

Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Speaker; Mr Tony McRae; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Hendy Cowan; Mr Rob Johnson

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**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

*Amendment to Motion*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MRS ROBERTS** (Midland - Minister for Police) [2.38 pm]: I have had numerous discussions with the Commissioner of Police about the regional and district allocation of resources guides and I have raised with him the concerns of the country shires in the wheatbelt. I assure the House that any changes made to staffing levels will be based on the principles of fairness and equity. They will be undertaken on a phased basis and they may take between two and five years to implement. We have inherited a lot of problems from the previous Government; it did not increase police numbers in the past four years. It now wants this Government to draw a rabbit out of a hat and to provide extra police officers to some areas without taking them from others. It is a nonsense argument. Other inherited problems include an inadequate police operational budget. In the past few years the previous Government cut \$10 million out of that budget. Members would be aware that meant that a lot of transfers were delayed and positions remained unfilled in country stations. The Government has given a commitment to inject an additional \$20 million over the next four years into the police operational budget. Despite numerous requests in recent years, the previous Government failed to provide an appropriate incentive package for Kalgoorlie and other hard-to-staff locations. By contrast, the Government has made a clear commitment there. The Government will be deploying 250 additional police officers, and freeing up as many officers as possible from administrative areas to the front line. The Government will increase the police operations budget to support police officers at the front line. The mounted police unit will also be expanded, and a 44-hour week introduced for police officers in Kalgoorlie.

**MR BARRON-SULLIVAN** (Mitchell - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.40 pm]: It has been interesting listening to the minister responding to the concerns raised by members on this side of the House, both in the Liberal Party and the National Party. She has failed dramatically to explain what the current Government will do to maintain a police presence in country regions.

Mr Trenorden: She has done the opposite.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: In fact, she has done quite the opposite, as the Leader of the National Party has said. Members on this side will be more concerned than before the minister spoke about the implications for country areas.

Mrs Roberts: The proposal from the Police Service, under the regional and districts allocation of resources scheme, suggests that the Bunbury area requires more police officers. The previous Government did not provide any additional resources. Is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggesting that no officers be taken out of the wheatbelt and none be placed into his electorate?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I am keen to get as much of what the minister says on the record. I would like the minister to answer two things by way of interjection. Under RADAR, how many extra police would be sent to Bunbury?

The SPEAKER: Perhaps the minister could cease interjecting, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition could direct his comments to the chair so that debate can move on.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I am happy for the minister to interject briefly, because she is suggesting that additional police will be allocated to the south west, or more to the point, that the RADAR guide recommends more police for the south west. I would like her to place on record the number of extra police RADAR recommends should go to the south west.

Mrs Roberts: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had been in the House while I was speaking, he would know that there is no finalisation of RADAR. It is but a guide.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I know why the minister is avoiding the question.

Mrs Roberts: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would like a briefing on the guide from the Commissioner of Police or the Police Service, he is welcome to have one. But a guide is only a guide.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The minister is avoiding the question because RADAR recommends taking away four police officers from the south west.

Mrs Roberts: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition would be incorrect in believing that.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Would I? How many extra police will be sent to the south west?

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Mrs Roberts: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants a briefing on the guide -

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: How many officers does RADAR suggest should be taken from Midland?

*Point of Order*

Mrs ROBERTS: Mr Speaker, I believe that you asked the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to direct his comments through the Chair. You asked me to desist from interjecting. Are we having some kind of debate, or is the member for Mitchell making a speech?

The SPEAKER: I do not think that is a point of order, but I think it is wise for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to address his comments through me rather than through the minister, because question time is over.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I will stick to the points I have here, and if the minister would like to provide some facts at some stage, it would be a novel idea.

Mrs Roberts: Why does the Deputy Leader of the Opposition not place a question on notice for a change, and then he might get some facts?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: What we heard earlier today, if I recall correctly - perhaps the Leader of the National Party might confirm by way of interjection if I am correct - was the minister saying that she would reallocate police from the wheatbelt region to other regions such as Peel or Perth. She used the word "reallocate". That is what I heard the minister say - move police officers from one region to another. I find it sad that the minister is pitting region against region. She has no comprehension of the difficulties faced by people in regional Western Australia. She cannot take 17 police away from the wheatbelt without closing police stations. These police have children who go to school. Remove those children from those schools and in some cases that might result in fewer teachers. The minister has no comprehension of what this sort of policy means for country Western Australia. In cold, harsh rationalist terms - that is an expression used by the Labor Party against the Liberal Party - the minister is ordering the police to be moved from one place to another. I suspect I might know a little about what this RADAR guide might entail, because the minister actually provided the criteria by which RADAR assessed the needs of different regions. There was one particular criterion that was not on that list: the social impact. A number of factors were included - the crime categories in each region, the details of offences, details of traffic accidents, injuries, remoteness - but nothing about the social impact. The minister does not give one iota about what happens in regional Western Australia. We are not talking only about numbers here, we are talking about police officers, their families, their children, the local teachers, the local school, the local community. The Labor Party made a big hullabaloo over "community". I do not think the minister has a clue what the word means. The minister could achieve what she wants to do in the south west without taking police away from the wheatbelt. They can be sent to Innaloo and places like that to look after the minister's mates, but she does not have to do it at the expense of country Western Australia. Augmenting police numbers will not happen tomorrow morning, the day after a directive is issued; it will be implemented on a gradual basis, and can be implemented quite smoothly. All the minister needs to do is look at the Government's policy, which is not much different from the coalition's policy in the lead-up to the election; that is, to employ more police. We appreciate that it takes six months for recruits to complete their training at the police academy. Fifty, sixty, or a hundred extra police cannot be placed on the beat tomorrow morning. However, their placement can be done gradually. Consequently, police numbers in an area such as the south west can be built up substantially over a year or a year and a half without the wheatbelt towns being affected. The police presence can be left in those areas. I agree that the south west needs more police. I have not yet had from the minister a firm commitment on the number of police that will be put into the south west to boost -

Mrs Roberts: That is because the plan has not been finalised, and if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had been listening, he would know that.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I was listening. The minister is having a go at the Opposition for saying that she will pull police out of the regions. She is admitting that she will pull police out of the wheatbelt. However, when the Opposition puts her under the pump, she will say what is happening in Innaloo, in the electorate of one of her mates. She will say what is happening in the wheatbelt, where she wants to rip the police out of the local community. When the Opposition asks what she will do in places such as Peel - the member for Dawesville put up a very strong argument for more police being needed in Peel - she will say all that will be done, but she cannot give details. This is what I find interesting, because the Minister for Police, when in opposition, has said that it was up to the Government to take action on this matter. Now that she is in government, she is wavering, and going weak at the knees. In fact, in my neck of the woods, the Labor Party candidate who ran against me in the election said that the Labor Party was committed to increasing police numbers in the south west - not the

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Minister for Police, not the Commissioner of Police, but the Labor Party. Can the Labor Party determine where police go?

Mrs Roberts: The Labor Party has policy provisions which will be implemented by the Western Australian Police Service.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Will the Labor Party tell the Police Service where to put the police officers? Will the Labor Party say to the Commissioner of Police that it has a policy to provide more police in the south west, and call on the commissioner to put them there, and at the same time take officers away from the wheatbelt, where they are not needed?

*Point of Order*

Mr McRAE: Mr Speaker, in referring to the Labor Party policy on police, the member for Mitchell is going into tedious and repetitious argument, and I ask you to draw his attention to proceeding with his line of argument.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: That is the first time I have referred to the Labor Party policy on police.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order at this stage, and I call on the member for Mitchell to continue his comments.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I am a relatively new member myself. I have been here only one term, but one thing I have learnt is that one should not try to stifle debate in the House, one should encourage it.

Mrs Roberts: All the member has done is try to be nasty and insult people rather than deal with the issues.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I will be nasty when I am standing up for my region. I am standing up for the police officers in country Western Australia, for their families and for local communities. I will argue as strongly and as hard as I want. That is an interesting point. Earlier the minister stood there and said that the member for Mitchell -

Mrs Roberts: You said you would wait for the new police officers to come on strength; and asked me not to redeploy any to his area.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: No, I did not.

Mrs Roberts: You said you would wait for the new recruits. That should be a headline in your local paper: you are happy to wait for the local recruits.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The minister said that the member for Mitchell, in effect, was prepared to toe the line and that he was prepared to wait, and so on. The minister has a short memory. I indicated a headline from the major paper in my area "Sullivan takes on party". I did not do what the member said. I came out strongly for my community, because I believe in looking after police in my region. Consequently, that is how it was interpreted.

Mrs Roberts: You are all talk and no action.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Not at all. It will be interesting to see whether members, such as the member for Collie, the member for Bunbury and the new member for Mandurah, who are now representing areas that are under-policed, will be on the same side of the House when the vote is taken. If those members truly care for the police officers in their areas and for their communities, and they want to bolster police strength, they will move to this side of the Chamber. This motion is totally in support of regional Western Australia.

The minister did not adequately explain why she should not leave the police in the wheatbelt and bolster the numbers elsewhere on a more gradual basis. It is certainly my understanding that under the previous Government the Police Service had commenced bolstering resources in country regions. For example, the \$9 million regional police complex in Bunbury that is currently under construction ultimately will receive a fair complement of police. The police in that region will be able to get on with their work in an effective manner. The previous Government was on top of it, through the Police Service, by allowing the Police Service to determine priorities, and so on.

