

Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Larry Graham; Mr Paul Omodei

GOVERNMENT'S ELECTION COMMITMENTS

Motion

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [4.02 pm]: I move -

That this House record that the Government has broken a number of significant election commitments during its first five months in office.

It is extraordinary that a newly elected Government, after just five months, can find itself in this position. This was shown more significantly than in any other regard today when the Premier and the Treasurer announced increases in a series of taxes and charges. That is just one of a number of topics that the Opposition will address during this debate.

I remind members that on 31 January this year, in the publicly televised leaders' debate, the present Premier said that taxes and charges would not rise under Labor. Anyone who knows anything about public sector finance and the realities of running government would know that that was a foolish, inconsequential commitment to make. It was never realistic. However, the point I make is that the Labor leader of the time, the now Premier, went on public television and made a commitment that he knew could not then honour, nor was it ever likely to be honoured. Today, that promise was broken for every single household in Western Australia. The estimates of the increases in taxes and charges today are at least \$60 for every householder, and probably significantly above that. That was the clanger of all broken promises. However, I shall return to that.

Is either the Premier or Treasurer likely to grace us with his presence?

Mr Kobelke: They are in the building, they are listening, and they will respond in due course.

Mr BARNETT: That is typical of the contemptuous attitude that the Labor Party takes to this Parliament. Western Australia has probably the most arrogant Premier. He has probably the greatest understanding of anyone in this House of the Westminster system and its history and tradition; yet, as Premier, he has treated this Parliament with absolute contempt.

I will return to the issue. During the election campaign, the Labor Party made all sorts of promises. The Opposition will go through a range of promises, but it must be borne in mind that the Government has been in office for only five months, so there will be many more broken promises to come. The reason the Government is breaking promises now is because of its conduct during the election. It made promises that it knew at the time it would not honour. It knew full well that it would not honour or keep those promises. Already, broken promises are falling out day after day, and it will go on. Indeed, the Labor Party is not capable of delivering on its election commitments. It promised too much. It was extravagant in the campaign, and it has been extravagant since coming into government. It has an impossible task. There are only two consequences: either promises will be broken or state debt will rise to unsupportable levels.

We know that the Labor Party has broken promises and that it has not been truthful with the people of Western Australia. The only questions in this debate are how many promises have been broken, and by how much they have been broken. It is not a question that it has broken promises; that is now firmly established, and the Government is only five months into its term. Therefore, we are talking about how many promises it has broken, and by how much it has broken them. That is what this debate is about.

I will concentrate first on some financial aspects, and I will also talk about some public sector issues. In due course my colleagues will talk about other aspects. We will detail and get on the public record promises broken in the Government's first five months in office. How many more are to come?

I will talk about finances. We have heard a lot about black holes, forward estimates and all that absolute garbage that the Government has come out with. I will again put on the record the financial reality of this State. Members should listen; they might learn something. At the time of the election, Treasury, as it is required by law, produced a revised set of accounts for the State. The accepted measure of the budgetary position of a State is the net operating balance. The net operating balance at the time the election was called was \$98 million. Therefore, the Labor Party inherited a budget in surplus to the extent of \$98 million. The Government talks about commitments the previous Government made. The previous Government made commitments in the lead-up to the election. However, the reality is that the amount of revenue accruing to the state Treasury increased by more, for the simple reason that mining production was high, but, most importantly, oil and gas production was high and the price was extraordinarily high; therefore, the ad valorem royalty produced huge windfall benefits to Treasury. Therefore, the Labor Party inherited an improved financial position - \$98 million in surplus. That is where the Labor Party started. That is not my figure; that is Treasury's figure.

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The present Government also inherited a state debt position. State net debt was \$4.5 billion. At the time the Liberal and National Parties came into government in 1993, state debt was \$8.6 billion. Therefore, the Labor Party inherited \$4 000 million less debt. The interest cost alone of servicing that debt is around \$250 million to \$300 million. Therefore, the Labor Party had a further advantage of \$250 million to \$300 million, less interest servicing costs, over that which the coalition experienced when it came into government.

Mr Board: And not having to pay back the debt.

Mr BARNETT: That is right. It will never pay that back.

The Labor Party won the election, and good luck to it. We then come to its period in government. During the election campaign, the Labor Party was quizzed about its election commitments. I quote from an article by Wendy Pryer in *The West Australian* of 7 February 2001 as follows -

The Labor Party, which also released its election campaign costings yesterday, admitted to spending more than \$765 million than was available in the Budget over the next four years.

If the Government wants to talk about forward estimates, black holes and all the rest of it, we will talk about the Labor Party's black hole. By the Treasurer's admission, its black hole at the time of the election was \$765 million more than was in the budget, including the forward estimates. Therefore, I will talk about forward estimates if the Government wants me to. It is the Government's estimate and the Treasurer's admission that the figure is \$765 million. If there is any black hole, that is the start of it.

However, it does not stop at that. Once the Labor Party came into government, the Under Treasurer had to do what was required. He had to assess what had been promised. Members should read this document. I quote what the Under Treasurer, John Langouant, said in the autumn 2001 edition of *Treasury News* -

The election of the Labor Government, and more particularly the delivery of its policy agenda, adds a completely new dimension to the tasks facing the sector. At the broadest level, this agenda involves introducing new expenditure initiatives totalling around \$1.2 billion . . .

During the election campaign, the Labor Party admitted to \$765 million in expenditure. In his autumn report, the Under Treasurer made it clear that the Labor Party's commitments will cost \$1.2 billion. That is the reality the Government faces. If there is a black hole -

Mr Kobelke: Why do not you tell the truth?

Mr BARNETT: Is the minister calling the Under Treasurer a liar?

Mr Kobelke: You are misinterpreting what he said.

Mr BARNETT: It is the truth. During the election campaign, the Labor Party admitted its promises would cost \$765 million.

Mr Kobelke: Plus capital.

Mr BARNETT: The minister should read his Government's reports. The member for Belmont was the party's spokesman. He admitted to \$765 million.

Mr Kobelke: Plus capital, which takes it up to \$1.3 billion.

Mr BARNETT: The Labor Party's only admission to the media was that it had costed its promises at \$765 million. I did the costings for the Liberal Party, and we costed those promises at \$1.1 billion. We were wrong and Treasury was right: it was \$1.2 billion. I remember the claims well; we argued about this during the election campaign. I told the media that Labor's promises would cost \$1.1 billion. The member for Belmont said that no, they would cost \$765 million. He admitted to that, and it was reported in the media. After the election, Treasury - the Under Treasurer - said they would cost \$1.2 billion. That is the deal. The Government should not talk about black holes. There is only one black hole; the Labor Party's financial approach.

I am no astrophysicist, but one learns a bit watching *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. What is a black hole? A black hole is an absence of light. By definition, there can be no vision. A black hole is the densest material imaginable. It is such that it sucks everything into its middle and, ultimately, collapses upon itself. That is what will happen to the Government. It has no light, no vision, is as dense as possible and it will collapse upon itself. It is the black hole.

It does not stop there. The Labor Party had a good time during the election campaign, making promises here and there to the tune of \$1.2 billion. However, it has kept going. What else has it promised since coming into government? The Minister for Education has promised \$120 million for online teaching and learning. During the election campaign, he said that would cost \$30 million. He now admits he will need to spend \$120 million,

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as we said during the election campaign. Another \$90 million has been committed to education. The Minister for the Environment and Heritage announced - which was inappropriate in terms of portfolio responsibility - that Labor would not proceed with the redevelopment of the police academy site at Maylands. Another \$25 million will now be required to build the new facility at Joondalup. I hope the member for Joondalup is keen to see that police academy completed, because the Government must find another \$25 million for it. The Government has made extra funding commitments of \$66 million for forest industry issues and industry restructuring. The Minister for Health had to put an extra \$20 million into health, and the Government has given another \$2.5 million to the John Curtin College of the Arts. It has not yet been honest and told the community how much the public sector redundancies will cost. It will be millions of dollars. Even by my conservative calculations, the Labor Government has committed an extra \$250 million to \$300 million since the election. It made \$1.2 billion worth of promises during the election campaign, and it has since added up to \$300 million. The Government has made about \$1.5 billion worth of promises. Come in cowboy; this is the 1980s all over again. The commitments are already up to \$1.5 billion. That is what the Labor Party in this State is about.

We are talking about black holes and intergalactic trips. What did the coalition promise during the election campaign? It made \$441 million worth of commitments over a four-year period. That is a commitment of about \$110 million a year, or one per cent of the total value of the government sector, which is about \$10 000 million. Our fully documented election commitments amounted to around \$100 million a year for four years, or one per cent of the budget. The Labor Party commitments, both before and after the election, add up to \$375 million a year.

Mr Kobelke: You don't believe in forward estimates.

Mr BARNETT: That is the Government's black hole. If there is any black hole, it is because Labor committed itself to \$375 million a year. The minister talks about the forward estimates. I will be generous: let us say the forward estimates were short by \$200 million. That would be the maximum. Even if the annual cost of what the Liberal Party and National Party had to deliver rose to \$150 million - another \$200 million over four years - it would have been committed to 1.5 per cent of the budget. We would have delivered that in a canter. That is the reality. The Government is committed to \$375 million a year. It does not have a snowball's chance in hell of delivering that. It is about time it realised that it will not deliver that financial outcome. The only outcomes will be either more broken promises or an explosion in state debt. The public of this State, particularly the financial sector, remembers that under the Lawrence and Dowding Labor Governments of the early 1990s, state debt rose \$1 billion a year. That is why this State became a laughing stock and why it lost its financial credibility and AAA credit rating. Hang on cowboys, because here we go again. We are about to see a repeat performance.

The Labor Party runs around talking about Barnett's black hole and Barnett's budget blow-out. It does not even understand forward estimates.

Mr Kobelke: You do not believe in them.

Mr BARNETT: It has no idea.

The Minister for Community Development, Women's Interests, Seniors and Youth, in a disgraceful attempt to play politics, ran around talking about a \$1 000-a-day loss on the belltower while groups in the disability services sector could not get access to her. The very day she performed her little media stunt, people tried unsuccessfully to make contact. She was wrong on even that. She was hopelessly wrong, and it was disrespectful to community groups in this State.

Now we come to today's announcements, and I will go through a litany of broken promises. Members should bear in mind that we are five months into a four-year term. This is the tip of the iceberg. This is the start of the lies, the deception, the cheating and the untruths. This is what members opposite will be defending for the next four years. The Labor Government started its term with tax increases. It started by increasing workers compensation premiums, although we gave it bipartisan support for that because of the circumstances. The Government's first act was to increase taxes on small business. Its second act was to increase the parking levy for businesses in the central business district by \$70 to \$120. Members should not think that impost hits only big business; it affects every tenant in every building in Perth, including charities and not-for-profit organisations. All sorts of organisations are affected. The Government came in and whacked them with a \$70 to \$120 increase. That was its second financial act.

There is now today's announcement. I remind the House what the now Premier said on television in front of thousands of Western Australians during the leaders' debate on 31 January 2000. He said to the public of this State that taxes and charges would not rise under Labor. It was a stupid thing to say. Today, it has turned out to be false. It was an absolutely stupid thing to say; it was never realistic. The lie has been publicly exposed with today's announcement. The Government has announced a range of increases in rates and charges.

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Mr Kobelke: They are below the consumer price index.

Mr BARNETT: A five per cent increase on vehicle registrations is not below the consumer price index. That is the first example. A 3.5 per cent increase on water rates and charges will equate to \$30 for every household in this State, and increases in vehicle costs will amount to \$12. It goes on. I do not need to detail the other increases.

I am disappointed. What does our great Treasurer say? In today's media statement he said that the Treasury estimated that a representative household would see a net increase in state fees and charges of 1.3 per cent or \$38.47. That is half the GST-adjusted rate of inflation. Was that the truth; is the figure \$38? Water charges have increased by \$30 and the increase in vehicle costs is \$12. We are up to \$42 before we even start, so who is being honest in this House? Certainly not the Treasurer. How did he get to the figure of \$38? He took out the abolition of financial institutions duty. Why did he do that? He plucked it out of the air and netted down the figure. If one reads on, one finds that the minimum increase for Western Australian households is \$58 a year, and it will be \$58 a year plus when the real costs come out. Financial institutions duty has nothing to do with it. FID was part of a federal-state tax reform package and it is absolutely unrelated to taxes and charges.

In the last sentence of the statement the Treasurer says that, as a general rule, other licences, registration fees, application fees and other government charges will be held to the GST-adjusted consumer price index figure of 2.5 per cent. Today in question time the Treasurer could not give an indication as to which charges were going up or whether all fees and charges were to be indexed at the CPI. The absolute clanger was that the Treasurer, who puts out statements and media releases about Barnett's black hole, when asked a dead simple question as to how much this package of increases will raise in total revenue, had no bloody idea! What a drop kick! He has no idea at all! Why can he not stand in this Parliament and say how much that package will raise? Do any of the government members know? Do any of the drop kicks on the backbench know? They do not have a clue! They will go out there and say, "It is \$60, we think" and when the public and business and Rotary groups ask them how much this will raise, what will they say? They will say, "We don't know; we have no bloody idea!" They have got no idea; they have not got a clue! Talk about the mushroom patch; they have no idea at all! The only good thing from our point of view is that when we look at members opposite we see marginal seat after marginal seat, and we will go ping, ping, ping!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order members! The House is becoming very unruly. I cannot hear and I am sure that the Hansard reporter is also finding it difficult to hear. I would appreciate it if members could be a little less noisy.

