

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) RECURRENT 2011–12 BILL 2011
APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT) CAPITAL 2011–12 BILL 2011

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [7.01 pm]: Before private members’ business I was talking about the need for improvement to the roads throughout my area—in particular Gnangara Road—and I think I was talking about Lord Street and West Swan Road and how I believe something needs to be done very soon to try to alleviate the pressures on those roads. One option is to fast-track Henley Brook Avenue, which is the extension of an existing road, but it is a proposed new through road through the major housing developments. That will take a lot of traffic off Lord Street and West Swan Road, and it will service those people who live in not only my electorate, but also the member for Swan Hills’ electorate. I was pleased to hear today that the Lord Street–Reid Highway intersection will be improved—member for Swan Hills, is that right—by the installation of traffic lights.

Mr F.A. Alban: Yes, traffic lights.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, traffic lights will be installed at that intersection, but the widening of intersection has not occurred and funding has not been allocated for it in the budget.

Mr F.A. Alban: Not yet.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is good to hear that traffic lights are to be installed at that intersection because it is a very, very dangerous intersection. I understand that Main Roads Western Australia is undertaking a detailed planning study into the cost of widening that section of Reid Highway; it is a major issue for the people who live in the area. Reid Highway should be a dual carriageway because it is a major highway and a major east–west corridor.

I want to quickly touch on a few issues relating to Ballajura, one of which I will raise as a grievance tomorrow. I want to talk about the sand bund that extends along Hepburn Avenue and the issues around law and order and its visual impact—eyesore issues—that it is raising for local residents. The sand bund was, I think, built in 2009–10 along the Hepburn Avenue extension. The community was surveyed at the time about the sand bund to ascertain whether people supported it, but it was described to local residents as having heavy vegetation that would stop people from standing on it, and that it would also be visually quite attractive; it is nothing like that. It is a terrible, terrible eyesore, and it has given rise to a lot of law and order issues around the area because rather than create a barrier for would-be criminals, they can actually stand on the sand bund and look into people’s backyards and houses. I have taken the issue up with the City of Swan and we are currently surveying local residents to find out what they believe should be the future of that sand bund. We have had an excellent number of surveys returned because people are very, very concerned about it, and we will be taking that issue further.

The issue I will raise tomorrow is the buffer around Mirrabooka water treatment plant and its impact on a proposed aged-care facility in Ballajura. Another issue relevant to my electorate is that of Ballajura Police Station, which was closed a number of years ago now. Again, this is important for the Ballajura community because it misses its permanent police presence. I am glad the Minister for Police is in this place; it is a continuing issue and people want a permanent police presence. The police station was closed without consultation, and unlike some of the other changes happening within the police system around the area in that suburban stations have been closed and a hub has been created to replace those stations, none of that happened. A hub station was not created after the closure of Ballajura Police Station; it was basically closed and people now have to go to Kiara.

I cannot finish today without talking a little about the Ellenbrook rail line, which I believe to be a major Liberal government broken promise. Time and again I have heard people trying to rewrite history on this issue. The Liberal Party very clearly made a commitment before the last election, and I will quote Hon Simon O’Brien, the then spokesperson for transport and later Minister for Transport. On 1 September 2008 he talked about the Ellenbrook rail line and stated —

They’re promising —

That is, the Labor Party —

a rail service to Ellenbrook and yet they’re not even going to start construction until the election after the next election,” Mr O’Brien said.

That’s not good enough and I think the people of Western Australia in certain marginal seats are sick of being taken for granted.

...

The difference is we’ll do it in our first year of our government not our eighth year.

That was a clear commitment to the people of north east corridor that the Liberal Party was going to fund and build the Ellenbrook rail line, and that it was going to commence it in this term. I think it is important to put this on the record because, frankly, it does not matter what the Premier says when he is being interviewed on the radio; these are the facts and these are the documents. Not much more evidence needs to be produced to show that clear commitment. I will go to the costings booklet that is the current Minister for Transport’s baby, as he said; he did it. He compiled the Liberal Party’s financial plan and he put it in the financial plan; the current Minister for Transport, who is debating whether there was a commitment, put it in the financial plan. There it is—Ellenbrook rail line! The Liberal Party financial plan shows it received funding of \$53 million, of which \$13 million was to be spent in 2010–11 and \$40 million in 2011–12. It was a clear election commitment. In December 2008, just after the Liberal Party won government in the September election, the *2008–09 Government Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement*, another key document, was released, so it was a clear indication of the government’s election commitments. It states —

- Construction of the Ellenbrook Railway Line (Midland Line Spur) is expected to commence in 2010–11.

In 2010–11, \$16.3 million was committed, and \$52.6 million was committed in 2011–12. Since that time we have had backflip after backflip, the rewriting of history, and the cancellation of rail definition studies. Last year’s budget included \$10 million for the Ellenbrook rail line master plan; that has now been taken out, and there is now a more general commitment for some planning for the north east corridor, which I understand to be a bus transit system, but we do not know.

Mr F.A. Alban: Will you take an interjection?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, because the member for Swan Hills has not been truthful with people.

Mr F.A. Alban: It’s an interjection, that’s all.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay, I will take the interjection; come on.

Mr F.A. Alban: Assuming you were in government and your electorate says to you, “We really want the Perth–Darwin highway; we really want to fix the safety issues; we really want to fix Henley Brook Avenue; we really want Gngangara Road fixed”, but there isn’t a big basket of money that is coming from heaven —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the member for Swan Hills for that.

I will put this out: the Liberal Party made a commitment. It was a core promise; it was included in its election costings; it put out a flyer. The member for Swan Hills has to say that that has to be a priority.

Mr F.A. Alban: So you would do whatever —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, the Liberal Party has to deliver its commitments. The member for Swan Hills can sit there trying to defend the Liberal Party tactics, but his government is funding things like the Premier’s palace at \$25 million.

Mr F.A. Alban: It is also funding Perth–Darwin highway that you support—you said you supported it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The allocation for the Perth–Darwin highway is \$8 million? That is the cost of planning for a \$600 million road! Does the member for Swan Hills think that will fund Perth–Darwin highway?

Mr F.A. Alban: That’s just the beginning. You know full well that that’s just the start.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The issue is that the government made the commitment. The member should go out and tell people that the government broke an election promise. He should be honest, but he has not, and neither has the government. That is the core issue. The member should go out there and tell people that the government broke a promise. If he wants to say that it broke a promise because it thinks other things take priority, that is fine; he should say it out there, but he should not try to rewrite history. The government made a promise and now it is breaking it. The member should be honest with the people and go out and say that he thinks that other things take priority.

MR A.P. O’GORMAN (Joondalup) [7.10 pm]: I will start my contribution to the budget debate by making some general comments and then I will get onto some issues that particularly relate to my electorate.

This budget was styled “the people’s budget” before it even came out, in an effort by the Liberal government to camouflage what it actually is. This was the “Tin Man”’s budget—or a Jenga budget, if you will. We all know

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the game of Jenga: the blocks are pulled out and eventually the whole thing falls down, and that is the way this budget is structured. The building blocks upon which it is built are flawed. It is built on a dollar value of about 96c to \$US1, but at the moment the dollar is at about \$US1.08, and there are a number of economists around the country who are saying that it is going to go even higher. Last night I heard an economist saying on the radio that the Australian dollar has been below the US dollar for the past 25 years, but for the previous 40 years it was well over the US dollar, so we have to take those sorts of things into account. But to return to the “Tin Man”’s budget—the “people’s budget”, as he called it—we have to ask: what was he trying to do? He was trying to buy himself a heart; he was trying to make it look as though he had a heart. We all know that the “Tin Man” does not have a heart, but he put \$604 million into the non-government sector. Did it buy a single extra service throughout the state? Not one. All it does is give funding to NGOs to enable them to provide the services that government agencies are already delivering for the same amount of funding.

The Premier then put upfront his increase in mining royalties. I do not have an issue with the government wanting to increase mining royalties, but the way it went about it, by bringing on this so-called war with Canberra, was designed to take the focus away from what this budget is really doing. This budget delves into the back pockets of every man, woman and child in this state and rips money off them, and it will rip money off them for many, many years into the future. Children who are very young today will still be paying for this budget when they are well into their working lives, and that is the reality of this budget. It has set up huge debt and huge additional charges of well over \$1 000. Many of my colleagues over the past couple of days have spoken about the extra charges that have been outlined—electricity prices, water prices and Fire and Emergency Services Authority charges. Members who were here when the previous government introduced the FESA levy will remember the member for Hillarys, in particular, berating the then government for being so hypocritical as to actually place a charge on FESA; that is, taking it away from the insurance companies and making it a direct charge so that we could actually budget for it properly. He berated us for that and said that we would increase the levy, but what has happened since the Liberal Party came to government? The FESA levy has been increased in every one of this government’s budgets. It will continue to do that, because it is just another way of putting its hand in the back pockets of every man, woman and child in this state.

I would like now to move on to my own electorate. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the success of an organisation in my electorate that I was happily involved in setting up back in 2004. I refer to the West Coast Academy of Hospitality and Tourism. Following the closure of Carine TAFE, I chaired a committee set up to decide where to site the new academy; at that stage it was called the TAFE Hospitality Centre. We worked with representatives of the industry to figure out the best location for it, and we decided on Joondalup. We built it and it opened in 2006. One of the recommendations of the committee was that it should be a centre of excellence for hospitality training, and I am pleased to announce that it was reported in yesterday’s *The West Australian* that the West Coast Academy of Hospitality and Tourism in Joondalup is the only training provider in Australia to be recognised by the prestigious World Association of Chefs Societies, which was established in Paris in 1928. The academy has actually achieved what we recommended it achieve—to set itself up as a centre of excellence in hospitality training. Over the past five years, the academy has won more than 150 awards, including the WA Oceanafest’s most outstanding training provider award, and the Australian Culinary Federation’s apprentice of the year award. Its facilities are second to none, and there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world. Australia is one of only four countries with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges education accreditation; the others are in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Ecuador. We are in very unique circumstances there.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I’ve eaten there with you!

