

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

Third Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR DAY (Darling Range) [2.39 pm]: Before question time I referred to the brochure distributed throughout the electorate of Darling Range by the Labor Government. The brochure is deceptive and shows the lengths to which the Labor Government will go to try to give the impression that it is doing something when, in reality, it is not. In the very short list of items by which it is supposedly honouring its promises in Darling Range, it refers to the redevelopment of the Kalamunda District Community Hospital. In reality, the Government is sitting on its hands. It could be getting on with the job; all the design work and detailed planning has already been done under the previous Government. It would delight me if I did not have to raise this issue, as I have done on a number of occasions in this Chamber, and put pressure on the Minister for Health and the Government to get on with it. I do not want this to be a political issue. All I am asking for is that the much-needed work to go ahead. As soon as the Government decides that the work will go ahead, I will congratulate the Government and the minister for getting on with it. However, my calls for the work to go ahead are unfortunately falling on deaf ears.

As I said before question time, the minister recently wrote to me and said that the future of the Kalamunda District Community Hospital will be considered as part of a broader review of how health service delivery can be optimised in the East Metropolitan Health Authority area and when this review has been completed, the procurement program and associated cash flows will be finalised. They are simply words designed to mark time at best, and to back-pedal at worst, on the supposed commitment given by the Labor Party in the election campaign. It knows that it gave a commitment and that it needs to give the appearance that it is doing something when in reality, nothing much is happening.

I ask the minister to visit the Kalamunda hospital in the near future and meet with me and other representatives of the Kalamunda community. He could outline to the community representatives what he thinks is the future of the Kalamunda hospital, and more importantly, listen to what they think the community requires. That is an important process. I do not believe the minister has any understanding of the services provided by the Kalamunda hospital and I hope that he will take the opportunity to visit it in the near future.

The situation is worse in the east metropolitan area because the Government has allocated a token amount of \$50 000 for planning to be done on providing extra beds at the Swan District Hospital, the Osborne Park Hospital and the Rockingham-Kwinana Hospital. That allocation is part of the \$8 million that was made available by the previous Government, from the sale of AlintaGas, to provide 100 additional subacute beds at those three hospitals. This was to take pressure off tertiary hospitals that are required to provide accommodation for aged care patients who do not need continued admission in those hospitals. That \$8 million was allocated by the previous Government for the provision of an extra 100 beds at those three hospitals, including Swan District Hospital in the eastern metropolitan area. The reality is that if the former Government had been re-elected, that work would be well under way and we would be very close to getting the additional 100 beds. By comparison, this Government has allocated only \$50 000 - a token amount - to keep the project on the books. The Government has grabbed the rest of the \$8 million and put it in the out years as a means of balancing its books and giving the impression that it will have a budget surplus. Almost \$8 million of the supposed \$51.5 million budget surplus, which the Government is touting, is due to the fact that it has put on hold the provision of the much-needed 100 subacute beds.

The Minister for Health has made a big song and dance about the fact that more needs to be done about aged care and he has criticised the federal Government for not doing enough in that area. Well, this Government could have done a lot more if it had kept to the commitment made by the previous Government to spend the \$8 million, which was allocated from the sale of AlintaGas, in this financial year and perhaps over the next financial year as well. In reality, this Government is not doing that and it stands condemned for not doing so.

The **SPEAKER**: Members, the speaker can hardly be heard above the background cafeteria noise. It was not interfering with the last member's speech, but I ask members to go outside if they wish to continue talking at that level.

MR QUIGLEY (Innaloo) [2.46 pm]: It gives me a great deal of pride to stand here today and speak on this budget in my first year in Parliament. The reasoning behind this budget epitomises much of the basis on which I chose to join the Australian Labor Party and represent the people of Innaloo.

In his speech, the Leader of the Opposition said that this budget - in so far as it once had a premium property tax - has exhibited the politics of incompetence. Quite the contrary! It demonstrated that this Government is not arrogant, not scared and not above admitting to a mistake.

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

The previous Government practised the politics of arrogance and defiance to the people of Western Australia at every turn. When the people of Western Australia tried to push the previous Government into a reasonable position on the belltower and the expenditure on it, it stood arrogant and stubborn. When the people of Western Australia tried to reason with the previous Government on old-growth forests, it stood defiant, arrogant and stubborn against the people of Western Australia.

Mr Board: Member for Innaloo, what would you have done with those bells?

Mr QUIGLEY: What was originally proposed; put them on university land on Winthrop Avenue. I am not taking interjections on this matter as it has been a long-running issue.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the Government's decision on the premium property tax was a backflip, backflip, belly flop and that the Premier demonstrated that not only could he not read the mood of Western Australia, but he was also no sportsman. The premium property tax went down in a neatly executed dive without a splash, never to be seen again. It went to the bottom of the pool, much to the chagrin of opposition members who, realising that an error had been made, wanted to seize upon it and try to embarrass this Government in the lead-up to the forthcoming federal election. The Government listened and now the Opposition members are disappointed that they are dealing with a flexible, intelligent and listening Government because it gives them less opportunity to whinge.

Mr Barnett interjected.

Mr QUIGLEY: The people of Western Australia watched this dive and saw the three judges give three perfect scores and say, "Well done, Labor, you called it right!"

The Leader of the Opposition went on about socialism. I went into the heartland of capitalism at the Albion Hotel last Friday night when I had my drinks with friends.

Mr Barnett: Was that your drinks with Brian Burke? Was it the Brian Burke-David Parker meeting?

