there.

I now move on to the premium property tax. This tax is targeting many elderly people who have worked hard for their retirement. The Leader of the Opposition said it was like a death duty. I believe it will be like a death enhancer because many elderly people will worry about the money they owe the Government. It is inappropriate to place the stress of these taxes on elderly citizens.

Ms MacTiernan: They do not have to pay the tax, if they are truly impoverished, until such time as the property is sold. They can stay in their family homes for the rest of their lives without any pressure whatsoever.

Dr WOOLLARD: Many of these people who are in their eighties or nineties have never had debts. This tax and the fact that they owe the money that will accumulate year after year will be a great worry for them.

Ms MacTiernan: I suspect it is more a worry for their heirs, quite frankly.

Dr WOOLLARD: The people who have called me are concerned that they will not be able to meet these debts.

Mr Kucera: That is because of the misinformation that has been put out by members opposite.

Ms MacTiernan: Or the greedy relatives.

Dr WOOLLARD: I have also received phone calls from people who put their savings into property rather than superannuation. With the collapse of HIH Insurance, One.Tel Ltd and Ansett Australia Ltd, these people could well have been visionary. Yet now these people will be taxed on their life savings. Many people live in areas where local government planning guidelines prevent the subdivision of their blocks of land. Some people will have no option but to sell up and move on if they are unable to pay the tax. I have also had calls from previously well off members of the community who have been unemployed for 12 to 18 months and who have been living on their savings. These people cannot afford to pay the premium property tax and will have to sell up and move on.

Ms MacTiernan: How can they afford to pay the rates on these properties if they have been unemployed for 18 months? We are talking about properties that would be worth about \$1.5 million, on which they must be paying an enormous amount of rates. We are doing them a favour!

Dr WOOLLARD: These people have been living on their life savings.

As a health professional, I know the stress that loss of employment can place on families. To compound this by causing families to move from their homes will place a greater burden on them. I am also concerned that Labor has contributed -

Ms MacTiernan: I would love you to come and see what a struggle is. I would love you to come to Armadale to get some idea about what a battler actually is, rather than arguing the case for people who live in homes worth \$1.5 million. You must be living in pixie land. You are in absolute, complete, utter pixie land.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

The SPEAKER: Order, members! The member for Alfred Cove is giving her speech. It is not an opportunity for everyone else in the Chamber to have a yak.

Dr WOOLLARD: I am concerned that Labor has contributed to this anxiety by failing to clarify the basis on which the tax will be assessed. Many of the constituents who called my office believed that the two per cent rate would apply to the full value of their land, including the first \$1 million. The true position is set out on page 6 of the budget overview, which states -

Only the excess of the unimproved value above the exemption threshold will be taxed, at a rate of 2%.

For a block valued at \$1.2 million, the two per cent will be levied only on the final \$200 000. This will still be a heavy burden on many pensioners, who will have to pay more to live in homes they have occupied for maybe 40 or 50 years.

I will now look at what has happened with our forests. Budget paper No 1 states that -

... the Government has ceased logging in all of Western Australia's old-growth forests. The total cost of implementing this policy is \$132.5 million.

That seems a considerable amount of money, especially when a large proportion of that is earmarked for what can best be described as welfare payments for businesses and workers. However, the people living down south really want jobs. Most of the rest of the money is allocated to industry development within our native hardwood industry. What does that mean? The native hardwood industry at the moment is overwhelmingly based on converting old trees into charcoal. The September issue of the WA Forest Alliance said that -

... according to industry reports, the furniture industry in WA currently uses about 40,000 m³ of jarrah and karri log volume in total! And these do not need to be 1st and 2nd grade logs.

First and second grade logs are our biggest and oldest trees. The pamphlet also said that -

Soon after its election the government decided to release 'indicative' figures for the long term (i.e. post 2003) sustainable yield of 1st and 2nd grade sawlogs from our native forests. These figures were developed by CALM, without input from conservation groups or independent experts.

... the 'indicative' figure for sustainable yield was 140,000 m³ per annum of 1st and 2nd grade jarrah sawlogs and 40,000 m³ per annum of 1st and 2nd grade karri sawlogs.