Point of Order

Mr COWAN: I ask that the member for Perth withdraw the remark that he made. I do not think he needs to be reminded that it is unparliamentary and, in that sense, it needs to be withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edwards): I am sorry, the noise was so great that I did not hear the remark made by the member for Perth.

Mr COWAN: He knows what he said and he is gentleman enough to withdraw it.

Mr MASTERS: I support the point of order. Mr Acting Speaker, you were on your feet when the member for Perth made a derogatory statement. However, before he made that statement he requested that the Leader of the Opposition sit down. He knew that you were on your feet and he still proceeded to make another interjection which also happened to be derogatory. It is entirely appropriate that you seek that the member for Perth withdraw his statement and that you also remind him that when you are on your feet there should be no interjecting whatsoever.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I did not hear the remark, but I take due note of the points of order made by the members for Merredin and Vasse. However, as I did not hear the remark made by the member for Perth, I believe we should continue with the debate.

Debate Resumed

Mr BARNETT: Some of the increases will flow directly to Treasury, others will be disguised taxation.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order members!

Mr BARNETT: The largest amount of revenue, whatever that figure is when the Treasurer comes clean, will be raised from the 3.5 per cent increase in water rates and sewerage and drainage charges. That will amount to

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about \$30 a household and it will be applied across all residential and commercial properties in this State. That will amount to a vast sum of money. Does the Water Corporation need to raise that money? Members might be interested to know that last year the Water Corporation made an after tax profit of \$154 million. This is not an organisation that is struggling financially. The Water Corporation pays an extraordinarily high proportion of its profits in dividends to the State. What is this increase? It is a disguised tax administered through the Water Corporation. There will be a 3.5 per cent increase in all water rates, drainage and, I assume, excess water charges, and almost all of it will flow through the Water Corporation. It will be extra revenue for an already very profitable organisation and it will pass straight through into what is probably a 90 or 95 per cent dividend for Treasury. This is a disguised tax measure. A government trading enterprise, in this case the Water Corporation, is being used to raise a form of taxation. The Government should come clean. It has not made a case as to why the Water Corporation should increase its rates by 3.5 per cent or \$30 per household. It has made no case at all! There is no justification for the increase and it is a disguised tax which will go straight through to Treasury, and we still do not know how much it will raise. We will work it out ourselves, but the incompetent Treasurer could not even give a figure in Parliament today.

Other increases are also relevant. There has been an increase of two per cent in third-party vehicle insurance premiums. There would be a case for increasing third-party insurance premiums if the fund were in difficulty, but there is no indication that it is. When the Liberal Party came into Government in 1993, the previous Labor Government had raided that fund for its property deals, its grubby little share transactions and its deals with its mates. It raided that fund and it was necessary for the coalition Government to introduce a \$50 levy which the people hated paying, but that was essentially the WA Inc levy. Once that fund was restored to a stable position, we removed the \$50 levy. The only case that can be made out for increasing third-party insurance is if the fund is in a non-viable position. No case has been made for that and the reports I get indicate that the fund is fine. Why was there a two per cent increase in premiums? There has been no justification or explanation at all.

Knowing it was in a bit of trouble, the Labor Party tried to play politics and I do not know if it leaked the story to *The West Australian*, but when we all woke up this morning what did we see? "Prices Jump" was the headline in *The West Australian*. It is the second scariest headline I have seen in *The West Australian* this year! Those prices included electricity charges, and then today we found out that electricity charges would not go up. What is the public meant to say? Are people meant to say, "Whew, thank goodness for that, they didn't increase electricity prices." *The West Australian* might have had a small error in its story, but the big mistake was that its headline was wrong. It should have had yesterday's headline, "Ripped Off" - perhaps it should have been "Ripper Rips People Off". It had the right headline, but it ran it yesterday. It should have put yesterday's headline on today's story and the public would have read, "Ripped Off - Prices Jump" because that is what the Labor Party did to people in this State today.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order members!

Mr BARNETT: I do not know what the members of the Labor Party are on about. They are talking about black holes and they seem to be on some sort of intergalactic odyssey ride. I suppose that is reasonable, as it is 2001 - they are out there spaced out on their odyssey and Stanley Kubrick would be proud of them. The Labor Party has no credibility and is sailing around in the never-never space making promises and commitments and talking about black holes. The Labor Party is breaking promise, after promise and adding millions of dollars to the debts of this State. The Government can sit there and be smug, but as the budget figures come out and the debt figures are published, and the bankers, Standard and Poor's and Moody's start to analyse the situation, just watch the AAA credit rating go. It will go for certain under this Government unless it breaks those commitments.

Mr Marlborough: Have you heard about the hurly-burly bird?

Mr BARNETT: The member for Peel can make his speech later and it will be very entertaining. I now wish to refer to another area of broken promises. The Premier put out a media statement on 15 January 2001 under the heading "votelabor.org". In this statement, which might still be on hardworking backbench members' web sites, the Premier said -

There will be no other public service job cuts under Labor's restructuring plan.

The only jobs to go will be the 60 chief executive officers from the senior executive service.

Mr Hyde: Voluntary redundancies!

Mr BARNETT: No. I am reading the Premier's statement: there will be no other public service job cuts under Labor's restructuring plan. It is black and white; there is no doubt about it.

Several members interjected.

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The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edwards): Order, members!

Mr BARNETT: What do we find? The commitment was for no other job losses apart from the 60 positions. On 3 May, 422 redundancies were offered.

Dr Gallop: That is part of the normal process of government.

Mr BARNETT: There will be only 60 redundancies but 422 have been offered! We have asked in this Parliament what happens when departments are amalgamated, as this Government is doing. What happens to the human resources sections, what happens to the receptionists, what happens to the accountancy sections, what happens to the media offices, what happens to the public relations areas and what happens to the information technology personnel -

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BARNETT: When asked in this Parliament whether the Premier would guarantee that there would be no job losses in lower levels of the public service from levels 2 to 8, what was the answer? No answer at all. I will give the Premier an opportunity to make a commitment to no job losses in the lower levels of the public service.

Dr Gallop: What a ridiculous question. The question is so stupid it does not warrant an answer.

Mr BARNETT: The response is that it was a ridiculous question. The election commitment was for only 60 CEOs. The number of redundancies offered is 422. The question now is how many job losses will occur through this redundancy program. People are leaving in droves. We have asked the Premier and Treasurer how many job losses will occur.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BARNETT: They have not answered. When we have asked how much the redundancy program will cost, we have not received an answer. I am taking a guess and saying it will be a minimum of 1 000 jobs; it could be 3 000.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Peel!

Mr BARNETT: Government members are getting vocal because we are losing jobs in the timber industry, the public sector, other areas of government, the building industry because of intimidation that is occurring there -

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Members, the speaker will accept some interjections, but I remind members that continued interjections are unruly and unparliamentary. I ask members on the government side of the House to please bear that in mind.

Mr BARNETT: We are seeing large-scale job losses of working Australians in the timber industry, for example, and in other parts of the economy, particularly the building industry, given the delays that have occurred due to the collapse of HIH Insurance -

Mr Kobelke: What about the GST?

Mr BARNETT: The goods and services tax has nothing to do with the backlog of 19 000 home building applications. The 19 000 home building applications backlog is due to the circumstances of the HIH collapse and the lack of indemnity insurance. Job losses are emerging in the building industry, in the timber industry, and we will see that right across the public sector.

I do not oppose reducing the size of the public sector; I have given bipartisan support to that from day one. What I have consistently asked is: how many and at what cost? What I find curious for the so-called champions of working Australians - and there are one or two on the government side who can rightly claim that - is that I have not heard a member in this House speak about the plight of workers in the timber industry, I have not heard a word about the plight of coal industry workers from the member for Collie, and I have not heard one member speak in defence and support of public servants in this State. When have government members stood in this Parliament and supported public servants?

Dr Gallop: I will do it, now!

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Mr BARNETT: Not one of the backbenchers has had the courage or the integrity or the dignity to do that. In the public sector -

Dr Gallop: What is your philosophy? What do you stand for?

Mr BARNETT: You can speak later, sunshine. You are a nasty little bit of work.

Who is leaving from the senior levels of the public sector? We are losing some of the best and the most experienced public servants in this State, many public servants who not only have a great deal to offer now but also have long careers in front of them. We are not losing people who are worn out and tired at the end of their careers; we are losing some outstanding people throughout the senior executive service.

Dr Gallop interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, Mr Premier.

Mr BARNETT: I want to talk about some of the people we have lost through the policies of the Labor Party. There could be a variety of reasons and every situation might be different -

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BARNETT: The Director-General of Education, Peter Browne, was an outstanding person who did terrific service for education in this State. I had the pleasure to appoint him as director-general, and he had another two or three years to run on his contract. He probably then would have retired as the head of the Education Department in this State. He was an absolutely dedicated person to children and to education in this State. What did the new Minister for Education do?

Mr Birney: Got rid of him.

Mr BARNETT: That is right. That is what the Government did. If the Government denies that, members should go out to any of the 800 government schools in this State and ask the principals what happened to Peter Browne, because 800 principals know exactly what happened. Do not take it from me; members should go out to their electorates and talk to the principals in the schools and find out what happened.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BARNETT: Neil Jarvis has gone from the top level of the Education Department. Stephen Home has also gone. He would probably be in his early forties. What was his crime? He negotiated against the Teachers Union, probably outsmarted them, but delivered good returns for teachers. He was targeted. Peter Browne, Neil Jarvis and Stephen Home so far have gone from the Education Department.

Haydn Lowe has gone from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. He was another long-term public servant. Wally Cox has gone from the Department of Environmental Protection. Bryan Jenkins, the head of the Department of Environmental Protection, is going. Yesterday the minister did not even know that her own chief executive had gone. She had no idea. Come in spinner! She should at least be awake, be on the ball, and know that the chief executive is leaving.

My colleague, the member for Murdoch, asked who has gone from the Health Department? So far Alan Bansemer, Andrew Weeks, Carolyn Graham, David Castle and Dr Zorbas have gone. The whole top structure of Mental Health Services is leaving. Why would they leave? These are outstanding people, dedicated to mental health care in this State. Not only are some of these people great administrators, but they are medical professionals. That area suffers from an acute shortage, so if people are offered redundancies, they can take their \$200 000 -

Mr Kucera interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BARNETT: They can take the money and get a job tomorrow. Many of them have already done that. They can walk out with the money, straight back into employment, either in the private or public sectors.

Gary Prattley, the head of the Ministry for Planning, has gone. I also happen to know that Simon Holthouse, chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission, has also gone. It goes on and on and on. Am I being paranoid or some sort of conspiracy theorist if I do not start to draw a view that people in the Ministry for Planning and Infrastructure cannot deal with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure? No-one can deal with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. No wonder the whole planning infrastructure is in absolute chaos.

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Health is in chaos, planning is in chaos, education is in chaos, environment is heading that way, and on and on it will go. Maybe we are seeing a different mechanism.

When Brian Burke came to Government in the early 1980s, he politicised the public service and - watch out - here we go again. People of integrity and high standing are leaving the public service in droves and it is only five months into this Government. What did Dr Gallop say? He said there would be no other public service job cuts under Labor's restructuring plan. We are talking about 60 chief executive officers. What an absolute joke! What a disgrace! What a dreadful way for the Labor Party, or any party, to treat the public servants of Western Australia! The Labor Party is a disgrace! The member for Riverton sits over there and smirks with his cheesy grin. As I said to him, we will be talking to public servants in Riverton. I will go to the schools in his electorate and we will talk about what is happening in education. A few government members should live in their electorates and get close to their constituents. It would be a good thing if a few government members lived in their electorates; they might have some empathy with working people, schools and public servants. A number of them do not even live anywhere near their electorates. If they actually lived in their electorates, they might have some understanding of their constituencies. They do not. A few government members live in my electorate of Cottesloe. They are western suburbs people; they are the chardonnay socialists. Members should get out, live in their electorates and talk to the working people whom they purport to represent.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr BARNETT: The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure does not live in her electorate, does she? Where does the minister live? Mt Lawley. You beauty! Let us have another chardonnay! Let us think about the workers from Mt Lawley!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edwards): Order, members!

Ms MacTiernan: You wouldn't know!

Mr BARNETT: The minister is a disgrace. No wonder the planning system is hollowed out, has backlogs and has appeals that have not been dealt with. The whole structure is closing down. I have spoken enough. I am just about exhausted.

Mr Kucera: You mean that you have run out of wind!

Mr BARNETT: No, but I would certainly run out of wind before the Minister for Health.

I will summarise and return to my initial point: the Labor Party promised \$1.2 billion. It has added probably \$300 million to that. It is running at \$375 million a year. The Government does not have a snowball's chance in hell of delivering that. Only two things can happen: it can break promises, as it has already done and as we are about to detail, or it can run up state debt. It will probably do a mixture of both, and that will be the legacy of its one-term Government.