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: The member has, actually!

Around February I put in a pre-budget submission that included a number of items, one of which was the widening of the Mitchell Freeway from two lanes to three lanes between Hepburn Avenue and Hodges Drive.

Mr R.F. Johnson: A very good move.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Yes, a very good move, but, unfortunately, what did the government do? It thinks we travel only one way. It thinks that we only travel out of the city; it does not actually understand that we come into the city as well. It does not understand that people have to be on time for work in the morning. It is not good enough for people to be able to get home in the evening with a bit of extra time; they have to get to work on time as well. The truth is that the freeway begins to become congested from 5.00 am. If one wants to get to work on time, one has to allow an extra 45 minutes to 50 minutes. Last Thursday, on budget day, it took me an hour and a half to get from Joondalup to the city. The government is not proposing to put an extra lane in the southbound freeway. Yes, it has expanded the northbound freeway, and that is great, but that is not where the problem is at the moment. The member for Hillarys gets onto the freeway much further down than I do, and the problems start

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right back at Ocean Reef Road at 5.00 every morning, and it is still congested at 9.00 am. We really need a third lane all the way heading south, not just in the northbound freeway.

In last Thursday's *The West Australian* we saw the member for Ocean Reef and the member for Kingsley out there saying what a great thing the extra lane was; but it is half-baked. It is not the full job, and it is a shame that the member for Hillarys could not actually deliver for his electorate. It is a shame that the Treasurer did not listen to him and realise that these are the sorts of things that will lose the Liberal Party votes in the northern suburbs. The freeway has to be expanded both ways, not just one way. It cannot just do a half-baked job; it has to do the full job. It is not good enough; people will not accept it. When is the work actually going to start, and when will it be finished? I daresay it will be finished closer to the election—close enough to the election for me to keep reminding people how the Liberal government did only half the job.

Mr R.F. Johnson: They will love it. I use it every morning and I never have a problem.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The member never has a problem. Did he listen to what I said? The problem starts further north, not where he gets on the freeway. It starts at Ocean Reef Road. The other thing that we need to talk about is trains and buses in the northern suburbs.

Mr R.F. Johnson: And boats!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I am coming to boats as well! Do not worry! I have it all covered! But I am talking about public transport at the moment—trains and buses. In my electorate, we have Edgewater train station. We pushed hard for quite a long time to get that station upgraded, because there was not enough cover. A large number of seniors use that station, and we needed to provide extra cover so that they would not get wet when it rains and they would not have to be out in the baking sun in summer. We pushed for that, and we got it. The upgrade has been finished for a month and a half or two months now. But the lift is still not operational. Therefore, elderly people have to walk up and down a big, long ramp, because they cannot manage the staircase, and the lift is standing there, idle. That is because the work was not properly planned and the workers are still waiting on a part. When I wrote to the minister's office about this, I was told that the lift will be operational by the end of this month. But for the last two months, that lift has not been able to go up or down. How bad is that sort of planning?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Will it be working in time for CHOGM?

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: It might not make it for CHOGM, but, then again, the CHOGM legislation might not make it in time for CHOGM, so who is surprised? I want to keep going, because I have a lot to get through and a lot of interesting things to say.

In that same paper of last Thursday, there is an article headed "MP pushes for Educat bus". Again, another Liberal member in the northern suburbs, Hon Michael Mischin, who does not have one idea of his own, has jumped on my back for something that I have been pushing for, and he is complaining that there is not an Educat bus in Joondalup. He calls it an Educat. It is just a CAT bus. That bus services the Motor Industry Training Association of WA centre in the southern business district on Vanden Way. What did this government do as soon as it got into office? A CAT bus was running through the Edith Cowan University area, and past the council and the hospital. We added another CAT bus to take in Winton Road. We could have adjusted the route from Winton Road, when we had worked out the patronage, so that it would take in this training centre. But one of the first things this government did was say that we do not need that CAT bus, and it threw it out! Hon Michael Mischin is now saying, "I'm fighting for you! I've put it to the minister, and the minister has said no." But we actually already had it, and one of the member's colleague in the upper house, Hon Simon O'Brien, threw it out because it did not have the patronage! Of course it did not have the patronage in the first six or seven months of operation. It takes time to build up patronage. We need look only at the CAT bus that goes through ECU now. The patronage is at record figures. That bus does 40 000 or 50 000 trips. But the minister did not even give that CAT bus the time that was set up by the previous government—12 months—to see whether it was working. In denying that CAT bus to those people, the minister has denied people with mental illness. The CAT bus is how people with mental illness used to get from the train station to the Joondalup commercial centre, which provides critical services. Therefore, even though the government has given money to non-government organisations, it has hampered them by taking away services that these people need. It is really rich of this government to say that this budget is a people's budget, when in fact it is a budget that is ripping the money out of people's pockets.

I have to move on, because I have a number of issues to raise, as I have said. The next issue is motorbike training on Queensbury Road, Joondalup. The licensing centre in Joondalup uses Queensbury Road as a test centre for motorcars. The motorcycle training schools also use that road. I get complaints on a weekly basis from the residents in that area, asking can I please do something about this. They start at 6.30 in the morning, and they are still going at 8.30 at night during the summer. Elderly people, and people who have retired, are living on those

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streets. They went there to live because they want to have a quiet life. But all they can hear up and down the street is the vroom, vroom of these people who are training.

Mr R.F. Johnson: What was that? Vroom, vroom? How does that go?

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The minister might think it is funny. I will put these motorbikes outside the minister's house for a few days at 6.30 in the morning and see how funny he thinks it is then!

Mr R.F. Johnson: I get hooning outside my house, don't you worry!

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: These people have genuine concerns, and the minister is laughing at them. These motorbikes are going up and down the street every morning, doing figure eights and emergency stops, and it is because the licensing department is using that road as a test centre for motorcars and motorbikes. We have asked the licensing department to vary the routes. It tells us that it cannot do that—or it will vary the route for a little while, and the motorcars and motorbikes then come back and go up and down the street again. The issue of where these licensing centres should be located needs to be addressed. There are plenty of commercial areas where this testing could be done. The motorcycle schools would then go to those commercial areas. Winton Road is not that far away and it is not that busy with traffic. No-one is living there, so it will have very little impact. Why cannot the licensing centre do something like that?

What we have also not seen in this budget is the Ocean Reef marina. The City of Joondalup, with funding of \$700 000 from the former state government, engaged in the biggest consultation ever in the City of Joondalup to see whether people support a marina at Ocean Reef. It got back thousands of surveys in support of a marina. The City of Joondalup has had to downgrade that marina, because the government owns about 50 per cent of the land there. Nothing has come from the government to put that Ocean Reef marina in place. Did we see the member for Ocean Reef or any of the other members from up that way fighting for that? No, we did not. The people in that area were expecting that they would get a marina at Ocean Reef in the near future. But what will they get? They will get the waterfront project in the city. That will bring even more cars from the northern suburbs into Perth. That will block up the freeway even more. There are not enough trains on the line. As we saw in yesterday's paper, even if the railcars are ordered now, it will take three and a half to four years to deliver the first train. In two and a half to three years, people will be packed into the trains like sardines again. There will be no point in people taking their cars down the freeway to the city, because the government will not be putting in an extra lane. How ridiculous is that? Where is the planning?

Another issue is that the Minister for Education and the Minister for Training are not talking to each other. West Coast Institute of Training is bursting at the seams with students. It is using the former Australian Institute of University Studies facilities to take that overflow of students. There is no planning. There is no discussion between these two ministers to see whether the Minister for Education can hand over that facility to the Minister for Training so that West Coast Institute of Training can continue to deliver its services. It is on a knife edge all the time with the number of people who are at that facility.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I want to talk now about the old Craigie High School site. The structure plan has been put out. Stockland and LandCorp are the developers. The structure plan shows an entrance and exit on the western side, coming out onto Camberwarra Drive, and another entrance and exit coming out onto Arawa Place. Those entrances and exits are within 200 metres of each other. The way structure plans are supposed to work is that there are at least two entrances and two exits. The effect of having the two entrances and the two exits so close together is that if there was a fire at the school, it would pose a risk to the people in that area. Another issue in that area is traffic. People who live in Albion Street, Camberwarra Drive and Arawa Place have come to me, and we have talked to the council about this issue, and the council is now undertaking traffic studies, because there is so much traffic in that area. There is a primary school, there is a church and there is an aged care facility, and buses are trying to get along these streets. If there was an issue with a fire or anything else, I can guarantee that the fire tenders would not be able to get in there. Camberwarra Primary School was also closed down. That was done under our government, with the amalgamation of Camberwarra Primary School and Craigie Heights Primary School. But we did not just close down that school. We built a brand-new school so that the students in Camberwarra would have the best facilities available, and they do—a \$13.5 million school, opened under this government, but started under us. But the buildings on the old site have been left standing. They have been trashed. There is graffiti, and there are broken windows. I have raised that matter in this place previously. Nothing is happening. I am told that the buildings will be demolished by the end of June. What will happen then? Will the government do a proper plan and get proper feed-in consultation from the local community, or not? My guess is that we are probably not going to get that.