Conservation groups have since established that these figures were derived without regard for the principles of ESFM -

That is the principles of ecological sustainable forest management -

or for the government's promise to protect all remaining HCV forests - two breaches of government policy.

What is the point of developing a 10-year forest management plan when the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Government have apparently made up their minds to continue turning our wonderful forest giants into low-value wood products, without concern for environmental consequences?

While I am discussing environmental issues, I also express my concern about the treatment of the Swan Estuary Marine Park in Alfred Cove. The city is implementing a development plan that many community and environmental groups believe poses a high risk to the environmental values of this important stretch of the Swan River foreshore.

The creation of a golf driving range and a continuing dispute over the location of dog access to the river create a risk to the delicate foreshore vegetation and to the many waterbirds that feed and roost along the foreshore. The community would like to see the Department of Conservation and Land Management take a more active role in the management of the foreshore nature reserve and the marine park. It would like both areas protected to the greatest possible extent. If that requires that CALM be allocated extra resources, I hope that will be considered in the budget.

Page 342 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2 cites one of the major achievements for 2000-01; that is, the Heathcote coordination agreement that was signed in January 2001.

Ms MacTiernan: Do you think that agreement is very ethical? Do you think there might have been an aspect in which your predecessor was using his position as Minister for Lands in a last desperate bid to fight off your valiant challenge to him in the election? Do you think that, when you look at the actual timing of that agreement

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

and the complete reversal that that constituted to the previous agreement that the Government had signed, it should just be seen as an election bribe and not as a proper, serious, responsible commitment of government?

Dr WOOLLARD: In relation to the minister's comments, this agreement was signed in January 2001. The community has been lobbying vigorously to save Duncraig House and the lower lands for many years. The community was also lobbying vigorously for many years to save our old-growth forests. I am very pleased that the previous Government finally listened to the community, just as I am equally pleased that this Government listened to the community on the old-growth forest issue.

I remind the Government that Point Heathcote is an important part of Perth's heritage, being a landing for Captain Stirling in 1827. It also held an equally important role for the local Aboriginal community as a site for male initiation ceremonies, fishing and shelter; and, according to local elders, it held important mythological significance. The land and buildings at Heathcote have a remarkable value today as community facilities, and it is Perth's best riverfront parkland.

Ms MacTiernan: I know you have put forward some ideas on how they could be used, but where in the budget do you propose that we would get the money to restore Duncraig House to use it for any of these purposes? You know that it would cost some millions to restore it.

Dr WOOLLARD: I have made the minister aware of the issues and of the community views. I will detail some of the ideas that have been put forward for Duncraig House. I would be happy to work with the minister on those ideas.

Ms MacTiernan: Would you support its becoming a naltrexone clinic?

Dr WOOLLARD: I would support Duncraig House being kept as a community asset. As I have said many times, the use of all of our facilities should be put to the community for its input. Lots of ideas were put forward. Duncraig House was the nurses quarters, while Heathcote was the Point Heathcote reception home for the treatment of the mentally ill. Later it housed the south metropolitan health board. It is a building of great historical value. I have given the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure a number of proposals for the use of Duncraig House, as she just mentioned. They included Duncraig House becoming a library; a healing centre managed by doctors, naturopaths and other health professionals; the headquarters for the Heathcote Foundation; or a facility for community groups, such as scouts or sporting or arts activities. It could become the regional office for the southern railway extension or for the Roe Highway extension. It could become a short-stay hostel for country people visiting relatives in hospital, a centre for palliative care or a daytime respite centre. It could be used by TAFE for university or extension premises. It could become a regional conference centre for the State Government or a reception centre for visiting bureaucrats or dignitaries. It could be become offices for a decentralised government department or a regional office of the Department of Education if the existing Beaconsfield complex were sold. It could become an extension to the Western Australian Art Gallery or the Western Australian Museum. It could be used to accommodate patients requiring step-down care following surgical procedures at public hospitals.

Ms MacTiernan: Would the member consider a lease to a commercial operator in which the building would be used as a hostel or a hotel?