Mrs Roberts: It is too late now. The previous Government had eight years to do something and it did nothing.

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Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The minister should have asked for an extension for her speech; I think she has spoken longer than I have, but it is my session.

Mrs Roberts: You have addressed all of your remarks to me rather than the Chair.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The minister went to great lengths to explain that this new RADAR assessment of police numbers in various regional areas is only a guide and is based on the fact that there are finite resources and so forth. How, in that case, do we get from the guide to the ultimate result? There was no explanation.

Mrs Roberts: There was, actually.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: What the minister has not explained, in areas where RADAR perhaps recommends that there should be a reduction of officers, is whether she will commit the Government to reducing the number of officers in accordance with that report.

Mrs Roberts: If you had listened to the explanation you would have heard that there was ongoing consultation.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I have reached the conclusion - we heard it during question time when the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of the facility in Cottesloe - that the current Government has two words missing from its dictionary: yes and no. We want some straight answers; that is all - not only us, but the community we represent in regional Western Australia.

Mrs Roberts: I want some straight answers from you. Do you need some more police officers from now on or not?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Where will the minister take them from?

Mrs Roberts: Do you need them in the course of the next few months?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I would be delighted to have more police officers in my area - that is, if the minister could find any - as long as it was done on a fair and equitable basis. If the minister is saying that she will pit people in my region against people in the wheatbelt, I can tell her that the people of Collie, Bunbury and Mandurah understand that that is the way to go about it. Small country towns and the community would suffer. The way to go about it is to increase police numbers overall and bolster the numbers in areas where they are required.

Mrs Roberts: Why did the previous Government not do that?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I seem to recall that we went to the election with a commitment on additional police very similar to that offered by this Government.

Mrs Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! The interchange between the minister and the member may be of some interest, but this is supposed to be a debate and not a conversation. I urge members to address their comments through the Chair.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: What we will be looking for from the minister, apart from the fact that we have made our point clear, is a firm commitment to regional Western Australia unlike what we have heard today. All we have heard today is that the Government will take police away from certain country areas, which, in a social sense, will suffer the most. I have said previously that my area does require additional police, particularly when the new regional police complex is opened. I want to see more police in Australind and Bunbury. The south west has a requirement for more police, particularly at holiday times when we receive all the tourists and so on from the south west. The Peel region, as the member for Dawesville said, is growing at a very rapid rate and requires more police. However, I understand, as do the people I represent and those in the region in which I live, that the fairest way to do this is not to rip the heart out of small country centres. I suspect that the way decisions are being made on this issue has no bearing on the social impact of this policy.

Mrs Roberts: I can give you some policies for the south west. Your current authorised strength for the south west is 189 and the RADAR guide recommends 199.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Can I have a firm commitment, by way of interjection, that the minister will provide the full number recommended by RADAR this year?

Mrs Roberts: No firm commitments are being given for any increased numbers, just as no commitments are being given for any decreases. I do not think members representing the wheatbelt electorates would be pleased with me as Minister for Police if I gave this member a firm commitment for an extra 10 positions at this time,

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because the people in those other electorates know that the numbers will come out of their areas. I said I would consult with the people in those areas.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The minister has already made it clear that she will go in and gut the police numbers in the wheatbelt areas and the country towns. That is not the way that we want the police numbers increased in areas such as the south west and Peel. I think I have explained that in full.

As the details come out, we will be looking intently to see what happens to police numbers and how they relate to recommendations in the RADAR guide referred to by the minister. Is it possible for that RADAR guide document to be tabled?

Mrs Roberts: It may well be a document that could be tabled. I do not have the document with me today, but I will investigate that possibility and get back to the member.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Tabling that document next week would help us understand the background behind the planning for any changes in regional Western Australia. Although the minister said that I was starting to get aggressive, when she indicated that I was getting a bit stropky over this, she must understand that at the moment regional Western Australia is looking for more confidence from Governments of all persuasions to ensure that the strength of the local communities is maintained. My region is about to suffer enormously as a result of policies this Government is putting in place.

I do not want to bring issues such as these into the debate, but in my neck of the woods the price of firewood is about to double as a consequence of the policies of this Government. Throughout the south west more pensioners and a larger proportion of people rely on firewood for their heating than is the case in the metropolitan area. These sorts of policies hurt people in local communities. So if I get a bit aggressive, it is because I am standing up for my local community, as are all the other members who have spoken today.

Mr Trenorden interjected.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: During question time we heard that if someone is the minister's mate, they are looked after and they get extra policing in their area, but if a member happens to represent a wheatbelt town they lose their police, and if a member represents an area in Bunbury they are made to feel guilty because the police positions are coming from the wheatbelt. People from Australind and Bunbury may have extra police cover, but it will be at the expense of their country cousins. Many people in my electorate are retirees from the wheatbelt. How will they feel when their sons and daughters experience a reduced police presence? How will they feel when the local school and community is affected so that those retirees can get more local police? The Minister for Police is pitting region against region and she should not be surprised if members on this side get a little hot under the collar.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

**Extract from *Hansard***  
[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 24 May 2001]  
p495b-513a

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Ayes (16)

Mr Ainsworth	Mr Day	Mr House	Mr Sweetman
Mr Barnett	Mrs Edwardes	Mr McNee	Mr Trenorden
Mr Birney	Mr Edwards	Mr Masters	Mr Waldron
Mr Board	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Sullivan	Mr Bradshaw ( <i>Teller</i> )

Noes (27)

Mr Andrews	Dr Gallop	Mr McRae	Mrs Roberts
Mr Bowler	Mrs Guise	Mr Marlborough	Mr Templeman
Mr Brown	Mr Hill	Ms Martin	Mr Watson
Mr Carpenter	Mr Kobelke	Mr Murray	Mr Whitely
Mr Dean	Mr Kucera	Mr O’Gorman	Dr Woollard
Mr D’Orazio	Mr Logan	Ms Radisich	Ms Quirk ( <i>Teller</i> )
Dr Edwards	Mr McGinty	Mr Ripper	

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Pairs

Mr Omodei	Ms McHale
Mr Johnson	Mr Hyde

Independents

Dr Constable	Mr Graham
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Amendment thus negated.

*Debate (on motion) Resumed*

**MR AINSWORTH** (Roe) [3.06 pm]: I will place on the record some concerns that I have about a shift in society’s attitudes and some of the detrimental affects that will create. We are becoming a society of blame. We take the attitude that someone else is to blame for anything that happens to us. We are not prepared to take full responsibility for most of the things that happen to us as was the case in the past. That has lead to some unfortunate circumstances. With the support of the legal profession, in many cases we are able to push away the responsibility we would normally accept and blame other people.

Some people claim compensation for things for which they should have been made responsible. That attitude has lead to some very sad consequences in the country areas in which medical services have been affected. In towns with small populations, women who give birth in country hospitals find it more difficult for a general practitioner to be involved in the assistance of childbirth because of the high cost of insurance. In places where few patients give birth, the insurance cost per patient is so high that the general practitioners are not prepared to assist with childbirth. Women must go elsewhere because the cost of insurance for doctors is extraordinarily high. That situation has occurred largely because we blame other people for the things that happen in our lives.

I am not suggesting that doctors should not be responsible for the actions that might prevent a safe childbirth or other medical procedure. Some problems that occur during childbirth are natural and have happened for centuries regardless of the best services that modern medicine can provide. Doctors are forced to pay horrendous insurance premiums to cover themselves against lawsuits because of the litigious nature of society. We have reached an absurd state in which doctors are refusing to provide the services that they swore to uphold under the Hippocratic oath when they first became doctors. They are breaking that oath by not being able to provide their services to women who give birth. It is a sad situation.

Schools are caught up in the same situation. We hear more and more from parents who say it is the school’s or the teacher’s fault that their child has not been taught the basic life skills, including good manners. When we were old enough to understand those things, we took it for granted that that was the responsibility of parents, not somebody else. We increasingly hear from the community that it is the fault of teachers or the Education Department that children have not achieved certain life skills or that they have not been taught right from wrong. Schools obviously play a big part in the training and upbringing of young people. However, they have those students only from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm five days a week. For the balance of the time, the majority of a child’s life, children are with their parents or guardians. That is where the main responsibility lies. Yet, more responsibility is pushed onto schools and the resulting pressure on teachers is horrendous.

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We recently concluded a debate on workers compensation insurance premiums. The same situation applies in that area. Most people would apply commonsense to actions they may take in the workplace. However, many people who do things that are plainly stupid choose to blame the employer and, through that employer and the insurance policy, get some form of compensation. There seems to be an overemphasis on the responsibility of one side of the equation, the employer, and very little responsibility is being sheeted home to the employee, even if that employee has done something that most reasonable people think is absolutely stupid. I have experienced that situation. I was a farmer for 25 years before I came into this place. On two occasions employees did things that were absolutely crazy in terms of safety. In one case, an employee shot himself through the foot with a .22 calibre rifle. He had been given strict instructions about firearm safety on the property, not mixing alcohol and firearms and a range of other things that I will not go into. All those things were ignored. This person shot himself in the foot and tried to make a claim under workers compensation. The insurance company, to its credit, took the matter to court because it did not want the person to receive unreasonable benefits and set a precedent that would encourage other people to push claims that are clearly well outside the intent of the law and fallacious. Fortunately, the court saw reason and the case was effectively thrown out. It emphasises the fact that people will try to use the system to sheet home to somebody else the blame for things they themselves have done.