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The City of Joondalup has a number of projects that it would like to get funded. I mentioned some of those projects in my pre-budget submission. There is the cultural centre, and there is the Ocean Reef boat harbour, and there are number of others. However, because there is no funding from the government, the City of Joondalup is now putting up for sale community-purpose sites that were given—some as many as 30 years ago—to the city for free to provide facilities for the community in the future. They are lots 181 Rowan Place, Mullaloo; 200 Quilter Drive, Duncraig; 766 Dampier Avenue, Kallaroo; 202 Kanangra Crescent, Greenwood; 147 Millport Drive, Warwick; 613 Pacific Way, Beldon; 671 Camberwarra Drive, Craigie; and 977 Burlos Court, Joondalup. These are all community-purpose sites. They are there for the people in the community and nobody else. They are not there for communities in other suburbs; they are there for that community. The City of Joondalup now wants to fund some of its projects by selling off those lots. The sites are roughly 2 000 square metres. My estimation is that with high-density housing the city could probably get 300 square-metre sites out of them, so that would probably be five sites at \$200 000 each—namely, \$1 million into the coffers of the city. Will that come back to those individual suburbs? The sites I am particularly concerned about are Burlos Court, Joondalup; Camberwarra Drive, Craigie; and Pacific Way, Beldon. They are sites in my electorate. I am told that up to 15 of these sites could be coming on the market. Why does the city have to resort to ripping from the community those community-purpose sites so that it can fund projects that the government should be funding?

I return to an item for the Falcons West Perth Football Club that I put in my pre-budget submission to the Premier and also raised in this place. Great; the Premier went out and met with the Falcons. However, that is only because I asked a question of the Premier in this place and he was embarrassed because he is spending \$14 million or \$16 million on his beloved club, Claremont Football Club. He went out and spoke to the Falcons and gave the club \$400 000. The club did not ask for \$14 million or \$16 million; it asked for about \$6 million to build a clubroom where it could once again feel like it is a proper club in the Western Australian Football League competition. It is the only club in the WAFL competition that does not have its own clubroom. What did the Premier give the Falcons club? Congratulations to the Minister for Sport and Recreation: the Premier gave it \$400 000. The Falcons West Perth Football Club will get a proper gym facility and a proper auditorium where it can review match-day tactics and things like that. Fantastic! However, it is well short of the \$14 million or \$16 million that the Premier is giving to his beloved Claremont Football Club, and it well short of the \$4 million or \$6 million that the Falcons club needs to build itself a brand-new clubroom so that once again the team can grow and grow. The Falcons West Perth Football Club is one of the best clubs in the competition, undefeated this year, and hopefully it will get to a point at which it will win the competition this year. It has won three times since it moved to Joondalup. I might say that it was the only club in the WAFL that went out of the central area. Subiaco, Claremont and Perth are all still in and around the central area. The Falcons West Perth Football Club went out to Joondalup and has done the hard yards, but what is it getting? It is getting a kick in the backside rather than a helping hand. It is incumbent on this government to support that club, as it supported Claremont, and give it the \$4 million to \$6 million that it will take to build the clubroom out there in the northern suburbs so that it can continue to deliver footy to young people out there.

I will now go to another issue. With your indulgence, Madam Acting Speaker (Ms A.R. Mitchell), I will read into *Hansard* a letter that was sent to the Minister for Health's office about school dental therapy assistants. It is outrageous that people in the dental area of the Department of Health seem to think that because 99 per cent of the people doing this job are female it is a second income for the family. They have said such things to these school dental assistants. If I read this letter, it will give a much better understanding of what they are feeling than I could give in my own words. The letter is in the words of one of the school dental assistants, and with your indulgence, Madam Acting Speaker, I would like to read it into *Hansard*, because it is very important, although I know I should only paraphrase it. It reads —

The feeling among qualified DCAs, that the \$3000 qualification allowance will be removed when the GA5 is registered in The Industrial Relations commission at the end of May, is devastating and insulting.

We have all undertaken a qualification to better ourselves, not to be a second income earner! There is no progression to a senior DCA from gaining the qualification and years of experience, and we are left to shrivel away at Level 1 for endless years with no recognition, while other Public Service Depts progress without qualifications.

So here we are fighting for a measly \$3000 allowance, which if correctly recognised would be Level 2 ...

Who else could this happen to in this day and age, only women! We work hard with no complaining, we are an extremely cost effective Dept and probably the flagship of the Health Dept. But here our reward is a PAY CUT, with less recognition, honestly who else could this happen to? We really are neglected by all, but admired by the families we treat.

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As we have treated at least 70 – 80% of West Australian families, we have contact with an enviable part of the population. From the previous case, to gain our qualification allowance, the parents were very vocal. They see us perform under difficult situations, with no computers, no fax machines, little relief staff, but carry on with all smiles and nurturing, while we treat their most precious possessions! The petitions coming through at the moment, and the 2 metres worth from the previous campaign, are the passion from parents and patients who don't want to lose this valuable service, and most certainly don't want to see women down trodden and disrespected for their worth in the WA Public Service.

Dr Hames, when in opposition, supported us in Parliament. Where is that support now? He now owns the title of taking it away! He clearly sees us as an easy target to cut spending in the health budget. We have been quiet in the past, but this is overstepping the mark, this has happened one to many times, we are unbelievably ANGRY and action will be taken to make sure every WA family knows.

The School Dental Service still has no computers. Apparently not enough money from other sources ... has been raised as yet.

She is referring to the teen dental scheme. The service is \$600 000 short and it is anticipated that it will get computers by 2016! The letter continues —

We're still the lowest paid, qualified staff in the Public Service.

We have the highest number of skills for any Level 1 in the public service, by a huge margin,

The qualification is still demanded...and still no recognition. To state a fact, it is extremely difficult to even attempt our skills with no qualification.

We are still banished permanently to Level 1, with no progression.

It still takes 12 to 18 months to gain a qualification, one year's lost income, which for them is approximately \$30 000 and at a cost of \$1 200 to \$6 000 for Certificate IV, depending on where they do it. The letter continues —

If qualified and aged 18, it still takes 3 years to reach Level 1:1 and then another 8 years to get to Level 1:8 —

It has a minimum age of 29 years for a measly \$24 an hour. It continues —

Try and explain this to my current 18yo Tafe student, she can't afford to work for the Govt with a qualification.

The Health Dept obviously thinks qualified DCAs see this as an exciting career step!

What is The Minister for Health going to do about this? Will it be left to the families of WA to protest and leave Gender Equity to be dealt with by a totally out of touch WA Government?

All parents are being notified of this anomaly and they are angry, puzzled and disgusted as are your loyal DCA's!

Lost qualification allowance....NOT AGAIN....enough is enough!!!

The letter is signed by that particular lady who has been talking to me for a number of years. The \$3 000 allowance came about because this lady came to me, and all the Labor members in the northern suburbs signed the letter demanding that the then Minister for Health, Hon Jim McGinty, do something about it. His interim response—it was an interim response—was to give a \$3 000 attraction and retention bonus. While that attraction and retention bonus was in place, steps were to be undertaken to include the assistants and take them up to level 2. They are not asking to rise to level 5, 6, 7 or 8; they are asking to go to level 2—one level up! Their strong belief is that the only reason they cannot get off level 1 is that they are female; and they are getting that sort of comment from the health department. It is outrageous! Our children are our future; they are the most important thing. The federal Liberal member for Moore, Dr Mal Washer, has said how important dental care is, particularly for young people. The Minister for Health in this place, in answer to a question without notice today said it was a federal government responsibility. School dental therapy is a state government responsibility. It always has been and it always will be. These women, most of whom are in their 50s, are without the basic office instruments that we all have and would complain about if we did not have. These women have no computers, fax machines or answering machines. These women do not even have a backdoor that they can get out through if there is an angry parent. If the dental assistant has hurt a parent's little darling, which occasionally could happen, they do not have an escape route. If a fire happens to be between the dental assistant and the door, they do not have an escape route. There was some block-in mentality when the Department of Health built the Craigie Heights

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Primary School and put in the school dental therapy clinic. The clinic was there when the Labor Party was in government. As soon as we get out, it was removed. What a disgrace!

MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [7.40 pm]: I rise to support the recent state budget, which offers unprecedented support to our most vulnerable and disadvantaged Western Australians through the \$1 million social services package. The social services package will benefit many not-for-profit organisations in my electorate of Swan Hills. This budget is most welcome in my electorate, especially in the area of new schools, and I am grateful for the provision of air conditioning to my public schools.

I will speak on the individual benefits the budget affords my electorate. I have no bad news, which is a bit of a surprise to the opposition. I am proud to be part of a government that says, "Yes, we will start the Perth–Darwin highway stage 1". The Perth–Darwin highway is an important project for not only my electorate, but also the state.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: It is not necessary for the member for Mandurah to continue to call out.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I expect Labor members opposite to lobby the federal Labor government for its support for this project that the federal government refused to do. The need to plan an alternative route for the existing Great Northern Highway, which runs through the Swan Valley, has been recognised for a number of years by our federal member, Hon Judi Moylan; the City of Swan; my colleague Hon Alyssa Hayden; the Swan Chamber of Commerce; representative bodies in my electorate; and all my constituents. Those people have continually reinforced their support for and commitment to an alternative route for Great Northern Highway as the number one priority of my electorate of Swan Hills.