Dr WOOLLARD: Provided it is kept as a community asset, and it is not sold off. If it is thought that it would have a better use in five or 10 years time, the community would accept that. It may not be put to good use now, but once it is sold, it is gone forever. The lower lands should be reserved for parks and recreation. It is worth noting that an application has been lodged to have the lower lands registered as an Aboriginal heritage site. I seek leave to place the application on the Table for the duration of today's sitting.

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

Dr WOOLLARD: Labor's financial management plan states that it will ensure current and future generations of Western Australians benefit from the responsible management of public assets. The community would like the entire Heathcote site to be protected, including Duncraig House and the lower lands. All members know that I have presented, and will continue to present, petitions requesting the Government to save all of Heathcote.

Ms MacTiernan: Almost enough to make us give in.

Dr WOOLLARD: Since 1999, a number of different petitions have been circulated calling for Duncraig House to be kept as a community asset and for the lower lands to be preserved as parkland. The total number of signatories to the petitions exceeds 13 000. The Government should recognise the desire of the community to retain the Heathcote site.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

Mr Johnson: Thirteen thousand signatures represents about half the number of people in the member's electorate.

Dr WOOLLARD: The petitions have been signed by people throughout the metropolitan area and as far south as Mandurah.

Ms MacTiernan: When the Government holds its consensus summit, it can go far afield.

Dr WOOLLARD: I advise the minister that the petitions have been signed by many people from many different areas, who do not want community assets to be sold. Community assets are our heritage, culture and environment. I believe these things should be kept. I am happy to show Duncraig House and the lower lands to any members.

I have addressed some issues that are important to my electorate. I hope the Government will listen to these concerns and respond appropriately.

MR McRAE (Riverton) [10.43 pm]: I will make a few comments about the budget as it has impact in my community, and I want to record my views on some global and national events. On Tuesday last week, terrorist attacks were made on New York and Washington. I have been encouraged and heartened by the expressions of support from members of this House for Australia to keep a clear head when it supports international efforts to pursue the terrorists who have committed those atrocious crimes. I have been heartened by those who have taken the time to think through the capacity for us to be involved in a rage that has the potential to hurt innocent people, and draw us into a vortex of bigotry that might damage people who hold values that are not dissimilar to the majority of Christian values held in Australia.

I am reminded of a song that Sting wrote some years ago at the height of the Cold War between the United States and the USSR. I will not sing it, even though members behind me have offered to do a three-part harmony.

The SPEAKER: We are all grateful for that.

Mr McRAE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In all seriousness, Sting wrote a song that said, "I hope the Russians love their children too". The purpose of that was to remind us that men and women, mothers and fathers and uncles and grandparents are part of communities raising their children and doing their best within their own cultural context, and that we needed to reflect on that as we were part of the global Cold War animosity. The same reflection needs to take place now, when the national and international mass media draw our population and the international community into labelling the terrorists as Muslims. It is wrong ethically and it is dangerous for our community. The sustainability, continuity and harmony of our community is at risk when we get drawn into those sorts of reactions.

As the State's budget is being debated, I want to reflect on the importance of recognising that Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists and other religious faiths around the world hold the rights of individuals, the respect of people, anti-violence and the priority of families and peace in communities as the fundamental principles of humanity. Even in our corner of the world, in a small provincial Parliament such as ours, it is very important to make those statements and affirm those values.

I do that today.

Several members: Hear! Hear!

Mr Birney: It depends on how bad the budget is.

Mr McRAE: I will get to that. This budget is part of a strategy to set this State on a long-term and sustainable footing that not many other Governments have achieved. I am not having a go at the previous Government; many other Governments in this State have attempted to do that.