MR BARRON-SULLIVAN (Mitchell - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.41 pm]: I start by saying that sometimes there is agreement between the two sides of this Chamber. It may surprise members on both sides of this Chamber that the Premier has said something with which I agree 100 per cent. I have a document with the Premier's smiling little face on the top right-hand side.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: He does look a bit like Darth Vader. I will quote one line from the document. The Premier's words are in inverted commas, and they say that the people of Western Australia elected the Government on the basis of its policy commitments. I tell the Premier that I think he is right. At the end of the day, we will pick off a number of members in marginal seats because those policy commitments were not met. I think the Premier knows that. While other members are joking, the Premier -

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have been very patient with interjections from the member for Peel. I ask him to curtail his interjections and poetry.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: It is interesting that the Premier is sitting there sullen faced, because he knows it is the truth. They are his words. The Government will be hurt most where the commitments that have been made and not met impact most on the people in Western Australia. Although members might joke about this - we will touch on a couple of matters now - families in Western Australia have already been affected after only five

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months of Labor government. I will talk about two areas: one area, of course, affects elderly people in this State; and the other affects everyone throughout the State - motorists, small businesses, people who run freight operations, farmers, rural communities and people living in the metropolitan area. All these people, within the space of just five months, have been utterly let down by the Government, which is failing, and has failed, to meet the commitments that the Premier has said are the reason he and his Government were elected.

I will start with one of the most horrific broken promises we have seen in the past five months. It is the promise the Government made to the elderly people in this community, particularly to about 7 000 elderly investors who were caught up with the mortgage brokers situation. To demonstrate the Government's total disregard for the elderly people who were affected in this way and the most fundamental way it has broken community confidence, I will quote directly from the ALP's policy document. The document contains five points, and each one of the points either has not been met so far or has blatantly been broken by the Government and the current Minister for Consumer Affairs, with no support whatsoever from either the Premier or the Attorney General. I turn to the first point of the document entitled "ALP Approach to Finance Brokers". This document sets out what the Labor Government would do to assist those people who were affected by the finance brokers situation. The first matter on the list states that the Government will ascertain the facts by setting up a judicial inquiry to ascertain what went wrong in the finance broking industry.

Dr Gallop: We have done that.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Yes, it has set up a judicial inquiry. However, the problem was that the Government led people to believe that the judicial inquiry would do things that the Government is not allowing it to do.

Dr Gallop: No, we didn't.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I will take that interjection, because it is very interesting. The Premier says that the Government is doing everything it said it would do with regard to the judicial inquiry. I assume that is what the interjection was intended to mean. The funny thing is that it is not only members on this side of the Chamber who believe that is not the case. Consumer advocates like Denise Brailey and Doug Solomon, who have followed this matter all the way through, as well as other observers of the scene, think that the Government has not just done a backflip, but has blatantly broken its promises to those people. Liam Bartlett wrote a story for the *Sunday Times* indicating that the Government had done a firm backflip and had broken promises. People who have been to public meetings with the now Attorney General write to us, the Attorney General, the Minister for Consumer Affairs and the Premier saying, "Hang on. You told us one thing when you were in opposition; now you are doing something completely different." When all those people seem to think that the Government has broken promises, surely it must be listening. Surely even the Government must realise that it is not just a public perception but is reality. When Dean Alston starts drawing cartoons for *The West Australian* showing the total lack of trust that one can have in this Government, it indicates that, after five months, the Government, quite frankly, is starting to be a little on the nose.

The second point of the ALP's policy approach to finance brokers says that the Government will provide legal assistance. It states -

For appropriate cases, the state will fund legal action to recover losses from finance brokers, company directors, valuers, banks, auditors, accountants, lawyers and anyone else responsible for the losses.

Again, I understand that meaning fairly clearly - "anyone else responsible for the losses". That could mean the Ministry of Fair Trading.

Dr Gallop: You have run out of steam. You have nothing more to say.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: We will have this debate time and again. We will have this debate until the Government does the right thing by the 7 000 people who are affected by its broken promises.

Dr Gallop: However, you are against it.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: We will hold the Government to its promises in this area. By way of interjection, can the Premier tell us whether the Government is planning in this year's budget, or in the forward estimates, to make any provision to pay compensation to investors?

Dr Gallop: That is a silly question. It does not warrant an answer.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: It is a very good question.

Dr Gallop: You know it is a silly question.

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Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: It is a question 7 000 people are asking right now: is the Government budgeting to provide compensation?

Dr Gallop: No, they are not; you are asking it.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Is the Government budgeting to provide compensation?

Dr Gallop: No, we are not.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: It is not!

Dr Gallop: Of course we are not.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The Government is not budgeting to provide any compensation? It has no intention of paying compensation? It set up a judicial inquiry, carefully calculated so it would not have to part with one cent. The reason for that is that the Premier does not want to find out whether the State is liable. Why? Because the Government does not want to foot the bill.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: It does not want to foot the bill. The Government makes a promise and, at any cost, it will buy the votes of the people who are affected. Now that it has come to the crunch, it will not support them. It will not dip into its pockets.

Mr Barnett: I think I heard the Premier say that there was no liability for the State.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Did the Premier say there was no liability?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edwards): Order! I have been fairly patient with the crossbench discussion. I would prefer that it came through the Chair and I ask members to do that.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: We are getting some remarkable admissions.

Dr Gallop: Are you? What admissions?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The Premier has just admitted that the Government has not budgeted to pay compensation. However, he said clearly there was no state liability.

Dr Gallop: There is none, my friend.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: How does the Premier know there is no state liability?

Dr Gallop: Point to a decision which says there is. There isn't any and you know that's the case.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The Attorney General indicated to me previously that he had not bothered to ask the Crown Solicitor for advice, not even by way of a phone call or a fax, on whether the State is liable.

Dr Gallop: What is your view, QC?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: My view is that I will hold the Government accountable for every one of those promises it made to the people of this State. No legal assistance will be provided in any of the circumstances indicated in the Government's list of commitments. The Minister for Consumer Affairs is well aware that Doug Solomon has approached the Government for assistance to represent investors at the royal commission set up by the Government; no assistance has been forthcoming. The Government set up that inquiry but it has not given the investors the legal assistance they need to get to the heart of the matter.

It is interesting that the terms of reference of the royal commission and the 17 projects ultimately chosen by the royal commissioner omit many projects which not only the consumer advocates said were vital to the investors' case, but also the Attorney General said were among the worst projects encountered in this whole fiasco. I remember the Attorney General, when referring to one project, said it was "rotten to the boots". That project is not one of the 17 projects that the commission will investigate. It is clear that the royal commission was established in such a way that it will not get to the heart of the matter and will not enable compensation to be paid to the investors in the way that the Government before the election led them to believe would be forthcoming. As the Premier said, they will not get one dollar out of the Government as a result of the inquiry. The Government is spending millions of dollars on the inquiry but will not fund the advocates who want to help the investors appearing before the inquiry. If the Government is prepared to assist them, it should say so now. Will the Government assist them? The Opposition is holding the Government to account. The Premier talks about accountability and honesty and now he is in the hot seat. However, he does not want to be accountable and nor does he want to live up to these very firm and very clear commitments to the people of this State. I am up to point 3 of the document, titled "Full disclosure".

Mr McRae: How many points?

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Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I thought government members would know backwards how many points there are. Point 3 states that all government knowledge about the finance broking industry, including legal opinions and results of audits and investigations, will be open to the public. Why then can the consumers' advocate not get the information he requires to launch his current legal action? It is because the Attorney General is claiming legal privilege in the matter. However, suddenly the Government is reading meanings into these words that no-one else is reading into them. Every member understands what these words mean: the 7 000 investors do; the media do; the advocates do; and we do. However, the members sitting on the government bench do not understand what these words mean.

Point 4 states that the Government will facilitate court action to resolve liability.

Mr McGinty: Is this coming from the bloke who supported Doug Shave in every vote in this House in the past two years?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I have touched a raw nerve there. Now the Attorney is interjecting. I remember sitting on the government side of the House when the Attorney said sharks were circling underneath the minister. The only sharks in this place are sitting on the government bench. The 7 000 investors reckon they are a darned sight worse than a bunch of scraggy sharks.

As I said, point 4 states that the Government will facilitate court action to resolve liability. If a Labor Minister for Fair Trading had been prepared to "do everything possible to bring the legal issues to an early resolution", as the document states, the Attorney General would have asked the Crown Solicitor for advice on whether the State was liable. Has he done that?

Mr McGinty: Did you do that when you were in government?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Hang on! I am sorry, I was not the Attorney General. However, the member for Fremantle is and I am asking him. Why will he not give a commitment tomorrow morning in front of the media that he will ask the Crown Solicitor for advice?

Mr McGinty: People can see right through you every inch of the way.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The Attorney will not give that commitment. The Premier has admitted the Government will not fund compensation to investors. The Premier does not believe the State is liable and the Attorney General will not find out by making one simple phone call.

Point 5 states that the Government will pay up where liability is established. That sounds great. However, the Premier has just admitted that he will not put one cent into the budget for compensation to the investors. I say to the Premier that that is one heck of a slip. Why did the Attorney General raise the issue of the State's liability if the Government was not prepared to find out whether the State was liable? Why did the Attorney General on numerous occasions - five are listed in this document - indicate clearly that he believed the process of government was crooked with difficulties and corruption and so on? Now that he is in government he is not prepared to find out whether the State is liable. Why is he not prepared to live up to his commitments? This debate is about broken promises. It is about the Attorney General's commitments to the people of Western Australia, about his honesty and about whether he will live up to the words he uttered before the election and, as the Premier admitted, which helped in the Government's election.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I formally call the member for Peel to order for the first time.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Again, I ask the Premier: why did he and his shadow ministers at the time raised the question of state liability? Why did he include it firmly in Labor's policy and is not now prepared to determine it?

Mr McGinty: Where is it? It is not there. You are making things up because you can't read English.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I cannot read English? Every member on this side of the House understands the Government's policy.

Mr McGinty: This is about the word that is not there - liability. Tell us all about the word that is not there.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Point 5 reads -

The combination of openness and legal assistance should help in the early resolution of questions of liability.

Liar-bility, liar-bility, liar-bility.

Mr McGinty: This is the man who voted against this issue every time we raised it.

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Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Every time this matter is raised, I will vote for the Government to uphold its commitments.

I turn to the second issue concerning the Minister for Consumer Affairs, which in another way impacts on people throughout the State; that is, fuel pricing. Before the election, the Government made a number of firm commitments throughout the State. It also implied in no uncertain terms that it was a matter that could and should be dealt with urgently and swiftly. In fact, the Government went to great pains in this Chamber and out on the hustings to say that the previous Government had not done enough about fuel pricing and there was no excuse for this, action will be taken immediately, and so on. The Premier is quoted as saying -

“There is simply no excuse for the Government not to immediately cap the price of wholesale petrol throughout the State and retail petrol in country areas,” . . .

The Premier made the firm statements that there was no excuse, and there would be immediate action. The Premier is also quoted as follows -

Premier Geoff Gallop said yesterday that a cap would be placed on wholesale fuel prices by the end of next month and on country retail prices soon after.

The Premier said that on 28 February. The next month was March. The Minister for Consumer Affairs then said the Government would have country price capping by the end of April. Hang on a minute! It is now nearly July. I do not think the Government quite made that target.

The Premier said also that “swift action was needed to relieve pressure on motorists.” If this is the Premier’s idea of swift action, I will not hold my breath waiting for it. The Government made a number of commitments about fuel pricing. It said it would introduce a maximum wholesale price system, in accordance with what I must say was probably the most important recommendation of the Select Committee on Petroleum Products Pricing in Western Australia that was established under the previous Government. That announcement was made in March. However, since it was put into effect on 12 April, do members know how much fuel has been sold in accordance with the maximum wholesale price?

Mr Barnett: Heaps and heaps, I bet!

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Yes - tonnes! Not one litre has been sold. As a result, a couple of weeks ago, two of the major independents said that the problems that have resulted from this Government’s total ineptitude in its handling of this issue may force them to leave the State. The minister knows - I must tell the House today - that a third independent chain is now saying it will have to pack up and move out if the minister cannot get the system to work.

Dr Gallop: They are actually talking about your recommendations.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The Premier should know what they are saying. I know that the Premier eventually met with them. They have been trying to meet with the Premier for four months, and we had to raise the matter in this Chamber to get the Premier to the table. Four months seems to be the going rate, because the Minister for Health takes four months; and he does not even meet with people from the Deaf Society of WA.

Mr Barnett: He got in early! He has only been there for five months!

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: True. The Premier could have waited longer, I suppose.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edwards): Order, members!

Mr Barnett: They have no shame.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Absolutely. The other thing that really sticks in my throat is that the Government said that if there was a problem, it would take tough action; it would get stuck in and sort it out. In another document, again with a smiling face in the top right-hand corner, the Premier - Darth Vader - said that while the Government would expect the oil companies to comply with the new regime, it would not hesitate to take tough action against those who seek to operate outside the rules. Not one litre of fuel has been sold under the rules that the Premier brought in on 12 April, and we have not seen much in the way of tough action.

The next matter is the difference between the price of fuel in country areas and the metropolitan region. This was a key focus of attention of the select committee, a key reason for the legislation that the previous Government brought forward, and ostensibly a key reason for the actions the current Government has taken. A relatively recent document from the Minister for Consumer Affairs shows clearly that the gap between city and country fuel prices has not closed one iota since the Government was elected and put in place the new pricing scheme. We are still waiting for action.