Main Roads recently completed the planning for the Perth–Darwin highway stage 1 from Maralla Road in Bullsbrook to Brand Highway in Muchea, which is the northern part of this stage. We are very excited about that. In this budget the government has committed \$8 million to commence the detailed planning to enable construction to commence as soon as funding is available. The scope of works involves the construction of 31 kilometres of highway from Reid Highway in West Swan to Brand Highway in Muchea, which is largely a federal government funding responsibility. In addition to this commitment, the Minister for Transport, Mr Buswell, has today announced that a new set of traffic lights will be installed at the entry of this project at the intersection of Reid Highway and Lord Street. I will be a gentleman and admit that members of the opposition also spoke about this issue. I am not trying to take all the glory. To be honest, I was a bit amazed today when I met Hon Donna Faragher and she told me that she lobbied the former government with no success. The installation of this set of lights ensures that a very dangerous intersection is made safer. Further funding is also undertaken for the intersection of Drumpellier Drive and Gngangara Road. The member for West Swan is not here, but I know that she will be happy to hear that. That intersection is also on the alignment of the Perth–Darwin highway. There will also be dual lanes from these traffic lights to Pinaster Road, which is the main entry to Ellenbrook. Dual lanes will alleviate bottlenecks and safety issues on Gngangara Road. I know that the member for West Swan is also passionate about fixing West Swan Road. I thank the minister today for his support of these projects and for taking time to visit Henley Brook Avenue. An opposition member mentioned that road and the upgrade of the intersection of Gngangara Road and West Swan Road, which is also necessary.

Several members interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: The opposition members do not worry me at all, minister.

We had another great win for my electorate and particularly Ellen Stirling Primary School. Former P&C president Larissa Flatters said publicly that, since the school opened in 2008, the P&C had lobbied the state government for air conditioning in its school without success. In conjunction with my school community I commenced lobbying the Minister for Education early in 2009, which is two years ago. Other members also joined in—but I am pretty sure I was the first to lobby for that particular school—and the debate became statewide. There was a great result in this budget with \$52 million for not only Ellen Stirling Primary School, which we first complained about, but also Arbor Grove Primary School, Ellenbrook Primary School and Ellenbrook Secondary School. The beauty is that my schools were thankfully in the first stage of the rollout. All state public schools have benefited from this campaign, and those that are without air conditioning, some 480 schools, will also benefit. I am very happy for that to happen. The budgeting for air conditioning in schools is another great announcement and commitment from our state government.

Another initiative that was announced today—a very small initiative, but very big for Ellenbrook—was the Aveley bus route. Members would have also heard an amount of campaigning on that issue. The new bus route is called route 337 and it was mentioned by our minister today during question time. Ellenbrook is already well

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serviced by one of the best public transport bus systems in the metropolitan area; every 10 minutes in peak time a bus leaves Ellenbrook and goes to the Bassendean railway station. The bus runs every 15 minutes in off-peak times. These are brand-new, low-floored buses. The low flooring is so that mums with prams can more easily access the buses. Elderly people also like the low-floored buses. This service connects the Ellenbrook community to the Midland–Perth railway line and the Morley shopping precinct via the Bassendean railway station.

Another great initiative is the internal shuttle service, which travels to the two shopping centres in Ellenbrook. The shuttle service allows seniors and pensioners and young stay-at-home mums without access to cars to shop in our two shopping centres—Woodlake Village Shopping Centre and stages 1 and 2 of the Shops at Ellenbrook, in the town centre, which was recently expanded to 60 shops. What a difference in just over two and a half years of the Liberal–National government. We have extended shops and services and we are no longer under the shadow or threat of the covenant. In July this year this extensive bus service will be extended by route 337 to service my community of Aveley.

The budget provides further benefits to my electorate. Announcements for my electorate include funding to the Swan River Trust to provide a new nutrients-stripping wetland in my electorate on the Ellen Brook. The budget allocates \$15 million to the Mundaring Weir outlet upgrade stage 2. Another great initiative by our Minister for Tourism was the announcement of \$60 million over four years for tourism. Hopefully that money will also benefit my electorate. Certainly the Swan Valley, Guildford, Mundaring and hills districts look forward to benefiting from that announcement. The minister made a further announcement only recently that I am pretty excited about. I travelled to China last year and I am well aware that only three per cent of the Chinese tourism traffic comes to the west. I was pretty excited when the minister announced that China Southern Airlines would fly directly to Perth three times a week commencing about October.

There is unprecedented funding in this budget for both new primary and secondary schools in my electorate, namely the brand-new Aveley and Malvern Springs Primary Schools, which are under construction. The beauty of these two schools is that they will be completed with air conditioning, which was a concern. Another great success under construction that is about to be completed is the Bullsbrook District High School. Similarly, stage 2 of the Ellenbrook secondary school, with a cost of \$25 million, is almost completed. What a great budget for my constituents in Swan Hills.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Nollamara) [7.51 pm]: I rise to address the budget bill. I have previously congratulated the government on its decision to build the Reid Highway–Alexander Drive interchange and the Reid Highway–Mirrabooka Avenue overpass, however, looking at the budget, I voice my concern that the people of Mirrabooka are being short-changed and request that the government recommit the money that it has drawn off the project. In the 2009–10 budget, the estimated total for the Alexander Drive–Reid Highway interchange was \$72 410 000. In the 2010–11 budget the estimated total cost for the Reid Highway–Alexander Drive interchange was \$47 656 000. The Minister for Transport then announced \$30 million for Reid Highway–Mirrabooka Avenue overpass in May 2011, which was made up of the difference between the two sets of estimated costs for the interchange. In the 2011–12 budget, the Reid Highway–Alexander Drive interchange now has an estimated total cost of \$40 618 000, and the Reid Highway–Mirrabooka Avenue overpass still has an estimated cost of \$30 000 000. That leaves a difference of \$1.79 million. I believe that that money should go to the people of the Nollamara electorate. Yet again the people of the Nollamara electorate are being short-changed. This is not about efficiencies that the government is gaining; it is about short cuts that compromise safety, as the existing four sets of lights near the Reid Highway–Mirrabooka Avenue overpass will not be modified to synchronise. Drivers get to a first set of lights at Balga Avenue, and when they arrive at the next set of traffic lights at the site of the Reid Highway–Mirrabooka Avenue overpass, there is another set of traffic lights. There is then a fourth set of traffic lights at the intersection of Yirrigan Drive and Mirrabooka Avenue, which is seen as a traffic black spot. That is because by the time drivers get to the fourth set of lights and have to stop yet again, after having already driven through three sets of lights, they do foolish and silly things that I would caution them not to do, but I can understand that they may be frustrated. Although the funding for the overpass is welcome, it will be an on-the-cheap job, so to speak, and some things normally done with such a construction, such as the synchronisation of nearby traffic lights, will not be done. However, money is available to enable it to be done, to ensure that the area is well serviced and the intersection and surrounding areas are made safe.

I, along with the rest of the opposition, voice my considerable concern over the increases in fees and charges and the cost of living. Under this government, the total bills paid to the state government by the average household have risen from \$4 820 to \$5 893 in just three years. This budget will see the average annual electricity bill rise from \$963 to \$1 515, a cumulative increase since the Barnett government came to power of 57.3 per cent. This is in addition to further increases in fees and charges, including for water. In my role on the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, I sit at repetitive meetings hearing evidence about ongoing increases in

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fees and charges wrought by government departments. Not only do we have these large increases in fees, but every time we turn around there are other fee increases being applied to our community. These latter increases in fees are what I call surreptitious increases. Last night I spoke to a constituent, a level 3 public sector worker, who received a yellow sticker for a damaged headlight. Although she acknowledged that she had not noticed the problem and that it needed fixing, when she took her car over the pits, other problems were found that she needed to address. This woman now finds it hard to meet the costs of repairing her vehicle, given her day-to-day living expenses and the increased fees and charges for her vehicle, which included \$87.40 for the first pass over the pits and \$61.00 for the subsequent pass. Basically it was the pits, and something she felt should be covered by the taxes she pays.

Then there is Lily, an elderly woman who lives in Dianella. On the day before Easter, Lily had her car stolen from her front yard. Lily reported the theft to the police immediately, and the following day the car was found. The police informed Lily that the car had been towed to the police yard for forensic testing and that she would be notified when she could pick it up.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.R. Mitchell): I ask the member for Wanneroo to please take a seat.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: At no time was Lily given any information about how that process would happen and whether or not she would incur a cost. Lily was given no choice about this arrangement; she was merely informed that the car would be towed; she was not advised whether there would be any cost. One week later Lily was notified that her car was ready for collection upon a payment of \$396. Lily was upset by this because had she been able to contact the RAC to have the car towed, as a member, she would not have received a towing fee. Of course, by that time it was too late and she was required to pay the tax invoice from AAAC Towing Pty Ltd for charges of \$250 for towage, \$50 for an after-hours levy, and \$36 for GST, in order to take possession of her vehicle. Additionally, the towing pick-up address was not recorded, and nor was the number of kilometres towed detailed. For all Lily knows, the car could have been found one or 100 kilometres away from the police yard in Osborne Park. Despite being a victim of a crime, Lily found her car held hostage by the police until she paid a bill that had been accrued by the police on her behalf, and without her being able to organise for a free service through the RAC. When Lily arrived at the yard to collect the car, it was unfortunately so damaged that she could not drive it. When she advised the police that she would leave it there until she could get towing, she was told that there would be an additional \$23-a-day storage fee. These are all examples of surreptitious fees. Keen to avoid an even greater bill, Lily immediately had the RAC tow the damaged car to a mechanic for free. Understandably, Lily feels upset that she not only had her car stolen, but also was disadvantaged by the police and the surreptitious costs that this government hits our community with every day.