The second issue that gives us the context for this state budget is the collapse of one of Australia's major airlines. I have listened to the contributions made today by former members of the Labor Party who are now Independents and by government and opposition members. I note that members of the opposition parties have made what I can characterise only as opportunistic and empty calls for the Government to intervene and to provide public funds to prop up what have been for a long time private sector businesses. I am concerned that the debate has descended to that point when it is so vital that we work together to ensure that tourism and regional communities do not suffer. Previous speakers have failed to note that many school children are preparing for Schools Week and have been fundraising all year to finance their travel to Perth from remote communities. Those children are now stranded. Our focus should be to help avoid those children being disadvantaged. We should not descend into a slinging match about whether the Government should offer a line of credit.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

Notwithstanding the apparent good intention of the Opposition, it would seem to be a high-risk proposition for the taxpayers' funds to extend a line of credit in a volatile market in which international airlines are at risk and domestic airlines throughout the world are on very thin margins. The people of Western Australia, who expect us to manage their funds wisely, would be most concerned if the Government offered a direct line of credit. They expect the type of leadership that the Premier, the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure have shown.

Members opposite want to get stuck in and make some points, but they cannot wait to see the package that this State will produce. That package will lead State Governments across Australia and ensure that incentives provide for regional Western Australia to be protected and that the private sector can do the job that it is good at. That is the role this Government should play, and that is the role this Government will play tomorrow and in the coming weeks. It is no good coming into the Chamber beating drums and trying to muster shallow support that members opposite appear to have gathered over the past day or so.

Mr Birney: It is not shallow.

Mr McRAE: It is absolutely shallow. The member for Kalgoorlie and a couple of other members have produced some of the most shallow arguments I have heard on this subject for a long time. The member for Kalgoorlie has failed to come to grips with the complexity of the issues that face the people who live in his electorate. He responds to shallow arguments and is able to produce only a hollow drum beat. The member has no substance whatsoever. It puzzled me when I heard the members for Kalgoorlie and Nedlands put on an extraordinary performance this afternoon. They were unable to offer one skerrick of evidence, support or leadership. They did no more than carp and whinge, and did nothing to contribute to the leadership that this Government will provide over the next week or so. The member for Kalgoorlie has been an abysmal failure. He does not represent the people that he purports to represent and he does not even provide decent opposition or intellectual arguments. The member is being pathetic and must go back to school.

I note the time and eagerness for people to finish this week so that we can dive into the estimates processes of next week because that is where we will see the real body of this budget. In the overview of the budget, the Under Treasurer stated -

The revenue measures address a structural budget imbalance that is evident in the bases for general government revenue and expenses. While that imbalance has been veiled by exceptional one-off revenue in 2000-01, it has been evident in four preceding years and in the forward estimates -

The Opposition still does not understand the forward estimates after all this time. The overview continues -
shown in the 2000-01 *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement* (PFPS).

The members opposite ran this place into the ground. The only economic option the previous Government had was to sell public assets. The people of Western Australia were fed up with it because they know that those assets were the jewels and the silver of the community, and they will damn members opposite forever for it. The Opposition has no answers. The member for Kalgoorlie knows that the next asset on the list was the Water Corporation, which would have propped up the next budget. What was the former Government going to sell after that asset was sold?

Mr Birney: It was an amount of \$300 million.

Mr McRAE: Did the Opposition have the budget surplus that we have now? The Treasurer has rightly characterised that as a privatisation surplus, because it was the only surplus the Opposition delivered in four years, following the sale of people's assets. Opposition members are an absolute disgrace. All they have done is produce a surplus by selling off bodies such as AlintaGas and Westrail Freight. The state tax revenues from those assets have been lost to this community forever. It is no wonder that people have turned their backs on those opposite. Liberal Party members of lifelong standing have come to me, they have resigned from the party, and have said they will never return because of the sales of assets. Opposition members are an absolute disgrace. Not one of the opposition members has admitted that their Government did that to prop up the budget; not one of the opposition members has admitted that that is how it produced forward estimates that were a charade and a fallacy.

Mr Logan interjected.

Mr McRAE: They should talk to the country people and learn what they think about privatisation. The member for Cockburn is absolutely right. We do not have to stick around the metropolitan area to understand that country people are so fed up and angry that they will not forgive the Opposition members during this term for the sale of Westrail Freight, for example, and they will not forgive them next term. Opposition members have burned a lifetime's experience into the souls of country people, and they will not forgive members for that.

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

Mr Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warren-Blackwood.