Mr QUIGLEY: No, that it was a different one. This was a drink with all of the people in the front bar of the Albion Hotel who said to me, "John, we have two difficulties and we are confused. We have a difficulty because down here, we are Liberal. Why did you join the Labor Party?" I said that I was driven to join the Labor Party by social conscious issues. They then said to me, "There is another thing that we get confused about, John. As businessmen under a Labor Government, we seem to be able to make a quid. We seem to do well."

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Although there has been some promotion of interjection, when two or three people interject at the same time, the interjections cannot be heard!

Mr QUIGLEY: The other day, I was doorknocking in Burniston Street in Scarborough when a Liberal Party member from the northern suburbs - whose identity I will not disclose - said to me that his real estate business in Western Australia is flourishing under the Labor Government. It is nonsense to say that it is nearly all over, red rover, because a Labor budget has been introduced. The people of Western Australia, especially the people of Innaloo, were very upset at the arrogance of the previous Government. The closure of the Scarborough high school and the lack of facilities provided to the area demonstrated that. This budget nearly doubles the facilities to the area. The budget has increased from \$2.2 million to \$3.6 million the amount of money allocated to replace facilities that the previous Government, and especially the Leader of the Opposition, had a lead hand in flattening and destroying. The decision to double the facilities offered by the Opposition were made after a public plebiscite in Innaloo. I think we need an ambulance or a doctor for the member for Murray-Wellington!

Mr Barnett: Your constituents said to me, "At least you told us the truth, Colin." They said that to me in front of you. By implication, you did not tell the truth.

Mr QUIGLEY: They did not. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition is actually misleading Parliament when he is sitting down. I do not know whether he can be done for misleading Parliament when he is sitting on his hands - like he did for the past eight years. A letter signed by the Leader of the Opposition said that the then Government would maintain the gymnasium and the swimming pool at that school. However, as soon as the school year finished and the students were on their Christmas holidays, like the angel of death or a thief in the night the Leader of the Opposition pushed over the school. He left the desks in the schoolrooms and flattened it. The Leader of the Opposition is being very noisy. I did not rise today to yell and perform; however, I welcome his attendance in the Chamber.

Mr Johnson: I will tell you something.

Mr QUIGLEY: I doubt it; however, the member can have a squawk.

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

Mr Johnson: How can you justify the fact that all the backbenchers totally supported the premium property tax; however, the minute the leader of the Labor Party got a call from Kim Beazley's office, you all turned against it?

Mr QUIGLEY: I knew the member could not tell me anything; he can only squawk. Wide! That was not an interjection, it missed the wicket. It was a wide.

I thank the Treasurer and this Government because it is the hallmark of this budget and this party that it does not listen only to the loudest voice but to the community. The true measure of a good Government is its ability to look after those who are least able to speak on their own behalf and who are least equipped to look after themselves. In that regard, I applaud the decision in the budget to supply another \$591 000 to the capital works program in Innaloo, for the Sussex hostel for profound and intellectually handicapped clients. That hostel has 27 such patients. I did not know it existed because it has such a low profile. Although I have lived in the suburb for 27 years, I had not visited it until I was invited there after I was elected to Parliament. The phone book lists it only as Sussex.

When I visited the hostel, it was an emotional experience. I saw clients who had been there from the days of the Tresillian hospital, which was closed in the early 1970s. I am sure that God has already reserved a place in heaven for the staff of 42 who work there on a 24-hour rotational basis and, in particular, for the clinical nurse specialist, Rita Harold, and the area manager Bernie Flynn. The budget provided \$591 000 for general renovations to the bathroom, kitchen facilities and an upgrade of the hostel's hot water system. Those people, who cannot speak on their own behalf will greatly appreciate that.

That was the biggest capital works expenditure provided for Innaloo in the budget. However, other facilities have been provided for in the budget, the most important of which is the upgrade of the Innaloo police station and the transfer to my electorate of an extra 28 police officers. That was a spectacular advance by the Police Service and the Minister for Police because those police officers were required in Innaloo. The Labor Party went to the election on the issues of education, law and order, and health. As I have said before, the increase to the facilities at the Scarborough high school site, which will service the primary schools in that area and the community in general, satisfies the first promise we made on education in that electorate. The additional 28 police brought to the electorate for the Innaloo police station will go a long way towards meeting the promise we made to increase the number of police at Innaloo.

Finally, we are now dealing with Labor's third promise to deal with the Osborne Park Hospital. Although no money has been set aside in this budget to build three new operating theatres at that hospital, I have chaired the Osborne Park Hospital review committee and I am confident that an announcement will be made early in the new year about where the funding will come from to provide the new operating theatres. Under the previous administration, the Osborne Park Hospital sought to realise some of its assets to build operating theatres but the previous Government would not allow it. It said that if any assets were realised, they would go straight into consolidated revenue. I am pleased and proud to commend this budget to this Chamber and to the -

Mr Barnett: You have not told us what you were doing with Brian Burke and David Parker.

Mr QUIGLEY: The Leader of the Opposition read it in the newspaper. I walked into a restaurant and there they were. What does this have to do with the budget? It did not come out of consolidated revenue.

Mr Barnett: Did the Premier know you were meeting them?

Mr QUIGLEY: Of course not.

Mr Barnett: Where does it fit into the so-called great code of conduct?

Mr QUIGLEY: When I went to the Aristos Seafood Restaurant, I did not know that David Parker or Noel Crichton-Browne would be there. Has the Leader of the Opposition not been there? I do not make any secret of it.

Ms Sue Walker: Are you defecting to our side?

Mr QUIGLEY: Am I defecting to that side? I am not defecting to become infected - no way!

Mr Barnett: Was the member for Innaloo holding a meeting with two convicted former members of the House?