This is a daily occurrence for people in the electorate of Nollamara who are struggling to make ends meet, as we create a category of working poor. The recent Henderson poverty line for a family of two adults, one of whom is working, and two dependent children, is \$803.79 per week. The minimum wage in WA is \$587.20. In the Nollamara electorate the average wage in 2006 was \$896. Allowing for wage price indexing, it would now be around \$950. The average weekly earning for Western Australians is \$1 484, but for those working in the retail or health sectors, that figure sits closer to \$1 000.

There are people who are working and struggling because of the cost of living and the poor affordability of housing, and we continue to punish them. Uniting Aid Inc in the Nollamara electorate has seen an increase in the level of debt for utility charges, in particular electricity. The agency runs a modest operation that assists many in the Nollamara community, but unfortunately it has the capacity to assist people only on Tuesday and Friday mornings, despite the demand for its services. It is funded by the federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Lotterywest, its own fundraising, and the generous contributions of philanthropists in our community. This means that although people will see the result of Barnett's increases in household utilities and charges and the impact of this uncaring budget, they will see none of the \$604 million for the community sector and none of the HUGS funding.

Uniting Aid provides food and clothing to people in need and has seen a marked increase in demand as families struggle to make ends meet. Yesterday a family with young children with health problems presented to the agency with a Synergy bill of \$1 100. The service has recently increased its budget for assisting people with their electricity and gas bills from \$300 in December to \$500—that is, the total budget for the day, not per person. Clearly when people have bills as large as \$1 100, Uniting Aid has to refer them to HUGS.

Dr K.D. Hames: Over what time period would that be? Is that a two-month bill?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I am not sure; I was not told about that. What I understand, too, is that when people get referred to HUGS, one of the difficulties is they cannot get financial counselling.

Dr K.D. Hames: That is a big bill for two months.

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Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Often what happens is that a lot of low-income people, as we know, buy energy-inefficient products. I will go to that in a moment. Anyway, I am told this is not an unusual situation. Two or three families a week are referred to HUGS because they cannot be assisted by Uniting Aid. Remember, it operates only two mornings a week, and it is referring two or three people a week.

Uniting Aid has identified that this is particularly an issue for newly arrived Australians, who do not understand that maybe a cheap electric heater or a cheap fan that they purchase to keep warm or cool leads to excessive and costly use of electricity. They often cannot afford gas heaters in their rental units. As we know, private rental has had increasing rents. In the January 2011 quarter, the median rent increased to \$380. That represents a jump from 19 per cent of median income paid on rent in 2000 to 26 per cent of median income paid on rent in September 2010. We know that housing stress comes in at around that 30 per cent mark. These people are encountering enormous stress, and that is in addition to the utility bills.

The agency has also had to work with people to increase their deductions to Centrepay, as the previous commitments have not been adequate to meet the costs of the increases in utility bills. Uniting Aid is encouraging people to increase their deductions from \$10 to \$20 per payment. This means that there is less money for other cost-of-living expenses. Increasing the HUGS payment is not the answer. Given that it is difficult to get into financial counselling, and given that HUGS is a one-off payment that can be made only once a year, it is clear that the hardship program needs something more. It needs something that assists people to reduce their consumption.

It is clear that the hardship efficiency program offered by the Office of Energy also needs to be actively working with people to reduce consumption. The items that can be purchased with money from the scheme should be extended. At the moment it can be used to purchase only, as I understand, insulation—for which there is probably no longer as great a need—and fridges, but no other sorts of items. Those people who are granted funding have to show that they have hardship. It has to be certified by a financial counsellor.

This brings me to the next point, which is that the decision on the feed-in tariff lines is completely counterintuitive. The government has raised electricity prices, so people want to meet their additional costs by reducing their consumption. One of the ways they can do it is through solar panels. While locals struggle desperately to pay their utility bills, the changes made in this budget will ensure that those on low to moderate incomes are priced out of generating their own electricity to provide some relief from the dramatic rises in utility bills since the Barnett government came to power. Cutting the feed-in tariff from 1 July 2011 will result in a net feed-in tariff reduction from 47c to 20c per kilowatt. In addition, the state government will close the scheme when the total capacity of renewable energy systems installed under the feed-in tariff scheme reaches 150 megawatts. This means the feed-in tariff, the incentive for householders to install renewable energy systems, will end once the system has reached 150 megawatts. Currently, almost 70 megawatts of capacity have been accepted into the scheme. As a result of the cuts to encourage solar panels, a race is now on, and it is likely that this 150 megawatt limit will be met shortly. In fact, it may have already been reached given the outstanding backlog being processed. What then? Once we reach it, what is to be done with all the other people who rush towards the 1 July deadline?

While we have high carbon coal-fired power stations running at 300 megawatts in Collie, 640 megawatts in Kwinana, 854 megawatts in Muja, 107 megawatts at Worsley Alumina and 416 megawatts at Bluewaters, we can have only a total of 150 megawatts in the Western Australian renewable energy scheme for householders. This is scandalous. For locals in the electorate of Nollamara, right now there is a smaller incentive to install a photovoltaic system. When the statewide system reaches 150 megawatts—one-third of the size of the average Western Australian coal-fired power station—they will be shut out of the market.

The renewable energy scheme is a win-win. Photovoltaic systems allow householders to produce their own energy and sell it to an electricity supplier. This means that, for those who can afford it, the system not only diminishes their bill, but also puts carbon-free energy into the grid. In return, Western Australia gets renewable energy and a diminished carbon footprint.

All this is in an environment of increasing debt. The government is taking from the people of WA now and intends to take from their children in the future to pay for its excesses. It is the ultimate baby boomers' budget—spending the children's inheritance. It is like this governments stance on addressing the serious issue of climate change; it is "Don't do anything. Leave it for future generations." And all the while the government says it is okay because it is going to pump \$604 million into the community sector.

I agree with the opposition leader that this budget is simply making a virtue of necessity and that this government has developed a begging bowl budget—one in which it has created the need and then has to fund the agencies that deliver the services. I worked as a volunteer in the community sector for a long time, and I

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welcome the funding for the community sector but I am concerned that it is not tied to workers' wages. Frankly, the writing has been on the wall since the Queensland equal pay decision to increase workers' pay by up to 50 per cent. Since the determination to reclassify WA government sector workers—social workers, psychologists, therapists and counsellors—the review of this area resulted in a new pay scale for the specified calling positions and increased rates of pay by 13 per cent for entry-level positions, 10 per cent for middle-level positions and eight per cent for senior positions.

The writing was on the wall in the Productivity Commission's report of January 2010, "Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector", which states —

A significant consequence ... has been that wages have been squeezed to the point where many NFPs find it difficult to attract or retain professional staff ...

Recommendation 10.2 of that report states —

... Australian governments purchasing community services need to base funding on relevant market wages for equivalent positions.

The writing has also been on the wall since the establishment of the partnership forum as a result of the Economic Audit Committee in October 2009. It has definitely been on the wall since the establishment of Community Employers WA in late 2007. That is a group of non-government and not-for-profit community service provider organisations in WA that formed an organisation because staff in the community sector in WA were not paid fair and just salaries; because it needed a stronger and more meaningful relationship with government; and because it is unlikely that community sector organisation will be able to continue to provide certain community services with current government funding levels.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It is clear that this funding decision was a necessity. This was not something that suddenly came out of the blue—that suddenly this government got a big heart. It had no choice. What the government has done very clearly is make a virtue out of necessity. It is something that it knew for some time. The government certainly knew, because there was an equal pay case.

It is disappointing the Western Australian government did not make a submission to the Fair Work Australia pay equity case that took this issue into account. The government makes submissions to the Fair Work Australia minimum wage, it makes submissions to many things. The submission of Community Employers to the Fair Work Australia equal pay case detailed that the average weekly wages for the 36 000 staff in WA was on average 30 per cent lower than the average full-time equivalent weekly wage of the entire health and community services sector in Australia. The employers stated —

The risk for the government sector is that, by underfunding organisations to provide services and pay staff a fair and just wage, they are failing to meet their social responsibility to the community of providing a level of service that truly meets the community's needs.

It also pointed out that the difference in base level salaries between public sector staff and the equivalent positions in the social and community services award in the community sector is up to 57 per cent, or \$29 210 higher. All these things would have been raised with the government, and it is interesting that that submission was not put in to the Fair Work Australia equal pay case. However, the government would have known from the Queensland case, in negotiations with the community sector employers and the application to Fair Work Australia in March 2010, that something needed to be done. Clearly, the issue of wages in the community sector is one of pay equity. That was also found to be the issue in the Queensland pay equity decision, in which, according to my notes, Commissioner Fielding stated —

Arguably, the benevolence and commitment of the workers and unlikelihood of industrial action is assumed in government funding models ... this situation would not be tolerated in predominantly male occupations or industries.

According to my notes, the Fair Work Australia equal pay case decision in Queensland concluded that —

... for employees in the SACS industry there is not equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal or comparable value of by comparison with workers in state and local government employment. We consider gender has been important in creating the gap between pay in the SACS industry and pay in comparable state and local government employment. And, in order to give effect to the equal remuneration provisions, the proper approach is to attempt to identify the extent to which gender has inhibited wages growth in the SACS industry and to mould a remedy which addresses that situation.

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WA has a gender pay gap of 27 per cent. That is vastly greater than the 17 per cent in the rest of Australia, which is why tying the funding to wages in the sector is paramount. Community sector employers and others recognise that over 80 per cent of not-for-profit staff are female and that the low level of pay in the sector is a significant contributor to the state's gender pay gap.