Mr McRAE: This budget delivers the very things that we said we would deliver if we were elected to government. It is an honour to stand here and be part of a Government that said it would address health, education, community safety and forests - and it is good that the member for Alfred Cove has at least acknowledged that as part of our commitment and credibility.

Health spending will rise to \$2.36 billion in this year; police operational spending will rise to nearly \$500 million in this year; and education spending will rise to more than \$2 billion in this financial year. These are benchmark achievements; they are achievements we set out as our election commitments, and we have delivered. All the previous Government could do was sell assets; all it could do was prop up fake budgets and try to pretend it produced surpluses. Opposition members are a charade, they are clowns, and they are an insult to the people of Western Australia - they absolutely wimped out.

In my electorate the new Western Australian Labor Government, headed by one of the great Premiers of this State, Dr Geoff Gallop, has produced a budget that has focused on a couple of very important issues in the community. It is putting more than \$1 million into the Perth central market. People outside my electorate and people a long way from my electorate probably do not understand the role the Perth central market plays in the economy of this State. It has been a vital and essential part of the State, and this Government has made a commitment to it and will expand it. It is working with the private sector in those markets to further expand lease agreements, and that stands as a great achievement for the people in my electorate and for the people of this State.

Mr Sweetman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Ningaloo.

Mr McRAE: Horticulture and agriculture generally, and the transport and distribution industries all form a state hub in and around the Canning Vale markets.

Secondly, an allocation has been made from the education budget, although it is with some regret that I acknowledge this. A little more than \$2 million has been allocated to Rossmoyne Senior High School. That is an interesting allocation.

Mr Logan: It is a great high school.

Mr McRAE: It is indeed.

Mr Sweetman interjected.

Mr McRAE: Come in spinner! It is very interesting that the member says that. Yes, \$2 million from the sale of AlintaGas will be passed to Rossmoyne Senior High School. Guess how much the previous Liberal-National Party coalition Governments allocated to Rossmoyne Senior High School over the eight years.

It was zero, zero, zero. They had nothing in front of them, nothing behind them, nothing up their sleeves and no AlintaGas to sell. The only time the coalition had something to put into Rossmoyne Senior High School or any other high school in my electorate, which are all high performing high schools of which I am proud, was when it sold people's assets and said to people that they had a dividend. What a joke! They are a bunch of heretics and they will be damned for it.

Several members interjected.

Mr McRAE: The member for Nedlands should go and check her branch numbers. The people who told me a lot of information about Graham Kierath are also giving me information about her. She has only three-and-a-half years, and she had better start counting.

Rossmoyne Senior High School is only one school. Willetton Senior High School is on the program. Earlier this year the Minister for Education and I undertook the first tour of my electorate schools. Is that not remarkable? Why do members think that Hon Colin Barnett, the member for Cottesloe and now Leader of the Opposition, and Hon Graham Kierath, the former Minister for Planning and Assistant Treasurer, and local member for Riverton, did not think of visiting schools in my electorate together?

Ms MacTiernan: Was it because the Minister for Planning was not of the NCB faction or was in the NCB faction?

Mr McRAE: I think he was the leading star of the ABC faction. That was the problem. There was the bit of a problem of their getting in the same car. They were two of the leading lights of the previous Government, two of

Mr Larry Graham; Mr Jeremy Edwards; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker;
Mr Bernie Masters; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Tony McRae

the heavy hitters, one of whom is left in Parliament as the dangling Leader of the Opposition - old grumpy chops - and the other of whom still has not come to terms with not being here. I am delighted to be here.

Several members interjected.

Mr McRAE: Is it not remarkable that in eight years, those two ministers never managed to visit a school together? The coalition never made education a priority. The people in my electorate think, love, eat and sleep education. That is what they are on about. The coalition never recognised it. The best it could do was to sell the assets and throw them a \$2 bone from the sale of AlintaGas. It is a disgrace. I am so pleased to be here for the first Gallop Labor budget. I am glad that we are sticking to our principles and our priorities, and the people's priorities of health, community and education.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Barron-Sullivan (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 11.03 pm
