

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2014–2015 BILL 2014**  
**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2014–2015 BILL 2014**

*Second Reading — Cognate Debate*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield)** [12.31 pm]: I rise today to make a contribution to the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2014–2015 Bill 2014 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2014–2015 Bill 2014. It is interesting following on from the member for Hillarys; indeed, I am surprised that I am on the same side of the chamber as him, given his rather average contribution to the debate. Possibly the member for Hillarys had counselling about what to say from members opposite or further abroad—who knows? There are a few spare seats on the opposition side of the chamber; perhaps he can look at relocating there.

The Premier and the Western Australian government have a clear vision for Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! There are too many audible conversations happening in the chamber. If members want to have meetings, they should have them outside.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I refer to what the government has achieved in its goal of transforming Perth. It is very easy to articulate and prosecute that argument when one considers the projects that are underway in our capital city. I refer mainly to Elizabeth Quay —

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** The member for Girrawheen does not have to attend its opening, given she is already being negative. She does not have to visit those sites when they are completed; indeed, she would bring down the vibe with her negativity. The member for Girrawheen should stay away and let us get on with the job of governing and delivering for Western Australia.

Let us look at what the government is achieving. The main project is Elizabeth Quay and there is also the Perth City Link project and the Riverside project, which I pass every morning on my commute to Parliament House.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen, I call you. I have asked you not to intervene.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** There is also the new Burswood stadium and the Forrestfield–Airport Link, which I will talk about later in my contribution. Members opposite do not see what is happening but, thankfully, people halfway around the other side of the world recognise what the government is doing. I note that an article in *The New York Times* refers to Perth and the great things that are happening here.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Be proud of your state; be proud of Western Australia!

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** I'm proud —

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! I want to hear from the member for Forrestfield.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** *The New York Times* recognises what is being delivered by the government and how it is transforming Perth. Of course, the Labor Party is stuck in its own negativity and backward views of Perth.

Perth is transforming and maturing into a global destination, and that is something of which Western Australians should be proud. Having spoken to people in my electorate and others when I get around Western Australia, I know that people want to be proud of their capital city. They do not want to play second fiddle to the cities in the east. They do not want Perth to be the poor cousin of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. We want to stand on our own two feet and be proud of our capital city as a global destination and a mature city with the appropriate infrastructure, which is what this government is delivering for Western Australia now and for generations to come. I stand by that record and the government stands by that record. It is something we are proud of, unlike members opposite.

Let us not forget the regions. There has been much debate this week about the regions and the level of investment in them. The Leader of the Nationals will correct me if I am wrong, but I am sure he made reference to the Labor government's \$20 million contribution to the regions. When one looks at the out years and the money that this government has set aside for the regions and the things that it has already delivered for the regions, \$20 million is small change; it is loose change in the hip pocket when one considers the billions of dollars the Liberal–National government has invested. I was in Port Hedland a couple of weeks ago, along with a few of parliamentary colleagues, to look at the iron ore production chain, which was extremely interesting.

As we moved around Port Hedland, I saw firsthand some of the facilities that the government has delivered to the regions. Port Hedland has a new state-of-the art recreation centre and a new state-of-the art hospital, which is fantastic. Those facilities made me realise that the Liberal–National government is delivering the types of facilities to regional Western Australia that people in the capital city have come to expect. The government has an outstanding record, of which we should be extremely proud.

I will look at some of the portfolios in a bit more detail; I will start with health. The budget includes an \$8 billion spend in health, which is a \$447 million increase in the health budget. There is continued investment in Fiona Stanley Hospital and Perth Children’s Hospital is coming to fruition; indeed, every time I drive pass it, something new has been built. There are also the many regional hospitals, one of which I have made reference to in my contribution today. Of course, Midland Public Hospital, which is in my neck of the woods, is well underway. The budget allocates that project another \$95 million this financial year, which will see it continue to develop and provide state-of-the-art health facilities in the eastern corridor for generations to come. Again, that is another proud achievement by the Liberal–National government.