The previous Labor government increased funding for disability sector workers' wages by \$33 an hour. It is therefore not without precedence that this money can be tied to what is needed in the sector for workers' wages.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What do you think the Fair Work case will deliver?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I am not sure.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It will be nothing like what we have delivered.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Nothing like what you delivered is what the Queensland case delivered over a period of time! I think it will deliver something similar to the Queensland case.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It is a staged, delayed payment.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I must continue. I noted in *The West Australian* that Stephen Kobelke, the chief executive officer of the —

Mr C.J. Barnett: You are lacking in generosity.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I did congratulate you for it. However, I have worked in the sector and I believe that this is a pay equity issue, Premier. This is a pay equity issue and I have outlined the argument for that, and that is why it needs to be tied to wages. The decision is welcome, but it needs to be tied to wages.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is where you fail. You see it as an industrial issue and we see it as policy and compassion.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I noted in *The West Australian* that Stephen Kobelke, the chief executive officer of Aged and Community Services WA, raised his concerns that the home and community care sector will not be beneficiaries of the welfare agency funding boost. I understand that this sector is not the only one to lose out, and that the increase will be in addition to the regular adjustments for already funded bodies. One can only assume that the many on-the-ground agencies and small agencies which deliver vital services, such as Edmund Rice Centre and Uniting Aid, will not benefit from the increased funding. I certainly hope that they do benefit, but if they do not, it may leave them exposed to the determination of Fair Work Australia in its equal pay decision.

In addition, it is still unclear whether the integrated service centre at Koondoola Primary School, one of the important community services in the area, will continue to be funded beyond 30 June. The Premier knows that the integrated service centres were established in 2007 through a collaborative partnership between the Office of Multicultural Interests, the Department of Health and the Department of Education. Direct services are provided by the health department through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and Child and Adolescent Community Health Service, and the education department. Funding was provided by the OMI and the Premier's department agreed to manage the funds until the funding ends on 30 June 2011.

According to my notes, the Minister for Health stated in a letter that —

The Departments of Health and Education are supportive of the Integrated Service Centres and the DoE is seeking to obtain recurrent funding for the two existing ISCs, plus expansion to establish additional ISCs.

I understand from the agency that it is patiently waiting to hear whether it will be funded and I call on the government to make the funding available given the contract finishes on the 30 June 2011.

As I understand, the government, through the Economic Audit Committee, has announced its intention to shift services to the non-government welfare sector and other services. This is privatisation by stealth and the Premier should be ashamed of his statement in the budget speech that the care provided to those with disabilities—I note that in his speech the Premier mentioned only disability—is done better “than employees of a large bureaucracy will ever do”.

This denigrates the good work of public servants such as the Disability Services Commission, which employs approximately 1 800 people, many in individual projects. Activ Foundation employees 1 445 staff and has 1 050 employees with a disability. Therefore, the idea that bureaucracy exists only in the public sector is simply wrong. A contemporary definition of bureaucracy is a system of administration distinguished by its clear hierarchy of authority, rigid division of labour, written and inflexible rules, regulations and procedures, and impersonal relationships. Bureaucracy is not something quarantined to the public sector; however, the difference in the

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public sector is that we can address the issue and the delivery of services is transparent and subject to freedom of information laws and the proper payment of wages.

Speaking to people in my electorate, they believe the essential services of government should be delivered by government. It concerns me that when we debated the public sector reforms, the Premier stated in *Hansard*, in response to repeated questions, that the delegation of power in the amendments was not to be used as a cover for privatisation or contracting. The Premier stated that although it gave the power to do so, it was not the government's intention to do so. The Premier accepted a comment from the Leader of the Opposition that the role and work of a child protection worker could be delegated to a large non-government organisation, but said that it was not the government's intention to so delegate. I call again upon the government to ensure it will not privatise by stealth the workers in the public sector.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I am confused. Do you support the funding or don't you?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I support the funding. I think the funding is great. I do not believe that any government services should be shifted into the non-government sector.

Given that this is in the budget, it really is time for the government to reveal its agenda. I dispute Gareth Parker's article in today's *The West Australian* that Labor is inventing a supposed Liberal privatisation agenda; there is nothing supposed about. The evidence of it is in the budget papers and in the government's actions, including the infringement notices and the speed camera tender, Fiona Stanley Hospital, Midland Hospital, Mundaring water treatment plant, Department of Housing maintenance, outsourcing of not-for-profit entities for affordable housing and title transfer, outsourcing of motor vehicle licensing centres, proposed legislation to allow privatisation of parole and probationary services, and the privatisation of TAFEs.

I also note the cautionary tale of the chair of the Curtin Graduate School of Business Research and Development, Al Rainnie, in *The West Australian* on Monday, 23 May. The crux of his research showed that the move to contract out services results in undercutting by each agency, which undermines the voluntary sector and threatens the viability and quality of the service.

I experienced this in the community legal sector when the Howard government introduced competitive tendering for funding in the community legal sector. In many states it resulted in a bid-to-the-bottom that reduced services as organisations bid to retain services for the lowest price. It ended in competition that did not deliver to the consumer.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Did you support Labor's privatisation in energy?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: No.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You do not support it?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I do not support privatisation.

Al Rainnie identified that similar moves in Britain resulted in a move away from the community-based, not-for-profit sector to a profit-based sector.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You had better tell your leader.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I am not aware that they privatised it; they split it up.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Exactly what you are saying. If you are saying shifting a function from the government sector to the private sector is privatisation, that is exactly what happened in energy under the Labor government.

Mr M. McGowan: You are being tricky.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes; the Premier is being very tricky with his words and is trying to undermine me. I do not support privatisation, Premier.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Then tell your leader that.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I have told my leader that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Did he listen?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Absolutely. And we brought a bill into this place to stop the privatisation of hospitals, and it was the member speaking, the Premier, who voted against it. The people in the community do not believe in privatisation of essential services; I do not believe; the people in the community do not believe.

Something that recently happened in the northern suburbs that I also do not agree with is the delivery of the humanitarian settlement funds, which have gone to the not-for-profit sector. The outcome in that federal government area was that the in-touch Metropolitan Migrant Resource Service lost its funding to a profit-based agency—PVS Workfind.

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According to my notes, Al Rainnie stated that —

The first step is to palm off the responsibility to the already overworked and under-resourced community sector. Then it is only a short hop to the multinational Sercos of the world and risk services in the process.

That is not what our community wants; that is not what our community should get.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [8.19 pm]: Last week I had the privilege of spending some time with years 5, 6 and 7 students from Roseworth Primary School in my electorate. I was asked to speak to the students about my role as a member of Parliament. The students’ considerable knowledge of our system and the role of the respective tiers of government was very impressive. I want to take this opportunity to commend the efforts and enthusiasm of their teachers—Travis Carter, Glen Purdy, Mark O’Mara and Anna Keunen.

I asked the boys and girls to think about and write down what they considered to be the issues confronting their neighbourhood and what would they do if they were Premier for a day. All in all, the answers were thoughtful and well considered. I preface my summary of the responses by saying that the students were unprompted by me. The wish list was varied and quite extensive, ranging from measures to eliminate graffiti and violence to expressing concerns for the care of sick children to wanting more equipment for front-line police and firefighters. Another wanted to ensure greater mobility for seniors through access to gophers and, yet another, greater legal sanctions for arsonists. Others wanted a change of speed limit on freeways. Another wanted assistance for flood victims, another to save trees and water, and a few wanted to improve the amenity of the local area. A couple wanted to combat animal cruelty. Other responses included wanting to assist people with disabilities; to provide underground power; to install traffic lights at dangerous corners; to enforce drug laws; to help victims of crime and to have stronger sentences imposed; to ban the wearing of T-shirts with offensive language; to eliminate racism; to provide greater resources for schools; and to provide healthier food for kids. Others were concerned about the implications of the improper use of Facebook. One student was concerned about the future of coalmines, which is dear to the member for Collie–Preston’s heart. Another expressed concerns as to how refugees were treated. Others wanted better hospitals. Another complained about the treatment of Aboriginals; some about grocery prices. Another brave soul was an advocate for wearing full school uniform. Another, interestingly enough, expressed concern about police shootings. One wanted the establishment of fire brigades in every suburb. A couple of students expressed concern about smoking and the dangers of passive smoking. A couple wanted more facilities for elderly Western Australians. A couple mentioned government addressing drink-driving. Another wanted the installation of cameras in local parks. Others were concerned that roadside crosses were a distraction to drivers. Some wanted more activities for children. Others thought increasing the price of cigarettes would deter people from buying them. There was a response about wanting better treatment for prisoners. Others, rather adventurously, wanted a change in school hours—obviously for shorter hours. There was another response about the age at which persons can obtain a driver’s licence, and one about making parks more kid friendly.

This is a rather long preface but I want to provide scientific veracity to what I will now talk about. By far, the most common response from students related to ensuring people had somewhere to live, a home of their own, and that that home be properly maintained. Students also expressed concerns about the many homeless people in our community. The other most common response to the question “If you were Premier for the day, what would you change?”, that these very savvy nine to 12-year-olds focused on was the burden of the cost of living on families and how government needed to take measures to ease this burden. They cited the cost of fuel, electricity, food and taxes as being too high, and that this placed a real drain on families. On the off-chance that my colleagues opposite think I am gilding the lily, with the indulgence of the house I will read out some responses.

In terms of housing, Darius, age 11, said he would like to help people who are homeless and get them into a house by making the builders build more homes. Matthew, age 10, said he would give homeless people clothes, money, toys and \$50. He would put their children in school and give their parents a job. Dionne, age 10, would help poor people by giving money and selling them a cheap house. He also suggested selling cheap fuel and building more schools. Jordan, age 12, would give people houses with no asbestos. Courtney, age 11, said she would change housing units to make them bigger and do it so that children had somewhere to play. Jennice, age 11, said she would help the homeless people get homes. Gemma, age 12, said if she was the member of Girrawheen, she would get more people to build more houses for homeless people. These are some responses from young people who live in my electorate.