Mr QUIGLEY: I am glad that this can now go on the record. I have one minute left. Everyone in Western Australia knows that the Commissioner of Police took a head count of the population and, realising he was one licence short for the people of Western Australia, asked me if I would donate mine. Therefore, I lent him my licence for three months. In these circumstances, I obtained a lift to lunch at the Aristos Seafood Restaurant. After I had been dropped off and had entered the restaurant, I saw the former Deputy Premier, Mr David Parker, who I did not know would be there, and also Mr Crichton-Browne, who I had no clue would be in the Aristos

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

Restaurant that day. My car had left. What was I to do, but enjoy a lovely slice of dhufish in the electorate of Nedlands? Big deal!

MR BOARD (Murdoch) [3.01 pm]: The general direction of this budget needs to be recorded during this debate. I have heard members opposite, over the last day or so, do the most enormous backflip. Have they read the speeches they made in support of the premium property tax? Do they remember saying how important it was to Western Australia to penalise these people? The tax was brought in because of a supposed deficit, which turned out to be a surplus of \$221 million. I am quite happy that the Treasurer has backtracked, and seen the error of his ways, but the intent of that premium property tax needs to be recorded. It was not about raising \$10 million or \$12 million a year. It was about telling the people of Western Australia that Labor was back in town, and now had the capacity and the power to penalise those people who may have achieved something, and may be sitting on an asset. It is a tax of envy. The Government thought it would shore up its numbers, and those people who would support the Labor Party, and that it was a clever way of raising a few bob, while at the same time letting people know that Labor was back in power. The Treasurer got it wrong, on a number of counts. Australians have an ideal - they want to own good property, if they can get it, and inherit property. They respect people who have property and who have made an effort, regardless of their status, where they are from, where they made those decisions, and how they acquired those properties. They do not think it is Australian to double-tax and punish those people for a lousy \$10 million a year. They think that is divisive. They penalised the Government, and members opposite know that. The people will not forget or forgive what the Government has done. Each speech recorded in *Hansard* will come back and bite government members for the support they gave to an action that was severely divisive of our community.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BOARD: The other issue of great concern in this budget is the general direction taken by the Government to penalise business. I have heard the Government argue in this House that it wants to support business. In fact, the member for Innaloo just said that business would flourish under Labor. At the first opportunity, in the state budget the Government raised payroll tax and land tax, and did things to hurt small business and restrict employment in this State. Why would the Government do that? Why would it attack the very engine room of Western Australia, which has the highest per capita number of small businesses in the country? It was an absolutely ridiculous thing to do. The Treasurer thinks, for some reason, that those people are somehow ripping off the system.

Mr Ripper: Does the member for Murdoch not think it might have had something to do with the budget situation the Government inherited?

Mr BOARD: The budget was in surplus, to the tune of \$221 million. I am not responsible for the Government's inappropriate election promises. The Government must now try to fund those promises, but in its first budget it has put a dampener on growth in Western Australia. That is a very poor decision for the amount of money it will raise. It sends out all the wrong messages to those wanting to generate income or employment, and it is a very poor way to go.

The other issue, which has not even been raised in this debate, is the extension of payroll tax to those who are subcontracting in the building industry. If the Government proceeds with payroll tax in that industry, it will hurt every builder and every subcontractor. The extra costs will be passed on to all the home buyers in Western Australia, particularly the first home buyers, which is where the action is. If the Government introduces payroll tax into that area, it will add between two and five per cent to the cost of homes, particularly new homes, in this State. It will put a dampener on the very industry that is driving our economy at the moment.

Mr Ripper: Did the member for Murdoch support the introduction of the goods and services tax?

Mr BOARD: Why does the Treasurer not come clean and recognise the benefits the goods and services tax will bring to the State Government in the form of increased tax revenue? We should talk about that.

The Government's actions will flatten the growth in the economy of this State. How will adding two to five per cent to the cost of a house, on top of the goods and services tax, help the industry to grow? It will flatten the very industry that is driving the economy of this State, and that is a very poor way to go.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members. It is disorderly to conduct a conversation across the Chamber while a member has the call, and it makes it very difficult for Hansard. I ask members to show some courtesy.

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

Mr BOARD: I found specific issues in my shadow portfolio, particularly in health, fairly disappointing. The Government made a great deal of mileage, particularly during the election campaign, about what it would do with the health budget. It was going to bring down a significant improvement to the health budget. It ran in the election on the issue that the previous Government had under-funded the health system, notwithstanding that expenditure on the health system increased by between six and seven per cent each year during the term of the previous Government. This year, we see a three per cent increase in the health budget, which is 0.85 per cent in real terms. That, combined with accrual accounting, and the per capita charge for superannuation, has created a situation in which the health sector is no longer as well off.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr BOARD: I have seven minutes left. If the member for Peel wishes, he may make a speech following mine. When I sit down I would like the member to stand up and make some points. The point is that the health budget in Western Australia is in crisis. The health budget needed to maintain the momentum that has been built up over the past six years. There has been a three per cent increase in the health budget, which is only a 0.85 per cent increase in real terms. On top of that, additional charges have been brought through the accrual accounting process. The Minister for Health said that the health budget would be some \$385 million better off.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BOARD: Where was that detailed? I asked the Minister for Health during the estimates committee to show me where the \$385 million increase over four years was listed in the budget. He was unable to do so. I will ask him again today. During the estimates committee he said it was an output measurement and that he was unable to demonstrate it. I asked him to demonstrate where the \$240 million allocation for the nurses' package was listed.

Mr Ripper: It is in the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*.

Mr BOARD: If it were it would show in the overall net appropriations, which it does not. I will challenge the minister to come clean and show us where the money is to meet the press releases that were put out.

Mr Ripper: Would you like a page number?