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I would love it if the Minister for Consumer Affairs would slide into his seat so that we could get another interjection, because if we could get an admission from the minister, as we got from the Premier earlier, we would have two real doozies today.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: We actually have four doozies on the front bench. The member for Armadale is doing very well to stay awake these days; it must be our enlightening debate. The Minister for Consumer Affairs and the Premier have said repeatedly that the Government will bring into force every recommendation of that committee in the areas for which the Government is responsible. Bearing in mind that one of the recommendations of the select committee was that it should be mandatory for all petrol stations to have price boards, I ask the minister: can he confirm that the regulations for price boards will come into effect? I will give the minister credit if the Government is doing that.

Mr Kobelke: I can confirm that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is obviously floundering around, without anything to grab hold of, because he is not even speaking to the motion.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I am.

Mr Kobelke: The motion states that we have broken our promises. We are delivering on our promises. Members opposite can argue about the timing, but we are delivering. When the oil companies said boo to you, you were so frightened that you hid under the table!

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The minister will not answer the question. Does the minister want me to tell the House now, or does he want a question on it tomorrow?

Mr Kobelke: We are taking up the fight, and we will deliver and debate petrol any time you like; but you obviously are out of your depth, because you are not even addressing the motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edwards): Order! I let that run, because the member for Mitchell did invite and did answer that interjection at the time, but I remind the member that the discussion should not be between members across the Chamber but should be through the Chair.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I did not get a reply. I will not give members the answer now, because I know the answer, and I think it is a doozy. I am sure the member for Albany will be rapt in it, but I am not sure that everyone else in here will be. However, we will keep that for another day. It is interesting, because we have had one great admission today; I do not need two. In fact, as the member for Kalgoorlie is wont to say, I feel a press release coming on. Although that admission by the Premier does add a small amount of humour in this place, it will be devastating news to the 7 000 people in the community who are hoping against hope -

Dr Gallop: We are honest with the people, unlike you lot.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to my right to please give the Deputy Leader of the Opposition their attention.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I should buy the Premier a dictionary so that he will know what that word means.

Mr Barnett: A special tricky-language dictionary.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Yes. I am the second speaker on this motion. I have raised 12 of the promises that have been broken, and I am keeping one up my sleeve for the Minister for Consumer Affairs for another day. I support this motion wholeheartedly. The Premier has made a very disturbing admission today. It is beyond belief that the Government has no intention of ever paying compensation to the investors who were caught out and who voted for this Government and listened to its commitments.

Mr Kucera: You are hypocrites.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr BARNETT: It is absolutely unparliamentary to refer to someone as a hypocrite.

Mr KUCERA: I withdraw that remark.

Mr Barnett: You should apologise, too.

Debate Resumed

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Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. We have had broken promises. People are paying too much for fuel; and elderly people who voted for the Government have been let down and now have nowhere to go. The Government took their vote, but it has let them down. The Government cannot be honest; and I am only the second speaker on this motion.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [5.08 pm]: I will focus on the term “broken promises”. How do we define that term? I will give a few good examples of broken promises. On 23 October 1996, Hon Norman Moore said he would guarantee that AlintaGas would not be privatised if the coalition won the next election. What happened to AlintaGas? It was privatised. That is a broken promise. On 7 December 2000, the then Deputy Premier, Mr Barnett, said in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* that the then coalition Government would not introduce a gold royalty during its next term of government. However, his Government did introduce a gold royalty. That is a broken promise. The former coalition Government said in its 1996 transport policy that in its next term, it would extend the northern suburbs transit system to Neerabup Road, Clarkson. That did not happen. That is a broken promise. The broken promise of all broken promises was the former coalition Government’s statement to the workers at the Midland workshops before the 1993 election that the workshops would stay open and would play a role in the future of the transport system in Western Australia. However, after the election, the former coalition Government closed the workshops.

The current Opposition is in opposition for two reasons: first, it showed an arrogance and complacency when in government that was clear to all electors, and, secondly, the Labor Party offered an alternative to the people that gave a sensible answer to the problems that our State faces and gave a really positive view of the future of this State. The first reason is the arrogance and complacency of the former Government, and it has taken that attitude straight into opposition as if nothing had happened and there was no election. There are no observable signs that the current Opposition is reflecting upon its performance in government, reconsidering its approach and coming into this Parliament with an alternative view to attract the interest and the attention of the electors. This attitude is manifest in the sorts of debates the Opposition is bringing to the Parliament. It does not come into the Parliament with values, policies and commitments to counterpoise those on this side of the House and have a good debate. For example, when I interjected on the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party and asked his view, he would not give it, but said that the Opposition was holding the Government to account. We do not have an Opposition with values, commitments and a set of philosophies and policies. Why is that? It is because the Opposition is so deeply divided that no member can stand up and say what the Opposition stands for. The member for Ningaloo said that the Leader of the Opposition had no commitment to regional Western Australia. The current Deputy Leader voted against the current Leader of the Opposition. We hear constantly in the corridors of Parliament murmurings about the current Leader of the Opposition. He does not know what he stands for any more because he is frightened that someone will stab him in the back. We have a valueless, policyless and commitmentless Opposition.

Let us look at the problems this State faces. We have a major problem with public administration, which we are addressing. We have major problems with the loss of young people’s lives as a result of the drug crisis, with which we are trying to come to grips. We have a major problem in two big areas of government service delivery - health and education. We have inherited huge problems. We are coming to grips with these issues step by step. The answers will not happen tomorrow. We will not turn around the State of Western Australia tomorrow. We are in for the long haul. When it comes to reform, there is no quick fix. We will bring about significant improvements in our State.

I could respond to the Opposition’s motion in a couple of ways. First, I could go through all the promises that we have managed to fulfil in the short time we have been in government. They are set out in the document about meeting our commitments in the first 100 days of government. We also have the document which follows that and refers to the month of achievements after the first 100 days. I will not do that, but I will address some of the issues that the Leader of the Opposition has raised. He essentially talked about two points: first, the public service, and, secondly, the budget.

Let us start with the budget. The current Leader of the Opposition talks as if the forward estimates mean nothing. That is a very complacent view of government. Forward estimates are important in an election campaign because they examine all of the policy commitments that have been agreed to by the Government of the day and they project them into the future, so we know what will be the impact on public expenditure. They are crucial when it comes to defining election commitments. We used the forward estimates contained in the budget papers, looked at how we would redistribute money through our programs and then determined our priorities.

When we came into government we found the forward estimates were not a proper basis upon which to make judgments about those matters. I refer for evidence to the major speech delivered by the Treasurer on this matter

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in which he introduced the terminology “Barnett’s black hole”. I also refer to the speech of the Minister for Education in which he spoke about the incompetent performance of the former minister and the computer program for education. The Minister for Education also spoke about the deceit of the former minister’s class-size commitment, which is not in the forward estimates programs. The Minister for Police pointed out that the Court Government initiated the Delta communications and information technology program and the computer aided dispatch and communications system but did not budget for these major new initiatives. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure exposed deceit throughout the State in the way the budgets in her portfolio were conducted. I could add to that list, but the fact is that there is a budget black hole which has been pointed out by the Treasurer.

We now have a problem as a Government. On the one hand we have the commitments that we made and backed up with the redistribution of effort within government, and we are on the way to achieving that by reducing the Cabinet, cutting back on advertising, travel and consultancies, reducing the number of staff in ministerial offices and looking at all the programs in government so that we can ensure that they deliver on behalf of the people of Western Australia. We could quite easily have met all of our commitments. However, we have found that on top of that we have the budget black hole. We have been absolutely open with the people of Western Australia: either we must cut back on expenditure or we must find some new revenue. That is open and accountable government on the basis of the facts of the matter. When in government, the Opposition concealed the facts about what was happening and tried to get away with a bit of spin. The people of Western Australia will not get that from this Government. The facts are on the table. We will address them in the best interests of the people of Western Australia.

I shall repeat my two points: first, the forward estimates are very important when framing promises in any election campaign. I am not surprised that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to downplay the importance of the forward estimates. If he treats the forward estimates with the seriousness they deserve, he knows that he has a bit of a credibility problem and that the members on his side of the House have a credibility problem. We must come to grips with that credibility problem, because what is a credibility problem for the Opposition is a budget problem for us. However, we are dealing with it, and people will see how we deal with it when our budget comes down. The Leader of the Opposition is wrong on the forward estimates. We are open and accountable and we are telling the truth to the people of Western Australia about that issue.

I turn to the public service. We have had eight years of privatisation, contracting out and closing down such entities as the Midland railway workshops. We have had whistleblowers pursued by the previous Government to the point where their ability to live normal lives has broken down. The present Leader of the Opposition threatened teachers and had them taken off the job for a few days because they had the temerity to write a letter to a local newspaper. Therefore, it is extraordinary that the Opposition talks about the public service. We are up front with the public service. We were before the election and we are after the election. We said to the unions that represent the public service that we would restructure the system and reduce the number of government departments. We said that there would not be any involuntary redundancies. However, we had to reduce the senior executive level of government. I will tell members why we had to do that. Members of the previous Government were the masters of economic competence, and this is what happened: the senior executive part of government was going up and the service delivery part of government was going down. No wonder the people of Western Australia said that they wanted a change. They did not want the Government of Western Australia to create more positions for more senior executives; they wanted it to provide a better service in education, in health, in the Police Service, in our training systems, and in the way in which complaints that were received were dealt with. That is what the people of Western Australia want done properly. Therefore, the Government is restructuring the public sector so that it will offer those services. Is the Opposition saying that the whole public sector in Western Australia should be frozen and that there can be no change? If it is saying that, the first thing I note is that that is a totally wrong view of what happens. What happens is that something like 10 000 or 11 000 people leave the public sector every year. That happens all the time. Why is it happening? It is because some people would like a different job.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dean): Order! I ask the members for Murdoch and Darling Range to keep the volume down a bit, please.

Dr GALLOP: Some people would like a different job; some reach the point of retirement; and some feel that the way the government system is working is such that they want to do something different. That happens all the time. What else happens all the time is that under the Public Sector Management Act, a process can be triggered that allows for voluntary redundancies. It happens. It is part of the system that the Opposition set up; yet it comes into this place and says that the Government is not allowed to use those existing processes, with all those people leaving, and the flexibility within the system. There must be a blanket freeze on the whole system, and the Government cannot retune the system so that the people of Western Australia get a better service.

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Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: What is the Opposition saying? Tell us.

Mr Board: Will you replace the 10 000 people who leave each year?

Dr GALLOP: I will answer that question. The Government will have 200 extra police, more nurses and more teachers dealing with literacy and numeracy programs. It will also have people on the trains providing security for those who use the system. That is what the Government is doing. I was absolutely clear about that issue in the election campaign. I repeat: service providers come first. That is why we have Governments. I am surprised that these so-called Liberals on the other side do not understand that. That is why we have Governments - service delivery.

The Opposition has no imagination. The people of Western Australia know that. I find it extraordinary that the Opposition should raise this issue. The Leader of the Opposition told us that he agrees with the Government's changes to the public sector. If he agrees with them, let us get on with the business. Under Labor, it will work this way: people's interests will be properly taken into account. We know that some people will have a different position from that which they had before, because in all these structural changes there will be changes in positions. That has been said all along. That might mean that there will be redeployment. In some areas there may be offers of voluntary redundancy. It is the normal process of government. I made it absolutely clear in the election campaign that there will be no involuntary redundancies under this Government. That promise will be delivered.

I refer to the two big promises. This Government will deliver responsible financial management and be open and accountable to the people of Western Australia. The Government is delivering on those promises. The Treasurer put the facts on the table about the financial situation and indicated that the Government will achieve the targets it said it would achieve. However, the facts are different from those disclosed by the previous Government. I ask the Leader of the Opposition what he would cut.

Mr Barnett: Before I answer that question -

Dr GALLOP: I will not respond to that, Mr Acting Speaker. I inform members that there was a famous question on the philosophy examination paper.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I will not tolerate that sort of comment from the Leader of the Opposition. I have given both sides a fair go. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to make personal comments like that, he can deal with them with me in another forum - not here.

Mr Barnett: The point was -

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I am speaking - I am still standing. The Premier has not invited an interjection. If he wishes to rise again and say that he does, I will let you carry on. Otherwise, your comments should cease.

Dr GALLOP: I am reminded of the philosophy question, which I must confess -

Mr Barnett interjected.

Mr Hyde: Go on, try and challenge the Acting Speaker properly! Go on!

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Perth is not helping matters.

Dr GALLOP: I must confess that I did not attempt to answer that philosophy question. However, the question was: is this a question? One of my student colleagues scored a very good mark, because his answer was: if it is, this is an answer. If we asked those opposite whether they were asking real questions, I wonder what sort of answers we would get, because they are not willing to deal with the substantive questions in this Parliament. On the budget, the Government has delivered what it promised in the way it is approaching the question, in its openness and accountability and in the way the Treasurer is talking to the people of Western Australia about the problems in an open way by putting the facts on the table. The previous Government concealed the facts from the people.

On the public service, the Government said that it would bring about significant change because it had to do so. The Government will reduce the number of senior executives in the public service, and there will be no involuntary redundancies. The Government has delivered on those promises. Therefore, the Government of Western Australia is working through its program to make sure that it delivers for the people.