In terms of household taxes and charges, Dylan, age 11, in year 6, said he would change the bills because people have complained a lot about bills because they cost too much. Mariah, age 10, said she would change taxes because some people are struggling with money because they do not have enough money for food and support for children—even help with bills. Jamie, age 10, said he would change the bills. He would do that by lowering

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the bill money by \$50 to help people who are suffering; for example, someone fighting to pay the bills. He said lowering the bill money would help. Lisa, age 12, said she would change the law because the bills of government cost too much. Braden, age 11, said he would help people by giving them money for water and gas bills. Leanne, age 11, said all parents who look after children need more money to look after them because some parents who do not receive family allowance are struggling to survive on their weekly pay cheque. Kathleen, age 11, said she would change the expenses of electricity and gas instead of making it more expensive for people who cannot afford the bill. Finally, if Sarah, age 11, was Premier for the day, she would change the prices of food so people can get more food because some people are struggling with being able to have a happy and easy life.

It is not much to want—a happy and easy life. I make this point rather laboriously to indicate that if the message can get through to nine to 12-year-olds, surely it can get through to this government as well. It saddens me that children of this age realise their parents and carers are struggling. It also saddens me that children this young face the harsh reality of realising that many people have inadequate or no housing. They also already appreciate how fundamental affordable housing is to people's lives.

The issue of affordable and social housing is a concern to a great many people in my electorate. I watch with interest the implementation of the government's new affordable housing policy. Part of the reason I believe there is such high demand on Homeswest housing is the state of the private rental market. Many of the practices adopted by agents are unconscionable. For example, I refer to the prevalent practice of receiving bids for a rental property or the practice of \$100 application fees. If people search for a house in a very competitive market, they sometimes have to make concurrent applications at five or six premises and produce a sum of \$100 each time. That is certainly a very hard burden for many people in lower income brackets. We will soon be debating the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2011, and, frankly, I hope that there will be some tightening up of the provisions on the fees that agents can be paid. This is a major problem, and the number of reports I get about what I call unconscionable conduct by private leasing agents is too high.

I have also had numerous complaints come into my office about the lack of maintenance of Homeswest houses and the lack of a timely response to sometimes serious maintenance calls. One of my constituents had to wait two weeks for her lounge room ceiling to be fixed after it had fallen in. Maintenance, clearly, is a huge problem that needs to be addressed. The contract with Transfield has been an absolute disaster and needs to be remediated very promptly.

The next concern in my electorate is the lack of police presence. Despite the government's rhetoric, more and more police seem to be either tied up with paperwork or are not there. A 24-hour station such as Joondalup, for example, is down five officers a shift, which is totally unacceptable.

The third issue that has arisen in my electorate in recent years is that of vacant school sites in that the Department of Education has failed to move swiftly to convert and develop the vacant land. I am on a committee that is currently looking into this issue, so I do not want to say any more, but it is unacceptable in areas where land is in demand. In one particular case the notification that the school was going to be closed was received in something like 2005, it closed in 2007, and then the school was finally demolished last month. That is unacceptable, and it will probably be 2013 before any buildings are on that site.

In terms of the so-called law and order budget, there is really not a lot to talk about because it was pretty lacklustre and did very little to back up the tough-on-crime rhetoric for which this government is well renowned. Treasurer Christian Porter devoted a whole four lines of his 16-page budget speech to police, and I think that reflects that the Barnett government's priorities lie elsewhere. I think that, coupled with the shameful attempt to erode fundamental and hard-fought-for conditions in its industrial relations agreement negotiations, shows the obvious reality that the Barnett government does not value our police. I must say, also, that a similar approach has been taken in the negotiations with the firefighters' union, and the government seems hell-bent on removing the special conditions particular to the occupational demands of those unique jobs. The government seems to want a once-size-fits-all approach to the negotiations that will remove the conditions that were fought for over many years. It is very unfortunate that things such as work-life balance will be very much affected, and I think that speaks volumes about whether this government really values our police and firefighters. The budget is not reflective of the increasing demands on police services in Western Australia generated by the growing population and the specific pressures of the mining boom. The community is increasingly fearful of crime, and concerned about the lack of police and the escalating alcohol and drug-fuelled violence.

In order to deflect criticism that I am being negative, I should mention a few highlights of the budget—I do stress that there are only a few. I welcome the additional moneys for the police assistance centre, which has suffered in recent times because the volume of calls has been much larger than anticipated, due, I think, to the acute underestimation of the number of calls from the regions after the decision had been made to transfer those

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calls through to the central police assistance centre. I also welcome the additional two alcohol and drug buses and the recurrent expenditure for the provision of staff running costs for those buses. I believe that now that we have these two buses, that should enable greater deployment in the regions, which is, of course, where the majority of fatalities occur. The Liberal Party's election promise was two drug buses, but they have suddenly transformed into breath and alcohol buses, so I will just be teasing that out of the minister during next week's estimates hearings.

Mr R.F. Johnson: And I cannot wait for you to do that!

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Good.

Funding for the community safety network, which used to be called the regional radio network replacement program, will be ongoing, which I welcome. The bad news is that I think the total rollout is still some years off. In fact, from the answer to a question on notice I asked, I know it will be rolled out region by region, and it was indicated the total rollout might be achieved by 2016. I think there needs to be some remedial measures in the meantime to ensure that this rapidly deteriorating, unreliable and substandard communications system can function.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The budget papers also contain reference to furthering the district police hub model; the other side of the coin to that is that suburban stations will close. We will, of course, be asking the government to clearly indicate its plans for the next five years and which suburban stations are about to go.

I welcome the money for a new Mundijong Police Station. The old one is in a dilapidated state; we have certainly been calling for its replacement for some time.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Did you know I was calling for that when we were in opposition?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I note that this allocation is out of sync with the general philosophy of police hubs that are being established elsewhere, and I wonder whether political considerations come into that decision.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Absolutely not.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: It is inconsistent with the broader hub policy.

The budget contains a large provision for information communication technology, which reflects the increasing number of breakdowns, inadequacies and failures in systems in recent times. I believe that these investments are fundamental, but I think it is just as important, if not more so, to value and invest in personnel. I am very concerned that there will be no marked improvement in funding for the Government Regional Officers' Housing provision for regional police officers. Those officers were recently sluggish with rent rises on existing accommodation, and elsewhere it is scarce or not available at all. The National Party leader, Brendon Grylls, has broken his 2008 election promise and is in denial that this lack of support acts as a disincentive to police serving in the regions.

Mr D.T. Redman: No, he's not.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The member says he is not in denial. We asked him a question about it last week and he denied it.

Mr D.T. Redman: Is this about support for police in regional Western Australia?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: It is about the lack of GROH acting as a disincentive for police officers to go to regional Western Australia.

As we have heard on numerous occasions over the past few months, there have also been numerous increases in a range of household expenses such as electricity, gas and water, which I think puts further pressure on police and families throughout Western Australia. The budget includes police fee increases of between three per cent and eight per cent, presumably for such things as firearm licences, security licences and police clearances.

Mr D.T. Redman: Did the police talk to you about their district allowances in regional Western Australia?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: There were no district allowances in the south west or the Gascoyne. Other than in the Kimberley and the Pilbara, the level of district allowances does not meet officers' needs.

Mr D.T. Redman: There has been a substantial increase.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Not in other than the Kimberley and the Pilbara, minister. The minister should stick to his other portfolios.

By and large, this budget reflects Minister Johnson's failure to prosecute with the Treasurer the full needs of WA Police.

There is one local issue that I particularly want to concentrate on. This may seem a minor matter. In this place these days we talk about hundreds of millions of dollars and billions of dollars. It may seem rather petty and small to talk about Warwick Senior High School in my electorate not having a bus. But that is a real problem for that school. One of the paradoxes that we have in politics is that sometimes it is easy to get a large project up, or to get a large grant for a project, but the little projects, such as getting a bus for a high school, tend to confound us. Warwick Senior High School, which has a specialist sporting program, does not have a school bus. There are only 520 students at this school, so it receives a lesser income to run the school educationally, and it has little spare money for extras. Therefore, the capacity of that school to pay for a bus is clearly limited. There has also been a decrease in the income of the P&C, due to fewer contributions by parents to the P&C levy, and a lack of volunteers to work in the canteen. The declining enrolments at the school also mean that less income is available for the P&C from the canteen and the uniform shop. The P&C has been advised by its auditor that it is overcommitted and needs to cap some of its expenditure. For example, last year the P&C spent \$7 000 on bus rental costs, and another \$8 000 was spent by the school. Therefore, the capacity for sporting teams to travel from the school is very limited. The cost for the hire of a small bus for the school is limited to \$200 per journey. Given the economic status of many of the students at that school, applying user pays is very difficult, and attempts to get parents to ferry the students to sporting matches has been unsuccessful. In some cases, a round trip of less than 10 kilometres in a bus has cost the school \$200. That means that the opportunities for students to engage in outdoor education are limited, and the leadership opportunities of taking kids to various young leaders' forums, such as the Joondalup City Youth Council and student council camps, are also limited. This has a huge impact on the capacity of the school to run its specialist programs, and its netball and Australian Football League programs. The school is obviously keen to continue and foster all those activities.