The second case did not involve a workers compensation claim, although it could easily have done so. An employee and I had been repairing a header. I told the employee to stand back as I was going to start the motor to see if the problem had been solved. I climbed into the cabin, and he leant against a drive belt on the side of the machine, which turned immediately the starter was turned. The tips of his fingers ran right through the drive belt under the sheave of the pulley. Luckily, he did not break any fingers, but he had to go to hospital, which was an hour away, and have the hand treated. Not only was he off work for several days, but also I lost a day's work. It could quite easily have meant a workers compensation claim of some sort. Yet, he leant against the machine after he was instructed to stand away from it. The cost of workers compensation has been pushed up because people do stupid things and then try to blame others. Again, it is a case of the attitude of "I have done something but it is somebody else's fault" permeating our society. I find it very sad.

Litigation generally has got out of hand. I greatly regret that we are following the American trend. We hear of cases in America where people sue anything or anybody. It is crazy, yet we are moving closer to that. On almost a daily basis, we see advertisements in the newspapers and on television from lawyers soliciting business from people who feel they have claims for injuries they believe they have suffered. The legal profession is effectively encouraging excessive and spurious claims. It is no wonder that costs in these matters are blowing out of proportion. The sad thing is that the genuine cases are often delayed because the courts are clogged. Employers are wary of putting on extra people because of the increasing costs. I spoke this morning to an employer in Esperance who was complaining about the cost of his workers compensation premiums. The premium does not take into account the break-up of the business. For the purpose of insurance premiums, people in office administration are lumped in with the workers in the more dangerous part of the business. The premium for the whole business is based on the rate applicable to the area of the business with the greatest risk. The employer said that his premium had shot up 85 to 90 per cent over the past two or three years. He has made one or two claims. One case involved half a day off work. The other case should have involved about three days off work, but the employee chose to be off work for three weeks, and was supported, unfortunately, by one of the local doctors. It was a very minor claim. The employee had suffered a cut on the little finger of his hand. It was not even his preferred hand with which to work. This employer has had virtually a 100 per cent increase in his premium because of two minor accidents. That is an across-the-board cost; the premium applies to not only the area of greatest risk but also those people who sit behind a desk. The most dangerous thing they could do would be to stab themselves with the end of a pen. The business of blaming and seeking recompense from somebody else is costing everybody, not only the employers. Employees are also losing because employers are putting them off or choosing not to take on fresh employees. That affects everybody.

One of the other areas in which society is, in my opinion, going a bit crazy is that of prohibitions on basic human responses to other people's distress, such as things that happen in the school ground. A seven or eight-year-old girl might trip over in the playground at her school. If the first teacher on the scene is a male teacher, he is no longer game to give that child comfort, other than verbally. He cannot even put his arm around the child or pat her on the head because, in our society, that is seen as somehow representing an act of a sexual nature. The teacher takes a risk when he carries out a common, reasonable and genuine human response. He cannot do it because someone might make a claim. Once a claim is made, it is very hard to disprove, and a person's reputation can be in tatters thereafter. The same thing applies with the female teachers. It is becoming more and more difficult to be human. Sure, there have been teachers of both gender in the school system who have abused their position of trust and privilege and the children in their care. That is despicable; however, it is a disgrace to

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counter that by making rules that disadvantage the students and the genuinely good teachers who are not the perpetrators of those sorts of things. It is a case of political correctness having gone totally overboard.

I speak about some of the needs of my electorate. My electorate received a number of significant benefits through the previous Government during the past four to eight years. Many great improvements have been made to the level of basic services, including the establishment of better water supplies and roads and improved schools. In a couple of cases, new schools have been built. Some innovative youth programs have been introduced into the area. All sorts of valuable things have happened in the past four years. However, in common with most regional areas of this State, there is still a heck of a lot more to be done. In matters such as communications - I acknowledge that is not only a state responsibility - major gaps still exist in services that are regarded as necessary and average requirements of life, such as mobile phone services and Internet services with high data transfer speeds. Those services are beginning to be rectified, but there is still a way to go. It is vital that energy infrastructure, pricing and reliability is upgraded. It is tragic to hear of businesses wishing to set up in some towns but being turned away because Western Power either is unable to provide them with electricity at any price or, if it is prepared to do so, expects the new business to provide the infrastructure. In one case Western Power quoted \$2 million for a dedicated line of about 50 kilometres so that the capacity of a business in a small country town could be increased. Those are the sorts of things that are holding back our regional areas.

There have been major benefits in health in the past four years with a change in the system to encourage more doctors and nursing staff into the area. However, problems still exist with other allied services, such as dental and mental health services. I mention, for example, Esperance, which most people would say is a reasonably desirable country town in which to set up business. It has most of the benefits to be found in the city and other benefits, such as the wonderful environment and so on, that are not found in the city. Last year in Esperance there were six dentists; this year there are three. Even when there were six dentists, the then Minister for Health acceded to my request to have Esperance declared an area of unmet need for dental services because there was still then a shortfall. A constituent - a former member for Roe - contacted me through one of his family members. A filling had dropped out of one of his back teeth, which exposed the nerves, causing him severe pain. He rang a dentist to make an appointment and was told he would have a nine-month wait. The dentist could not see him, although it was, in a sense, an emergency. I rang the dentist concerned, not to complain, but to find out the background to the story, as there is usually more to a situation than is first presented. The dentist told me that if I made an appointment for a check up I would have a three to four-month wait to see a dental therapist and if the therapist determined that I would need the service of a dentist, the additional wait would be up to six months. I believe that the current ratio of dentists to population in Perth is one to 1 000 or one to 1 500; in Esperance it is one to 5 000 or one to 6 000. Therefore, even a town as attractive as Esperance is having trouble attracting and retaining qualified dental practitioners.

A similar problem occurs with mental health. Improvements have been made to the mental health system both in the provision of physical resources and to the people visiting the Esperance area. However, compared with mental health services in metropolitan Perth, not only my electorate but also the whole of country Western Australia is underserved. Because of the isolation of some individuals and businesses, mental health problems tend to take on a greater importance than they otherwise would in a city like Perth, where there are at least people around for back up and support with a range of readily available services throughout the metropolitan area. More work must be done in those areas.

Significant improvements have been made to roads in recent years. However, because of the size of the area I represent and some of the activities taking place there - the growth in heavy haulage traffic because of increased grain production from farms, the advent of new mining activities along the South Coast Highway near Ravensthorpe and the general increase in domestic traffic from tourists and the general population - the road system still needs much more money spent on it to bring it up to a standard that most people would regard as reasonable. I hope this Government does not cut back on the previous Government's projected road funding for the next few years programs because to do so would be detrimental not only to road safety but also to the whole State. These roads are not just a local asset; they are a state asset and have a great deal of value to not only the people who use them, but also every person in this State.

Esperance is very much in need of relationship counselling services, but we are struggling to get funding. A service exists four hours drive away in Kalgoorlie, but it is not satisfactory to expect couples with problems who need assistance to rely on an infrequent service or to expect them to get in a vehicle and travel for four hours. This is another area that is grossly underserved compared with some of the more densely populated areas of the State.

One of the myths perpetuated by the media and the general public over a period - and probably by some members in this place - is that country towns are in decline. As with any argument, members will find an example to prove their argument. However, the vast majority of country towns that I represent are either in a



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state of growth or are trying to grow. Much of the reason for their not growing as fast as they would like is that they are held back by a lack of services of some sort. This inability to grow quickly, or at all, is due to a lack of available land. That might sound strange, because as one drives through country towns and sees empty paddocks of adjoining farms or vacant blocks of land in a town, one cannot help wondering how there could be a land shortage in that country town. The answer is simple. The first reason is native title; secondly, some services are unavailable, even to a surveyed block of land. When the Water Corporation cannot guarantee to provide water to that land, the Department of Land Administration will not release that land for use. That is the case at Salmon Gums, which is a tragic example. It causes me a great deal of pain that a small town is denied the opportunity to set up a new business because of something as basic as a water supply. That is not a problem that can be dealt with immediately.

Another problem is the supply of energy to some of these places. Ravensthorpe is a classic case, as it is currently on the longest lead from the power source in the southern hemisphere. The power comes from Katanning, several hundred kilometres away, and by the time it gets to Ravensthorpe the quality and quantity of the power are below par. Apart from voltage fluctuations and outages, there is also no capacity for an increased load on that line. Some moves are afoot to rectify that and I know that the previous minister examined the possibility of extending the gas pipeline from the west coast in that direction. Currently, a proposition is being considered by the independent power provider, who has been chosen by the current Government in a process set up by the previous Government, to provide power to Esperance. Burns and Roe Worley Pty Ltd, the successful bidder in that process, is considering the possibility of extending either an overhead line from Esperance or the gas pipeline from Kalgoorlie to Esperance and across to Ravensthorpe. As I mentioned earlier today, Ravensthorpe is facing a 100 per cent growth in its population because of the advent of the Ravensthorpe nickel operation, one of the two nickel mines proposed for the area. One mine is already operating, but another big one is the proposed Ravensthorpe Nickel Operations Pty Ltd project for which an estimated 1 100 to 1 200 people will come into the town. A substantial amount of energy will be required for that operation; therefore, the proponents of that project are currently in discussion with Burns and Roe Worley.