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The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised a number of matters. Of course, he is not saying much about the Bunbury Back Beach and how he, that great supporter of Bunbury and the south west region, allowed the former Deputy Premier to shift \$2 million that was allocated to the Bunbury Back Beach to other parts of the south west region. He is not saying much about that in the Parliament, is he? He is not willing to talk about the promises which he gave and which were not fulfilled because the Government that he supported took the money and spent it somewhere else.

Another issue about which he is not talking is that the Government he supported withdrew the regulations that established price controls for regional motorists in Western Australia when it came into power in 1993. The previous Government withdrew those regulations. Let us be absolutely clear about this issue. The Labor Party made specific commitments to people on the petrol question and on the finance brokers issue. The Labor Party has clearly delivered on one of those promises in that the finance broking royal commission is currently operating. A certain proportion of money had been allocated to that. That royal commission will get to the truth of many issues that were not exposed under the previous Government. Those issues were not exposed because of the links between the Liberal Party and those involved in these scandals. The coalition Government did not want to touch them. It would be interesting to know the sorts of conversations that went on at the highest ranks of that Government. I can picture the meetings when those government members realised they had a problem because the Opposition was raising the issue in the Parliament and a public campaign was mounting. They would have asked themselves how they should deal with it, and they decided to set up an inquiry under the Public Sector Management Act to corral the issue into the small area of public sector management. They decided to not deal with the auditors, the mortgage brokers, the banks or any of the other people involved in this issue. They did not do that because they knew that once an inquiry started investigating that little world, complications would arise.

The Liberal Party accuses us of not supporting those people. We are supporting those people, and we will make sure that the truth comes out.

Mr Barnett: Who were those people with links to other people?

Dr GALLOP: Why did the coalition Government not hold a full royal commission?

Mr Barnett: It was considered more important that charges be laid, and over 220 prosecutions have been made.

Dr GALLOP: Why was that not an issue in the coalition Government's royal commission in the 1990s?

Mr Barnett: I am answering the question. We funded the liquidators. It was important that prosecutions proceeded and that they were not compromised by the events of a royal commission. I do not mind a royal commission, although I think it is a waste of \$4 million or \$5 million, and I do not think it will help one investor get back one dollar.

Dr GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition wants me to break our promise because he thinks it is a waste of money.

Mr Barnett: Yes, I think it is a waste of money but, as I have said, if I or any opposition member becomes involved in the royal commission in any sense - I don't see how - we will be totally supportive of its finding out what it wants to know.

Dr GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition was not that friendly with Doug Shave.

Mr Barnett: What are you implying?

Dr GALLOP: I am implying that the Liberal Party is changing its tune on this matter. Should all members of the former Government be held up for inspection by the royal commission? Should we delve into the coalition Cabinet and find out what went on?

Mr Barnett: Okay; let's go there.

Dr GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition wants to do that.

Mr Barnett: Hang on -

Dr GALLOP: Is that what the Leader of the Opposition wants to do? We have been open and honest about this.

Mr Barnett: If I am invited to interject -

Dr GALLOP: The people of Western Australia judged those opposite. It was called political responsibility, and they were turfed out. The member for Alfred Cove is here today -

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The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dean): I am not sure that the Leader of the Opposition had finished his interjection. I will allow him 20 seconds to do so.

Mr Barnett: If the Premier -

Dr GALLOP: Mr Acting Speaker, are you now inviting interjections? That is okay; members should go for it. I misunderstood your position. Let us have interjections.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Premier, I thought you asked the Leader of the Opposition a question, which I will allow him to answer in a less emotive fashion in the next 10 seconds. Then, it will be back to you.

Dr GALLOP: The former Government concealed the truth about this matter. We promised a royal commission and we have delivered that. There is no question about those matters.

Mr Barnett: What I am curious about -

Dr GALLOP: In terms of supporting individuals, we are looking at the question of the civil cases -

Mr Barnett: It is a weak person who implies something but will not substantiate it.

Dr GALLOP: What did I imply?

Mr Barnett: You implied matters involving former members of Cabinet, and you have not been able to substantiate them.

Dr GALLOP: Did the coalition Government ever discuss the sorts of people involved in the finance broking industry and whether it would be an embarrassment and pose political problems if the issues were inquired into?

Mr Barnett: Not in my earshot, no.

Dr GALLOP: Not in his earshot.

Mr Barnett: Certainly not. I want to put this on the record: Cabinet did discuss -

Dr GALLOP: I am not asking the Leader of the Opposition what happened in cabinet.

Mr Barnett: Cabinet discussed whether a royal commission should be held. Advice was sought and we decided to have an inquiry and fund liquidators to help assist action. We decided that was the appropriate way to proceed. Now, 220 charges have been laid. That was Cabinet's decision. If you are implying -

Dr GALLOP: I asked the Leader of the Opposition a question, and he answered it.

Mr Barnett: Don't be a smart Alec.

Dr GALLOP: He said, "Not in my earshot" -

Mr Barnett: You are being too smart.

Dr GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition said "Not in my earshot". He is fudging a bit with his answer.

Mr Barnett: You are looking silly.

Dr GALLOP: No, I heard what he said. He said, "Not in my earshot".

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! According to Standing Order No 113, quarrels are not permitted.

Points of Order

Mr BARNETT: The Premier has implied that I and other former members of the Cabinet of Western Australia had a conflict of interest and made decisions for either political reasons or because of the interests of various people associated with the Liberal Party. That is impugning the reputation of me and my colleagues as well as our conduct as ministers of the Crown. I take great offence at that and ask the Premier to either substantiate or withdraw those comments.

Mr KOBELKE: I do not think it is appropriate for the Leader of the Opposition - or anyone - to frivolously take a point of order so that he can re-enter the debate. The people of this State made a clear judgment at the election on the issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition. We know what they think. It is not proper for the Leader of the Opposition to try to further his contribution to the debate by claiming a point of order. There is no point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I see no point of order. That is the Leader of the Opposition's opinion of the Premier's statement. I ask him to cease interrupting, in line with Standing Order No 113.

Debate Resumed

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Dr GALLOP: I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition been for the past three years. While on the other side of the House, we argued about these issues on many occasions.

I move on to the petrol issue. The Government in power is delivering on its promises in that area. The fuel industry is a very complex marketplace. Governments should deal with it by going into the marketplace and working through its commitments step by step, law by law and regulation by regulation. A Government can go in one of two directions when it gets tough: it can pull back and do nothing, which is exactly what the previous Government did, or it can look at the facts of the situation and try to work out how to move forward. The petroleum market is one of the most complex and difficult markets in the State. However, we will not pull out. We will keep looking at that issue.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised two issues. The first was the finance broking issue. I indicated that we have delivered on our promises in that area.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: No-one else believes you.

Dr GALLOP: I take it the Deputy Leader of the Opposition does not believe us.

Mr Barnett: Neither do the investors.

Dr GALLOP: The Opposition says we ought to do something that we did not promise; that is, expose the taxpayers of Western Australia to a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mr Barnett: You broke your promise.

Dr GALLOP: Is the Opposition saying that was our promise? If that were our promise, we would have debated it during the election campaign. It would be a huge commitment. It was not debated during the election campaign because it was not promised. The Leader of the Opposition knows that is true. We are supporting the investors through those civil cases and we have instigated a royal commission.

I have addressed the four issues raised by the Opposition: the budget, the public service, the finance broking scandal and the petrol issue. I could go through all of the achievements made in the short time that we have been in government.

Mr Barnett: That would be very short!

Dr GALLOP: Okay, I will do it! I will list the Government's achievements. I will have to cull it a bit, because we do not want to be here for a long time.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: So members opposite do not want me to do it?

Mr Barnett: It is boring!

Dr GALLOP: I see; the Government's achieving its promises is boring? I will go through those achievements. We have drafted and introduced the Criminal Code (Protection of Vulnerable Persons) Amendment Bill. Will the Opposition support that Bill?

Mr Barnett: We will amend it; we will make it a minimum, not a maximum.

Dr GALLOP: I see. The Opposition will amend it, so it will support it. The Government has established the royal commission into the finance broking scandal. The Government has implemented a maximum wholesale price for petrol -

Mr Barnett: That has not worked.

Dr GALLOP: It has not worked? There are a lot of problems with that policy; that is right. However, the Government implemented that policy - the Opposition did not do it!

Mr Barnett: What is your model?

Dr GALLOP: What is the Opposition's model?

Mr Barnett: We do not offer fantasies; we do realistic things.

Dr GALLOP: The Government put the 50-50 legislation through the Assembly.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dean): Order! I ask the member for Kalgoorlie to please tone down his interjections. I remind members that all interjections are disorderly.

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Dr GALLOP: We have put an end to the privatisation of vacation swimming lessons in Western Australia - Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The debate is with the Premier and not between the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Education.

Dr GALLOP: The Government has ended the logging of old-growth forests in Western Australia. That was not a minor commitment. It has resulted in a major change in how Western Australia works and perceives itself. We have also put in place support mechanism for the people affected by the decision to stop the logging of old-growth forests.

Mr Barnett: Not one of you has gone to the south west to support the workers. Who has come out in support of the workers?

Dr GALLOP: All of us. Every Labor member in this Parliament supports the workers in the south west.

The Government has cancelled the beach fees in south west national parks. I am picking out the better achievements in this list that highlights the Government's achievements in its first 100 days.

We have abolished the Metropolitan Health Service Board, and that money will be redistributed to provide real health services in Western Australia. This Government has heritage-listed the Raffles Hotel, something the Opposition did not have the will to do. In indigenous affairs, this Government has totally transformed the way native title is approached in Western Australia, and we have removed the antagonism and negative overlay that the previous Government put on that issue. We have raised the minimum wage for workers. We have put a stop to workers in the public sector being forced to take out workplace agreements. We have supported the Australian Council of Trade Unions in its national wage case. The more I go through the Government's list of achievements, the better it gets!

We have reimbursed the City of Cockburn for money that was taken off it by the previous Government. We have implemented major reviews of the native title negotiating procedures. We are introducing legislation into this Parliament to remove ministerial appeals from the planning system in order to bring Western Australia into the twenty-first century. We are bringing together the interest groups that are concerned about heavy haulage in Western Australia and are trying to achieve consensus on this contentious issue.

I apologise to the members of the back bench for my next point: we have reduced cabinet positions from 17 to 14, and that will save the people of Western Australia between \$15 million and \$20 million over the next four years. We now have a public servant as our cabinet secretary.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dean): Order, members!

Dr GALLOP: This Government has stopped the process by which the position of Agent General in London is a gift to a former member of Parliament and has given that job to a career public servant. We have reduced the Totalisator Agency Board turnover tax from five percent to 4.5 per cent and thereby have given an injection to the racing industry to save it from the impact of the goods and services tax. We have appointed cabinet ministers to represent all of the regions of this State. We are holding regional cabinet meetings, two of which have already been held in Albany and Kalgoorlie.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: I will not ask for any interjections from the independent benches, but for the first time in this State's history, we have created a science council that will develop a proper strategy for science in Western Australia. We have brought into the Parliament significant concessions for seniors that will apply from 1 July, and I congratulate the Minister for Seniors on that policy.

It was a tough decision, but this Government abolished the Way2Go fiasco - that waste of money that was introduced by the former Government. This Government has provided a financial assistance package for the Nannup timber processing mill to secure the future of the people in that area. I believe all members of this House will agree that was an important and major decision. We have directed state government agencies to pay their bills within 30 days to improve the cash flows of small businesses. We have approved legislation to cut stamp duty on workers compensation premiums to three per cent for small businesses in Western Australia.

Mr Barnett: I recall the huge increase in parking bay charges in the CBD.

Dr GALLOP: The Government is very proud of that achievement. Is the Leader of the Opposition opposed to that? Does the Leader of the Opposition know what that will achieve? It will secure the future of that wonderful central area transit bus system that was created by the previous Labor Government. We have reduced the

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number of ministerial staff from 217 to 160 and the number of cars from 87 to 48, and all that money will go back to the people of Western Australia via the services that we will introduce. We have commenced the process of releasing government contracts for public view by posting summaries of contracts that are \$10 000 or higher.

I could go on and on; however, I remind members opposite that this Government has held office only since 16 February 2001, and already we have achieved all of those measures for the people of Western Australia. My advice to the Leader of the Opposition and opposition members in general is that if they persist with the same arrogance and complacency that they showed when in government, they will not make any progress. After the Labor Party was defeated in 1993, we went to the people of Western Australia and developed a coherent package on how we would redistribute resources in Western Australia and take new initiatives to ensure that the State could meet the challenges that it faced; and step by step we projected a positive alternative for the people of Western Australia. That is why we were given the chance to govern. I ask the Opposition: what about coming into this Parliament and debating some of the real issues? Tell us what the Opposition would do with the health system. Tell us what the Opposition would do with the education system.

Mr Barnett interjected.

Dr GALLOP: Why is the Leader of the Opposition not debating education?

Mr Barnett: I will debate education right now. We will stay back after seven o'clock and we will have an hour's debate on education.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dean): I call the members on my left to order!