Mr BOARD: I have already put it on notice and we will talk about it this afternoon.

Mr Ripper: Is your approach to spend more, and tax less?

Mr BOARD: The approach of the Liberal Party is to meet its commitments and not to carry on with rhetoric in its press releases or to come back with a whole lot of mumbo jumbo. People have asked the Labor Government for details on the increases it announced and all its ministers said is that they are sorry; they cannot find them because they are output measures.

Ms Sue Walker: Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the numbers in the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: A quorum is not present. Ring the bells.

Mr Johnson: We want all your colleagues to hear it.

Mr Marlborough: More government members are present than opposition members. There are five of you and seven of us. The Leader of the Opposition should lift his game.

Mr Barnett: The Government is responsible for the House.

Mr Marlborough: The Leader of the Opposition cannot get away with it as easily as that. He should lift his game. He is in charge of the Opposition. He should encourage his members to support the member who is speaking. I know that the member for Murdoch is the main threat to his leadership, but the Leader of the Opposition should support him. He should get people in here and lift his game. He has been playing a bad game of footy since the season started and is about to be dropped completely. His team-mates are about to make that decision. Government members sit on the sideline and applaud at the appropriate time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: A quorum is present.

Mr BOARD: The member for Peel has made his longest speech in Parliament this year during the call for a quorum. We look forward to the continuation of it! The point is that the Labor Party ran to the people of Western Australia and said that it would significantly increase the health budget. It has not done that. It told the people of Western Australia that it would significantly improve the education budget in Western Australia, but it has not; that is the reality. The economy the Labor Government inherited is in great shape. The Government

should tell the people of Western Australia about the unemployment and youth unemployment rates, which are the lowest in Australia. Western Australia has some of the highest investment growth rates in Australia. What did the coalition Government inherit in 1993? If the Treasurer wants to be considered tough, he should have been in government in 1993 when the coalition Government took over from his lot and cleaned up that mess. It took four years. The Treasurer has inherited a great economy with a low unemployment rate and strong investment. He has all the ingredients needed for growth, but what has he done in his first budget? He has brought down measures that will flatten growth. I cannot believe that he would try to hurt the engine room of Western Australia - the housing industry and those who create employment, and generate and drive the Western Australian economy. They are the ones he has hurt. It is ill conceived and petty. It will come back to bite the Treasurer. I am extremely concerned about the state of our debt - where it will go, what will happen to the AAA credit rating, and what will happen to people's confidence, particularly those seeking employment.

MS RADISICH (Swan Hills) [3.14 pm]: I note some of the positive aspects of the budget for my electorate, particularly those concerning agriculture. The divisions of the budget outline initiatives to be carried out by the Department of Agriculture. I will speak about three aspects. I will begin with the viticulture industry and the benefits that will accrue to that industry from this year's terrific budget. As members might be aware, the wine grape industry has experienced significant problems in my electorate this season. One of the major wine grape buyers has not been able to buy grapes from about 32 local producers. It is unfortunate that the producers did not make contractual arrangements with that buyer. There is a historical aspect to that. Nonetheless, it is important that these problems do not occur in the future, or at least do not occur with any regularity. Anyone involved in agricultural pursuits knows that there is sometimes an oversupply or undersupply of one primary product or another. In this case there is an oversupply of wine grapes. The major buyers in the region cannot take them all. That is why I would like to focus on some of the investment that will be made through the current budget to improve management practices for wine grapes in my region and in other regions around the State. An amount of \$750 000 has been allocated in this year's budget to develop management practices and improve the quality of wine grapes produced in this State. There is a lot of scope at the top end of the wine market to improve export and domestic sales opportunities. Unfortunately, if the quality of the wine grapes does not improve, those sales cannot be made and the best quality wine cannot be produced.

Mr Board: Was the decision by The Houghton Wine Company based on the quality of the grapes or on the fact that the volume was too great.

Ms RADISICH: I am not reflecting upon why Houghton's made that decision. My understanding is that its crops have now come on line and it is either buying from other parts of the State or is simply using its own holdings. I am not 100 per cent sure about the reasons behind that decision, but Houghtons does not need to buy as many grapes from the Swan Valley region any longer. I cannot comment accurately on why that decision was made.

It is good that investment is made in broad export opportunities for a domestic wine product. The Department of Agriculture is investing in the table grape industry. I note that a new table grape variety called red crimson will soon be released. That variety could potentially be planted in the Swan Valley region and provide income opportunities for people operating in that area. It is always exciting when new primary produce comes onto the market. Small, seedless sweet grapes are popular with local consumers and on the export market. That could be beneficial for producers who take up that opportunity. Farmbis, which is partially funded by the State and Federal Governments, offers extremely important opportunities to producers in my electorate to improve marketing and management of their enterprises. This applies particularly to small producers, so that they can better understand how to effectively operate their small, family businesses. Wine grape producers have often been in the business for years and have not necessarily undertaken the skills or professional training to operate businesses at the standard that is becoming the benchmark for small business in the State. Farmbis is offering growers opportunities to learn, for example, how to better calculate expenses relating to producing a tonne of grapes. These skilling sessions and the opportunities they provide will be a winner for the future.

I reflect on the relocation of the Midland saleyards. During the estimates debate I asked the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Agriculture to report on the status of that relocation. Unfortunately, little information was forthcoming, as the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority report had not been released. However, it has now been released and is open for a four or six-week consultation period, during which the many sectors of the community that are interested in the meat and related industries may make submissions. I have consulted with a number of interested parties in my electorate, including the West Bullsbrook Residents and Ratepayers Association, the Chittering-Bullsbrook Chamber of Commerce and representatives from the WA Meat Industry Authority.