I need to note that a number of surrounding colleges have more than one bus. It is very unfortunate that Warwick Senior High School is missing out and is incurring a cost of about \$15 000 a year for a bus. Ashdale Secondary College has one bus. Balcatta Senior High School has two buses. Balga Senior High School has four buses. Carine Senior High School has two buses. Duncraig Senior High School has one bus. Girrawheen Senior High School has one bus. Greenwood Senior High School has two buses. Mirrabooka Senior High School has two buses. Wanneroo Senior High School has one bus. So why is Warwick Senior High School missing out? Why are the students at that school, particularly in its specialist programs, being hampered in their development and educational opportunities by the absence of a bus?

The second local issue that I want to talk about is the freeway extension. Yes, we welcome it. But, as the member for Joondalup has said, it is half-baked. It is only half of the freeway. Constituents of mine who have to travel south to the city in the morning find that if they get on the freeway at Hepburn Avenue after about 6.30, it is, to use the old cliché, a car park most of the way into the city. So that extension of the freeway will not markedly improve the situation in the near future. Of course, behind the problem of congestion is the fact that many people have to travel to the central business district by car, because there are very few buses in my electorate that run east-west, which is a major problem. The trains are full to capacity. Some parts of my electorate are a considerable number of kilometres away from the train stations. That all conspires to increase car usage as well, thereby further blocking up the freeway. Therefore, although the extension of the freeway might be part of the solution, it is not all of the solution. I therefore urge the Minister for Transport not to rest on his laurels on this matter.

Another matter that I want to mention in the context of the budget is the increase in the road trauma trust fund contributions from speed and red-light camera fines. I congratulate the Minister for Police on the decision that 100 per cent of speed and red-light camera fines will now go to the road trauma trust fund. I should indicate also that I did have a bill drafted to that effect, so I have spared the minister the difficulty of having to oppose a bill that in his heart of hearts he actually supports. With that extra revenue—which we will also go into in estimates—there needs to be greater transparency about how that road trauma trust fund money is allocated. The road safety outcomes that are expected to be gained by that expenditure need to be more clearly delineated and more precise. At the end of the day, the funding is still way short of what is required to fund the Towards Zero road safety strategy. I had hoped that I would not need to keep repeating my comments about how the Towards Zero road safety strategy is unfunded. It is now partially funded. But the funds that will be acquired through the road trauma trust fund will be substantially less than what will be needed to fund the Towards Zero strategy.

The final matter that I want to mention is yet another increase in taxes and charges. That is the emergency services levy. In three years, the ESL has gone up by a total of 31 per cent. This year, it will increase by 5.59 per

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cent. The minister justified the increase last year by saying that the increasing demand on our emergency services, be it fire, flood or cyclone, and the recommendations of the royal commission into the bushfires in Victoria, all mean that FESA has had to spend more money across the board. That is fine. However, there is not a lot of transparency about how those funds are deployed. Local governments have complained to me that people are unhappy that their council rates have gone up. There is not enough transparency or nexus between the imposition of that levy and people knowing how those funds are spent. Hopefully, the Ellis and the Keelty reports that will be coming out shortly on the Roleystone–Kelmscott fires will address the ESL and how those funds are spent. There needs to be greater clarity to make sure that some of those funds are not leaked or diverted to purposes that, like the road trauma trust fund, are indirectly related to only the creation of safer and more resilient communities.

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [8.44 pm]: It gives me much pleasure to give my support to the government's budget for 2011–12. Budgets are always a difficult thing. But I believe that this budget is not only a responsible budget but also a historic budget. It has struck a new balance between providing strong economic management, and building infrastructure, and at the same time addressing the needs of the more vulnerable members of our society, who are finding things tough, at a time when most of us are reasonably well off.

I am pleased to be part of a government that has shown by its financial allocations that it supports the many hundreds of not-for-profit organisations that are working hard every day to deliver services and care to those most in need of assistance. Many of these organisations, such as Anglicare and Centrecare, YouthCARE and Relationships Australia, have a large network of service centres and are active also in my electorate of Southern River. Support for the disadvantaged, for families and for seniors is the centrepiece of this year's budget. Many families in the expanding electorate of Southern River are first home buyers, while others are second or third home buyers who are usually a little more established financially. More than 70 per cent of households in my electorate have children, and often a hefty mortgage. Among the seniors are residents of the three modern retirement facilities in my electorate.

In my previous role serving as a pastor, I had the opportunity to be well acquainted with the plight of the economically disadvantaged. I am therefore pleased to see that the needs of struggling families have been addressed in very practical ways. The hardship utility grant scheme has now been increased to \$10 million, and I think the allocation of \$5 million a year for the junior sports program is a brilliant move. The seniors cost-of-living rebate increase by some 40 per cent—allowing an extra 4 500 seniors in the state to apply for a Seniors Card—is a very positive move. Although it will not impact directly on the electorate of Southern River, I am delighted to see the investment of \$5.4 million towards building a night shelter for homeless men in the central business district. Having been involved for many years in the fight against drug addiction, I am also encouraged that I am part of a compassionate government that is making a large investment in accommodation for people dealing with drug and alcohol, mental health and other disability-related issues who cannot be catered for in the usual way. Naturally, all of us would like more assistance to be provided to the needy in our community. However, it is important to balance the long-term management of the state, which is the foundation of our ongoing prosperity, with the immediate needs of the socially disadvantaged.

For the working people in my electorate, there are some very welcome items. I am delighted that the electorate of Southern River will receive \$3 million for additions and improvements to local schools. It includes \$1.5 million for the new Campbell estate preprimary centre and \$426 000 for capital works at Excelsior Primary School. The \$52 million rollout of funding for air cooling for all schools is very welcome. The former arbitrary line on the map that delineated which schools got cooling and which did not resulted in two schools in my electorate not qualifying—Ranford Primary School and Canning Vale Primary School. I am pleased to say that those two schools will be in the first rollout of air conditioning, which means it should be in place before next summer. Undoubtedly, this will have a major impact on both students and teachers, and will contribute to a better learning environment for our teachers and students.

There are some very practical things in the budget for ordinary people. An extra lane on the freeway between Leach Highway and Roe Highway will save at least five or 10 minutes of residents' daily travel time to the city. The 45 more railcars to be provided will be a welcome addition for those who have to squeeze onto a train at Murdoch. The extra buses and the extra funding for bus services will be very welcome in my electorate. I am looking forward to some announcements in the near future about exactly what that will mean for my electorate. While a railway station at Canning Vale is not in the forward estimates yet, I can assure my constituents that I continue to make representations to government to not forget to keep on the horizon this important project worth \$235 million or thereabouts. I remind the other side of the house that Labor had decided to sell the land reserved for the three railway stations. One of the first things I did as a new member of this house was visit the then Minister for Transport with the Mayor of Gosnells and the CEO of the City of Gosnells, from whom we received an undertaking that the land would not be sold. Had Labor won government, there would have been no chance of

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ever getting the railway line through Canning Vale; but thanks to the Liberal–National government, there is a real possibility it will happen.

Funding to the tune of \$541 million for the contingent construction of Fiona Stanley Hospital will also benefit many residents in Southern River. This world-class hospital will be situated on South Street, which is only 10 or 15 minutes' drive from my electorate. Most residents will find this a very welcome service.

There are other issues in my electorate. There is a major traffic snarl at Nicholson Road roundabout. Work is underway on that and I am sure there is some funding somewhere hidden away in the budget to address that issue in the not too distant future.

Ms J.M. Freeman: You hope!

Mr P. ABETZ: I am ever hopeful! I am sure I can twist the arm of the minister responsible for Main Roads to somehow make that happen.

Another big issue in my electorate, which is not related to the state but which I will mention, is the abysmal lack of broadband facilities in a modern, new suburb in Southern River—Harrisdale. It is just outside my electorate and there is no broadband availability there.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Will the NBN fix that?

Mr P. ABETZ: Yes, in about seven years' time!

Ms J.M. Freeman: So, what you need to do is get the NBN early into your area.

Mr P. ABETZ: Yes. The problem is that the NBN is actually the reason why internet service providers are refusing to invest. That is part of the frustration.

Many constituents in the Southern River electorate have considerable concerns relating to law and order. Fighting against crimes, hoons and antisocial behaviour is often the number one issue raised with me. All of them applaud this government's decision to fund upgrades to police stations, police cars and communication equipment throughout the state, as well as the decision to invest \$60 million in new databases and software to track and catch criminals.

For the small business sector, I am delighted that our government has taken positive steps towards the appointment of a Small Business Commissioner. I believe that the appointment of the Small Business Commissioner, although it appears budget-wise to be a budget-neutral step, is certainly a wonderful complementary function to the measures I propose in the Franchising Bill 2010. I believe that the Small Business Commissioner will serve a very useful role in the franchising sector as well, and will help to resolve some disputes in a low-cost manner.

Some of my constituents have queried why we as a government cannot do more since we are forecasting a \$412 million surplus and strong surpluses every year for the following four years. I explain to them that our budget surplus is only a forecast; that, if achieved, our borrowings will be reduced; and that it is not as though there is a pot of money sitting in the corner of a Treasury building at the end of the year.

The media tends to gloss over it, but the reason we have had to increase utility prices again is because of the legacy of the former Labor government of this state. When I point out to my constituents that, despite tariff increases, the state will still pay an operating power subsidy of \$1.1 billion over the following four years and that freezing electricity prices would increase our state debt by almost \$2 billion, their response is: "How do you manage to do so well in the face of such odds?" People do recognise that they need to pay for the cost of electricity, and I am delighted that HUGS has been increased to provide additional assistance.

In summary, I am delighted with the budget and I am pleased to commend the bills to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.F. Johnson (Leader of the House)**.

House adjourned at 8.58 pm