The power required for that operation should be able to be fed back into the Western Power grid. That would provide an improved service for the town of Ravensthorpe and for some of the customers on the line between Ravensthorpe and Katanning, in that a better and more reliable supply of power could be provided to them.

We need to look very closely at providing some incentives to increase growth in country towns. Apart from overcoming some of the other impediments that I have mentioned - planning delays is another example - we need to look closely at the current taxation zone system as it applies on a federal and state level. The current zoning system is a farce. It was put in place a long time ago and today bears no relationship to the facts of life in country areas. We must provide incentives to encourage people to relocate to these towns as either workers or business people. We must seriously consider providing to businesses that are prepared to establish in regional areas, relief from state taxation, perhaps in the form of a tax holiday or tax relief from some of the state charges they would otherwise be required to pay in starting up. We must make available land at the right price. It is not very realistic to value land in the country at a similar price to equivalent land in the Kwinana strip - as was the case with the Meenaar industrial estate. If we could encourage businesses to set up in country regions, we would go a long way to solving some of the other social and economic issues that are continually talked about in this place.

In the few minutes left to me, I will talk specifically about Esperance, which is my home town and which contains about 50 per cent of my voting population. Esperance currently is going through a very positive time, despite some of the vagaries of agriculture, of which everyone is aware, and the business pressures that are being experienced for a range of reasons. The place is still progressing at a rapid rate and some extremely positive things are happening in the region.

In no particular order I will mention a few: I refer first to agriculture. Apart from the traditional agriculture that we have seen in the area, we have seen the emergence of a very promising seed potato industry as well as a small but successful wine industry.

A lot of activity is occurring in the area of aquaculture: interest is being shown in establishing abalone farming operations, and a local group currently is working on the establishment of the Esperance marine institute. We are also very close to securing a \$2 million, three-year research project on the marine environment, to be carried out through a combination of the University of Western Australia and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. I am hopeful that we can also establish a marine reserve system in the Recherche Archipelago, because local management of that resource is vital.

We are at the feasibility stage for a discovery centre - an interpretive centre covering a region extending from around Ravensthorpe, on the edge of the Fitzgerald River National Park, to Norseman and the eastern extremity

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of the shire of Esperance near Israelite Bay. This is a fantastic project which I hope will get up and running as it has huge benefits from a tourist point of view as well as for local users.

The region supports a growing forestry industry. Discussions currently are occurring between the local industry and the independent power providers to establish a biomass plant to feed into the gas turbine system, so that biomass can be used for electricity generation.

The community college in Esperance, which was established with the help of the previous Government, is a wonderful combination of the Department of Education Services, Curtin University of Technology and the former TAFE college - Esperance amalgamated with Kalgoorlie College as an independent TAFE college and that then became part of Curtin University. All the tiers of education are combined in a collaborative basis in this community college and it has a lot of potential for future growth.

Major developments are occurring at the port, which, when completed, will make Esperance the only port south of Dampier or Port Hedland capable of fully loading a cape-size vessel. This is to cater for increasing iron ore exports from the port. The exports have been highly successful. Once the port development is completed and the increased production from the mine occurs, we anticipate that up to 8 million tonnes of iron ore will go through the town annually.

Tourism is also doing well. Despite our weather conditions, on which some people occasionally cast aspersions, our tourist season is now probably nine to 10 months of the year rather than four to six months. It is a huge growth industry with a lot of potential because of our natural resources as well as some of the man-made attractions that have been established. These augur well for vastly increased tourism through the town and the spin-off economic benefit that it brings to the area.

On the issue of ports in general, I was privileged to attend the state ports conference at Woody Island in Esperance only a few days ago. It was impressive to me because I knew only about my own home port. However, when all of the port authorities from around the State, including little ports like Broome, reported on what they were doing, it was clear that each and every port was in expansion mode. Even Albany, which has had a downturn over the past 12 months because of the agricultural situation, is expanding. The ports have experienced increases in through-put and they are all spending big money on providing better infrastructure for the future. It gave me great encouragement to see that, without exception, every port in Western Australia is looking positively to the future. That says a lot for the record of the past eight years of government and I hope it continues - for the State's benefit, at least - during the next four years of the new Government.

**MRS EDWARDES** (Kingsley) [3.38 pm]: Having heard so many maiden speeches during this Address-in-Reply debate, I wish to reflect upon my maiden speech. I was elected in 1989 and I am currently the longest serving woman member of the Parliament. I do not know whether any former female members served longer than I have, to date.

Mr Barnett: Youthful yet experienced.

Mrs EDWARDES: I am still a young member of parliament.

In 1989 I was elected to represent the new seat of Kingsley, which was created after a redistribution. It was an absolute privilege to be elected and to represent all of those people. The suburbs in the electorate then were Greenwood, Kingsley, Warwick and Woodvale. There has since been a redistribution and some of Warwick was lost. However, as those members who have not yet experienced a redistribution will come to know, once a member has represented people, the member will always be regarded by those people as their member, irrespective of whether they are still in the same electorate.

As I went back over my maiden speech, I noted that the issues of the day were the need for youth facilities and child-care facilities. Preprimary school was a big educational issue and more schools were needed, as quite a few demountable classrooms were in use at the time. Transport was another big issue, particularly bus transport. The Government needed to ensure that the bus system met the needs of the community and did not just go north from Perth out to the suburbs and then back again. The bus system at the time basically ran from north to south and did not cater for the shopping centres, doctors facilities and the like; they needed to be accessed by a system running from east to west. Rail transport and the freeway also were two big issues of the day. Some of these issues have not changed; indeed, there will always be issues. The extension of the rail is still an issue in the northern suburbs and I will talk a little bit more about that and the Greenwood railway station shortly.

The City of Joondalup currently is landscaping some of the older parts of those suburbs with the aim of revitalising those areas. Although most people welcome the landscaping, some residents do not appreciate trees suddenly being placed in the middle of the street, even though it does give a lift to the suburb.

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An issue critical to my electorate at the moment is school crossings. There was considerable concern last year about school crossing wardens being taken away from a number of schools. The original criteria were set by the previous Labor Government back in 1992 and were based on the number of children who used the crossing and the use of the road by traffic. It was basically a counting exercise, which is a reasonable starting point. However, if demographics and the use of the area are considered, and if consultation with schools and the local community and the like is carried out, it becomes evident that the basic mathematical exercise does not always meet the needs of the school community. After the election I wrote to the current Minister for Police and put the case for Hawker Park and Halidon Primary Schools. I pointed out that there was a weekly traffic flow of 3 000 vehicles along Hawker Avenue, most of which were going to the Warwick train station, and there was something like 6 000 motor vehicles travelling along Dorchester Avenue. The number of school children crossing that road may have been down - between 25 and 35 depending on the day of the week and the like - but at the end of the day it was an enormous risk to remove those school wardens when approximately 6 000 motor vehicles use the road and one child would have to negotiate it. I was pleased that the former Minister for Police started a review and that the review is being continued by the Labor Government. The Minister for Police has confirmed that Halidon and Hawker Park Primary Schools will retain their current A-level school crossing status until the completion of the review.

I raised a further point in my letter, which was not answered by the Minister for Police. I asked that before she makes any changes as a result of that review of school crossing wardens, that those changes go to the local community, the school, the principal and the parents and citizens association. This is critical if the Government is to get an understanding of the situation. Hawker Park Primary School is a critical case. A roundabout on Hawker Avenue has caused confusion, especially following the change of rules for roundabouts. Most people still do not understand those changed rules. If the drivers are confused, imagine how the school kids feel. These are primary school kids who are being asked to work out whether there is an indicator saying that the vehicle will go forward or will turn left or right. They get confused. Many motor vehicles go along Hawker Avenue because it is the only northern access to Warwick train station. It is critical that the traffic warden for that school stays in place. It is equally important to the Halidon school community that its warden stays in place, given the level of traffic along Halidon Street. I am pleased that they will stay in place; however, I would like some confirmation from the Minister for Police that when the review is completed the local schools and the communities surrounding them will be consulted on any future changes.

I was pleased to read in a media release issued on 2 May by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure that the tenders for the Greenwood train station would be called towards the end of this year and that the service to Clarkson was scheduled to begin in September 2003. That means that everything is still on track. As it was anticipated that both would go together, if the service to Clarkson begins at that time the Greenwood train station will also be up and running. The timing of that was based upon the delivery of new railcars. It took me some time to work out why the Greenwood train station could not be in service without extra railcars. Again, it was a mathematical exercise, which I will not go into today. It needed to be explained to the community that it will be in place in 2003 and that tenders will be called this year. I am pleased to know that it is still on track.