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

The member for Greenough and I support the relocation of the saleyards from Midland to the north Bullsbrook-Muchea area. The site borders on my electorate, but is located within the electorate of Moore. Growing urban sprawl means that we need to expand agricultural and semi-industrial pursuits in the outer metropolitan region to combat unemployment. The planned community of Ellenbrook has been approved, and has a population of approximately 6 000 people, which is estimated to grow to 30 000 at its completion in 10 to 15 years. Opportunities for employment in the region are insufficient. We need to transfer, relocate and innovate to ensure new job opportunities in the outer metropolitan region. The transfer of the Midland saleyards to Muchea would go some way to achieve that. At this stage, it is only a recommendation of the report. Ministerial approval is still required. I know other views are being put forward. However, one of the key benefits of this site is the available land on which complementary industries could be built, which would further improve employment prospects, particularly for young people, in the areas surrounding Bullsbrook, Ellenbrook and Chittering.

Mr Trenorden: Some people will heavily contest that proposal.

Ms RADISICH: Yes, I noted that earlier.

Mr Trenorden: There will be great difficulty with that site, because the Toodyay Shire Council will not allow heavy traffic through the shire. Anyone wanting to access Muchea from the central wheatbelt area will have to come to the metropolitan area through your electorate and then go to Muchea. It is a serious matter.

Ms RADISICH: It is one that I am sure the Minister for Agriculture will take on board when making his final decision, perhaps in conjunction with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. I am sure they are more than competent to make those decisions.

My third point relates to the biological control of weeds, particularly Paterson's curse. During the Estimate Committee, the members for Avon and Warren-Blackwood requested from the Department of Agriculture supplementary information about weeds. Paterson's curse is prolific in my electorate. A number of community groups in the Swan Valley, Gidgegannup and elsewhere put much effort into trying to eradicate this weed. It has taken hold in a number of regions. People who have lived in the Swan Valley tell how they would go out with their mothers and have to literally dig the weed out by the roots, because properties would be inspected by Department of Agriculture representatives to make sure they did not contain any of the weed. I hope that the technological advancements made by the department will mean the end of this back-breaking labour, and the ability to eradicate the weed by simply releasing a reagent on the weed-infested site. The project to control and hopefully eradicate Paterson's curse is now almost entirely funded by the declared plant research activity of the Department of Agriculture. That move is welcomed by many residents in my electorate. That concludes my remarks on this year's budget.

MR SWEETMAN (Ningaloo) [3.26 pm]: Health remains one of the biggest issues in my electorate, particularly the hand the budget dealt to the Gascoyne Health Service. As a precursor, I was fair to the Government and the minister by waiting to see the fine detail of the budget, particularly what is to be allocated to the regions, before making any comments. I am especially interested in the Gascoyne Health Service, which is the primary health service in most of the region I represent. There were some murmurs when the budget was announced that funding for the Gascoyne Health Service would be cut in real terms by \$1.7 million. The Press, the ABC and the local media contacted me to see whether I would make any comments. I said that until I learnt of the allocations to the regions, I was not able to speak authoritatively about whether funding to my region had been cut.

The Gascoyne Health Service has had difficulty managing its budget, although that has nothing to do with the management skills of the administration, general manager or the board. Particular issues and wild fluctuations in demand make health services difficult to run. The board finds it difficult to manage those, and I am sure other regional areas in Western Australia suffer from the same types of problems. When the budget was announced amid much glitz and fanfare, I was genuine in my response to some of the media outlets when I said that some decent things had been provided for health, such as training packages, scholarships, additional visiting clinics and the top-up of the patient assisted travel scheme. However, I am sure the minister does not understand how PATS operates, because the extra \$1 million a year will barely keep pace with the natural growth of the demand for the PATS subsidy.

Mr Trenorden: It would not pay the increase in fuel bills.

Mr SWEETMAN: It would not, even if the travelling subsidy were increased by another 2c or 3c. That \$1 million will go nowhere. The minister has clearly not studied the history of PATS and how the demand for patient-assisted travel has increased over the past six or seven years.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 17 October 2001]

p4516c-4527a

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

The reality is that the permanent care unit of the Carnarvon Regional Hospital, which is the hub of the Gascoyne Health Service, has been shut down, although they say it is on only a temporary basis. However, those 15 or 16 permanent care places have been moved to the general ward. A general ward in a regional hospital is designed to fulfil a specific task. It is not normally tasked to deal with the acute care of seniors; that is, those requiring nursing home care. It is a disgusting environment; a general ward is simply not built to cater for permanent care needs.

Again, as the local member, I have tried to be responsible in my explanations to the many people in my electorate who have called regarding a disgraceful set of circumstances and called for the Government to do something about it. I am aware that the airconditioning ducts in the ceiling will be replaced in the old F block, which contains the maternity section and acute care for our permanent care people. The work is out to tender but it is not due to start for a while. Those permanent care people have been shifted to the general ward because of the inability to recruit sufficient staff to run the various sections of the hospital. Much of the staff problems accompany uncertainty over the budget allocation of the Gascoyne Health Service.

The hospital board and the administration are finding management very difficult. The service has carried a deficit for some years and I have made submissions to previous ministers that they should wipe the slate clean and write off that debt. I am sure that many other health services have the same problem, and they need that financial relief. I am sure they have adjusted to managing a tight budget and some of the dynamics associated with it. Ruling a line across the page and writing off the debt would have been the decent thing to do, and still would be. To carry the debt forward over successive budgets, particularly in the light of the funding cuts the Gascoyne Health Service has experienced this year, will only compound the problem. I understand that the debt to the Gascoyne Health Service is \$800 000 or \$900 000. To have its funding reduced by \$1.7 million on top of that debt almost makes the service unmanageable.