I want to look further than health by considering areas such as disability services and mental health. This government has increased spending in mental health by 68 per cent, with disability services funding up 101 per cent. There may be a school of thought in sectors of the community that it is more traditional for the Labor Party to champion the disadvantaged. We stand on our record that this Liberal–National government, while delivering for the capital city and the regions, is doing its best not to leave behind the most disadvantaged. We have a fantastic record. Let us not forget that it was this Liberal–National government and this Premier who appointed a mental health minister. The Premier has led the charge in ensuring that people with mental health issues have a voice at the decision-making table of Western Australia, which is cabinet. That is another proud achievement.

I will provide an example of how this government is considerate and always thinking of ways to help the disadvantaged. I refer to the KidSport program. Surely members of this place know about KidSport; indeed, the Minister for Sport and Recreation always goes on about the program, which helps disadvantaged people in our community gain access to organised sport, and we all know the benefits of organised sport. There is another little line to the detail of that program. The Department of Sport and Recreation designed that program while the Labor Party was in power. However—this is telling—it was not until the Liberal–National government came to power that the program was instituted. Again, there are very clear and concise examples of this side of the house acknowledging those most in need and of doing everything it can to bring them along and make them a contributing part of our community. That is yet another fantastic thing to stand by.

I now want to look at law and order. Obviously when I go around my community, law and order is a significant issue. This government is investing \$1.34 billion in law and order, and policing. That is up \$83.5 million from last year. That includes 550 more police officers. Between 2008 and 2017, this government will have added around 1 000 police officers to the force here in Western Australia. Again, that is a proud thing to stand by. This government is also investing \$1.3 million for more CCTV. We have also heard the recent announcement about the covert hoon cameras—which will be warmly received in my electorate—to tackle our war on hoon drivers. That is another fantastic commitment from this Liberal–National government.

Of course I could not give a budget reply speech without talking about education. We see a \$4.6 billion spend in education, up \$188 million from last year. Even though all the naysayers said that teaching positions would not be available, this year we have employed graduate teachers in the hundreds, and next year we will add a further 550 teachers to the mix. Again, that demonstrates this government’s commitment to education in this state.

There will be a further increase in the spend per student. I think this year the spend will go up another \$150 per student, to take it to \$15 824, on average, per student—the highest spend in the nation. We have heard a conversation or debate about resourcing in schools. I have worked in the education system for a decade of my life, and I know, hand on heart, that the most important resource in our education system is our teachers. This Liberal–National government and this Premier did what members opposite could not do when they were in government—we made teachers in this state the highest paid in the country. Also, importantly, given that teachers are the most important resource in our education system, we have put a teacher in front of every student enrolled in a public school in Western Australia. That is also something that Labor failed to do. We did it when we came to power, and we have done it every year since. Again, that is another proud thing to stand by.

This financial year, we will also see the rollout of the student-centred funding model. It would beggar belief if anyone were to oppose the introduction of this funding model, because it delivers and targets the funding to those students most in need. That is another demonstration of the compassionate nature of this Liberal–National government in making sure that those students most in need get the funding that they need to enable them to achieve their educational potential.

We have heard Labor and the unions carry on about class sizes. I want to look at class sizes, because it makes for interesting reading. The Department of Education breaks class sizes into different categories, depending on the year in which students are enrolled. The specified class limit for kindergarten is 20; in 2014, the average class size was 18.9. The specified class size for preprimary is 27; the current class average is 23.4. The specified class size for K-1 is 20; the current average is 19.4. The specified class size for years 1 to 3 is 24; the 2014 average is 22.2. The specified class size for years 4 to 7 is 32; it is currently 28. The specified class size for years 8 to 10 is 32; it is currently 26.2. Those class sizes are well under the specified sizes for classes and students across the system. In fact, if we look at the history of class sizes, the only time there was a breach was in 2007. By my calculations, that is when that mob opposite was in power—and, more telling, that is when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Education. So the only breach that we have seen in specified class sizes over the last seven years was when the Leader of the Opposition was in charge! It was not under us; we have actually delivered class sizes well below the specified sizes. The Leader of the Opposition as Minister for Education did not pay teachers what they deserve to be paid and disillusioned an entire workforce. He turned the curriculum in Western Australian schools into a basket case—I know, because I was there. He also breached average class sizes. That is a poor record in education. It is no wonder teachers regard the Leader of the Opposition as one of the worst education ministers in living history.