Dr GALLOP: There are now two sides to the political debate in Western Australia. The Government of Western Australia has a coherent view of the future of our State and a clear program that it will proceed to implement in a determined way. It has a clear concept of reform for the State's institutions, the public sector, the Cabinet, our electoral system, our forestry industry and our petroleum industry, so that it remains in touch with the new economy rather than ignoring it as did the previous Government. We will reform some of the antiquated legislation that discriminates against people because of their sexuality. We will do all of those things. We will bring the State of Western Australia into the twenty-first century.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Dr GALLOP: This will be a long, hard process but we will not be deterred. The long march forward into the twenty-first century has commenced. Join with us in creating a much better future for all Western Australians.

Government members: Hear, hear!

MR COWAN (Merredin) [5.55 pm]: Had I been involved in the management of opposition business I am not sure that I would have sought to introduce a motion to discuss broken promises so early in the life of this Government. I would not have been as direct as that. Governments usually need a bit of time to hang themselves, and I do not think this Government has had that much time. I will raise some important issues about how an erroneous spin has been put on some of the management of this Government that will cause some very serious implications, not only for the Government but also for the public of Western Australia.

I refer to an example raised by the Premier. I want the Premier to listen to this and to take note of it, because it is very important, and indicative of the way this Government operates in a public sense for a public image, but delivers nothing. I refer to the issue of science. We now have a minister responsible for science - the Premier. As the minister responsible for science, the Premier has established a science council or a science forum.

Dr Gallop: It is building on some of the work that you have done.

Mr COWAN: Yes, and I am sure that is the Premier's intention, but the actual delivery of science policies and objectives is currently being undermined. A number of programs were designed to attract a greater input into science and a greater expenditure of funds on science in this State. I cannot think of an area more relevant than the marine environment, because we have so much coastline in this State, yet we do not have a particular group investigating the marine environment or the marine sciences. In an endeavour to attract people from the marine science division of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation to Western Australia we had to put some money on the table. Those funds are in jeopardy. As a consequence, the concept of attracting the CSIRO to this State is in doubt, because the question is whether this State Government will honour its commitment to that program and bring a scientific body, such as CSIRO, to Western Australia. While the Premier is delivering this wonderful public image about a science council - and I support that - he should make sure that somewhere along the line something is being done, because at the moment all these reviews and all

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these decisions to defer and to delay - to wait until the new budget is delivered - are effectively destroying the confidence of other bodies we are trying to attract to this State. I do not want to deal with that issue to any great extent, but I remind the Premier that he needs not only to talk about a few things but also to act on them. At this moment nothing is being done.

I now raise some of the issues referred to by the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy, and about which the Government has some sensitivity, because it has responded to them. I refer to the public image as opposed to government action. Members should note that the public image of this Government could be given a very high rating indeed. The Premier has done it well. He has spun the yarn, he has put out the story, and it has been swallowed whole.

Dr Gallop: We have only been in power since 16 February.

Mr COWAN: I know. That is why I said it was somewhat premature to talk about broken promises, but it is not premature to talk about the spin that the Government has put on things that seem, for some reason or another, to have been accepted by the public of Western Australia but which will at some time lead to the Government's downfall.

We have constantly heard about the budget blow-out, a budget hole and a whole range of issues. I would love to refer the Press to the same recommendation. Members should look at the previous budget papers and make some comparisons with the budget estimates for every year for both revenue and expenditure, and then look at the actuals. They would note the difference. Members should look at the previous 10 years to see a range of figures from Governments of both persuasions and see the difference between what is a forward estimate and what is an actual. Invariably forward estimates are much lesser sums than actuals. It is not appropriate for this spin to be put on the budget through talk of a budget hole by saying, "This was not included in the forward estimates", because a forward estimate is invariably considerably lower than the actual expenditure. In addition, the claim has also been made that the previous Government spent money that was not budgeted. That is acknowledged. If members look at the budget papers they will see that, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, those amounts were considerable, because payments were being made to offset losses in areas such as the Bank of Western Australia - that arose a little earlier than some - and the Government Employees Superannuation Board. A whole range of matters were not budgeted for but were included. In some years that figure has exceeded \$350 million; last year I think it was about \$252 million.

Mr Barnett: I failed in my explanation, but maybe the member for Merredin could explain to members opposite who actually prepares the forward estimates and publishes them.

Mr COWAN: The Treasury does that. I assume that at some stage the Treasurer will actually tick off the Treasury. On page 6 of budget paper No 3 last year an amount of \$222.8 million was appropriated on policy decisions made since the 1999-2000 budget; in other words, that was money that had not been appropriated. All of that information is there. We as a Parliament and the public have been given the impression that there is a huge budget hole. My response to that at any time would be unparliamentary. The Government can put those connotations on the budget and on what did or did not happen. However, members will find that it and has been the practice for years. At some time or another, someone in the press gallery or in the broader public will wake up and ask what is going on. How can we possibly believe that a practice that has been pursued for years can now be used as a reason for saying that we have a budget hole? It cannot.

I remind the Minister for Education that he should not believe everything he reads in the Press.

Mr Carpenter: I don't.

Mr COWAN: I am pleased about that. It seems to me that his attitude in this place was beginning to reflect some of the words that have been written about him. He should not believe it. I do not like to think that he was regarded as one of the -

Mr Carpenter: Senator, I just like to enjoy myself. You should remember that Caligula made his horse senator, so there is hope for you yet.

Mr COWAN: He did indeed. I could probably do a better job than the horse if I were to get there, but I have not made up my mind on that yet. I will let the minister know when I do. I hope the minister enjoys himself, but he should not believe everything that has been written about him, because he is not that good.

Health and education will always be two of the portfolios that will appear on the page in the budget papers that demands a greater sum of money. It might be good fun to be able to say where this particular policy fell over and where it did not. I agree with the Minister for Education about the issue of computers. It is not appropriate to just supply computers; we must provide the curriculum course that shows students how to use them, how to

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improve their word processing skills, their capacity to use the computers, and their capacity to access the Internet so they can use it not only as a learning tool but also as something that will equip them in later life to do the job that they might be asked to do. Health is the same. The demand for health will always grow because Treasury has the view, and I share it, that we need to keep a little pressure on health. However, in the final analysis, we must always meet the demands made by the public. There is no point in complaining about the health budget needing more money. I commend the Minister for Health for what he has done. He has had the added burden of reviewing and increasing nurses' wages and salaries. It was clear that there would be a blow-out when it came to health and education issues.

I will spend the small amount of time I have left - I do not want to ask for an extension of time - on the issues of fuel and finance brokers. A lot has been said about the performance of the previous Government on the finance brokers issue. We have copped quite a lot of that on the chin, and I am prepared to do so. However, one thing I will not cop is the constant carping that we did nothing. We employed a number of supervisors, at cost to the taxpayer, to investigate ways and means of returning money to those people who had invested in those companies and businesses that failed. When Knightsbridge Finance Pty Ltd had a difficulty, what did the Government do? It did not appoint a supervisor. The Government allowed that company to go into liquidation. There is a difference: a liquidator will look at only secured creditors, whereas a supervisor has a broader range of responsibilities. No interest was shown in the majority of investors. The Government was not prepared to appoint a supervisor to give some assistance to the investors of that finance broking firm and the deals it conducted. Someone somewhere along the line will remember those things and remind the Government that a royal commission is fine, but at least the previous Government allocated an amount of money designed to act for those people who had invested funds and to seek to recover some of those funds. A royal commission will not recover one cent for any of those people who have invested unwisely with those finance brokers and their schemes.

Finally, I turn to the petrol issue. I had a lot to do with the petroleum products legislation. We said prior to the election that there was no time for us to prepare legislation to amend the Petroleum Products Pricing Act as well as the Petroleum Retailers Rights and Liabilities Act. We could not do both. As a priority, we amended the Petroleum Products Pricing Act and dealt with that in the first instance. Subject to our return to government after the election, we undertook to introduce legislation that dealt with most - not all - of the recommendations of the committee, particularly the 50-50 legislation. However, we were not returned to government. I am sure that at some time the Minister for Consumer Affairs might be prepared to acknowledge that, when he came to government, there were already some initial drafts of the 50-50 legislation, which backs up what I have said. The Ministry of Fair Trading was instructed to give drafting instructions to parliamentary counsel to get on with the job of preparing the 50-50 legislation. To say that we had no interest in this matter is nonsense. One of the reasons we were somewhat reticent about the 50-50 legislation was that we recognised it would not have a great deal of value in a commercial world. Unfortunately, that has proved correct. The price of fuel has been lowered not because of government legislation or regulatory provisions, but because the international oil companies have decided that shall be the case. The Government's maximum wholesale price has had no impact whatsoever on fuel prices. It certainly has had no impact on fuel prices in country areas. If the Government takes the action that the member for Pilbara has talked about - that is, regulate the retail price of fuel in country areas - it might fix one thing, but it will create mayhem in a range of other areas. That is something the Government must come to grips with.

Although it might be too soon in the history of this Government to talk about broken promises, it is appropriate to talk about those issues that are credible - that is, what the Press is prepared to accept and publish. However, they certainly do not have a great deal of depth. Because they lack depth, at some time in the future the Government will be shown to lack credibility. That is something the Government needs to take notice of, and that is one of the reasons I support this motion.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [6.08 pm]: I oppose the motion. What I find interesting is that we have heard three speakers from the other side, none of whom actually spoke to the motion in any substantial way. No facts whatsoever were raised in support of the motion. Perhaps we should look at the words of the motion. It reads -

That this House record that the Government has broken a number of significant election commitments during its first five months in office.

For a start, the Government assumed office four and a half months ago. Of the large number of commitments that were made by the Labor Party prior to the election, very few of them specified a date. I cannot recall any of them saying that they would be delivered within four months of our coming to government.

Mr Barnett: The motion does not say that.

Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Larry Graham; Mr Paul Omodei

Mr KOBELKE: The motion states that the Government has broken a number of significant election commitments during its first five months. A few matters of substance and a few interesting things were said; however, most comments did not relate to breaking promises. The Opposition said that the failure of the Government to deliver on a four-year promise within four months is breaking a promise. It said that because in four months of government we have not delivered on all the promises that we said would take four years to deliver, somehow those promises were broken. No-one in the community will believe that hypothesis; it is simply nonsense. This motion states that the Government has broken promises. Not one fact was advanced by members opposite in support of their claim that we had broken election promises. Many things were said about not delivering promises in time - we can debate that - but not one thing was said about breaking a promise.

I shall put on the record what it means to break a promise. In my book, and I believe in the book of the people of Western Australia, breaking a promise is when a Government goes to an election stating that it will keep and refurbish the Midland Workshops but as soon as it wins the election it closes it down and sacks everyone. There was not one fact about this Government doing that sort of thing. Similarly, in my book, breaking a promise is when a Government prints advertisements during an election campaign stating that there will be no gold tax if the coalition Government is re-elected, but it wins the election and legislates to impose a gold tax.

Mr Barnett: Hang on, did you say that was in our policy?

Mr KOBELKE: I said it was in a paid election advertisement.

Mr Barnett: By whom?

Mr KOBELKE: By the National Party. It voted for it, and that is breaking a promise. Does the Leader of the Opposition agree that is breaking a promise?

Mr Barnett: Not by the Liberal Party or the coalition.

Mr KOBELKE: If a political party places a newspaper advertisement stating that if people vote for it there will be no gold tax and that party when elected to government votes for a gold tax, is that breaking a promise?

Mr Barnett: You can ask the leader of the National Party about that. The coalition party and the Liberal Party broke no promises.

Mr KOBELKE: Mr Speaker, I believe I have made the first point I wanted to make: The Leader of the Opposition cannot distinguish fact from fantasy. I told him of a clear fact: in a recent election - not the last one - newspaper advertisements placed by the National Party stated that there would be no gold tax if the coalition party were re-elected. Members know that the coalition came into Parliament and passed legislation for a gold tax, and the State now has a gold tax. The Leader of the Opposition does not believe that is breaking a promise. That is the level of rationality from this Leader of the Opposition. He will not admit that that is breaking a promise. Time after time this Leader of the Opposition says one thing and the facts are contrary. I could speak for hours about how this Leader of the Opposition does not speak the truth. I have given one example of his response to me so far on this matter.

The motion before the House should be taken seriously. I expected the Opposition to mount some facts in support of a motion before the House that suggests the Government has broken a number of significant election commitments. I - and no doubt other members who have listened - have not heard one fact put forward by the three previous speakers. In fact, the member for Merredin in his opening remarks suggested that moving this motion now was not such a smart thing to do. That is probably because in his judgment - he may refute this - the Government has not broken any promises. In the future the Opposition may contend that we have broken promises. However, the member for Merredin stated that the Gallop Government has not broken any promise it gave. It is this Government's clear commitment to go through its whole four-year term without honouring any commitments. The proposal put by the Opposition has no substance. It could not state a single fact that could be taken to mean the Government broke an election promise in its first four months of government. It may be said with justification that we have not delivered some promises as quickly as we would have liked to; however, that is not breaking a promise. We did not say we would deliver them in four months. We have four years to deliver our promises and if at the end of those four years we have not delivered those promises, that would be breaking a promise. We have not done that yet.

What does this Leader of the Opposition do? He comes into this place and talks about lies. He used the word "lies" half a dozen times, suggesting -

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr BARNETT: I did not use the word "lie" in this debate.

Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Larry Graham; Mr Paul Omodei

The SPEAKER: I do not know whether the word was used. I was not in the Chamber for the entire debate. However, if the word was not used perhaps the minister should withdraw that statement.

Mr KOBELKE: Mr Speaker, in fact it was used. It was not to impugn any individual member, but it was used several times by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not want to take issue with that matter because I did not take a point of order at the time, although I could have, because it was not directed at a member.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition is definite that he did not say it. I ask the minister to withdraw the statement.

Mr KOBELKE: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. Tomorrow I shall look through the *Hansard* to see whether the word was used and provide it to the Leader of the Opposition, and perhaps to you, Mr Speaker.

Debate Resumed

Mr KOBELKE: The Leader of the Opposition, in this case and in every other case, says something that is totally contrary to the facts. How many members on my side of the House heard the Leader of the Opposition use the word that we are not allowed to use?

Several members interjected.

Mr KOBELKE: I am talking only about the Leader of the Opposition at the moment. I see many hands rising on this side of the House. In the Leader of the Opposition we have a man who has no interest in the truth. He is interested in positioning.

Mr Barnett: I say to the Leader of the House that I do not recall using the word "lie". I do not believe I did. However, there is nothing inappropriate in using the word "lie". What one cannot do is call a member a liar, and that did not happen.

Mr KOBELKE: I did not say that.

Mr Barnett: What are you carrying on about then?

Mr KOBELKE: I am trying to get to my point, but the Leader of the Opposition was overly sensitive. The point I make is that he is too poncey to accept the facts. He is in opposition and if he is ever to return to this side of the House he should start considering the facts rather than considering nice political positions with which to attack the Government or to make statements that have no relevance to the facts of the matter. My withdrawal of remark is a further example. So far there are two examples in which the Leader of the Opposition by interjection indicated he does not understand simple facts. First, he did not understand that breaking a promise is when one says something and one does the opposite. This Leader of the Opposition finds it incredibly difficult to speak the truth. The last point is that the Leader of the Opposition got to his feet and used a deal of colourful language about how this Government misled the people at the election and got it all wrong. The matter must be put in context. The Leader of the Opposition introduced the debate on a motion that accused the Gallop Government of honouring a number of significant election commitments. One would expect the Leader of the Opposition to have done a bit of work on his speech. When he rose to his feet one would have expected the Leader of the Opposition to have one or two facts correct. He tried to lay a smear on the Government for having got it all wrong and having misled the people. He said that Labor said during the election campaign that its commitments would cost \$756 million. I do not take issue with that. The Leader of the Opposition said that when we came into government Treasury gave us an assessment of \$1.2 billion. I ask the Leader of the Opposition whether that is correct?

Mr Barnett: That is what Treasury said - \$1.2 billion.

Mr KOBELKE: He said that we misled people because we said it was only \$756 million. I interjected and said that was not true. During the election campaign we said there was \$700 million-odd - I now clarify that as \$756 million - in recurrent funding and \$460 million-odd for capital expenditure. The Leader of the Opposition said no. That is what I heard him say. Is that correct?

Mr Barnett: We costed the ALP's promises at \$1.1 billion. Media reports in *The Australian* and *The West Australian* used the figure \$756 million. I cannot recall any public comment from the Labor Party conceding that its commitments exceeded \$1 billion. You did not make it public.

Mr KOBELKE: For the third time, the Leader of the Opposition has shown that he has no respect for the truth. He uses weasel words to get out of it.

Mr Barnett: I am reporting what was in the media.

Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Larry Graham; Mr Paul Omodei

Mr KOBELKE: He is now saying that his information is based on press reports. He said earlier that the Labor Party totally misled the public during the election campaign. Apparently we said nothing about \$1.2 billion; it was only \$756 million. He said that we deceived people, but he is now changing his tune because he knows I have a copy of the press release issued during the campaign revealing that the figures were \$756 million recurrent and \$461 million capital expenditure. That was the press release that this Leader of the Opposition, while leading the debate and trying to lay some facts before us, said was not true. He attempted this attack on the Government, but he could not tell the truth. He does it time after time. The leader has absolutely no respect for the truth, and that is what will catch him out. He has no credibility. How can he come into this place and say that the Labor Government has broken a promise when he cannot tell the truth? He cannot present one fact that backs up his case. We have a problem with the leader. It may be terminal, but we hope it is not. We like him as Leader of the Opposition; he makes a marvellous adversary.

Mr Barnett: *The Australian* and *The West Australian* recorded the Treasurer's comments.

Mr KOBELKE: The leader should have listened to the former Deputy Premier, who gave good advice when he said that we should not believe everything we read in the newspapers. I know the leader does not get on well with the member for Merredin - he can be testy. However, on this occasion the leader should have listened to his advice. These issues have been raised in newspapers, on the radio and on television, and a press release was issued. The leader is relying on the excuse that the media got it wrong. That is pathetic. He came into this place to mount a major attack on the Government and got his facts wrong, and he is now blaming the media. That shows us where this Opposition is going.

No facts have been presented supporting the proposition that this Government has broken a promise. The best members opposite can argue is that we have been too slow in delivering. Apparently, we should have delivered in four months what we promised to deliver in four years. That is a point for debate, but it does not relate to the motion before the House.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised a number of issues. I will comment briefly on the finance brokers scandal. The Government has not yet delivered on its five clear commitments, but work is being done on all of them. Some have been fully delivered, some have been partially delivered and some are yet to be addressed - but they will be delivered. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has said that the Government has broken promises when clearly it has not.

He then got involved in a debate about liability. The deputy leader should be the last person to claim that the Government has a liability. If a liability rests with the Government - that question is still to be resolved - exactly where does it rest? It appears that the Opposition has not understood what the Premier has been saying. His position, which I fully support, is that if a liability rested with the Government - that is, on then Minister Shave, then Premier Court, and then Deputy Premier Barnett - then that involved a political process. That political process has taken its course in the form of the people's vote at the election.

If members opposite want to take it further - the Government does not - and start digging into who said what to whom and why they did not stand up in this place and make representations on behalf of those people who had been robbed, whether they were cowardly or inattentive, or whether they had mates who were making crooked money and they did not want to get down on them -

Point of Order

Mr BARNETT: Again, the Leader of the House has named me, the former Premier, the former Deputy Premier and other former cabinet members. He has implied that we would be liable - I presume in some financial sense - for actions related to the finance brokers situation. The implication is that improper decisions were made by the previous Government on the basis of alleged associations with various individuals in the finance broking industry. That is a direct impugning of the reputation of me and my colleagues.

Mr KOBELKE: It is important to point out that I said the word "if" at the start. I said that the Government thinks accountability starts at one level and, if members opposite want to take it further, it will open up those questions. I did not imply that was a fact.

Mr Barnett: If you think that is a problem, walk outside and say that in front of a camera.

The SPEAKER: I listened intently to the Leader of the House. If he was impugning any of the people mentioned, I would have called him to order and asked him to withdraw his statement. He was very careful not to impugn anyone.

Debate Resumed

Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Larry Graham; Mr Paul Omodei

Mr KOBELKE: I was putting forward a hypothetical scenario. I said at the outset that the Government does not believe that that is the way to go. The people have spoken and that is how it should be settled; that is, through the election process. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of liability, and we should be dealing with that liability. If it is pursued to the level of government -

Several members interjected.

Mr KOBELKE: They might say, "Don't touch us; blame the public servants." They do not want anyone to touch the former minister and the former Government. Time after time, members of the coalition Government voted to defend the minister. There is a liability. The Government does not want to go down that road, but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that we should. I am pointing out the stupidity of suggesting that course of action. If he thinks he can skip out from under and blame the public servants, he has another think coming. The public servants may or may not have done things that were incorrect, but the royal commission can look at that issue and make a determination. Whether a liability rests with the former Government has yet to be determined. This Government gave clear commitments about how it would react should that be the case.

The Opposition has put this motion, and three speakers have made contributions so far. Not only have they not managed to lay a glove on the Government, they also have not presented one fact that goes to the point of the motion. That demonstrates that members opposite still have not come to grips with the fact that they lost the election or that they must start telling the truth. They cannot run lines because they sound good and not back them with facts.

When members on this side have made a mistake - there have been several - we have addressed the issue and put the record straight. Members opposite do not think they should do that; in fact, they have criticised the Government for doing so. Yesterday I spoke on a procedural matter and corrected myself later because that was the appropriate thing to do. Somehow members opposite think that is a big issue. Members opposite do not face facts; they cover up and keep everyone in the dark, thinking the problem will go away. As we have seen clearly today from the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition, members opposite are not willing to address the facts. They say things that are false. Someone who aspires to leadership should do much better. If the leader cannot get the facts and present them, he is failing. That is not leadership; it is a woeful situation with a rabble leading a rabble.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley) [6.30 pm]: As much as it pains me to remind members opposite, they are in government and we are in opposition. They made promises during the election campaign to attract votes.

The then Opposition's priorities were not ours. Some of our promises were very similar and others quite different. Our role in opposition is to ensure that the Government is open and accountable to the people to whom they made those commitments. If members of the Government want to use tricky language and say, "Hang on, that is not what we said", and the Leader of the House wants to use a technical defence to the debate this afternoon, it all becomes smoke and mirrors and tricky language.

Mr Kobelke: Give us one fact.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will get to that.

At the end of the day the people will hold the Government accountable. Our role is to ensure that the people are aware of what is going on. That is the reason we raise issues, as we have done today. I used the expressions of "smoke and mirrors" and "tricky language". The member for Merredin used the expression "spinning a yarn". I do not care what words were used to describe what the government members said to the electorate. It is all the same. They might say that they did not use those actual words, but people in Western Australia have a perception and an understanding, which is totally different from that tricky defence.

I turn to the public service. The Premier said on 15 January that there would be no other public service job cuts under Labor's restructuring plan. That is a nonsense. The Deputy Premier later acknowledged that there would be job cuts. I give an example: if three agencies are being combined into one and there are three libraries in each of those agencies, three librarians will not be needed. What will the two surplus librarians do? The Premier says that they will be retrained and redeployed. I hope the Government has a super-duper plan for redeployees, because it will need it when talking about restructuring. If the Government asks why we are raising these matters, it is because we, the public service and the community, want to know how many jobs will be targeted in the Government's restructuring program. The Government need not tell me that there will not be any job losses. I have just given one small example that everybody can understand. The number of jobs in the public sector will be reduced. The Premier talks about redeploying, but that does not mean a job. What will the Government get public servants to do - projects or sitting at tables looking out of windows or going home and doing the gardening?

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We are also concerned about the reduction in services. We are concerned about the cost. If I may take a small example: in 1999 the Public Sector Standards Commissioner, Don Saunders, said that it costs \$29 000 to hire a chief executive officer. The Government is planning to create 23 new departments, which means 23 new CEOs at a cost of \$700 000. That is one cost factor that has not been identified, and the Government has not identified whom and what it is targeting. The report released last week by the Premier's task force at pages 26 and 27 gives some indications of the magnitude of efficiency benefits that can be achieved in staffing following machinery of government changes. The example used is what happened in the federal Government after 1987. There was a 10 per cent reduction in the staff of the Department of Primary Industry and Energy; a 17 per cent reduction in the staff of the Department of Community Services and Health; and a seven per cent reduction in the staff of the Department of Transport and Communications. The number of senior executive service staff in the Australian public service declined from 1 664 in June 1987 to 1 517 a year later, a decrease of nearly nine per cent. Reductions in staffing in corporate services were less clear-cut; declines of 28 per cent and nearly 50 per cent were observed between 1986-87 and 1988-89 in the Department of Primary Industry and Energy and the Department of Transport and Communications.

What is not being identified and what the Government is not being honest about is what it is targeting. The report highlights a number of organisational charts. Those organisational charts may show what the Government is wanting to achieve and therefore they may very well be drafts until the Government goes through the process of advertising and making appointments. In one little unit only 12 people may be needed and in another little unit only 23 people may be needed. However, we are not being told that, nor is the public. That is why the Government's comments are regarded as untruthful. The Government said in January that there would be no other public service job cuts. That is a nonsense. It cannot be so if one goes through the level of restructuring that is being anticipated at the moment.

I suggest that the Government has bitten off far more than it can chew and the services that will be available to the public will be reduced. I suggest that they will be even more reduced in country and regional areas. We are already starting to see some of the offices close in some of the regional areas. The report refers to service delivery from Perth. As I said this afternoon, does Western Australia want Canberra to run it? Country and regional Western Australia do not want Perth to tell them what they can and cannot do. They want regional services in their areas. The member for Pilbara every year when we were in government asked how many people in his area were employed in this department, that department and so on. I can tell the member for Pilbara that the numbers are going down.

Mr Graham: I can tell the member for Kingsley the question is already in the computer.

Mrs EDWARDES: I bet he has not yet got an answer. When I asked the Premier about the reduction in regional services, he gave me a weasel answer. He said "we guarantee", but he would not guarantee that there would be no reduction in regional services.

I want to refer to two other facts briefly, and so give other speakers the opportunity to raise issues. The first issue is the Scarborough Senior High School land. The member for Innaloo put out a survey to all his residents about the future of the Scarborough Senior High School site. He said, "I want to see the future of this site determined by the wishes of the community." What did the community say? Nearly half preferred the land to be retained for open space.