Five hundred parking bays will be provided at the Greenwood train station. Parking at Warwick and Whitfords train stations is under pressure. An extra 100 parking bays will be available at Whitfords in the near future. Also an exercise of consultation occurred last year, in which the Government worked with Westrail, the Department of Transport, the City of Joondalup and local communities. The Government was able to work through all the difficulties about access onto the freeway and into the parking bays, whether to the kiss and ride section or to park the cars and use the trains. Other issues concerned commuters parking their cars at the front of residents' homes and taking shortcuts across the freeway at an inappropriate spot. As a result of that consultation, a roundabout is being built between Kingsley Drive and Whitfords Avenue, which will help with the traffic there, and a dual entry onto the freeway will be built. Details for those are being worked out at the moment. One hundred new bays will go in at Whitfords train station. Another roundabout will help ease traffic into Whitfords train station or to the freeway south. The City of Joondalup will make sure that commuters cannot park at the front of residents' homes, while the Department of Transport will erect a major fence of some length to discourage people from parking or crossing the freeway at an inappropriate spot. It was significant that those solutions came from working with the local community, the appropriate departments and the local council. I commend those people who spent many hours, even Saturday mornings, meeting residents to come to what is an excellent solution for those people.

The third area that still requires some work concerns local youth. When I was first elected to Parliament in 1989 issues raised at the time concerned the need for more child care, preschools and the like. Those kids have now grown up and are teenagers. Some of those teenagers are a little antisocial and are causing problems. In my local shopping centre, in which I have my office, about 70 to 80 youths almost terrorised the patrons the

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Christmas before last. When the shopping centre employed security guards to move them on, the youths would go into the street and knock down letterboxes and the like out of pure frustration from being moved from where they had congregated. A group from the community and shopping centre management got together with the respective departments. In an endeavour to employ someone to work with the youth in the shopping centre, the group intended to try to access funds from Safer WA. To its credit, the shopping centre management went one better; it said to forget about putting in a submission to Government and to do it as a group. The centre management has ended up paying for a barbecue on Friday nights for the kids in the area, to which the local police officer goes. If anyone from Family and Children's Services or another agency is needed, they also go.

As a consequence, the 70 to 80 kids who used to congregate there over a year ago have been reduced in numbers to about 20 to 25. The remaining kids and the security officers work quite closely together to ensure that no-one comes onto their turf and disrupts the good relationship that they have developed with the management of the shopping centre and the local police officers. It is an example of sitting down, working out what is the problem and deciding on a solution. What happened to the other kids that no longer congregate at the shopping centre? They have gone to other corners of the suburbs but it is not as big a problem as it might be in some areas. The numbers involved are small but we do not want it to grow into a larger problem. The northern suburbs need a police and citizens youth club. The district of Joondalup is the only police district that does not have a PCYC. The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1996 indicated 90 000 youths were living in the northern suburbs. That is a huge number. I am not talking about only my electorate but about all the northern suburbs. I am talking about the electorates of Joondalup, Wanneroo, Hillarys and part of the electorates of Carine and Ballajura. A PCYC is needed in a location that provides easy access for those kids. The sorts of centres that exist today are not solely the style of PCYC that I remember operating from Scarborough. Modern centres involve other organisations and groups; they have games rooms, Internet cafes, computer laboratories, skate parks and climbing walls. They have all the mod cons that are needed to capture the imagination and attention of modern youth. They are not funded and operated solely by the police, but the police are needed to play a very strong role in running the centres.

During the election the Liberal Party made a commitment to establish a new centre and, in the next few years, to run a mobile facility. I would like to see the Government, with the help of the members for Wanneroo and Joondalup, work towards operating a mobile facility with the long-term goal of building a permanent centre a few years down the track. A mobile centre currently operates in Ipswich in Queensland and it is very successful. For many years I worked as a volunteer on the YMCA mobile facility which was just a bus that had bean bags and sporting equipment and which dispensed hot dogs. It was something to which kids could come and feel safe and secure. We could always put them in touch with people if they had problems or issues they wanted to raise or we could offer to help them ourselves. It is essential that we give local youth much more help and additional services.

It is now winter. In some suburbs pot belly stoves are numerous and one can drive down the freeway and know from the haze when one is approaching the electorate of Kingsley. The winter haze is well known and has been documented by a select committee of this Parliament. The main causes are pot belly stoves, wood heaters and the like. Strong recommendations were made by the committee and the previous Government started to address them to try to improve the quality of Perth's air. A plan was released that will be extended over the next few years. The recommendations included looking for ways to encourage people to upgrade their wood heaters and exploring options to change to gas or electric heating. I regularly receive complaints about the smell and smoke created by wood heaters. The situation creates enormous difficulties for people with respiratory problems. If we can help remove the impact of wood heaters on people's lives it will make them much more comfortable. Wood heaters must now comply with Australian standards; people have to burn dry wood and not wet wood. I was delighted to see the Melville City Council team up with AlintaGas to look at ways of improving the situation. They have developed a special program that offers incentives to householders to replace their existing wood heaters with gas appliances. As an incentive, AlintaGas is offering local people discounts on gas heaters, free connection to the AlintaGas mains supply and special deals on heater and bayonet point installation. The program was supposed to have been launched in April. I wait with interest as to the outcome of the program. I will write to the City of Joondalup and ask whether it will enter into a similar pilot program next year. I will suggest some of the suburbs in my electorate as being suitable for a trial. I am aware that, with the air monitoring that has been put in place, Duncraigh has become a key suburb for smoke haze.

Another promise made during the election, which was due to be in place by 1 March was paid parental leave to all government employees. A number of agencies currently have some form of paid parental leave and they include: Agriculture Western Australia, the Department of Land Administration, the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations, the Ministry of Fair Trading, the Education Department, the Ministry of Justice and the Tourism Commission. A number of other departments and agencies do not have paid parental leave. At the

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moment the entitlement for parental leave for state government employees is 52 weeks following the birth of a child. The difference would be that the first six weeks would be paid leave. An employee could have 12 months off with a combination of paid and unpaid leave. It would be a boon for government employees such as nurses, police officers and administrative staff who do not currently have access to that form of paid entitlement. It is an initiative that recognises the value of parenting and supports families. It is aimed at fathers and mothers; it has gender equality. It should be taken up by the current Government as a family-friendly policy even though it was originally a coalition Government suggestion. The initiative is behind time and should be implemented immediately.

During the past eight years I have been privileged to be a minister. On a daily basis I appreciated the value of public servants. They are a very professional group of people who are committed to their jobs. They are employed to do their jobs on behalf of the people of Western Australia, whom they serve. I have always found public servants to take that role very seriously. As a minister one needs to receive professional advice from people who are experienced and knowledgeable about the Public Sector Management Act and the Financial Administration and Audit Act and who know and understand Treasury guidelines and the practices and procedures that ensure that we have a public service of integrity. Such experienced people are needed to ensure that a minister, and by extension the Government, does not unintentionally breach standards and guidelines.

I had some wonderful experiences in working with my public servants and chief executive officers. At the risk of giving them the kiss of death, given the restructuring that is being undertaken, I will not name them. I do not think they would thank me for that. I would like to thank one in particular, Mr Bob Fisher. He was the former chief executive officer of Family and Children's Services. I had the privilege of being the responsible minister for 12 months. That experience was thoroughly enjoyable.

The people I worked with, both within the agency and in the non-government sector, were very passionate people, committed to those they cared for. They would also wish Bob Fisher the very best in his new position, representing Western Australia as Agent General.

That leads me to the Public Sector Review Taskforce. It is absolutely essential that the task force not be used to dilute the integrity of the fundamental principles, values and standards contained within the Public Sector Management Act 1994. I pulled out the "Report of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and other Matters". It is a valuable document, and I would commend it to ministers, because it contains some critical things. At page 6-5 of part II of the report, it states -

There are substantial reasons for believing that the merit principle was put in jeopardy . . . Ministerial staff dealt with officials in matters relating to programme management in ways which affected the organisational integrity of departments. Some chief executive officers had their access to ministers they served seriously curtailed.

. . . it is impermissible for a government to encourage allegiance by making the Public Service partisan at points of strategic significance.

It is therefore absolutely critical that, throughout this restructuring process, the integrity of the public service, and the lessons of the past, are not lost. The roles and responsibilities of the public sector must be understood.

It was with some concern that I read an article in the *Sunday Times* of 11 March 2001, under the title "Burke aide gets job in new regime". The article reads -

One of Brian Burke's right-hand men during the tainted days of WA Inc has been made a senior officer in the new Labor Government.

Emiliano Barzotto is now chief of staff to Police Minister Michelle Roberts.

"I have no regrets about my time with Brian," he said this week.

"They were amazing years. They were exciting times."

Further on, the article states -

The commission reported: "Whatever may have been the instruction from the Premier, the manner in which it was carried out carries alarming implications for the integrity of public records."

It therefore is a matter of some concern to read -

Mr Barzotto told *The Sunday Times* he had done nothing while working for Mr Burke that he wouldn't do again.

Mr Quigley: No adverse findings or criticisms were made of Mr Barzotto by the royal commission.

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Mrs EDWARDES: I encourage members of this House, particularly ministers, to go back and re-read the "Report of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and other Matters". It contains some valuable pieces of advice and recommendations, and it is critical that we do not forget those lessons. My concern is that, through this restructuring, we will see the departure of long-serving public servants, particularly at the chief executive officer level. I have identified why the experience of those people is needed. I have had reported to me instances of interference by ministers and their staff in the appointment of people to public sector agencies. That is contrary to the Public Sector Management Act. People have been appointed to chair reviews, who have had long and close connection with those ministers or the Labor Party. A large number of contract staff in ministers' offices are political appointments. I give the commitment of the Opposition to the employees of the public sector, that we will watch very closely this restructuring, and make sure that the integrity of the public sector is maintained and the lessons of the past are not lost.