To emphasise the problems faced by the Gascoyne Health Service I will read into *Hansard* a motion passed at its most recent board meeting on 28 September. This motion is significant because this Government said that although some cutbacks would be made to the health budget, services would not be reduced. The board passed the following motion -

... that “following comments regarding dissatisfaction with the proposed budget allocation for the Gascoyne Health Service, a letter be forwarded to the Commissioner of Health, Minister of Health the Hon R Kucera MLA, Minister for the North West the Hon T Stephens MLC and Member for Ningaloo Mr R Sweetman; as the initiatives proposed by the management of the Gascoyne Health Service will result, in the Board’s opinion, in a reduction of services which is contrary to the Minister’s directive, and a continuation of current services would result in over-expenditure, which is in violation of the FAAA, the Board of the Gascoyne Health Service requests the Commissioner of Health to provide assistance in determining a final budget and level of service which is acceptable to the communities of the Gascoyne”.

That motion was passed unanimously. It gives the clearest insight yet into the Gascoyne Health Service’s very difficult situation. I have said in this Parliament before that without agencies providing staff on short-term contracts to the Gascoyne Health Service a health service would not be available in the Gascoyne. In addition to those problems, we face some serious cutbacks in the Gascoyne Health Service’s budget. If the minister were in the Chamber he would say that that health service’s budget had been increased. The situation is interesting. A close look at the detail will show that prior to the budget, the Government withdrew funds from various health services. It took back from the Gascoyne Health Service funds allocated for capital works. I do not know what capital works were involved, but I am aware of the intention to provide accommodation to attract staff from outside the Gascoyne to help ease staff recruitment problems.

Approximately \$1.3 million was being held in that fund until the accommodation could be built. As the funds were not going to be utilised in that year they were recalled. The Gascoyne Health Service was reassured that the funds would be reallocated. They were reallocated in the GHS budget, and it was then told that its budget had been increased. It amounted to withdrawing funding earmarked for capital works and reallocating it in the global distribution under the health budget, then reallocating it back to the region under the guise of an increase. That is not sound economics; in fact, it is downright tricky.

The reality is that my health service is trying to get by on a severely depleted budget. We all know that without a decrease in the population, demand for services will only increase. Although much emphasis has been placed on the metropolitan health services, the Minister for Health has not applied himself as he could have to services in regional Western Australia. One morning I heard the minister speak on a regional news bulletin. Although I may have misunderstood what he said, other people said that they heard him say that people who required

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

specialist care and obstetrics should travel to Perth. If that is the case, he must be upfront about saying the patient assisted travel funding should be increased by \$15 million or \$20 million a year so that people who need treatment can fly to Perth rather than have extra money provided for visiting clinics and specialist services in regional Western Australia.

Increased PAT funding would not be practical because having specialists go to country Western Australia is the appropriate way to maintain the service. People in the Department of Health have said that, even though the PAT funding may reach \$40 million or \$50 million, it would be still cheaper to fly people to Perth for treatment than to provide the services in country Western Australia.

Allied health services also continue to battle for the recruitment of staff. I am happy with the allocation in the health budget for allied health services. From my interpretation of the figures there has been a modest increase in that area. The graduation of people from our universities will help address some of the dire shortages in a variety of allied health positions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The voices of members on the right-hand side of the Chamber are beginning to carry to the point that I am having difficulty hearing. If that is the case for me I am sure that Hansard is also having difficulty. They should keep it quiet or go outside.

Mr SWEETMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, as soon as I heard someone say, "Have \$50 on it for me." I was going to ask that \$50 be put on for me as well!

During my first four years as the local member I was constantly reading criticism in the local media about how we were not appropriately staffing the dental clinic at the Carnarvon Primary School. A dental clinic is staffed for a period in accordance with the number of enrolments at the various schools in the community. Carnarvon qualified to have a dental clinic operating for two terms. When I was part of the previous Government, during four years the shortest time the dental clinic was staffed was just over two terms. In another year it was staffed for almost three terms and then it was staffed for three or four days a week for the other two years. The dental clinic operated almost full time when the coalition was in government. I understand that it is not operating for the final term of this year. Of this entire school year a dental clinic has operated in Carnarvon for one term. For all that Hon Tom Stephens said when in opposition about the staffing of the dental clinic being a problem that the Government must solve, and that it was a disgrace that the dental clinic was not staffed on a full-time basis, he has had an opportunity as part of a Cabinet that controls Treasury to see that it was staffed full time. When I wrote and queried him on this issue he sent me a letter saying that the staff are simply not available and the need was so great elsewhere that the clinic therapist had to be shifted, but that he would try to do better next year. Whoop-di-do! I hope he does. That left the clinic operating in Carnarvon for only one term in the 2001 school year. It is interesting to see the different attitudes of members when they move from one side of this Parliament to the other.

During the estimates committee I referred to stamp duty increasing from 3 per cent to 5 per cent. I can be criticised as part of a Government that approved the increase in that stamp duty. It was a bad decision. However, this budget presented an opportunity to reverse that decision. The implications of that are dire for the transport dealerships that sell prime movers, which are the dearest item and attract the most stamp duty when it is time to put them on the road. The upshot is that the cost of stamp duty to put on the road in Western Australia a prime mover worth \$500 000 or \$600 000 in a complete configuration of two trailers and a dolly is about \$30 000.

The stamp duty on that same rig configuration in Queensland is about \$8 000. Guess what? We are losing business to the eastern States. Our dealerships and motor body, trailer and tipper builders and ancillary suppliers to the transport industry are suffering as a consequence of that decision. It must be reversed so that we are on an even footing with manufacturers and dealerships in other States and that we can win back that business.