On 20 February 2000, the then Labor shadow Minister for Planning talked to the residents there. The now Premier was there, plus two of the upper House members, Hon Ken Travers and Hon Ed Dermer. What did the shadow minister, the now Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, say? She said, "We will not say how much land should be open space, whether it should all be open space or 40 per cent open space. That is really a decision for the local community." That is why we are saying a proper consultative process must be set up. There has obviously been a change of heart, which was foreshadowed in the local Press on 13 March 2001. Mr Chris Tatam, President of the Scarborough Junior Basketball Club, voiced concern that the Government would not commit to the \$2.2 million basketball facility to replace the high school facility, which is what the community wanted for the needs of local youth.

Ms MacTiernan: How do you know that is what they want?

Mrs EDWARDES: This is what the community is saying.

Ms MacTiernan: How do you know that is what they want?

Mrs EDWARDES: They have no confidence in the minister.

Ms MacTiernan: We are going out and asking them -

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Larry Graham; Mr Paul Omodei

Mrs EDWARDES: The newspaper reported that there is still no word from the Government on its Scarborough Senior High School policy and local groups are becoming increasingly concerned. The Minister for Education then advised that a review of the coalition's proposals was continuing. On 17 April 2001, the City of Stirling reported through the Press that the Government intends to consult the community before finalising its proposals, and that this will be done as soon as possible. On 24 April, the City of Stirling reported in its newspaper *Voice News* that it was in a difficult position, not knowing what the owners of the land wanted to do and not knowing whether previous commitments to fund the \$2.2 million replacement community and sports facilities still stood. On 22 May 2001, it was reported that the Scarborough open space action group spokeswoman, Robyn Murphy, who I believe has stood as a candidate for the Labor Party in the past, believed that the State Government would not undertake thorough consultation with the community but rather would present the community with options from which to choose.

On 5 June 2001, almost four months on from the 10 February election, the Government came forward for the first time with details of its policies and plans regarding the high school site. A community forum was announced for Saturday, 16 June. That gave only four working days notice. Registrations closed on 11 June. After four months, what consultation did members of the community get? They got four working days notice to register interest in a public forum following a delay of some four months. I suggest that it was rushed through to minimise public involvement. The minister announced on 5 June, prior to any community consultation, that it was a decision for the local community. The decision on 5 June was that the Government needed \$10.5 million from the sale of prime land, including high residential lots, to put towards educational capital work priorities. The balance - some \$4 million - was to be put towards unspecified community facilities or would be traded against more than 30 per cent open space being retained. If there were no public facilities, it would probably be closer to 40 per cent public open space. That was contrary to Labor's commitment to those people. The people who attended the public forum did not want to vote on the options put forward by the minister. Another vote was taken, which overwhelmingly supported the retention of the site as 100 per cent public open space. What is the Government going to do? The Labor Party in opposition said that it was a decision for the local community, and that was why it was setting up a proper consultative process. I am not sure that four days notice provides a proper consultative process.

Where is the member for Innaloo? Was he consulted prior to the cabinet decision on the \$10.5 million that was needed? Was he consulted after that decision? Did he agree with that decision? What is his position? He knows what his community wants. It voted overwhelmingly for 100 per cent public open space at that site. The Labor Party gave the commitment that the decision would be made by the local community. It is another example of the Government's record of broken promises.

I will go to another broken promise, that of the Maylands Police Academy, which was raised in question time today. The Minister for the Environment and Heritage based her local campaign on Labor's promise to save the Maylands peninsula and to stop the 241-lot housing development on the site. The advertisement for that was referred to in question time today. The Minister for the Environment and Heritage pledged at a Maylands Ratepayers Association meeting in late January or early February that a Labor Government would tear up the then Government's proposal to develop the academy site. She was reported in the *Voice News* on 3 February as saying that the widespread consultation process would go back to square one. She has now come out and said that she cannot deliver on that promise.

Ms MacTiernan: When did she say that?

Mrs EDWARDES: In *The West Australian* and in Parliament. The headline was "Edwards retreats from land vow." What is the Government doing? Will it go back to the people? Will it stop that 241-lot housing development site?

Ms MacTiernan: Of course we are going to go back to the people.

Mrs EDWARDES: Will the Government do so with four days notice? Will it provide the same notice it provided for public consultation for the Scarborough Senior High School site? Will it present the public with some options and then go back to its original decision? The Government knows that the money is required for the police establishment in Joondalup. It must decide what it needs to do. The commitment for Scarborough had already been given in terms of the educational facilities. Now that the Labor Party is in Government, it must make some hard decisions. It went out to the public when it was in opposition and said that it would listen to the community and it would give people whatever they wanted.

Mr Kobelke: We did not. We never said that.

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Mrs EDWARDES: The Government said that it was a decision for the local community! It would not say how much land should be open space; whether it should be all open space or 40 per cent. It said it would set up a consultative process.

Ms MacTiernan: Can you cite the whole text of that speech? You can't because you don't have it!

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure will come to order.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes, I do have it. I can go through the whole lot. There is nothing that contradicts the minister. The Labor Party went out and said, "We will listen to you. We want your vote at the next election. Trust us." Now that the Labor Party is in Government, it must make hard decisions. It is in charge of the treasury benches and it is proving a bit hard for it because all the promises that were made before the election cannot be funded. The Government is trying to juggle all those balls. It has asked the Opposition what it would do. If the Liberal Party were on that side, it would manage it. We would put in our priorities, not the Government's, because our commitments prior to the election did not cost anywhere near those of the Government. That reality is now hitting home. The Government cannot do it. These are two more examples of the tricky language used when commitments were made to the people in order to gain votes and the treasury benches. Now it is in Government, the Labor Party is finding the job too hard. It cannot manage it. It is saying to the people, "We didn't mean that. That is not what we said." It is the technical defence. The Liberal Party does not buy it; nor will the people.

MR GRAHAM (Pilbara) [6.46 pm]: I happen to concur with the Leader of the National Party that it is too early to tell whether the Government has broken a number of significant commitments in its first term. It is reasonable that any Government be given at least one budget before it is criticised for broken promises, unless there are glaring cases in which a party says that it will do one thing during an election campaign and then does the exact opposite when in Government. I am not sure that I have heard anything that convinces me of that.

There has been a change of Government and that point has not yet sunk in for a lot of people around this place. Some good things and some not-so-good things have come out of that. One of the good things that was promised and which has been introduced by the Minister for Racing and Gaming is a change to the racing turnover tax. It completely saved country racing in Western Australia. I have argued that case with my limited knowledge of racing and my even more limited knowledge of betting on horses. Country racing people argued for years about the need to change that. That change came in and it is a great thing.

The other significant change is in the attitude to native title. Notwithstanding my personal differences with the Premier of this State, he deserves a great place in history for the stance that he took, as Leader of the Opposition, on native title. He maintained that stance despite great internal party and public pressure. He stuck to his guns on native title and he is delivering a much fairer native title regime in this State. I received a briefing from the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia last week and asked for a list of the biggest issues and problems in this State. Curiously, for the first time that I can remember, native title was not on the list as a problem. Those things are positive.

On the downside, and this does concern me, is the issue of petrol pricing. This Government has backtracked on petrol pricing. This Government lacks the commitment to do what it said it would do. It is all right for people to dress it up, but a parliamentary committee report, which came to this Parliament prior to the election, made a number of serious recommendations based on the finding that the gap between country and city fuel prices had increased since 1993, when retail capping was removed. It was a finding of fact. The Australian Labor Party picked up that finding and acted upon it.

The committee made a series of recommendations. One of the key recommendations was the implementation of a true terminal gate pricing policy. The previous Government, to give it credit, introduced legislation, and both sides of the House supported it, as did I, because it was considered at that time to be a competent piece of legislation. The powers contained in it, however, are still to be fully utilised. The petroleum companies have danced a merry jig around that legislation. It is easy to sit in here and take shots at the Liberal Party. However, as the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party said, the facts of life are that not one litre of fuel in this State has been sold at the maximum wholesale price. I believe that might change, but to date not one litre has been sold at the maximum wholesale price. The system has failed, other than in the metropolitan area, where it has introduced a new pressure into the market and brought down prices.

What was the second leg of the select committee's report? It was the need to introduce retail price capping in country Western Australia because the competitive forces in country Western Australia had failed completely. What was the Labor Party's position in the last election? It was not to dance around the point. It was right on the mark. I thought that the Labor Party candidate in my electorate was very cheeky because she put out a series of pamphlets that referred to the wonderful work the Labor Party had done to bring down recommendations on

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petrol pricing. We had a good laugh at that. On page 22 of "Labor. a fair go for regional WA", the preamble makes the point that I just made; that is, that the gap between city and country prices had widened since 1993. Then it says, "Labor supports all of the Select Committee's recommendations." It is not an argument about whether it will or will not cap retail prices; it supports it. Am I certain of that? One need only read the next paragraph, which states -

Labor will fight the rise of petrol, diesel and LPG prices in Western Australia by:

introduce capping of retail prices for petrol, diesel and LPG products in Western Australia. This was abolished by the Court Government in 1993 and was recognised by the Select Committee as contributing to the increased price differential between city and country prices;

Could any reasonable person who read that and the other electoral propaganda of the Gallop Government - "propaganda" is probably too harsh a word but it will do - as well as all the pre-election propaganda on fuel prices, and who heard the public debates and the parliamentary debates in this Chamber in the lead-up to the election, come to any view other than that the Labor Party had country motorists at the forefront of its thinking? No reasonable person could come to any view other than that that was what the Labor Party promised country Western Australia. However, that is what the Labor Party has not delivered. It deserves criticism and condemnation for that. I plead with the minister, as I have done privately, publicly and through the media - I will continue to do so - to ignore his department. One does not need to have a wholesale price to set a retail cap. The history, and the whole preamble of the Labor Party policy, is based on the experience using the 1982 legislation, under which, for 11 years, retail prices were capped in major centres in this State. The power exists; it has been tested. I plead with the Government to do that, because while it has been thinking about it, the gap between Perth and country petrol prices has widened further. The effect of all the actions to date has been the exact opposite of what the select committee recommended. It recommended that action be taken in country Western Australia, but action has been taken only in metropolitan Western Australia; and it simply is not good enough.

MR OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood) [6.54 pm]: This debate is about broken promises of the Government. The member for Pilbara has eloquently and unequivocally explained the petrol pricing position. Because the Government has a large budget, and a range of good programs are available in budgets - that is what budgeting is about - it does a number of good things. Tonight we heard a diatribe from the Premier about the achievements of his Government. However, the Opposition's motion before the Parliament tonight is about the Government defending its role in breaking its promises.

I refer to the question of a police royal commission, which has already been debated in this Parliament. The Labor Party made it plain that it called for a royal commission as far back as 1996. It was always championing at the bit to get a royal commission under way. On 9 August 2000, Dr Gallop said -

We should have had a royal commission in the early 1990s . . . we should have one today . . . There is clear evidence of systemic corruption, and the current system for exposing and combating that corruption is not working. The corollary is a royal commission, and it is about time one was established.

The debate goes on. The Commissioner of Police, Barry Matthews, said that he would have liked the royal commission to commence pretty quickly, and then we could move on. He said that once the royal commission commenced, changes would be difficult to make. The commissioner is admitting that most of the work is done over time. For example, in the case of the Wanneroo royal commission, people had already been charged and were in jail before the conclusion of the royal commission. The situation is similar with the mortgage brokers; charges have already been laid. Mr McGinty said that if the royal commission into police corruption investigated specific allegations that were more than 10 years old, he believed it would be a waste of time.

The Government has established narrow terms of reference. That means that cases such as the deaths of Stephen Wardle, Anne Zappelli and Shirley Finn cannot be investigated; nor could the Argyle Diamonds affair. The Labor Party made great capital out of that. In 1996, Mr McGinty moved a motion that a royal commission be established to investigate the Argyle Diamonds case to root out corruption and re-establish public confidence in the police. In 1998, Dr Gallop continued the pressure for investigation of the case. He said that the police had been dealing with this issue for nine years, and that was why the full and comprehensive inquiry of a royal commission was needed into this matter. On 9 August 2000, Dr Gallop said that a Labor Government would set up such a royal commission to do a number of things. First, it would investigate and report on specific allegations of police corruption, including, but not limited to, the Argyle Diamonds affair. He said that all these issues would be given straight to a royal commission to address. On 21 April this year, Michelle Roberts said that so many allegations had been made over a sustained period that a royal commission was needed to clear the air. Les Ayton also said that it might be necessary to follow a line of corruption back to see whether there were

Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr John Kobelke; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Larry Graham; Mr Paul Omodei

influences from the past. He was talking about narrowing the terms of reference to avoid investigations going back a long way. The Labor Party has said that it will spend \$15 million on a royal commission. We know that the Wood royal commission cost \$70 million. I think one person was charged as a result of that royal commission.

I spent some time at the police conference yesterday, and I went to the dinner last night. The view of the police is that if the Government is committed to holding a royal commission, it should be held now, so that the air can be cleared and a pall of doubt does not hang over the integrity of the Western Australia Police Service. The Minister for Police attended the conference. She was well received. The Leader of the Opposition also attended the conference, and he was well received. The Opposition believes that there should not be a royal commission. However, if there is a royal commission, it should be held immediately.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.