Another concern is that the public sector review may just be about reducing the size of government to meet extravagant election promises, and the result is low morale, confusion, low productivity, suspicion and a lack of confidence. Everybody is seeking advice about what they can do if they lose their position, and this is concentrating their minds, instead of the delivery of services. There is a sense of frustration and despair resulting from the restructuring process. It is critical to the Premier and his ministers that the public sector's confidence in the Government is retained. That confidence is being lost, and public sector employees feel betrayed because the Premier, while in opposition, promised that there would be no job losses in the public sector. Now, in his ministerial statement dealing with the interim report of the Public Sector Review Taskforce, he says there will be no forced redundancies, but that is not what the public servants took him to mean in the lead-up to the election. The Minister for Health has large numbers of contract staff in his department who have been there for many years, and they expected to be made permanent, through commitments given before the election, but in the past couple of months, long-term contract staff have been put off without any notification. I will be watching very closely the outcome of the Public Sector Review Taskforce.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin) [4.07 pm]: I congratulate all the new members of this Parliament on their election. I guarantee that, while they will find it intensely interesting at times, it will be equally boring at others. There will be a great deal of frustration for those new members, particularly those who have entered this Parliament to sit on the government benches. The opportunity for government members to speak in this place is far more limited than for those of us who have the misfortune to have lost government. Parliament is structured in such a way that democracy rules, and in a democracy, we have to suffer the tyranny of the majority. The majority will always get its way, but the Parliament is created for the minority to be heard. That is exactly what happens in this place, so those of us on this side of the House will have a much greater opportunity to express our views publicly, in the Parliament. Members opposite may be able to do that in a room upstairs or in committee rooms around this place, but it makes it a lot more difficult for them to articulate their views publicly. They will also face the prospect of having demands placed upon them from their constituents as to when they will deliver some of the things that the Government promised. However, I do hope that everyone who was elected finds this an interesting place.

I have always had the view that there are two key opportunities for speeches in this Parliament. The first is the Address-in-Reply debate, which is effectively about an outline of policy by a Government - what it hopes to implement - and the second is the budget debate, in which it can be established if the necessary funds have been appropriated to allow the Government's policies to be implemented. Mr Acting Speaker (Mr McRae), I am sure you would agree that, unless there is money, it is very rare that the action follows.

It is easy to enunciate policy and produce policy framework, either during an election or within the Governor's speech, but it is another story to find the funds to deliver the programs to the people of Western Australia. I shall respond to some of the initiatives that have been identified during the Address-in-Reply. As with all Governments, this Government can be commended for some programs. Most people would applaud the decisions made by the Government and referred to under the heading "Achievements So Far" in the Governor's speech. The reduction of the Totalisator Agency Board turnover tax from five per cent to 4.5 per cent is a good example and it will be welcomed by the racing industry. However, if the Government is to deliver some value to the racing industry it will need to examine the way in which the funds are distributed throughout the industry. At the moment, there is complete domination by bodies such as the Western Australian Turf Club and, although more money has been given to the racing industry, this Government has not followed through and dictated how that money will be distributed. As a consequence, the additional funds may not be well spent. However, I am sure that at some time in the future the Government will have the opportunity to complement that decision to reduce its revenue from the TAB turnover tax and apply itself to the distribution of that additional revenue.

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The next issue relates to the payment of bills by government agencies within 30 days of receipt. I always resented the policy directive from Treasury that the period should be extended to 60 days, and I commend the Government for being prepared to reinstate the previous policy position.

Other matters listed under the heading “Achievements So Far” will rebound against the Government. The first item indicates that cabinet membership has been reduced from 17 to 14, and a ministerial code of conduct has been established. I will deal with the reduction in cabinet numbers and not the code of conduct because, no matter what is written about a code of conduct, the ministers themselves must ensure it is put into effect. The public will argue that the reduction in the number of cabinet members is laudable. Most people would argue that we are over-governed and it is a fantastic idea to reduce the number from 17 to 14. The Cabinet of 14 contains only three ministers who have previous cabinet experience - perhaps four if we include the member in another place who was a minister of the Crown for 10 or more days. It is placing an enormous burden on those ministers, with little experience, to assume the full responsibility for government. I have watched some of the ministers during the time they have been on the front bench, and I have already detected some of the signs which usually indicate people are learning how to operate without sleep. They are beginning to understand the rigorous pressure imposed upon them when they graduate from being a member of Parliament to being a minister of the Crown - it is a significant shift.

Mr Kucera: I am used to night shifts.

Mr COWAN: I will have a conversation with the minister one day in the future, and I am sure he will acknowledge that the job he is doing now is more onerous and requires more time than the job he had previously. I recognise the significance of the minister's previous occupation, which would have occupied a lot of time, but I bet that he is now spending more time at his desk doing his job than he ever did as an Assistant Commissioner of Police.

The public would approve of the reduction in the number of cabinet ministers as a valuable reform. I do not agree. It is placing a huge workload on ministers, to the extent that they will not be involved in the administration of their departments and they will be able to intervene only in matters of policy. People can argue about whether that is right or wrong, but we should not emulate the federal system under which ministers effectively deal only with policy decisions. Those ministers are so far removed from the wishes of the public that no-one should want to go down that path, but that is the system this Government has initiated.

I am most concerned about that decision combined with the decision to reduce the number of senior executives in the public service. I know the public supports that concept, because not many people understand the pressures or demands involved in the public sector. When the Government indicates to senior executives that their numbers will be reduced by 40 or so, they immediately either become insecure or develop a competitive streak in an attempt to become the chief executive officer of the newly restructured department. As a consequence, instead of giving fearless advice to an inexperienced minister, they will compete with other people in adjacent positions. Therefore, they will never take on ministers and provide the advice they should hear, as opposed to the advice they would like to hear. In other words, that old rule for senior public servants will go by the board every time. I will provide an example of that in a moment, because there is already proof that it has occurred.

The final matter listed as an achievement or reform was the offer of redundancies within the public sector. I assume that over a period the Government will go through all agencies and offer redundancies, but I understand that that the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet was first, the Department of Commerce and Trade was next and a few others will follow. As everybody knows, if the paddock gate falls down it is not the hack that disappears; it is always the good animals. In other words, the good people who should be retained will leave. The people who can find alternative employment, perhaps in the private sector, will take the redundancy offer, and this Government will be left with the hacks.

With the combination of those three issues, I have a great deal of concern about the direction in which the State is heading during this Government's formative months. Its ministers have a high workload and not a lot of experience - I am sure they will get over that very quickly - and senior executives cannot take on their ministers and give them fearless advice, because as a consequence they might lose their jobs or not be favoured in a contest for a particular job.

Finally, the Government will offer severance and redundancy packages and all of the good people will leave. That is a generalisation; some good people will stay. I know that I am right.

I will give an example that was dealt with earlier today by my colleague, the member for Stirling. He made the point that an application had been made to the federal Government for an extension of the boundaries under which exceptional circumstances funding - that is, relief from poor seasonal conditions - could be made available to additional numbers of farmers. That application failed because it did not meet the specifications of the National Rural Advisory Council. The NRAC operates on guidelines set by the ministerial council. The New

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South Wales Government invariably refuses to change the exceptional circumstances rules because it seems to be able to qualify under the current guidelines. The first successful Western Australian application was made last year by my colleague, the member for Stirling, when he was the Minister for Primary Industry.

The National Rural Advisory Council examined the draft application made by the previous Government and informed the Minister for Agriculture that it would fail because the percentage of people suffering was not high enough. To be eligible for exceptional circumstances, two out of three farms within the boundary of the declared area had to fail. The draft was amended, much to the chagrin of farmers who missed out on the relief, including those in my home town of Narembeen, and also Yilgarn and Kondinin. Seven shires or part thereof were granted eligibility and were able to apply.

I will not deal with the successful applicants within the area that was declared eligible for exceptional circumstances funding; however, I will deal with the second application. It was effectively a rewording of the draft that the previous Government had already been told would fail. The chief executive officer who helped draft the application should have told the minister that it would fail. However, he knew that he was competing with another CEO for the newly merged agriculture, fisheries and forestry portfolios. He reworded the application in a hurry because he did not want to argue with his minister, and it failed. That is what happens when doubt and uncertainty is created in the senior public service in response to offers of redundancy packages and people's workload is increased.

The outcome of the second exceptional circumstances application was a disgrace. The Minister for Agriculture thought it was all right to put a spin on this issue and to blame the federal Government. The minister knew that he would have to spend at least \$5 million of the State's money on an EC application should it be successful and that the federal Government would pay the rest. Knowing that that \$5 million would not be available, the minister did not care whether the application was successful because he knew that he could belt the federal Government. People are not fools; they will see through the shallowness of the minister. It is disappointing that the senior executives who were involved in the second application have not been able to give fearless advice to their minister because their positions are in jeopardy.