There have been constant references in this Parliament - particularly during the estimates committee hearings - to the previous Government's enthusiasm for selling state assets. In its wisdom and exercising sound financial management, the previous Government reduced state debt from about \$8.5 billion to about \$4.5 billion. The reduction in interest payments and the revised credit rating resulted in an annual saving of about \$300 million. If the sale of government assets is so alien to this Government, why does it not buy back those assets? It has \$4 billion and a good credit rating, and it is saving \$300 million annually. Why does it not buy back the Dampier to Bunbury gas pipeline, AlintaGas or BankWest? I am sure that two of those assets could be purchased more cheaply than we sold them. AlintaGas owed about \$900 million when it was sold. It was returning a profit of about \$40 million to the State. I may have been lucky in business, but when I look at those figures I cannot see how we can be worse off after selling those assets. We are in front for many reasons. The longer we held on to AlintaGas, the less it was worth. After three years in a deregulated environment, that asset

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

would have been worth nothing. The previous Government displayed sound management and, as a result, delivered an environment that will allow this Government to govern well for the State of Western Australia.

MR TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [3.43 pm]: I will reflect on some of the important aspects of the budget as they relate to the electorate that I represent and the wider Peel region. I will refer to the issues raised during the election campaign. I will also highlight how they relate to the budget as it affects the people of Mandurah.

The focus of the Gallop-led Labor Party during the election campaign was on the key areas of health, education, law and order, the environment and transport. I will provide a report card, because it is very good for the people of Mandurah.

I refer first to health. The Labor Party made a specific promise to the people of Mandurah during the campaign that it would ensure the extension and improvement of the renal dialysis facilities at the Peel Health Campus. Unfortunately, an increasing number of people in that region require renal dialysis. The Health Minister visited the campus a few months ago and met a wide range of stakeholders. He was wanted to look at what is happening at the campus and to assess the demands on the renal health facility. As always, the facility was full when he visited. He was able to speak with the people receiving treatment and to hear about their needs. I am pleased and proud to say that one of this Government's key commitments was to ensure the extension of that service, and that commitment has been honoured in this budget.

The member for Peel mentioned a very important issue in an interjection; that is, those who suffer with diabetes. Unfortunately, the incidence of that disease is increasing in Australia. Anything the Government can do to relieve the pressure on the many victims of this debilitating disease will be welcomed. Many of its victims are on low incomes or pensions. The Health Minister's statement about needle supply was great news for those who must inject insulin. It was a recognition of the requirements of those who are doing it tough and who need government assistance. They are being assisted by the Gallop Government. Unfortunately, many people in Mandurah suffer with diabetes. They have welcomed that announcement because it is a demonstration of this Government's commitment to ensuring that those key health-related issues are acknowledged and addressed. This budget has done that.

The Health Minister is highly respected in Mandurah not only because he meets with the people but also because of his previous involvement with the Police Service in the area and his knowledge of it. He has listened carefully to the people and acknowledged their needs. The area has specific health requirements. It is incumbent upon me and the other members who represent the region to remind the Government constantly about the needs that must be addressed in the area. I am pleased that those commitments have been delivered.

The Minister for Education mentioned a very important project in his statement this morning. I refer to the collocation of the senior campus, the technical and further education facility and Murdoch University.

Mr Barnett: You were critical of that.

Mr TEMPLEMAN: The Leader of the Opposition wants another acknowledgment. He has been acknowledged four or five times already. I do not mind doing it again. If the leader wants to have a go, I will return the favour.

The former Government did not understand the rate of growth in the area. Members opposite did not plan adequately to ensure that the facility could cater for a greater than expected enrolment. What happened? The school dealt with the capacity problem by using initiative and extended the class timetable beyond 3.00 pm. Unfortunately, the former Government was not able -

Mr Barnett: It was designed to operate on that basis. That was the whole philosophy of the college.

Mr TEMPLEMAN: The problem is that the former Government did not provide public transport for those who attended the classes held after 5.00 pm. Members opposite did nothing to cater for those students who needed to access those classes. I am pleased that the Minister for Education and the minister responsible for public transport listened to the community. As a result, those students will be catered for at the beginning of the 2002 school year. This is all about ensuring that education in the Peel region and Mandurah continues to be valued and enhanced.

Mr Barnett: The Liberal Party established the school; you provided the bus service!

Mr TEMPLEMAN: The Leader of the Opposition simply wants to be patted on the back. It is almost as if the Leader of the Opposition has an insecurity that requires him to be constantly patted on the back. The Government has done that. It is a pity the Leader of the Opposition was not there this morning because one of the very important things that the Minister for Education did was to ask the member for Dawesville to tell the Leader of the Opposition how grateful everybody was. The member for Dawesville is not in the House today

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

but he will do it in his good time. If the Leader of the Opposition wants a pat on the back, he should go outside and pat himself on the back.

The Government was able to announce two very important initiatives in respect of the budget. The Mandurah High School and the Coodanup Community College will be given funding for behavioural management programs. It will allow the schools to employ extra staff and put in place programs to deal with a specific group of young people who require assistance to ensure that they work hard when they attend school and that they learn important skills. The behavioural management and discipline program and the money allocated to the schools is very welcome. I recently spoke to the principals of the schools. They are very pleased that the money was made available as it will allow them to address a very challenging issue that they have had to face in the past without any funding or support from the previous Government. The Government has seen the need and allocated funds.