A government member interjected.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** We already hear the rumours coming from his colleagues about his life expectancy in that role.

Another issue that the Labor Party and the unions have gone on about is the fees that will be paid by 457 visa holders for their children in our schools. It is interesting to look at some of the detail around this issue. There are around 5 000 children from 457 visa families in our public schools. That is an increase of 1 700 per cent since 2005. That is a vast increase. The average base salary of a 457 visa worker in Western Australia is \$99 800. That is higher than the average salary in Western Australia. I will take the liberty in further debate on this topic of rounding up that figure to 100 grand, if that is okay. The average 457 visa worker is on around 100 grand a year. When I do some pretty simple mathematics, if we take those 5 000 students in the system and multiply that by the average spend per student of \$15 824—the highest spend in the country—that comes to \$79.12 million that is being spent by Western Australian taxpayers to subsidise the education of these students in our system.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** But they do pay taxes, though.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** Yes, and I will get to that point, member for Armadale, and I will explain that, so thanks for raising that—I have a few things to thank members opposite for, and I will get to that as well. I will name some of the schools that these students are enrolled in: Subiaco Primary School, Hillarys Primary School, Shenton College, Highgate Primary School, Melville Senior High School, Applecross Primary School, South Perth Primary School, Applecross Senior High School, Como Primary School and Rossmoyne Senior High School. The list goes on, but I think I can safely say that those are not suburbs that we would really associate hardship with.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** There are a lot in Challis! You know Challis very well!

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** That raises another point. The member for Armadale yells out about the constituents in his electorate, and it is good for him to do that. This is not a heartless government, as I have demonstrated in my contribution. Families who are experiencing financial difficulties will have the opportunity to apply for special consideration. We acknowledge that. I will get to the other point that the member for Armadale raised about paying taxes. Yes, 457 visa workers do pay taxes for the four years of their 457 visa. The decision to introduce this tuition fee reflects the reality that Western Australian taxpayers subsidise public schooling for the life of their taxpaying existence here in Western Australia, whereas the 457 visa workers do that for only four years. Members opposite will say, “Yes, that may be so, but many of these workers will become permanent residents and will continue to live here, but not on their 457 visas.” Great! Then they will not have to pay the tuition fee.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** It is no wonder people are flocking to Western Australia in their thousands. We have the highest average wages of any state, the lowest fees and charges of any state, except Tasmania, and the lowest unemployment level of any state.

In the few minutes I have left, I want to talk about my electorate of Forrestfield. We have had school upgrades, with \$150 000 to Forrestfield Primary School for a kitchen conversion to complement its programs, which has been delivered, and \$200 000 for East Kenwick Primary School for a stop-and-drop facility, which has been delivered. We have had \$3.6 million for Darling Range Sports College, which is underway as we speak. I toured that recently with the Minister for Education, and it is coming along leaps and bounds. We have had \$5 million

for an upgrade to Maida Vale Primary School, which is in the process of being delivered as we speak. We also have the 40-kilometre-an-hour flashing signs, which I had the good fortune, if you like, to switch on with the Minister for Transport recently, and which is very warmly welcomed by that community. We have had train station upgrades at Maddington and Kenwick, delivered or underway; and we have the Hartfield Park sporting complex in the heart of my electorate, at a tad over \$3 million.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

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