I am irritated that in the third application made by the Minister for Agriculture, federal funds that, with federal Government approval, were earmarked for other purposes in Western Australia were to be reallocated. The state minister did not want to spend new money out of the consolidated fund; so, in the third application, he applied to reallocate moneys that belonged to the Commonwealth. The farmers of this State will see through that device. The honeymoon for the Minister for Agriculture is well and truly over.

I will refer to other government achievements that sound very good but, on closer examination, are shown to be shallow and will cause disenchantment. Labor's policy to end logging in old-growth forests is an example of that. The majority of electors support an end to logging in old-growth forests. Labor cannot end all such logging and still retain all of the contracts for timber. If that were to happen, pressure would be applied to the remaining productive forests and the yield would not be sustainable. Popular decisions must be accompanied by some unpopular decisions. The Government has not yet had the guts to make them, but it will have to eventually. It would be appropriate for the Government to make an early start on that issue.

I will also address another matter of considerable importance; that is, the machinery of government process. I will give a friendly warning to the Government. When I first assumed ministerial responsibility, the second paper I received came from Treasury officials and informed me that the Government had to be more efficient and that the only way to do that was to examine closely the machinery of government. I had no problem with that, but I did have a problem with recommendations about the machinery of government process that would hand greater authority to Treasury.

I have had a very good relationship with the Under Treasurer. I regard him as probably one of the more competent Under Treasurers not only in this State, but also in Australia; he knows his stuff. However, I am disappointed when Treasury officials try to dictate the terms of the operations and the machinery of government in this State. I am sure that members of this Government will be given recommendations that comply with or are closely in accord with the recommendations made by Treasury officials. I am wary of giving Treasury greater authority over government trading enterprises. We will soon have a minister for government enterprises, and I bet that government bodies including Western Power and the Water Corporation, which have huge revenue raising capacities, will be subject to the whims of the Under Treasurer or Treasury officials. That will handicap this Government in the future.

Members on this side of the House used to get tired of my talking about issues associated with regional development. It is something about which I am passionate because one of the biggest issues in regional Western Australia is not the identification of the lack of infrastructure or reduction of services; it is what practical outcome we can deliver to address those issues. We will never get a government agency to do that on its own.



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Its priorities will invariably reflect the number and location of its clients. If members want proof of that, they should look at the health budget. The five teaching hospitals consume 50 per cent of the health budget. Every other health service in every other part of the State is funded from the other 50 per cent; that is, all hospitals - including Joondalup Health Campus and Bunbury Regional Hospital - and the allied health services. The reason for that is that the power base is in the teaching hospitals, and they can claim they deliver and service the numbers. They do not; the small peripheral hospitals do that and they are equally as good. That issue must be addressed.

The issue for regional development is not simply the identification of the lack of service or the failure to deliver a product in the form of infrastructure; it is establishing a group of people who can implement some of the findings and argue the case for the reinstatement or delivery of infrastructure in a particular region. Regional development is about to be completely fragmented. Four ministers are now responsible for the nine regions. The Premier chairs a cabinet standing committee on regional policy. I will be asking how often it meets because I do not think it will meet very often. When fragmentation of the regional development portfolio takes place, an individual minister will not be in a position to argue for an increased budget to resource the regional development commissions to ensure that those matters that have been identified, whether they be infrastructure development or service delivery, are addressed. The path this Government appears to be travelling will provide no way in which to deliver outcomes. It has made many high-profile announcements; for example, the reduction in the number of ministers, the reduction in the number of people in the senior executive service and the offers of redundancy. It announced the decision to end old-growth logging, but it has made no accompanying announcement about strategies that will ensure the remaining productive native forest is not put under so much pressure that it falls over. A \$75 million fund for regional development has been announced. Is it old or new money? Where will it go? Who will argue the case for the expenditure of that \$75 million? I could go through the 2000-01 budget and find in excess of \$75 million that has already been allocated to regional Western Australia. Will we follow the Victorian example? Will the Government pool the money already contained in the forward budget projections and then say that it has a new \$75 million fund?

I repeat: the Government may fool some people, but it will not fool them all. Ultimately, it will be found out. I say the same thing to the new Minister for Science about the \$50 million science commitment. It is fantastic, but I have only to read the budget estimates for two government departments - Agriculture Western Australia and Fisheries WA - to find in excess of \$50 million already allocated for research. That money comes from compulsory levies on industry and is destined to be spent on research within those government agencies. Is this \$50 million old money? Will it be in addition to the money that is already set aside for research? If it is, then it has real value and meaning. The budget in August will show the \$50 million as a single line item. Agriculture Western Australia, Fisheries WA, the Department of Commerce and Trade through the centres of excellence and various telecommunications programs, and the Department of Resources Development all make a significant contribution to research and the application of science and technology. I strongly suspect that we will find in the budgets of those departments a corresponding reduction in the funds available for research. The Government should not think it will get away with that. I will ensure that does not.

The key issue is epitomised in the salinity debate. Under the new program, the Natural Heritage Trust will continue for another five years. Another program associated with land care is being offered \$500 million over seven years, which, for Western Australia on a per capita entitlement, is about \$158 million over the next seven years or approximately more than \$20 million a year. A lot of fuss is being made about the State Government contributing money to that. The State Government is complaining that the federal Government has asked for matching money. It has said it would give the Commonwealth an extra \$10 million. It would not be very difficult to do that; but I bet it does not.

**MR JOHNSON** (Hillarys) [4.37 pm]: I start my contribution to the Address-in-Reply with congratulations. I congratulate the Speaker of the House on his election. I have got to know the member over the past nine years; I have worked with him closely on different parliamentary committees. One of the members on the other side said he has a unique sense of humour. I can confirm that. He will carry out his duties with fairness, equity and the necessary diligence. I also congratulate the Premier and the Labor Party for a successful election. They ran a very good, strategic campaign. I take my hat off to them and say that it was an outstanding job, and one that was not expected by the general public of Western Australia. They ran the election in a tactical way, with the cooperation of the Greens (WA). I often saw members of the Labor Party and the Greens meeting in the Parliament House courtyard. It was a good, tactical move on the part of the Labor Party because it could win the election only through preferences, and they had to come from somewhere. They came from the Greens and those involved with the Greens. I also congratulate all the new members in this House. They obviously fought good campaigns. They will have an interesting four years. Some in safe Labor seats will be here for longer, but other members will be here for only four years. It will then be time to say, "You are the weakest link."

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Goodbye.” They will be gone. However, I urge them to enjoy the four years during which they are here, as it is a rewarding job. This is my ninth year in this place. I know that every member of this House, as well as contributing in the House, will work as hard as he can for people in his electorate.

I also want to thank the many people who helped in my campaign. As always, they worked tirelessly. I mentioned them after the last two elections and they have asked me not to mention their names this time. It is getting boring for them and they are happy to be mentioned en bloc. Therefore, I say a big thank you to all of those who helped in my campaign. For those members who do not know the electorate of Hillarys well, it is the pearl of the northern suburbs. It has a unique marina.

Mr Pental: South Geraldton.

Mr JOHNSON: Some people say it is south Geraldton but it is not; it is the pearl of the northern suburbs. I shall say a few words about Hillarys Sorrento Quay marina. There was a great deal of opposition to the project when the previous Labor Government started it. When I first came to Western Australia in 1986, just before the America’s Cup series, I remember only too clearly seeing big bulldozers and so on involved in reclaiming the ocean. It looked like a unique operation. I was unsure of what was going on at the time until it was explained to me. When I eventually immigrated to Western Australia in February 1988, Hillarys marina was up and running. In those days it was a bit of a ghost town because many shops were vacant. Some people would say it was five to 10 years ahead of its time. However, today it is a thriving and busy community facility, not only for the people who live in Hillarys but also for people from all over Western Australia and international visitors who frequently visit the marina. It is a wonderful place. We have what used to be called Underwater World and is now called AQWA - the Aquarium of Western Australia - which had some wonderful dolphins that tragically died through, I believe, some form of pollution.

During the election campaign the Premier, when he was Leader of the Opposition, went up there, as did the Minister for Health when he was a police officer. They held morning teas and various other functions and made all sorts of promises, encouraging people to vote Labor. The Premier made a promise to the people that once elected he would spend \$500 000 to upgrade the car park and provide more parking spaces for the people who use Hillarys marina. As I said, the previous Labor Government developed the marina; however, it did not have enough foresight to develop it properly. It was developed to cater for one million visitors a year and currently attracts three and a half million to four million visitors a year. The car parking facilities are, therefore, inadequate and there is a problem getting in and out of the marina on busy summer weekends. The then Leader of the Opposition said that he would spend \$500 000 on easing that situation to enable people to park easily when they visited Hillarys marina. I call on the Premier to come good on his promise. It will be interesting to see how long it will be before he fulfils that promise, because he said he would do it straight away. There is definitely a bottleneck when people try to park there.

The Labor Party candidate who stood against me - I have nothing against her, as I am sure she is a credible person - also claimed that if elected she would ensure that access roads and roundabouts would be put in place so that people could more quickly get in and out of the marina. She did not say that the project had already been commenced, and it is now almost finished. I have been working on improving access to the marina for many years. There are now two major roundabouts and some dual carriageways that people can use to get into the commercial side of the marina and to the wonderful restaurants. There is also separate access to Hillarys Yacht Club - a very successful yacht club to which people come from miles around to be members - and to groups such as TS Marmion, a naval cadet group that has been situated there for some years now. The member for Kingsley and I had a great deal to do with supporting them in getting those facilities in the Sorrento Quay area. They are a great young group of people who do a tremendous job, supported by their parents and by dedicated naval officers.