When I was doorknocking I found that law and order was one of the most important issues for people. An initiative of the Government has been to appoint a minister for the Peel region. For the first time, the region has its own minister. The minister will understand and address issues that are specific to the region. I am pleased to see that the minister acknowledged a number of challenges that face the region and Mandurah during the estimates hearings. In less than seven months, the Government has increased the number of police officers in the region. When I was doorknocking, people told me that they wanted more police in Mandurah.

There is no doubt that Mandurah needs them. Eleven new police officers have been posted to Mandurah; they have been most welcome. An additional five officers will be posted in the next few months. Mandurah will have a complement of 80 police officers. Previously, when compared with the populations of other areas, Mandurah had a deficiency in the number of police officers. Thankfully, the Gallop Labor Government was elected and it has already provided more police officers to Mandurah. The Peel region has 108 police officers. Additional officers have been posted to Mundijong, Pinjarra and Waroona.

Transport is essential to Mandurah. Unfortunately, in the past, it has been treated haphazardly. The previous Government had no real commitment to public transport. Through the wonderful efforts of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the Government has delivered to the people of Mandurah a commitment that they will receive a direct rail link. The rail link will go down the middle of the freeway; it is the only sensible way to go. People know that the Labor Government will deliver because it has a wonderful history in providing rail transport. The Opposition has no history or commitment to rail. Not one extra metre of rail was provided by the Opposition in government. That is remembered by the people of Mandurah.

I received a letter from residents who live along the Fremantle Road in Singleton, Madora and Golden Bay. The residents had received a letter from the chief of staff of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. In respect of the budget, their letter to me states -

Dear Mr Templeman

BUNBURY HIGHWAY INTERSECTIONS AT MADORA, SINGLETON, GOLDEN BAY and SECRETH HARBOUR

The enclosed is a letter received from the Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

To say we are chuffed would have to be the understatement of the millennium.

Thank you most sincerely for your involvement in this matter. The ultimate result has been achieved and it would not have been possible without your help.

Yours sincerely

RESIDENTS' GROUP FOR ROAD SAFETY

That is a pat on the back for the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. It means that, once again, the priorities are right. People understand that the Government got the priorities right. The Government listened to what they saw as the most important issues of the day. It is another delivery from the Gallop Labor Government. The Government listened to the people and delivered.

The Premier visited Mandurah last Friday and launched the Mandurah ocean marina boat and fishing show. The show was held at the marina, which is a state-of-the-art-facility that will provide employment opportunities and ensure that Mandurah continues to be the number one destination outside Perth for aquatic and recreational services, not only for the people who live there, but for visitors and those who will live in the region in the future. The Premier said -

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 17 October 2001]

p4516c-4527a

Mr John Day; Speaker; Mr John Quigley; Mr Mike Board; Deputy Speaker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Rod Sweetman; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Dean

One of the great things about Mandurah has always been that it can be enjoyed just as much in an aluminium dinghy as it can in a magnificent blue water cruiser.

Mandurah continues to be a place that attracts people because of its environment and lifestyle. I look forward to future budgets because they will continue to recognise the needs of Mandurah. It is the fastest growing city in Australia. The Peel region is the second fastest growing region in the State. I look forward to future Gallop Government budgets as they will continue to deliver good government, quality government and better government than anything that could have been delivered in the past for the people of Mandurah.

MR DEAN (Bunbury) [3.57 pm]: I do not like following the member for Mandurah as he is such an enthusiastic speaker. He is full of wit, humour and knowledge. Members opposite must be jealous of the talent on the government benches. When I look at members opposite, I look forward to the next four years.

I will look at Bunbury as a regional city in the context of the budget. I have had some good-natured ribbing from members -

Mr Barnett: The member needs some new cufflinks. He could buy some in the bar.

Mr DEAN: I am sorry, member for Cottesloe, but I am a working-class man.

I have received some good-natured ribbing from members of my party and the Opposition, a lot of whom I am on good speaking terms with. In one way, Bunbury is an island. It is the capital of the south west. Because of its capital city status, it provides a lot of things that other towns in the south west do not provide. Off the top of my head, I can think of the south west recreation centre. Under great political pressure from the people of Bunbury and the City of Bunbury, the previous Government contributed \$5 million toward the centre, of which \$3 million is in this budget. The south west recreation centre, not to be confused with the Bunbury recreation centre, will be a magnificent facility. The City of Bunbury provided \$7 million. Within a kilometre or two of the south west recreation centre is the village of Dalyellup, which is in the shire of Capel. However, it is embarrassed about being a part of that shire. This is obvious in Dalyellup's advertising brochure, which lists all the virtues of the city of Bunbury. One of these virtues is the south west recreational centre. The glossies state that it is less than two kilometres to the south west recreational centre - and it is the best recreational centre in the State, if not Australia.

Mr Masters: Do you expect the brochure to state that it is the worst recreational centre?

Mr DEAN: I said that it is the best.

The Dalyellup glossies also refer to the Bunbury Regional Hospital. That hospital is a reasonable hospital.

Mr Masters: Only reasonable?

Mr DEAN: It is reasonable; it has some deficiencies that are currently being looked at. I am the chairman of a committee investigating the hospital and we have identified a few shortcomings that will be brought to the attention of this Parliament in due course. Another part of the glossy advertisement refers to the Edith Cowan University and states that it is the only regional university in Western Australia - obviously it is not. Bunbury has assumed the status of a regional capital and therefore it deserves special treatment. It is because of Bunbury's regionality that previous Labor and Liberal Governments have poured money into the town - not because it is just Bunbury. The money provided to Edith Cowan University, the Bunbury Regional Hospital, the south west recreational centre - and more importantly places like Hay Park in the future - are all part of Bunbury's regionality. Bunbury is gracious because it accepts that regionality crown.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.