I ask the Premier to put his money where his mouth is. He promised the people of Hillarys \$500 000 to try to get his candidate elected. She did not quite make it, but that should not matter; the Premier should still come up with the money. I ask him to do that and thereby fulfil his promise.

Mrs Hodson-Thomas: It is an election promise.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, it is an election promise.

Mr Watson: She didn’t get elected.

Mr JOHNSON: Exactly, and that is what I am worried about. If she had been elected, I am sure at some stage - probably just prior to the next election - the money would be spent. I can assure members that the electorate wants the money.

Mr Watson: They chose you and lost it.

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Mr JOHNSON: It was not a conditional offer, at least not in writing. There may have been a condition in the small print that nobody else saw. It was certainly not a conditional offer.

I will return in a few minutes to the subject of the marina, as there are further problems there. I want to ensure that the Premier and the Minister for Water Resources fulfil a pledge made by the previous Government related to the Beenyup waste water treatment plant. The Water Corporation promised \$9 million for stages 1 and 2 and \$30 million for stages 3 and 4 to alleviate the enormous Craigie pong, as it became known. I am sure my colleagues the members for Kingsley and Wanneroo know that that pong has been a problem for many years. The smell emanates from the old days of the then Shire of Wanneroo, which allowed a residential development in an area that should not have been developed. It was too near to -

Ms Guise: That was not when the member for Hillarys was there, I hope.

Mr JOHNSON: No, it was long before that.

Mrs Edwardes: It was the member for Whitfords when she was the Minister for Planning.

Mr JOHNSON: I would not have allowed something like that to happen. There is an enormous problem there at particular times of the year and money must be spent on that treatment plant so that people can have the quality of life they deserve. I ask the Premier and the Treasurer - I am sure he will have a hand in this - not to grab any money from previous commitments made by the Liberal Government, which were genuine commitments made for good, solid reasons, not for political reasons. Every Western Australian deserves to have a good quality of life. I therefore ask the Government to come good and not to renege on the commitments made by the previous Government. Some stories have been circulating in Craigie that the Gallop Government will renege on that commitment and not spend money on that project. I hope that will not happen.

Mrs Edwardes: They will be marching in the street.

Mr JOHNSON: Absolutely.

Mr O'Gorman interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: They may love us but they will not love the member for Joondalup!

Mr O'Gorman: They have never loved you in Craigie!

Mr JOHNSON: Of course they have. I accept that I did not do well in Craigie in the last election, but I lost it in the 1996 election by only 39 votes. I lost the election before that by about 600 votes when Pam Beggs was the member. I accept that this election indicated a big turnaround. I also accept that the member for Joondalup's friends may not love me in Craigie, but a few people voted for me, including a few people who voted for Labor in the past. However, even if we are unsuccessful, because of the work we do as members of Parliament and provided we work as hard as we can to help people, we are very often rewarded on the ballot paper.

Mr O'Gorman interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: It is very difficult to hear an interjection from so far back in the gods. My hearing is not the best in the world, but the member for Joondalup will have to speak up a bit more if he wants to interject on me, because I cannot hear him otherwise.

Mr O'Gorman interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: Of course there were some. However, I am in this place and I was 1 200 votes ahead of the Labor candidate. That speaks for itself.

I pledge to the people in the seat of Hillarys that I will continue to work as hard as I can and do everything in my power to assist them whenever they need help. They know my door is always open and my telephone is always answered. I have never refused to meet with any person who wanted to meet with me. I help many people over the phone, and many other people are happy to be helped by my electorate officer if it is a simple matter rather than take the time to make an appointment with me. However, they know that if they want to meet with me, I am always there for them.

My electorate has a few problems, and I know the member for Kingsley's electorate has similar problems. These problems have not just come to light, but they are getting worse; and now that members opposite are in government, they must make the hard decisions and try to do the things that must be done. My area must have a safe bus service.

Several members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I am happy for members opposite to also have a safe bus service in their electorate, but they should get up and ask for that themselves when the time comes. If they have already made their maiden speech -

Ms Radisich: First speech.

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Mr JOHNSON: It is called a maiden speech - then they should take advantage of the next opportunity and ask for whatever they need in their electorate. However, this is my time, and I intend to take my time to speak on behalf of my electorate and the people who use the bus system in my electorate. Although the number of reported and unreported incidents of crime is relatively low, a large number of passengers are concerned about their personal safety when waiting for buses at bus stations and interchanges, or when travelling on buses, particularly at night. Many of the people who travel on buses have no alternative means of travel and must rely on the bus service to deliver them safely to their destination, whether that be their home or somewhere else. Other people use public transport to exercise their support for environmentally responsible travel options. We have heard a lot from the Greens (WA) and members of the Labor Party about how we should be more environmentally responsible, so I hope those members are listening. However, those people who choose to use public transport for that reason will be inclined to revert to car use if their safety is in doubt. They will not wait at bus stations or interchanges or go on buses if they risk being mugged or attacked. Most of the concerns of bus passengers relate to antisocial behaviour, in particular from groups of young people, who are often affected by drugs or alcohol. That can be very intimidating to other passengers.

A great deal of vandalism takes places on buses and trains. There is a now a new form of graffiti called scratchiti. I had not heard of it before, but I am told that is what it is called. It involves the etching and tagging of glass on bus and train windows, and on bus shelters. This type of graffiti costs the public a tremendous amount of money. Action must be taken to deal with this problem, which concerns not only the Minister for Police, who has a responsibility to ensure the safety of people at bus stations and interchanges, but also the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. It is a bit difficult to work out whether this matter comes under road safety or transport, and who is the responsible minister. I do not know, and perhaps the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure will let us know. Perhaps the whole lot is the responsibility of the Minister for Police now that she has taken over a certain amount of work from the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

A recent survey conducted by Donovan Research found that while most people feel safe on buses during the day, that is certainly not the case at night. The chief reason people gave for feeling unsafe on buses at night was the perceived threat of personal harm or violence. The survey found that there were significantly higher levels of "do not feel very safe" responses in the Morley region. In fact, 63 per cent of the respondents in that area said they did not feel safe when using buses at night. This was an increase on the survey results from the previous year. As a consequence of the antisocial behaviour on buses, patronage levels at night have declined, and those people who have no alternative to using buses at night are in constant fear of personal harm or threat. I ask the responsible minister to take note and do something. Some of the people who travel on buses live in my electorate, and others live in other electorates. However, I care for those people just as much as I care for the people in my electorate.

The Liberal Government recognised that public safety, antisocial behaviour and vandalism was also an issue in the rail system, and it increased train security by appointing additional security officers, special constables and customer service assistants. In effect, it formed a specialist railway security unit comprising approximately 168 personnel to provide both a customer service and a security-revenue protection role. This unit has enabled all trains to be manned for at least part of each journey and every train that departs after 7.00 pm to have two security personnel on board. In addition, major railway stations have static security between 2.30 pm and 3.00 am daily. All of those personnel are uniformed and provide a highly visible physical presence, thereby acting as a deterrent to possible troublemakers and minimising vandalism, and also providing a customer service. This coalition initiative has been extremely successful and has gone a long way towards restoring passenger and community confidence in the rail system.

The unit that was put in place by the coalition Government should also be put in place on the bus service. Transport currently provides static security at Wellington Street bus station, and at Mirrabooka and Morley bus stations in the northern corridor, during various hours of the day and night. That static bus security is required and, like the static rail security, is effective. It is obviously not possible for a security officer to travel on each bus in the northern suburbs and throughout the metropolitan area. What the people who travel on buses need is a mobile unit comprising security officers who can react quickly and can jump onto a bus when no-one expects it, because that will deter people from committing the vandalism and antisocial behaviour that we have experienced. As I said, I am not sure whether this matter comes under road safety or transport; therefore, I ask both ministers to take action to make bus travel safer not only in my area but in every area.

I now say a few words about the time I have spent not only as a member of this House but also as a minister in the Court Government. I believe that for eight years we had a Premier who worked for all Western Australians and made some tremendous achievements that future generations of Western Australians will enjoy. He will go down as one of this State's best Premiers for a very long time. I want that on the record. I spent just over a year as a minister, but I got a tremendous amount of satisfaction from the job, which was a hard one to do. I am sure

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that all the new ministers will find that after about a year they will think that it is quite a hard job, particularly those with the super ministries. From what I can gather, some of them are already having trouble. It is disgraceful that it can take two months for a minister to reply to a letter from a member of Parliament. I do not believe that any member of Parliament who ever wrote to me when I was a minister received a reply more than two weeks later, at the outside. The portfolios that I covered were works and services and citizenship and multicultural interests. Works and services was an interesting portfolio, which took in the Department of Contract and Management Services and the State Supply Commission. Both agencies were extremely well run by top chief executive officers and the dedicated staff did a tremendous job. The Department of Contract and Management Services has saved the taxpayers of Western Australia many millions of dollars through being innovative and taking on new technology.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.